



COLBY FREE PRESS

Believe it or not Ford stuck in Chevy

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

Fighting crime can be a dirty business, but for Thomas County Chief Detention Officer Dave Ford, that meaning took on new heights today when his patrol car got stuck in the automatic car wash for more than 15 minutes.

Ford, who simply wanted a quick wash before leaving town on county business, drove into the far west bay at the Majic Spray facility at 244 W. 4th St.

"I pulled in and watched as the wash cycle went through its first rotation," he said. "Then as it went into the second part of the cycle, the mechanism just stopped on the right front fender."

Moments later and, in disbelief, Ford said he realized he was stuck as the water continued to spray a constant mist all around and with no way to disengage the vehicle from its predicament. Since he was trying to leave town, getting out of the car was not the best option, so he decided to call the sheriff's office for assistance.

"I'm stuck in the car wash," he told Jane McDougal, secretary and sheriff's matron. In response, McDougal said that at first she couldn't quite comprehend what exactly was the problem. Ford then continued by saying he was literally stuck and needed somebody to call the manager of the facility to shut down the equipment so he could get out. Within minutes Merle Albright,



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Chief Detention Officer Dave Ford is hard to see through all the mist, but he's in the patrol car. Ford, who thought he was making a quick trip to the car wash before getting on the road to Topeka, found himself stuck inside the automatic car wash until freed by the manager of Majic Spray on W. 4th St.

manager, was there and had the situation under control. Another fellow officer, Shawn Ackerman, arrived on the scene to offer moral support while trying to keep a straight face.

Once the vehicle was freed, Ford stepped out of the car and looked at the right fender saying, "Well, that's probably the cleanest this fender has ever been — just glad it didn't clean the paint off."

Although the situation was light-hearted and the first time that Albright said it's ever happened during his tenure as manager, he did offer a few suggestions. In the event a car gets stuck, the first option might be to drive it on out, but if that's not possible, as was the case with Ford, then call him or the police department for help.

If the car is stuck and someone wants to get out of the car, Albright said there

is a button switch on the inside that will open the south door allowing them to back the car out.

After seeing the car was undamaged, Ford continued on his trip to Topeka.

"Well nobody can say that the sheriff's office in Thomas County isn't cleaning up crime in more ways than one," said one fellow deputy about Ford's dilemma.

Commissioners ink several documents to benefit the county

By **MAXINE NELSON**
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners put their signatures on several documents at their Monday meeting to benefit the county.

They signed a memorandum of agreement with Dave Tole for sand and gravel for the county road department. Chris Bieker, road department supervisor, brought a contract agreeing to pay Tole 50 cents per cubic yard to excavate sand in a 400 by 300 foot area. The area has approximately 20 feet of sand under 10 feet of soil.

Bieker said the price was the same as it has been, but the lease is for five-years because it is the largest area he has worked. He said he was advertising for bids to excavate, and will be opening them March 29.

Bieker also brought a contract with Penco Engineering of Plainville to inspect 33 bridges in Thomas County at a cost of \$47 per bridge. The total was \$1,551. Inspections are to be done by May 31.

In other business; • The commissioners signed an application for non-fund warrants for \$700,000 for expenses for the expansion of the landfill. The money will be paid back over a period of time.

• The commissioners signed grant applications totaling \$54,262 for Kathy Ryan, county health nurse. Applications are for \$7,000 for the state formula grant which helps pay for basic services; \$30,640 for Maternal and Child Health; \$12,239 for Family Planning; \$484 for HIV/Aids counseling; and \$3,899 for Immunization Action Plan.

Ryan said the county provides family planning services for Logan, Rawlins and Thomas counties; maternal and child health care to Decatur, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas and Wallace counties; and Healthy Start services to Thomas County.

She said she will be needing to replace some infant and toddlers car seats, because she had just been notified the ones she has no longer meet safety standards because of changes. The health department provides the seats on a loaner basis.

She said she is going to apply to the Thomas County Sheriff's Department to see if some of the drug seizure money can be used for this purpose. She said she also wants to see if she could get a van from drug seizures because the department employees have been using their own cars for Maternal and Infant Care trips. The commissioners told her to check out the vans in the impound lot also.

• Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor,

said solid waste has averaged 12.8 tons per day in February, and has been 13.7 tons for the year. This is well under the 20 tons per day needed to keep the landfill open.

He said the price for scrap metal is down, and he may have to start charging for it, if he has to pay to get it hauled away.

Jumper said Thaniel Monaco of Miller Associate of McCook, Neb., will be at the next meeting to discuss opening the new landfill pit.

He said the state wants to have a two-day landfill training at Colby Community College in the fall and do some hands-on training at the Thomas County landfill.

Jumper said some of the accounts at the landfill are more than 120 days overdue, and asked what he should do. Commission Chair Ron Evans told him to check with other landfills, and with the road department to see what they do, and he can probably get a sample letter to send out. If that fails, the account can be referred to small claims court.

• Evans said the county is advertising for an EMS director due to the resignation of Josh Buffington.

• Tax abatements in the amount of \$6,127.74 were approved. One was for \$213.76 for a boat not owned. Abatements of \$4,409.68 and \$1,504.30 for commercial property were paid under protest, and the state ordered a refund.

• The commissioners signed an agreement for services from Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas for .959 mills of tax money for FY 2001.

• They received notice of a time extension for the county's micro-loan project. The project has been approved for a 12-month extension, until June 30, 2002. This is money which can be loaned to individuals. Contact County Clerk Tracey Perkins, for more information.

• Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock

said Maurice Sloan had notified him he

has recuperated from heart surgery and

would be able to continue doing yard

maintenance for the county office

buildings.

• Perkins said EMS Assistant Director Martin Rinehart has completed his Officer I training. This will give him a 21-cent an hour increase in pay.

• The Thomas County Highway Department gave the following February work report. Equipment was moved to County Road 412 in the south part of the county between roads 6 and 7 for a graveling project. Seven hundred and eighty-eight cubic yards of gravel have been hauled there from Fulwider Pit, ripped in, and laid down. Snow was plowed in East Hale and North Randall Townships.

Deadline Friday for Chamber reservations

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

The deadline to make reservations

for this year's Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet is Friday, said Gerry Fulwider, executive director. The banquet is Friday, April 5, at City Limits Convention Center, with social hour at 6 p.m. and dinner and entertainment starting at 7 p.m.

"Spirit of America Alive In Colby," is this year's theme for the banquet with Bill Cordes of Great Bend, the guest speaker.

"Learning to embrace the moment and get involved while making the best

of it is what Bill plans to talk about," Fulwider said. "Bill's dynamic delivery, requiring energy not only from him, but also his audience integrates more than just a touch of humor with serious life skills and relationship issues."

Cordes is a speaker, consultant and author, he said, and has keynoted programs for conventions, conferences, schools and universities nationwide.

Other biographical information provided on this year's speaker noted that Cordes has co-authored some of the nation's finest books for teens to include, *Teen Power Too*, *Teen Power Thru Christ*, *Lead Now and Step Aside*, and *Teen Empower*.

"Bill has also been a high school teacher, college instructor and television talk show host," Fulwider said. His educational background includes graduate and undergraduate work at the University of Hawaii and Fort Hays

State University. Among his professional and personal accomplishments, Cordes was awarded Graduate Student Teacher of the Year at Fort Hays by the International Communication Association and is a committed Christian, husband and father.

In addition to Cordes, another highlight of the banquet will be recognizing the 2001 Ambassador Business Person of the Year and Community Service Award winners.

Tickets for the banquet are \$25 or \$225 for a corporate table of eight. The dinner menu is prime rib and chicken and the event is open to all Chamber members and guests.

Since the deadline is fast-approaching, Leta Lee, secretary, said people can either mail their reservations with payment to the Colby/Thomas County Chamber Office, 350 S. Range, Suite 10, Colby, Kan., 67701 or call (785) 462-3401.

Gerry Fulwider,
Chamber executive director

Project HomeSafe truck plans stop in Colby today; free kits available

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

The Project HomeSafe truck will be in Colby tonight from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Wal-Mart Plaza parking lot.

The purpose of the event is to teach people how to store firearms and, along with that free safety kits and a gun lock will be distributed to those attending.

The truck has been traveling around the state

since Saturday with Wichita as its first stop and earlier today representatives were in Goodland.

The tour will end on Friday, March 29 in Topeka, said Sara Klein, spokesperson. Other stops this week include Salina and Hays.

Project HomeSafe is sponsored by Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer's office, the Kansas Highway Patrol and Kansas HeadStart program, with more than 3 million safety kits provided by the National Shooting Sports Foundation in pro-

moting gun safety and saving lives.

"Statistics show that if you have a loaded gun in your home which is not stored safely, it's likely to hurt or kill someone someday," Klein said.

"Not just an animal or an intruder, but your child or a family member."

On average, 75 American children are shot every day, and some die as a result. In addition, millions of children live in homes where there

are loaded and unlocked guns, experts say, and a majority of gun deaths happen in the home.

Lt. John Eichkorn, highway patrol spokesman in Topeka, said troopers in Thomas County will talk with gun owners about how to handle and store their firearms. However, those planning to attend the event need not bring their guns with them.

The kits that will be distributed, Klein said, include a cable-style gun lock tested by the

Consumer Product Safety Commission and lock instructions.

The lock can be used on handguns, rifles and shotguns.

"It only takes that one time that a gun is left loaded and accessible to a small child," Eichkorn said.

"We encourage everyone to stop by and learn more about how to safely store weapons and make their homes a safer place," he said.

Lygeros Jr. or the Goodland Weather Service at 785-899-7119.

Softball signup now underway

From now until mid-March, the Colby Girls Fast Pitch Association is looking for softball players, ages 8 through 18, interested in joining a Sweet Thunder team, said Barbara Wieland, president of the association. For questions or information, call Wieland at 462-6501; Tanya Staats, business manager at 462-6537; or check out the website at www.colbysweetthunder.org

Scholarship deadline nears

The American Association of University Women has announced that Monday, April 1, is the deadline for filing a scholarship application. Scholarships are open to young women in Thomas County who are juniors and seniors in high school. Applications are available at Pioneer Memorial Library or for questions, call Vanessa Eicher, scholarship chairperson, at 462-7438.

Briefly

Weather: Rain?

The National Weather Service mentioned the "R" word today in its forecast for the Colby region. Tonight, cloudy, lows in the middle 30s, south winds 10-15 mph, turning to the northeast late. Wednesday, partly cloudy to cloudy, highs in the middle 50s, southeast winds up to 15 mph. Wednesday night, cloudy, a 40 percent chance for rain, fog developing, lows in the middle 30s. Thursday and Friday, cloudy to partly cloudy, lows in the upper 20s to lower 30s and highs in the middle to upper 40s. Colby's high Monday was 56 and the overnight low this morning was 28, climbing to 36 by 8 a.m. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 38 degrees. The records for March 12: 84 in 1972 and -3 in 1969. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

College board announces meeting

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will have a special meeting Thursday at 9 a.m. in the All-Ameri-

can Room of the Student Union for the purpose of discussing negotiations. The board will again meet at 10 a.m. in the Fireside Lounge also for negotiations. The meeting is open to the public.

Walkers to meet Thursday

There will be a short informational meeting for the Walk Kansas program Thursday from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. at the 4-H Building. "We'll go over all the details of the program and give you a chance to meet some of the other walking participants," said D'Ette Scholtz, Thomas County Extension Agent. Teams are asked to have one or two team members attend the meeting.

Bring a sack lunch. The program will kick-off Saturday.

Sorority plans youth tournament

A 3-on-3 youth basketball tournament, sponsored by Kappa Upsilon, will be held on Saturday, April 13 in the Colby Elementary and Colby Middle School gymnasiums. The grade divisions for boys and girls are 3rd-4th; 5th-6th; and 7th-8th, and 9th-10th with entry fee at \$24 per team.

