



# COLBY FREE PRESS

6 pages

## Ethanol plant backers schedule Colby meeting

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

A series of investor meetings aimed at furthering the development of an ethanol plant in northwest Kansas will begin in July with Colby being the first stop, said Jeff Torluemke, president and chief executive officer of Western Plains Energy, L.L.C.

Although plans for a new plant have been in the works since the Spring of 2001, only recently has the board of directors come up with a proposed location in Campus, which is about 30 miles east of Colby, he said.

The plant is expected to process over 10.7 million bushels of corn and milo annually at the 30 million gallon facility, Torluemke said.

"At the meetings in July, we are pleased to announce the offering of capital units, and area corn producers, milo producers, cattle feeders and others interested in investing are encouraged to attend," he said.

The Colby meeting is set for 9 a.m., Monday, July 1, at the City Limits

Convention Center. Other meetings in the area include one in Goodland at 2 p.m. (MDT), Monday, July 8, at the Elks Lodge; in Oakley at 9 a.m., Wednesday, July 10, Oakley Country Club; in Hoxie at 2 p.m., Friday, July 12, at the Elks Lodge; with other meetings in Scott City, Oberlin, Hays, Wray, Colo., Burlington, Colo., Norton, Quinter, Dighton, Tribune, and Bird City.

Each meeting will feature an in-depth description of the plant's proposed location, a description of the plant's design and a discussion of the investment risks.

The presentation, Torluemke said, will also include information regarding the plant's design/builders, the distiller's grain marketers, and the ethanol marketers.

"Attending the meeting does not commit anyone to investing; however, attendees will have an opportunity to invest in the proposed ethanol plant," he said.

Initial financial assistance has been

provided by the Kansas Corn Commission, Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, along with Midwest Energy.

In addition to Torluemke, others on the board of Western Plains Energy are: Dick Sterrett, Quinter, vice-president and chief financial officer; Ben Dickman, Grinnell; Ron Blaesi, Sharon Springs; Dave Mann, Quinter; Brian Baalman, Hoxie; Gary Johnson, Oakley; Ken Krien, Bird City; and Bob Casper, Wichita.

"We need something to maintain and ensure the way of life out here in western Kansas," Torluemke said. "It seems every time we turn around, there are reasons to leave the area instead of stay here and maintain our livelihood."

Those who serve on the board and others who have already invested think the plant is a step in the right direction, he said.

For information or questions, call Torluemke or Sterrett at (785) 754-2119.

## Commissioners supportive of home-owned carnival

By **MICHELLE L. HAWKINS**  
*Colby Free Press*

Kerry Wark, chairman of the Thomas County Amusement Association, and Mark Miller, president of the Thomas County Fair Board, brought their home-owned carnival discussion to Monday's meeting of the Thomas County Commission at the courthouse.

Wark pointed out that at last Thursday's fair board meeting, a comment was made about the commissioners' disapproval of the home-owned carnival in the past due to liability.

The commissioners agreed that when the subject surfaced last time, the liability insurance was a problem, but realized it was feasible at this time.

Commissioner Ron Evans said, "We are going to be very supportive as long as the carnival is properly insured. If that is what the people want, I think it will be wonderful."

Wark reported the amusement association would be meeting June 24 at 8

p.m. in the conference room at the Holiday Inn Express to further discuss the home-owned carnival. This meeting is open to all who would like to be involved.

In other business:

- The commissioners celebrated the retirement of Colby Free Press reporter, Maxine Nelson. She has worked for the Free Press for 20 years and has covered the commissioners for much of that time. They presented her with a certificate to honor her retirement and to thank her for the many years of hard work. An open reception brought about many Thomas County employees that Nelson has worked with over the years.

- The commissioners approved the purchase of a road grader for the landfill at the cost of \$5,000 from the City of McDonald.

- The commissioners approved a tax abatement totaling \$15.24 for a motor home and motor vehicle.

- The water damage at the basement porch at the courthouse was discussed. All three commissioners will evaluate the situation and discuss a course of action at their next meeting.

- Removal of the parallel parking signs in the frontyard of the courthouse was agreed due to the fact it is common knowledge the area is for parallel parking only.

- Minutes were approved for the Northwest Kansas Community Corrections meeting.

- Discussion was held about the family sick leave available to Thomas County employees. The item was tabled until next meeting while more information is gathered.

- A Thomas County citizen attended the meeting to show concern over the bindweed problem. The commissioners were concerned about the amount of bindweed in the city as well as the county and strongly encouraged residents to take care of their noxious weed problems.

## August 6 . . . or later?

## Fate of Kansas primary up to federal judges; redistricting questioned

TOPEKA (AP) — With the boundaries of the state's four U.S. House districts still in doubt, Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh isn't sure holding a primary in eight weeks is realistic.

A congressional redistricting plan passed by the Legislature and reluctantly signed into law by Gov. Bill Graves is the center of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court by Attorney General Carla Stovall. She is trying to postpone the Aug. 6 primary.

Stovall sued Thornburgh, the state's chief elections officer. Democrats and the state's four American Indian tribes also want to intervene, meeting a Mon-

day deadline for seeking permission to do so.

On Friday, a three-judge panel pushed back the filing deadline for congressional candidates to July 9. It had been June 24.

That order could put the primary in jeopardy, according to Thornburgh.

"I will work to preserve the Tuesday, Aug. 6 primary," Thornburgh said Monday. "This is difficult due to the recent ruling by the federal court."

According to Thornburgh, the court will have to approve other changes to the election calendar for the primary to occur as scheduled.

"We are required by federal and state law to meet certain deadlines pertaining to overseas military ballots, advance ballots and notification to the public of the election," said Thornburgh. "We will ask the court to consider these deadlines when making their final ruling."

As an example of a deadline that could pose a problem, Thornburgh's office noted that county election commissioners are required to publish notices of the election three weeks in advance.

An Aug. 6 primary would require such notices to be published July 15 —



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Jeff Starkey mowed the lawn between two of the buildings on the Colby Community College campus this morning. The college uses two mowers to take care of its 13 acres of grass.

## Lawn care no easy project

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

Even though the majority of students are taking a break for the summer, the work doesn't stop for maintenance employees at Colby Community College, said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer.

There are many projects underway this summer, she said, such as installation of a sprinkler system

near the dorms, the laying of asphalt for the parking lot north of Thomas Hall, preliminary work on the new roof at H.F. Davis Library and routine maintenance that goes on every day even when the students are gone.

One area that requires a great deal of attention during the summer months is mowing, she said.

In order to keep the college lawns looking good, Schwanke said it requires two people mowing eight hours

a day. For many of those years, Jeff Starkey, who is currently on summer break from Fort Hays State University, operates one of the mowers.

Starkey, who grew up in Colby, has been mowing the grounds for eight years.

"I started the summer before I was a sophomore in high school," Starkey said, "and it's something I enjoy doing every year." Also assisting with mowing is Kevin Brungardt.

## Briefly

### Moisture enters picture

The weatherman is talking about a little bit of rain (maybe) Wednesday night and into Thursday for the Colby region, in the form of showers and thunderstorms. They are talking about a 40 percent chance Wednesday night and a 30 percent chance early Thursday. Otherwise, expect the heat to linger through the weekend, in the lower to mid-90s and overnight lows during the period in the upper 50s to middle 60s. Colby's high Monday was 98 and the overnight low this morning was 58. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is now averaging 78 degrees.

Precipitation for the month remains at 1.26 inches. The records for June 18: 107 in 1936 and 42 in 1895. (*The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

### Vets Commission sets meeting

The Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs will meet at 1 p.m. Friday, June 21, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, 220 North Lake (1 block west of the courthouse) in

Colby. The Commission affords veterans, their relatives and dependents information, advice, direction and assistance through the coordination of programs and services in the fields of education, health, and vocational guidance and placement.

### City council meets tonight

The Colby City Council will hold its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. today in council chambers.

Items on the agenda include a resolution and plaque for Bill Keck, who is resigning his council position for health reasons; the swearing-in of Francis Britton to fill Keck's unexpired term; presentation of 2002 audits; request for building and sign on soccer field; and amended zoning ordinances.

### Taxes due June 20

The second half of the 2001 real estate and personal property taxes are due by Thursday, June 20, in the Thomas County Treasurer's office, said Donita Applebury, treasurer.

## Air tanker crashes, 3 firefighters dead

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP) — An air tanker lost its wings and crashed in flames while battling a wildfire in Northern California, killing all three crew members on a tumultuous day of firefighting.

Within hours of the crash, a fire engulfed crews trying to corral a blaze in Southern California, causing three injuries and shutting down a major highway.

The accidents, which come as crews battle 20 large blazes in 11 states, could signal that the fire season in the West will be particularly dangerous.

"These things happening in the middle of June do not bode well for the remainder of the year," said Bill Peters, spokesman for the California Department of Forestry's San Bernardino

unit. The fire deaths and injuries came on the same day that a U.S. Forest Service worker in Colorado appeared in court on charges alleging she started that state's biggest fire while burning a letter from her estranged husband. If convicted, Terry Barton could face a total of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The Northern California fire, in the Sierra Nevada near Yosemite National Park, destroyed at least one home and forced 400 people to evacuate as it consumed some 10,000 acres of brush and forest near the small mountain resort town of Walker.

The C-130 tanker had just made a pass over the fire when it crashed Monday.

TV news video showed the aircraft's

observations in northeast Kansas in the 2nd District with Junction City, Fort Riley, Manhattan and all of Douglas County, including the city of Lawrence.

Democrats asked to be included because the map approved by lawmakers and the alternative offered by the attorney general split the city of Lawrence between the 2nd and 3rd districts.

Late Monday, Democrats filed a new plan that took into account some of the tribes' concerns.

Arguments before the three-judge panel are expected to begin the first week of July.

wings snapping off and flames pouring out as the fuselage spiraled to the ground, erupting in a giant ball of fire.

"I'm standing here looking at the tail section," Mike Mandichak, who owns an auto shop 150 feet from the crash site, said by telephone.

"My shop is right next door. It almost hit it."

Hours later in Southern California, three firefighters suffered first- and second-degree burns to their hands, elbows and noses when flames engulfed their two trucks. One of the firefighters managed to deploy an emergency shelter as the heat peeled the paint off the fire engines, which were parked on a highway. They were listed in good condition at Arrowhead Regional Hospital, said Peters.

