



COLBY FREE PRESS

Major street work on Colby's agenda for the year 2003

By DARREL PATTILLO

Colby Free Press

State and local funds totaling \$31.6 million were approved recently for 49 construction projects in cities across Kansas through the Kansas Department of Transportation's *Local Partnership Program*. Colby will make improvements to Range Avenue next year by combining two projects under this program.

"We'll be doing a mill and overlay on Range from the Interstate all the way to Cedar Street," said Gerry Bieker, the city's public works director. The project does not include re-doing the stretch of Range that was recently improved when the new stoplights were installed at Davis/Zelfer Avenues.

"We applied for the mill and overlay project two years ago," said Bieker. "And we applied for College (Drive) to the Interstate last year. The state went ahead and combined the two projects."

"We hope to get started on it next year, while we're doing the work on the viaduct. It's going to be a hassle, but I'd like to get all of the work done at once, rather than spreading it out over two years." The program financially assists local governments in making needed road improvements on city connecting links and other city and county roads. It's divided into three categories: City Connecting Link (KLINK) Resurfacing, Geometric Improvements and Economic Development.

City Connecting Link projects are on city streets that connect two rural portions of the state highway system and are for resurfacing the existing roadway. Geometric improvement projects are designed to help cities widen pavements, add or widen shoulders, eliminate steep hills or sharp curves and add needed acceleration and deceleration lanes. Economic development projects are intended to enhance economic development in the state.

Most cities with City Connecting Links to the State Highway System within their boundaries are eligible to apply for KLINK and Geometric Improvement funds. Any local unit of government or state agency may be considered for Economic Development funds for a highway or bridge construction project that has the potential to enhance and increase the area's income, employment and land values, says information from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Bieker said the engineer's estimate for the two projects will be approximately \$500,000, "with \$400,000 of that coming from the state."

Enactment of the Comprehensive Transportation Program by the 1999 Legislature allowed continuation of the three local partnership programs, which have been in existence since 1986. As part of the new program, funding for these local partnership programs increased, the Kansas Department of Transportation said.

Thomas County Fair schedule

Tonight

7 p.m.—Dunk Tank, to benefit the new Thomas County Amusement Association, opens

7 p.m.—Antique Tractor Show & Stationary Engine Display

8 p.m.—PRCA Rodeo, grandstand.

Wednesday

8 a.m.—4-H Swine Show, followed by Sheep Show

4 p.m.—Farm Bureau Association Pedal Tractor Pull registration, followed by the Pull from 5-6:45 p.m.

5:30 p.m.—Free Barbecue

7 p.m.—Dunk Tank to benefit the Thomas County Amusement Association

8 p.m.—PRCA Rodeo, grandstand

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley areas

The numbers

Monday's high, 97
Low this morning, 65
Year ago today, 99 and 66
Temperature at 10:15 a.m. today, 86
Colby's rainfall, 0.00
Month's total, 1.49
Oakley's rainfall, 0.00
Month's total, 2.91
Soil temp, 82
Records for July 30: 109 in 1935 and 43 in 1971

The forecast

Today's high is expected to play around in record territory around 102-104. Tonight, clear, lows 65-70, south winds 10-15 mph. Wednesday, sunny, highs again in record territory around 104-106, southwest winds 10 mph. Wednesday night, clear to partly cloudy, a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms after midnight, lows 65-70. Thursday, partly cloudy to cloudy, a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms, highs in the middle to upper 90s. Thursday night, mostly cloudy, a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms, breezy, lows in the middle 60s. (*Temperatures and precipitation are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, unless otherwise noted. Forecast is from the National Weather Service.*)

Colby Water Usage

• July 29 = 3,527 million gallons
Levels of Concern
Watch Level 3.5 million gallons
Warning Level 4.0 million gallons
Emergency Level 4.5 million gallons
(Three consecutive days)

Kathleen Sebelius raises most funds

TOPEKA (AP)—Senate President Dave Kerr raised more than \$650,000 in only two months of campaigning for the Republican nomination for governor, according to documents filed Monday with the secretary of state's office.

Democrat Kathleen Sebelius took in more money than any other candidate, more than \$1.2 million in seven months. Sebelius, a two-term insurance commissioner, does not have a primary opponent and will face the winner of next Tuesday's GOP gubernatorial primary. Kerr did not join the four-candidate field until late May, after the conclusion of the 2002 legislative session.

Kerr's funds included a \$50,000 loan he made to his own campaign, as well as \$16,029 he carried over from his state Senate campaign fund.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

ABOVE: Roger Stockton, Kansas State University area crops and soils extension specialist in northwest Kansas, looked over an abandoned irrigated circle four miles north of Breton and 12 miles northeast of Colby. Stockton said the farmer in this circle did all the right things for a successful crop, to include the wheat stubble visible on the ground which helps to retain moisture. In spite of those efforts and an irrigation system running non-stop, the combination of the drought, evaporation levels, moisture below soil depth, coupled with low well capacities, resulted in the crop being lost. **BELOW:** Stockton showed a single ear of corn and the fact that it should be twice the size it is for this portion of its maturity.

Even irrigated crops suffer from drought

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Drought conditions in Thomas County are taking a toll on the dryland crop for harvest in the fall, but many farmers are now worrying about their irrigated crops as well.

During the last 10 days, said Roger Stockton, Kansas State University's area crop and soil extension specialist based in Colby, he has been asked to visit some 20 irrigated circles in Thomas County with a few of those in the Rawlins County area to determine whether or not the irrigation systems should be shut down and the fields abandoned.

For Stockton, it is very unusual for producers to abandon irrigated fields. "These irrigated fields have been watered seven days a week, 24 hours a day since the beginning of May," he said.

Although a tough decision for a producer to make, Stockton said abandoning some fields may be the best management practice at this point.

"In some instances, I've been seeing the pollen desiccated by the 100 plus temperatures in combination with the hot, dry winds," he said. "In other instances, the heat and drought stress caused the tassel to release

pollen before the silks on the ear were mature enough to be receptive to the pollen."

"In most of these situations, it has been my recommendation to abandon the field and advise the producer to check with their insurer for release of these acres," he said.

Stockton said he is predicting that 20 percent of farmers with irrigated crops will abandon their fields before the fall and has doubts as to whether any of the dryland crops will survive at all.

In explaining why an irrigated field would be affected so drastically by the drought, he said that while most irrigation systems are designed with the assumption that there will be six to eight inches of precipitation during the growing season, April through mid-July precipitation at the Northwest Kansas Research Extension Center in Colby has been just over three inches and "open-pan" evaporation for this period has been 48 inches.

He also talked about the depth of available soil moisture at planting time ranged from one to three feet.

"In calculating average daily evapotranspiration the water use of the corn crop from June and July has been .35 to 0.4 inches per day," he said. "At the same time these drought conditions are occurring, the well capacity or spring

size of many irrigation systems only have capacities of 0.2 to 0.25 inches per day and that's what is creating the deficit moisture conditions."

Once the field has been abandoned, Stockton also advises producers that with the forage produced on those acres to consider utilizing it as silage, hay or grazing.

"The producer should have the forage tested for nitrate content before feeding though, since some of this non-grain corn will have excessive nitrates," he said.

Within the recommendation, Stockton also said that high nitrate forage can be blended with safe forage to reduce nitrate content of the total ration.

"Nitrate poisoning in cattle causes abortion of the calves and can cause asphyxiation death of mature livestock if the levels are too high," he said.

The last time that Stockton said he has seen irrigated fields abandoned was about two years ago, but in a much smaller area located in the northern half of Cheyenne and Rawlins County.

"In response to the climatic stress we are seeing," he said, "I would recommend that the best management practice for these low well capacity circles would dictate sacrificing half or more of the acreage to put more water on the remaining portion to assure grain production."



In Stockton's opinion, to continue to water the entire circle would ensure crop failure of the entire circle and in some cases, an entire circle needs to be sacrificed in order to divert water to another area with an alternative crop which might still produce.

As for the other fall crops, Stockton said he holds out little hope for dryland corn, soybeans and milo for most of Thomas County and adjoining counties.

"I do think we will have some sunflowers and unless we get rain very quickly, I don't believe that even if the corn and milo pollinate, there will be enough time for it to head out before the frost."

Dunk tank pressed into service to help new group

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Amusement Association has been busy scheduling activities to entice local and area residents to the Thomas County Fair this week. One of the activities is a dunk tank sponsored by Colby Ag Center. The proceeds, said Wanda Brown, secretary of the new group, will go to assist the amusement association in their endeavors to build a home-owned carnival.

"Many local business people have volunteered to sit on the tank and we hope fairgoers will find the person they would like to dunk while going out to support a worthy cause," she said. Those on the tank will be:

Tonight: Howard Culver, 7 p.m.;

Kristin Hafliger, 7:30; Anna Peptis, 8; Kelsey Strickler, 8:30; Justin Finley, 9; and Sandy Murrell, 9:30.

Wednesday night: Lacy Struckmeyer, 7 p.m.; John Rinehart, 7:30; Brice Barton, 8; Tanya Koehn, 8:30; Tom Benson, 9; and Doug Ketchum, 9:30.

Thursday night: Larry Ummel, 7 p.m.; Jodi Foss 7:30; Sheri Staab, 8;

Ann Ogle-Puckett, 8:30; Tom Cook, 9; and Levi Traxler, 9:30.

Friday night: Phil Breckenkamp, 7 p.m.; Karen O'Neal, 7:30; Doug Lewis, 8; Justin Finley, 8:30; Johnna Thompson, 9; and Terry Wendell, 9:30.

Saturday night: Deb Hudson, 7 p.m.; Tonya Lee, 7:30; Drue Herl, 8; Jared Cranston, 8:30; Ted Hart, 9; and Rusty Talley, 9:30.

Briefly

Commissioners meet Wednesday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, July 31 for the end of the month meeting. Tom Jones, Thomas County sheriff, is scheduled to appear before the commissioners to address cruelty to animals. The meeting will be held in the commissioner's room of the court house and is open to the public.

Railroad club takes part in fair

The Northwest Kansas Model Railroad Club will have their layout open to the public during the Thomas County Fair. The club will be open beginning tonight and through Friday evening from 6 to 8 p.m. They are located at the back of the Colby Public Schools administration building.

Leadership nominations wanted

Applications are now being accepted for the 2002-03 Leadership Thomas County program, said Leilani Thomas, one of the

coordinators. The purpose of the program is to develop future leaders for the county and application requests can be made by businesses, civic clubs, organizations or by individuals, she said. Additionally, people can nominate themselves if they are interested in learning more about 21st Century leadership. Completed forms must be returned to the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce by Friday, Aug. 23. For questions or an application, call (785) 462-3401 or stop by the office at 350 S. Range, Suite 10 in Colby.

Rexford plans flea market for Aug. 3

Rexford PRIDE will be holding its Farmers/Flea Market on Saturday, Aug. 3, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a city-wide garage sale running at the same time. These events are held the first Saturday of the month and booth space is \$10, said Peg Greenwood, one of the organizers.

Among the vendors taking part at the next flea market are the Rexford Boy Scouts who will be setting up for lunch and having bake sale items available. Anyone interested in participating as a

vendor can call Greenwood at (785) 687-4346 or Evelyn Johnson at (785) 687-3925.

Landfill hours revisited

The Thomas County Landfill is open for their summer hours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. For information about the landfill or charges contact Larry Jumper at 462-8139.

Vendors wanted for sidewalk sale

Vendors are wanted for this year's annual *Sidewalk Sale* beginning at 4 p.m. and concluding around 8 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 8. According to organizers from the Colby Downtown Merchants Committee, any groups or organizations that would like to sell items are encouraged to call Bonnie Dinkel at 462-2751. One example of a group planning to do something at the sidewalk sale, she said, is the 9th-10th grade Mid-America Youth Basketball boys team, who will be selling cotton candy.

