



COLBY FREE PRESS

Jail count here means increase in expenses

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

With the number of prisoners on the rise, costs for maintaining and manning the Thomas County jail are on the rise as well.

As vocalized by the Thomas County Commissioners, part of the 4.6 mill increase for Thomas County taxpayers this year will be attributed to the increasing expenses for the jail.

“There are three big items effecting us in the jail,” said Undersheriff Mike Baughn, “the increase in prisoner population, the increase in the costs of goods and services we provide, and the increase in medical costs.”

Baughn said he feels the increased medical issues with inmates is directly reflective of the increase in the use of illicit drugs.

He said they are seeing a great number of prisoners who have Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, and other diseases related to the use of drugs that come through the jail.

Already this year, the jail has had 521 inmates locked behind its bars. If the same population trend continues throughout the rest of 2002, totals could well exceed the 768 inmates incarcerated last year, or the 635 inmates from 2000.

The number of “prisoner days” has also in-

creased. For example, if a person is arrested and placed in jail for two weeks, they will only tally as one prisoner, but 14 prisoner days.

In 2001, 3,367 prisoner days were accounted for, which averages out at about 280 prisoner days per month. This year, at the end of July, over 2,600 prisoner days were already tallied. This is an average of 374 prisoner days per month.

With increases like these, Jones and Baughn said overflow has to be taken to other locations. Currently there are nine bed spaces available for inmates, 11 if holding cells are used. The extra prisoners are most often taken to the

Sherman County jail in Goodland.

Officers transporting prisoners does add to extra costs due to the time involved, even more so if it is a woman being transported, since two officers are required.

There are currently five detention officers that work in the jail.

Jones said that even though the inmate population has increased, we are seeing a decrease in juvenile offenders transported from here in the county.

In 2001 officers transported 23 juveniles to the Kelly Detention Facility in WaKeeney.

By the end of July this year, only eight have

been taken there.

With the growing inadequacy of the facility here in Thomas County and the increase in prisoner population, hopes are to form a Criminal Justice Strategic Planning Committee. Members of the committee would represent all the townships and incorporated towns from within the county and would come together to figure out the best solutions to the growing problem.

“If the current trend continues, we’re going to have to do something,” said Baughn.

Jones agreed and said that the forming of the committee would allow all angles to be looked at and examined.

Biggest slumber party starts Friday

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Organizers of this year’s “Relay for Life” are hoping that everyone in Thomas County will consider attending the celebration starting at 7 p.m., Friday, and concluding at 7 a.m., Saturday, with all activities being held at Dennen Field in Colby.

Kicking off the event will be the traditional survivor walk and other comments at 7 p.m., followed by teams walking the track throughout the evening and other food and entertainment available.

Lighting of the luminaries, which is also a heartwarming and major highlight of the event will be held at dusk.

“This annual event brings together friends, family, businesses, hospitals, schools and churches — people from all walks of life,” said Cheryl Schwarz, co-chairman.

In addition, Schwarz said that all money raised at the event will help the American Cancer Society.

“Relay For Life provides the society with money to do cutting-edge research, educate students, health care professionals and the public on prevention and early detection of cancer,” she said. Donations are also used to advocate for public policies that further the fight against cancer and provide ser-

vices for patients in Thomas County.

There are many ways that people can contribute needed funding, said Chuck Dempewolf, another co-chair.

For example, teams of 8 to 12 members gather with tents and sleeping bags for the 12-hour event and prior to that seek sponsorship.

Another way to donate is by participating in the luminaries, which is a way to remember someone who has lost the battle with cancer or to celebrate survivors, Dempewolf said.

“Many of the participants are our family, friends and neighbors who have been cured of cancer themselves,” he said. “Their involvement is proof of the progress that has been made not just in cancer cure rates, but also in the quality of life following cancer treatment.”

As an added incentive to attend, both Dempewolf and Schwarz offered a variety of reasons for spending the night with such a fun group of people.

Among those reasons, was that people in the county don’t want to miss the biggest slumber party in Colby — with all this to raise money for American Cancer Society research and program, Dempewolf said.

For information or questions about activities, call either Schwarz at 462-3232 or Dempewolf at 462-3481.

Rooftop rumble



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Oakley city crews worked Tuesday afternoon to put up new shingles on covered picnic tables in the park. The project started two years ago with the last of the picnic table roofs completed this week. In total four

sheltered picnic tables received attention, officials said. **ABOVE:** City workers (left to right) are Russ Mollering, Cody Sattler and Clayton Bosserman.

Deadline extended to host Sebelius or Shallenburger on public television

By TOM A. DREILING

Free Press Publisher

Wednesday’s “My Turn” column in the Free Press mentioned today as the deadline to apply for hosting a gubernatorial candidate in your home while television cameras record the event for broadcast sometime in October. The project is dubbed “Political Grille.”

Kristy Nyp, director of communications and marketing at Smoky Hills Public Television (SHPTV) at Bunker Hill, told the Free Press today that the deadline for submitting an application to host one of the candidates has been extended to Aug. 29.

SHPTV, three newspapers and High Plains Public Radio have teamed up to

produce the show.

This means, Nyp said, there is still time to apply to participate. She identified the sponsoring newspapers as The Salina Journal, Hays Daily News and Garden City Telegram.

Families are needed to host a gubernatorial candidate in their home for dinner and discussion of the issues, all

while being videotaped for the show, she said.

To apply for “Political Grille,” families are asked to provide contact information including name, mailing and physical address, and telephone number, as well as to write in 500 words or less why they should be chosen to host a gubernatorial candidate. An applica-

tion form can be downloaded from the websites for SHPTV (www.shptv.org), The Salina Journal (www.saljournal.com), The Hays Daily News (www.hdnews.net), and The Garden City Telegram (www.gctelegram.com).

Entries will be reviewed by a panel of faculty and staff from Fort Hays State University. Those families se-

lected to participate will be randomly matched with gubernatorial candidates. For information, contact Nyp at (785) 483-6990 ext. 128 or knyp@shptv.org. The gubernatorial candidates are Democrat Kathleen Sebelius, current insurance commissioner, and Republican Tim Shallenburger, current state treasurer.

State board of education approves \$372 million in new funding

TOPEKA (AP) — On the eve of expected cuts in state spending, the State Board of Education approved Wednesday a request for \$372 million in new funding for elementary and secondary schools.

The 8-2 vote advances a request to the governor and Legislature for an

increase in the base state aid for students, as well as additional funding for at-risk students and health insurance.

However, Gov. Bill Graves has scheduled a news conference for this afternoon to announce cuts in spending as state revenues continue to fall short of estimates. The cuts are neces-

sary to keep the state from ending with a deficit on June 30, 2003, the end of the fiscal year.

“We’re pretty nervous about this,” said Dale Dennis, deputy education commission. “Every school district budget that we work we ask them ‘how much can you handle without hurting

kids?’” Many observers were expecting the cuts as deep as 3 percent, or about \$70 million, from the Department of Education’s \$2.32 billion budget. That translates to a \$100 cut in the base aid per pupil, currently \$3,890.

Those cuts will come as students and faculty return to classrooms for the fall

semester.

Mark Tallman, lobbyist for the Kansas Association of School Boards, said the 303 districts have already set their budgets for the year. Because of contracts, boards cannot simply fire teachers at the start of the year, forcing cuts to be made in many areas.

WeatherWatch

Colby-Oakley areas

The numbers

Wednesday’s high, 94
Low this morning, 60
Year ago today, 90 and 61
Temperature at 11 a.m. today, 74

Colby’s overnight rainfall, 0.00
Oakley’s overnight rainfall, 0.00

Soil temp at the 4-inch depth, 74
Records for Aug. 15, 105 in 1935 and 49 in 1979

The forecast

Today, windy, high in the middle 80s. Tonight, clear, lows in the upper 50s. Friday, partly sunny, 20 percent chance for thunderstorms, highs in the middle 90s, southeast winds up to 15 mph. Friday night, partly cloudy, 20 percent chance for thunderstorms, lows in the lower 60s. Saturday, sunny, highs in the upper 80s. *(Temperatures and precipitation are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, unless otherwise noted. Forecast is from the National Weather Service.)*

Colby Water Usage

• Aug. 14 = 1.747 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)

Briefly

Deadline on workshop extended

The Thomas County Community Foundation is sponsoring a special workshop on Tuesday, Aug. 20, featuring Vaughn Henry, who is one of the nation’s leading experts in the design and administration of charitable remainder trusts, lead trusts, gift annuities and other tools that integrate charitable giving and sensible financial planning, said Becky Donelan, director of the foundation. There will be three opportunities to hear Henry speaking, she said. The first two require interested people to register and the deadline has been extended. The first session is geared toward professional advisors from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., with the second session toward non-profit organizations from 1:30 to 4 p.m. The third session will be more general and begins at 7 p.m. The evening session will not require registration. If interested in registering for the morning or afternoon workshop, call Donelan at 465-9152.

Premium checks now ready

Premium checks from the Thomas County Fair are now ready to be picked up at the Thomas County Extension Office.

Floats wanted for parade

The Rexford-Golden Plains Alumni are planning a special celebration on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 30-31 and Sept. 1, said Kathi Hapke, chairman of the association. In an effort to make this millenium alumni weekend even more successful, Hapke is encouraging businesses, individuals and organizations to enter floats or anything related to the theme of the event, “Blast

From the Past.” for the parade on Saturday. For questions, call Hapke at (785) 687-3340.

Fair board meeting tonight

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet tonight at 8 p.m. at the 4-H Building at the fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include: guest Kerry Wark with the Thomas County Amusement Association; guest Shawn Stephens; a premium check report from the Thomas County Extension Agent; drug forfeiture money; budget comparisons; and the replacement of the grounds keeper.

Freshmen retreat planned Friday

There will be a freshman retreat on Friday, Aug. 16, from 12:15 until 8 p.m. sponsored by the Thomas County Community Foundation and Dillons. The day, school officials said, is designed to be a fun day that will involve individual and group games and activities that will assist students in the transition into high school. Registration will begin in the Colby High School Commons area at 12:15 p.m. followed by group activities at the high school until 5 p.m. There will be a swim time from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Colby Municipal Swimming Pool, followed by a free barbecue at Fike Park. Parent are welcome to attend the barbecue with their student. For information contact Joni Clark-Leiker or Doug Finley at 465-5300.

Freshmen orientation tonight

Parents and students are being reminded by school officials of the Freshman and New Student Orientation planned for tonight,

at 7 p.m. in the Colby High School Commons area. Students and parents will have the opportunity to attend various breakout sessions.

These sessions are short in nature and are designed to provide important and helpful information about Colby High School, officials said. Students are asked to bring their schedules to the orientation to be able to do a walk-through of their classes.

Crafters needed for fall event

Plans for the annual Colby Girl Scout Craft Sale are now underway, said Jan Barnum, coordinator. As in year’s past, Barnum said crafters are needed for the event, which will be held on Saturday, Oct. 12, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Colby Community Colby. For questions or information on how to arrange for a booth at the ‘Craft-a-Ganza,’ call her at 462-6503.

Hunter education course slated

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Colby volunteer instructors and the Colby Recreation Department are sponsoring a hunter education course. The course will be held at the Colby Community Building on Tuesday, Aug. 27, and Thursday, Aug. 29, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., and Saturday, Aug. 31, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. “Students must attend all sessions,” said Benny Young, with the Wildlife and Parks Department. In addition, anyone born on or after July 1, 1957, must take and pass a hunter education course before they can hunt in Kansas. Students must also pre-enroll at the Pirate’s Den at Southwind Plaza, Colby. For information, call 462-6631, 462-7602 or 462-3367.

