



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Big 20

### Citizens Medical Center has seen many changes

By **PATTY DECKER**

*Free Press Editor*

More than 20 years ago, the hospital in Colby, Citizens Medical Center, Inc., opened its doors to patients and late last week a celebration commemorating the event was held.

Although the official opening date was in April of 1982, said Tama Unger, hospital spokesperson, the “birthday party” was held last Friday with a variety of activities for the employees.

In addition to the special activities, the chief executive officer, Michael Boyles reflected on the many changes at the facility.

“We were just talking about all the additions to the hospital since its opening in 1982,” he said this week. “It’s really quite amazing,” Boyles said referring to the expansion projects that included the birthing unit, the specialty clinic, a newer laundry, shipping and receiving, and a new diagnostic services depart-

ment.

“And, of course, the building of Prairie Senior Living Complex,” he said.

Square footage additions, along with the original structure totals 60,690 square feet for Citizens Medical Center and when adding in Prairie Senior Living Complex, the total square footage for both is more than 100,000, Boyles said.

As for the actual “party,” Unger said employees were treated to breakfast, pizza at noon, and gathered outside for an aerial photograph of the facility.

“There were balloons and other party decorations around the hospital and Citizens Medical Center, Inc., gave shirts to all the employees as part of the celebration,” she said.

The shirts were given, she said, to let others know who the hospital employees are and what they do 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For many years now, Unger said that a tradition has been established with the aerial photographs. A few employ-



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Employees of Citizens Medical Center joined together in the parking lot of the hospital to form the number 20 for an aerial photograph. The hos-

pital is celebrating 20 years of serving the community and northwest Kansas.

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Employees have been in every fifth year anniversary picture. Citing one example, Jeanene Brown, who serves as the education

coordinator, talked about her experiences with the hospital. “In the 5- and 10-year picture I had my kids with me, Tanner, Cassie, and Chanda,” Brown

said. “We announced to my parents the expected arrival of Cassie when we were touring the new birthing area and Cassie was born just after the hospital

opened in 1982,” she said.

Brown’s father was also on the board when the hospital was planned and built.

## Attorney calls latest lawsuit ‘frivolous’ and not warranted

By **PATTY DECKER**

*Free Press Editor*

A Colby physician’s attorney has filed an answer and more to allegations made in a civil lawsuit late in October by a hospital employee alleging “extreme and outrageous” actions by the doctor.

Michael O’Neal of Hutchinson, who represents Dr. Victor Hildyard, the defendant in this case, is calling this most recent action “frivolous” and “not well grounded in fact nor warranted by existing law.”

In her petition, Margaret Ann Staats, is alleging battery, emotional distress and relief by a monetary judgment in excess of \$75,000 for herself, along with an additional \$75,000 or more for her husband, Troy, for similar damage and for suffering loss of consortium.

Responding to the allegations, O’Neal said that Dr. Hildyard denies all the allegations of misconduct, add-

ing that not only should Staats get nothing from her petition, but that the court find relief for his client.

O’Neal is also asking for information from Staats in the event his client files any counterclaims, which could become known during the course of discovery. Within those legal documents, O’Neal has filed for requests and orders for information about or from Staats through her attorney, Charles Worden of Norton.

In one such document, O’Neal has requested Staats to respond to the initial complaint filed at Citizens Medical Center, Inc. in April of 2002 against Dr. Hildyard. Although separate from this civil suit, that complaint set a series of events in motion to include an independent investigation completed in July of 2002, a temporary restraining order that has been lifted for now with a private hearing scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 20. That private

hearing will not be a public hearing, but rather in accordance with the by-laws of the hospital and will determine whether or not the panel selected will terminate Dr. Hildyard’s privileges at Citizens Medical Center, according to information previously provided by Vern Schwanke, board president.

Other requests for information that O’Neal is seeking includes a response from Staats as to her retracted and recanted complaint, both verbally and in writing on or about the same time as the initial complaint was made.

O’Neal is also asking Staats to explain her reasons for filing the original complaint, which she is alleged to have said that it “was influenced and directed by Michael Boyles (chief executive officer at the hospital), Cindy Carmichael (director of nursing) and Dr. Eric Jacobsen (another Colby physician).”

He further wants an explanation

from her in which she is alleged to have stated that in her written statement rescinding her complaint that she had felt pressured by Boyles, Carmichael and Jacobsen to write the complaint.

In addition, he wants her to explain various portions of her recantation in which she stated it was filled with anger and inaccuracy, the portion that stated, “The truth is I am to blame for the indiscretions and improper behavior,” and a section where she alleged examples of others that could be subject to discipline.

The request filed earlier this week, O’Neal said, is also asking Staats for a response that if she filed the complaint against Dr. Hildyard that Boyles is alleged to have offered to pay for anything she would need to secure a written notarized statement against him and that Jacobsen was alleged to have said, “this is good... We can now get rid of that (expletive). This will end his

power. You have to write this all up.”

O’Neal is also asking her to explain from the recanted story about pressure from the administration that caused her to become physically ill.

According to O’Neal, there is also a request for Staats to respond to her alleged statement in the recantation that when she was advised that the hospital had obtained a restraining order to keep Dr. Hildyard away from his patients, she is alleged to have said that she became ill again, developing heart palpitations because she felt she was the person who was ending the career “of a good doctor who many people love and trust.”

Dr. Hildyard’s attorney has also filed notice of intent to serve business records subpoena on Randy Jones, chief of police; Staat’s medical, psychological, psychiatric and employment records; along with any other documents such as diaries, journals,

notes, letters, etc., relating in any way to the events complained of in the petition or related complaint against the doctor filed with the hospital.

Worden, who represents Staats said today, that on behalf of his client, he will probably not comment on every filing to include answering all the interrogatories and requests.

“We will be proceeding and will respond to discovery and we will be doing our own discovery,” Worden said.

Regarding the magnitude and scope of O’Neal’s request on behalf of Dr. Hildyard, Worden said that is normal in every civil case. “It’s part of the discovery and we will send some information back, plus we talk with other people (under oath), which could include members of his (Dr. Hildyard) staff.”

Worden also said that a civil case, such as this, can sometimes take up to two years to settle.

### Decisions, decisions, decisions!

### Will Sebelius family move?

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius isn’t sure whether she’ll be moving into Cedar Crest, the governor’s residence.

Sebelius lives in Topeka and noted Wednesday that she has owned a house in the city’s Potwin section, a stately neighborhood of brick streets and restored Victorian residences, for 22 years. The last governor from Topeka,

Joan Finney, kept her private home but moved into Cedar Crest after her election in 1990. Sebelius said she planned to consult her husband, Gary, and two sons, Ned and John.

“We haven’t really made any of those choices yet,” Sebelius said. “Now we need to make some choices and have some family meetings and figure out what’s next.”

## Pheasant hunters begin to arrive in Colby

### Motels report business down from years past

By **DARREL PATTILLO**

*Colby Free Press*

The drought that plagued western Kansas for the last few years and was especially severe this year has claimed a new victim: Motels are feeling the pinch as pheasant hunters, via the Internet and word-of-mouth, are finding out that the bird population is going to be thin this year, due mainly to poor reproduction conditions brought on by the drought

A survey this morning of eight motels in Colby revealed that reservations are down for the opening weekend of

pheasant season, which is Saturday and Sunday.

“We’re usually full at this point,” said Pat Ullom, assistant manager of the Best Western Motel south of I-70. “We’re definitely down from last year.”

She said the motel had about half of the reservations it usually does at this time of the year.

The Budget Motel on the west side of town is also at about half capacity compared to previous years, according to manager John Liester. “Hunters are getting smarter,” he said. “They’re

getting on the Internet and finding out where the birds are.”

Jeanne Crawford, who owns the Country Club Motel, expects to fill this weekend, although she has had some cancellations.

“One guy called a farmer who told him that when he cut his wheat he didn’t see any birds, so he canceled his room here.”

Becky Riggs, with Comfort Inn, said that she had several small groups of hunters checked in, but wasn’t too concerned with dwindling bird populations.

## Briefly

### Veterans Day parade is Monday

Colby’s first annual Veterans Day Parade will take place on Monday, Nov. 11, at 5 p.m. The parade is set to start at Fike Park and travel south on Franklin to third street, and will end at the Thomas County Courthouse with a small ceremony. A dinner will be served for all veterans and auxiliary members at the American Legion following the parade. To RSVP, contact the Colby Chamber of Commerce at 462-3401 or Jim Vap at 462-3493.

### Senior Center to salute veterans

On Monday, Nov. 11, at 11:30 a.m., a Veterans Day program will be presented at the Senior Progress Center in Colby. Special patriotic music will be presented by Amy Kendrick and Pat Ziegelmeier, to honor the nation and our veterans. This presentation is open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

### Christmas parade plans announced

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce today announced the date for this year’s Christmas Parade. It will be held

on Sunday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. The parade will begin on the south end of the downtown business area and travel north and then onto Santa City. Anyone interested in participating — floats, bands, other musical groups, individuals, churches, other groups, organizations, etc. — should let the Chamber of Commerce people know no later than Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. The office number is 462-3401.

### Mass to honor special people

Sacred Heart Church and the Colby Council of the Knights of Columbus will hold a special *Blue Mass* on Sunday, Nov. 24 at 10 a.m. at the church. This Mass is a way of reaching out in thanksgiving for the superior job that our police officers, sheriff’s deputies, highway patrol troopers, firefighters and EMT’s do everyday to serve and protect the citizens of Thomas County. These groups have been invited to this special Mass and are asked to be dressed in their respective uniforms.

### Parnell to address luncheon

Dick Parnell, of the Thomas County Amusement Association,

will be guest speaker at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce noon luncheon on Friday at the Quality Inn (formerly Ramada Inn). The public, members and their guests are encouraged to attend.

### Ident-A-Kid project Saturday

Keyna Baalman, of the Colby Police Department, will be at the Housing Authority office, 600 S. Mission Ridge, starting at 3 p.m., Saturday to fingerprint children of all ages using Ident-A-Kid. This is a public service and is open children of all ages in the community, said Lori Wilson, resident activities participation coordinator at the housing authority. Everyone is encouraged to stop by for this free service.

### Scout fund raising underway

Colby Girl Scouts in Cadette Troop 110 (seventh graders) are currently selling cookie dough, pizzas and other products with proceeds going to support council-wide activities, said Bret Pfeifer, scout leader.

### WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

#### The numbers

Wednesday’s high, 62  
Low this morning, 26  
Year ago today, 78 and 33  
Soil temperature, 41  
Temperature at 11:15 today, 63  
Records for Nov. 7, 84 in 1980, 10 in 1938

#### The forecast

Tonight, clear, lows near 40, west winds up to 15 mph. Friday, sunny, highs in the mid 70s, west winds up to 10 mph. Friday night and Saturday, partly cloudy, lows in the upper 30s and highs in the mid 60s. Sunday, cloudy, maybe a shower or a few snow flakes overnight, daytime high in the upper 50s.

