



COLBY FREE PRESS

Commissioners begin reviewing demand transfers

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

A short schedule faced the Thomas County Commissioners in their meeting this morning.

The main point of discussion was centered around the media information sent from the League of Kansas Municipalities and the Kansas Association of Counties about the litigation between the cities and counties and the State of Kansas over demand transfers.

Commissioners in brief discussed the packet which included statements from the presidents of both the League of Kansas Municipalities and the Kansas Association of Counties, outlines of the legal arguments and lists of the cities and counties involved in the litigation.

Commissioner Ron Evans asked county clerk, Tracey Perkins, to check into how much funding Thomas County stands to lose in the cut-backs.

In other business:

- Three tax abatements were approved for various reasons. The first one, for \$240.41, was for tax on a truck that was sold and for a truck that was transferred to a different account.

- The second, for \$46.19, was for

property which was moved, and the third, for \$33.09 was due to a clerical error. The total for the three tax abatements was \$319.69.

- The agreement between the Thomas County Amusement Association and the Thomas County Fair Board was looked over by the commissioners.

They agreed to have Thomas County Attorney Allan Taylor, review the contract before it is signed.

- A call was made to Mark Miller, fairboard president, inquiring about the number of vacancies on the fair board.

It was determined there were four open positions that need to be filled. Miller said that if there was anyone interested in being appointed to the fairboard, they could contact him.

The commissioners also agreed to place an ad in the *Free Press* to advertise the open slots.

- Commissioners reviewed the audit performed for the Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas.

- Linda Vaughn and Donna Bennett of Waddell and Reed came to make a presentation to the commissioners of their services.

City council to consider approving airport grant

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Colby City Council is expected to take action on approving a grant that would provide a weather monitor for the system at the municipal airport, along with money to re-stripe the runways and taxiways when it holds its regular meeting on Tuesday, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers.

Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, said the state's share in the grant would be 75 percent and not exceed \$17,891 with the city's share being \$6,085.

If the council approves the grant and funding criteria, the Kansas Department of Transportation and the city would be looking at construction in 2002, she said.

Along with the grant application, the council will also consider reappointing Municipal Court Judge Rick Ress and his clerk for another term. In addition, there are plans to discuss the standard operating procedure on animals at large with documents that will be reviewed.

Among the documents the council will review, are concerns that arose when Ken and Virginia Umberger's dog was killed by a police officer this past fall.

The council is also expected to approve applications for businesses to license retail cereal malt beverages. Those businesses include Dillons, J & J Oil Co., Kabredlos, Loves Travel Stops and Country Stores, Inc., S & S Ventures, Inc. (Total), S.S. of Kansas, Inc. (Montana Mike's), The Service Oil Company, Triplett, Inc., and WKRP Management, LLC (Pizza Hut).

Other items on the consent agenda include approval of Colby Mayor Warren Hixson's reappointment of Diann Gerstner to the Housing Authority and approval of a new daycare home occupation permit for Precious Little Angels, owned by Izetta M. Rummel at 906 Court Terrace.

All meetings are open to the public and everyone is encouraged to attend. For an agenda, call 462-4410.

'Tis the season . . .



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Chris Trundle of Colby, along with his two children, Akayla and Jacob, were among more than 100 people who helped fill Christmas baskets at the 4-H Building Friday night. There were 196 Christmas baskets this year, said Geri Landry, one of the coordinators, and many service organizations and youth groups in the area volunteered. In addition, a

lot of individuals also assisted in the annual "spirit of giving" event. "With so many people helping," Landry said, "it only took about one hour to complete the filling and we are so thankful for all those who came to help." On Saturday, the baskets were distributed from 10 a.m. until about noon, she said.

Wichita plans to give \$1 million to charities

WICHITA (AP) — Mayor Bob Knight is pledging \$1 million from the city's reserve fund to help four charities that are hard hit by recent layoffs.

The city's \$1 million includes \$500,000 for United Way of the Plains, \$350,000 for the Kansas Foodbank Warehouse, \$100,000 for the Lord's Diner and \$50,000 for overflow homeless shelters.

Knight is urging elected officials, businesses and working citizens to redouble their efforts to help more than 10,000 aviation workers laid off over the past 18 months.

"It's absolutely the best Christmas present I have ever had," said Virginia White, executive director of the Kan-

sas Foodbank Warehouse.

The City Council is expected to approve spending \$1 million from the city's \$23.4 million reserve fund on Tuesday.

United Way president Pat Hanrahan said the \$500,000 from the city could keep the Help Center for Laid-Off Workers open longer, perhaps long enough for the economy to turn around. He estimates that \$750,000 will be needed to fund the center for two more years.

The center opens once a month for several days, based on needs and funds, helping laid-off workers pay bills, manage money, reduce debt, and apply for food stamps, among other services.

"One hundred percent will go to laid-off workers," Hanrahan said. "We are not taking out any fees for overhead. All will go to individuals."

White said she hopes to increase the value of groceries handed out to the needy at the Help Center for Laid-Off Workers from \$70 to \$140.

"We will try our best to make it stretch as far as we can," said White, whose organization supports 250 agencies throughout the city.

Larry Hare, kitchen manager at the Lord's Diner, said the \$100,000 pledged might cover six months of operating expenses at the soup kitchen, which serves about 400 dinners each evening to the homeless and poor.

Sandy Swank, who helps run the city's overflow shelters and is director of housing and homeless services for Inter-Faith Ministries, is just as enthused about her group's \$50,000 pledge. The winter overflow shelter, which traditionally stays open from early December through February, costs almost \$10,500 a month to run.

The overflow shelter is a joint effort of Inter-Faith Ministries, the city of Wichita, Sedgwick County, the United Way and area congregations that let the homeless sleep in their buildings on cots. Swank said the overflow shelters usually house about 40 people this time of the year. "It's a direct effect of the layoffs," Swank said.

Gore's departure means Democrats' presidential race will be wide open

WASHINGTON (AP) — Al Gore left the field of potential 2004 Democratic presidential candidates in a surprise move that immediately raised the stakes for a half-dozen others pondering a run for the White House. Sen. Joseph Lieberman said Monday he'll announce early next month whether he plans to run.

Gore made his announcement Sunday on CBS' "60 Minutes," taking the nation and party faithful by surprise. Some close aides had ex-

pected him to start making calls to political and financial advisers to test the waters and then make a decision over the Christmas holidays.

While saying he still had the energy and drive to run again, Gore, 54, noted "there are a lot of people within the Democratic Party who felt exhausted (by the 2000 race) ... who felt like, OK, 'I don't want to go through that again.' And I'm frankly sensitive to that feeling."

Many Democrats said they were surprised by

the timing of the decision, which came after Gore spent several days in New York discussing his plans with family members.

Potential rivals moved quickly to praise Gore, who still has a considerable following among Democratic voters.

Lieberman, who was Gore's vice presidential running mate in 2000, said in a statement Monday he would have been "proud to support him had he chosen to run for president again."

"Obviously, in light of Al's announcement, I will spend time over the coming holidays talking with my family and friends, and announce my decision about a campaign for the presidency in early January," the Connecticut Democrat said.

Lieberman is undertaking a trip this week to the Persian Gulf and Middle East and will visit U.S. troops in the region. Gore won the presidential popular vote by a half-million votes in

2000 but conceded to Republican George Bush after a tumultuous 36-day recount in Florida.

Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, Missouri Rep. Dick Gephardt, Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, Vermont Gov. Howard Dean and North Carolina Sen. John Edwards promptly praised Gore as an important force in the party who was certain to contribute more in future years. All are possible Democratic standard-bearers next time around.

Briefly

Legion plans Christmas party

The American Legion in Colby is sponsoring a children's Christmas party, Tuesday, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the for all young people whose parents or extended family are veterans, said Don Birzer, one of the coordinators. Santa Claus will be present with refreshments, treats and games available for the participants. For information, call Birzer at 462-2127.

Request for early lighting

Prairie Senior Living Complex is planning two evening tours so that residents at the facility can see the various Christmas lighting displays throughout Colby. In order to make the excursion enjoyable, officials are asking that anyone with displays turn their lights on early the evenings of Tuesday and Wednesday.

School board begins earlier tonight

The Colby Board of Education is rescheduling the time for its regular meeting tonight, said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent. The meeting, which was originally to begin at 7 p.m., has been changed to 6 p.m. due to the Colby High School music concert starting at 8 p.m. The purpose for moving the time up one hour, Nielsen said, was so administrators, staff and the public wanting to attend the

concert can do so as well.

All school board meetings are held in the administration building board room, 210 S. Range Ave. For questions, call 465-5000.

Brewster school board to meet

The Brewster School District will be accepting bus bids and consider wrestling mats, along with other topics of action or discussion when it holds its regular meeting tonight at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria area of the school.

Other information provided was that the board will talk about classroom changes, a request to enter the Western Kansas Liberty League and Little 8 League, along with appointing a recreation commission member.

The board could also go behind closed doors to discuss personnel, student concerns and negotiations, according to agenda information.

College to discuss contracts

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Colby Community College will be held on today at 5 p.m. in the board room of the Thomas Hall administration area. The agenda includes approval of a representative to the Northwest Kansas Library System Board, approval of contracts and agreements, payment

of claims and the report of the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

Amusement Association to meet

The Thomas County Amusement Association will be meeting tonight at 7 p.m. at the Thomas County Office Complex. This is an open meeting and the public is encouraged to attend and discuss the home-owned carnival.

Sacred Heart programs planned

Sacred Heart School in Colby will hold its preschool and kindergarten Christmas programs on Tuesday starting at 7 p.m. Both programs will be held in the school's gymnasium, 1150 W. 6th St. For questions, call 462-2813.

Deadline Tuesday for Letters to Santa

There's still time for area children to submit letters to Santa Claus which will be published in a special edition of the Colby Free Press on Friday, Dec. 20. Children can mail letters to Santa at 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or drop them by the newspaper office between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The deadline for letters to Santa is Tuesday at 6 p.m.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Sunday's high, 66

Low this morning, 24

Year ago today, 44 & 22

Temperature at 11 today, 45

Soil temperature, 34

Records for Dec. 16: 68 in 1939,

-10 in 1989

The forecast

Tonight look for partly cloudy skies with otherwise mild temperatures. Lows expected in the upper 20s and winds from the southwest at 10 to 20 mph. On Tuesday, warmer temperatures continue to prevail with highs 55 to 60 under mostly cloudy skies and lows in the mid 20s. The extended forecast for Wednesday and Thursday will be cooler temperatures and dry with highs in the 30s and lows in the teens.

