



# COLBY FREE PRESS

6 pages

## Council approves property purchase

### Action assures police will have new storage building

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

A new building is in the Colby Police Department's future. That certainty came about Tuesday night when the city council voted at its meeting to purchase land near the law enforcement center for the purpose of erecting a new building that would be used to store police records and evidence.

Prior to making the decision to purchase the land, the council went behind closed doors for less than 10 minutes to discuss the transaction. After returning to open session, a unanimous vote was made to buy two and one-half lots across the street from the Thomas County Courthouse to the west and south of Colby Canvas near the old Garvey building.

The contract price of \$10,350 was agreed to plus the city agreed to pay approximately \$100 for title insurance from Calvin and Diane Williams, the current property owners.

Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, said the lot measures 62.5' x 125' and money to pay for the land will come from the Special Law Enforcement Trust Funds.

Among the reasons for purchasing the land and constructing a metal building later this year, said Randy Jones, chief of police, is to house records and evidence that currently is being stored at the Colby Public School administration building at 210 S. Range Ave.

Armstrong said today that in addition to housing city police records, the Thomas County Sheriff's office will also use the future building for their storage as well, with the understanding they too will share in the expenses.

In other business, the council denied a replacement vehicle for the public power department after reviewing bids from Frontier Autoplex and Tubbs and Sons Ford. During the discussion, council members questioned the need for a newer car after learning that the police chief wanted to keep the 1995 Intrepid with 62,000 miles which would have been used as the trade-in. The bids included a 2002 Buick Century with 18,000 miles at a cost of \$13,999 with trade of \$9,000 from Frontier and Tubbs and Sons submitted a bid of \$13,950 for a 2002 Mercury Sable with \$10,250 trade for the Intrepid.

"If the Intrepid is good enough to keep, why do we need to trade it off?," was a question posed by Councilman Todd Barrows. He

then asked Jones why he believed an additional vehicle was necessary for the police department.

Jones said that he would have used the Intrepid when officers went to other cities for training and for on-call supervisors, who now use the marked police cars.

Barrows asked Jones if the need for another vehicle was vital. In response, Jones said that there are three marked units available, but that the on-call supervisor uses one of those cars for 10 days straight. The point being that even when in civilian clothes, the on-call supervisor will be in a marked car at the grocery store or other places since an emergency could occur anytime during his on-call duties. With regard to training outside the city, Jones said that officers could come upon accidents or other incidents while in another place and even though they do by-pass those situations, it's awkward for them and in both examples, appearance-wise, it would be more appropriate to have an unmarked car.

Jones said that when he learned the Intrepid was a possible trade, he was willing to use funds from the special law enforcement trust to buy it, but added that otherwise he "couldn't swing financially" for another car.

Herb Sunderman, another councilman, asked Corky Delzeit, director of public power, if keeping the Intrepid for at least another year would be a hardship. Delzeit said he had no problem keeping the car since it had been "trouble free" thus far.

Councilman Mark Beringer said that if the Intrepid is still in good shape, he couldn't see trading it off for a newer model even though it was in the budget. The vehicle proposal was initiated as part of the electric department's vehicle rotation cycle; however the council decided that since the car was not costing a lot in repairs, it was best to hold off on purchasing a newer model.

The council approved an agreement required by the Kansas Department of Transportation involving utility companies and the city being responsible for moving or altering utilities for the intersection projects this year. The intersections that would be affected included Fourth and Range and Fourth and Franklin.

The council approved a declaration for participation in the Firefighters Relief Fund for 2003, which is something the city's mayor signs every year, Armstrong said.

## At the top of his game



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Todd Kane, 8, climbed to the top of Mt. Franklin Tuesday afternoon, taking advantage of the sunshine, and in the process stopped to tell the world about it. The snow peaks appear when

city and county crews need somewhere to pile excess snowfall. Mt. Franklin is located in the big field bordered by South Franklin Avenue and East Plum.

## Budget bill advances despite highway gripes

TOPEKA (AP)—A bill reducing the state's budget deficit won tentative Senate approval, but even some supporters were uneasy about withholding money from highway projects.

Legislators and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius must eliminate a deficit projected at \$312 million in the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. The Senate bill would leave a deficit estimated at \$35 million to \$40 million.

The measure, advanced Tuesday on a voice vote, would withhold \$95 million from highway projects and \$48 million in aid to cities and counties. It also would take \$35 million in fees normally set aside for special programs, such as cleaning up waste tires, and use it for education,

social services and general government spending.

The House already has approved a separate measure that would balance the budget. If the Senate gives final approval to its own version, negotiators would work out a compromise.

Some senators said using highway funds to help balance the budget breaks a promise the state made in 1999 when it enacted a 10-year, \$13.5 billion program of transportation improvements.

"At some point in time, we need to fess up to our responsibility and pay that money back," said Sen. Paul Feleciano, D-Wichita.

The House bill includes a provision requiring the state to return the highway funds by June 30, 2005.

Sebelius said last week she has no problem with the provision, but some critics said they don't expect the state to have the money to set aside next year.

For that reason, the repayment provision isn't a part of the Senate bill, said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Steve Morris.

Morris, R-Hugoton, said the state might not have a legal obligation to pay back the funds, but, "I don't know that we can cancel the moral obligation."

Sen. Tim Huelskamp complained that neither Sebelius nor legislative leaders have proposed significant layoffs across state government to rein in spending during an economic slump.

"We have a long ways to go to match the type of cuts the private sector is making," said Huelskamp, R-Fowler.

In other action: < — The House Taxation Committee, studying repeal of dozens of sales tax exemptions, heard opposition to one repeal bill from broadcasters and advertising agencies.

— Legislation allowing cities and counties to post legal notices solely on the Internet received criticism from newspaper publishers during a Senate Elections and Local Government Committee meeting.

— Fifty-five House members introduced a bill to set minimum health and safety standards for abortion clinics.

### Device goes off in Emporia school official's mailbox

EMPORIA (AP)—Five Emporia High School students have been arrested in connection with an explosive that detonated in a middle school official's mailbox, police said.

The students, who range in age from 14 to 17, were arrested Saturday on suspicion of arson and conspiracy to commit arson and released to their families, Deputy

Police Chief Mike Williams said. The Lyon County prosecutor's office said that the students had not been charged as of late Tuesday morning.

The investigation began Jan. 28 after an explosive device went off in the mailbox at the residence of David Krumme, who is the assistant principal at Emporia Middle School.

"It appears that this is related to and directed at Mr. Krumme with regard to a school-related incident a year ago and one of the juveniles," Williams said.

No one was hurt and the explosion caused no significant damage, Williams said.

He said he was waiting for laboratory tests to determine what kind of explosive was used.

## Leoti abuzz as word of possible wind farm site surfaces

LEOTI (AP)—By the end of the year, 50 to 75 giant wind turbines could tower above the western Kansas landscape near Leoti under a deal announced earlier this week.

Sunflower Electric Power Corp. and Renewable Energy Systems said that preliminary construction work on a plant just east of Leoti

could begin as early as May if the project is approved by Rural Utilities Service and the Kansas Corporation Commission.

"This is real exciting. There will be a real positive benefit for local people," said Sharla Krenznel, Wichita County Economic Development Corp. director. "All up and

down Main Street, there will be opportunities for business—everybody from the convenience shop that sells fuel to the grocery store and hardware store."

The project is expected to have a work force of 100 to 150 construction jobs, and as many as 10 permanent jobs once it goes into opera-

tion.

Sunflower will purchase the first 30 megawatts of energy from the wind farm, which has been designed to produce up to 100 megawatts. The first phase of construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

When fully developed, the wind

farm will consist of between 50 to 75 wind turbines mounted atop tubular steel towers more than 200 feet tall and laid out in rows on a 6,000-acre site.

The wind farm will be located northeast of Marienthal, Krenznel said, but it's too soon to know on whose leased ground.

## Briefly

### Help with refunds available

Rosalie Seemann will be at Meadowlark Manor on Friday, Feb. 7 from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. to assist with Homestead Refunds, Food Sales Refunds and LEAP applications.

### Soup's on for Friday evening

Kappa Upsilon, a local sorority, is sponsoring a soup supper on Friday from 5:30 to 7 p.m., at the Colby Community Building when Colby takes on Oberlin in basketball action. The menu will include chili, chicken noodle, and vegetable soups, along with cinnamon rolls, cookies and drinks.

The cost is free-will donation with proceeds going to benefit Puddle Duck Pre-School.

### Rotary Club plans soup supper

The Colby Rotary Club is sponsoring its annual soup supper from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 18, during the Colby-Goodland basketball game at the Colby Community Build-

ing. The cost is \$4 for adults, \$2 for children 12 and under. Tickets will be available at the door or from any Rotary Club member. All proceeds go toward Rotary projects that benefit the community.

### Red Cross announces classes

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is offering a shelter operations class to help with local shelters in the event of bad weather or other disasters, said Molly Oliver, spokesperson for the organization. The class is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22, from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. In addition to the shelter operations class, the Red Cross is always looking for people interested in learning how to drive the ERV (emergency response vehicle).

### Massage clinic planned

The Physical Therapist Department at Colby Community College is once again having their annual massage clinic to raise money for program activities. The event this year will

be on Tuesday, Feb. 11 and Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 5 to 9 p.m. in the PTA department. Costs are available by calling Pat Erickson, department head, at 462-3984, ext. 260. Students will get a discount. The event is open to everyone and reservations can be made by calling Erickson. Walk-ins are also welcome.

### Booster Club on the hunt

The Colby Booster Club is looking for any school group or team interested in earning extra money for their group, to work at its concession stand during home wrestling matches and basketball games, said Shawn Stephens with the club. In the event there is no school or team response, the club will extend the offer to church youth groups and other organizations. If interested, call Stephens at 462-6929.

### Landfill hours posted

The Thomas County landfill is now on its winter hours, which are: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m.



### Wind advisory

Tonight, cloudy, lows lower teens, very strong north winds increasing during the night to 15-25 with gusts to 35 mph. Thursday, cloudy, occasional flurries, highs lower 20s, brisk north winds 15-25 with gusts to 35 in the morning, subsiding later in the day. Thursday night, partly cloudy, very cold, lows zero to 5 below zero. Friday, partly sunny, highs lower 30s.

### The numbers

Tuesday's high, 37  
Low this morning, 15  
Soil temperature, 36  
Year ago today, 39 and 14  
Month's precipitation: 0.12 inches  
Records for this date: 77 in 1904, -22 in 1899

