



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## City's budget \$12,000 less for taxpayers

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

Even though the City of Colby's budget in 2005 is going up by more than \$8 million from the previous budget year, the taxpayer will be contributing \$12,000 less in taxes, said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager.

The total mill levy the city will be asking for is 35.825, which is 2.04 mills less than last year, she said.

Armstrong said that last year the city's assessed valuation was at \$30,145,129. This year the assessed valuation went up to \$31,525,723.

What that means to the city, she said, is that each mill was worth about \$30,000 in 2004 and is now worth about \$31,525 in 2005.

But because the city is reducing the mill levy in 2005, this will mean a reduced amount of tax by \$12,000, which is based on the lesser mill levy being collected.

"The total budget is up tremendously from last year's \$12.9 million," she said. The biggest reason for the jump in the 2005 budget, which totals \$22.8 million, will be the new sewer plant at \$6 million, the Wal-Mart street project at South Franklin and Willow estimated at

\$860,000 and the start of airport improvements at Shalz Field.

However, the majority of cost for the street projects, sewer plant and airport improvements will not come from local tax dollars, she said.

"The state's revolving loan fund will fund the \$6 million for the sewer plant and the money will not be repaid with tax funds," she said. As for the street projects, the Kansas Department of Transportation will fund 90 percent and Wal-Mart will be responsible for \$450,000 of the street project at Franklin-Willow with the remaining \$860,000 being funded through the issuance of bonds.

Improvements at the airport will also be paid primarily by the Federal Aviation Administration. In total, the federal government is expected to pay 95 percent of the total project costs.

Armstrong said she attributes the lesser amount in taxes to careful spending and having some cash carryover from the previous year.

Following the public hearing to discuss the 2005 budget and having no input, the council unanimously approved the budget at its meeting last week.

## School district sues to cover lost checks

TOPEKA (AP)—As the Topeka School District sues to recover more than \$500,000 lost to an international check fraud scheme, a state audit team will study how Kansas' 300 other school districts can be protected against similar scams.

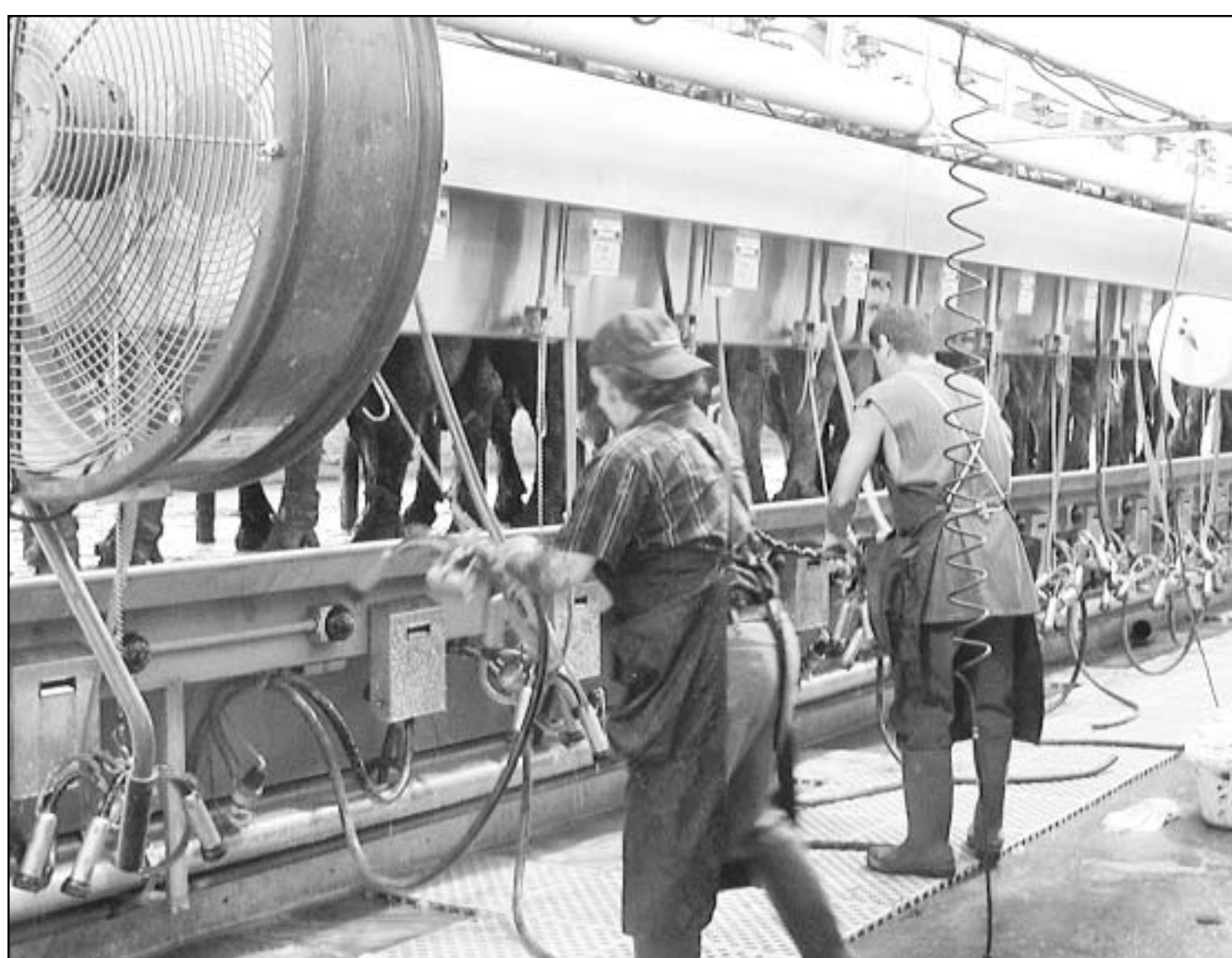
Public inquiries prompted Unified School District 501 to announce last month that it filed suit March 10 in Shawnee County District Court against U.S. Bank, which administered the district's checking account.

There is no claim that anyone in the school district or the bank participated in the scam. Rather, the

lawsuit asserts that the bank negligently processed checks with outdated signatures and inaccurate numbers.

In all, 17 counterfeit checks — deposited at banks in China, Hong Kong, Latvia and elsewhere — were posted against the district's account from May 2001 through December 2003. The checks were replicas of those used by the district and ranged in amount from \$9,852 to \$64,918, for a total \$554,000.

"We made some mistakes. We're not hiding anything," Sawyer said, and we are trying to get back as much of the dollars that were lost."



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

McCarty Dairy employees work to get cows milked in the dairy's milking parlor, where 50 cows can be milked at one time. The

dairy, near Rexford, is one of the smaller dairies in the western half of the state. The dairy might be expanded in the near future.

## Rexford dairy part of growing trend

By **TISHA COX**

*Colby Free Press*

Agriculture is big business in Thomas County but McCarty Dairy near Rexford is carving out its own unique niche in the state's ag economy.

Tom McCarty, owner, said his dairy is one of 19 in western Kansas.

Kansas' dairy industry is in a transition, he said. Initially, most of the state's dairies were in eastern Kansas, where the bulk of the industry was located. Now, 60 percent of the state's dairy cattle are in the western third.

"The last seven years there's been a lot of growth in western Kansas," he said. "They've had to get people in this part of the world to have their voice represented as well."

The trend was once toward smaller dairies in eastern Kansas but that's changed. Now there are much larger western dairies.

McCarty Dairy currently has 1,800 head of cattle but that number might change this fall. The family's original dairy in Pennsylvania had only 200 cows.

McCarty and his wife Judy have four sons: David, who manages the Syracuse Dairy, which has four times the number of cattle at McCarty Dairy; Mike and Clay, who are both full time at the family dairy; and Ken, a student at Kansas State University in Manhattan, who is helping out at home during the summer.

McCarty said the idea behind relocating to Kansas more than four years ago was to start an operation his sons could carry on and the goal is to grow to involve them all.

"We would like to add 400-500 cows his fall," McCarty said, adding despite having so many cows, his dairy still isn't one of the largest. "We're one of the smaller ones."

The herd is all Holstein, which he

said is the highest-producing breed.

Most of their cows produce 70 pounds of milk each per day. McCarty said the dairy produces on average about 3 million pounds of milk a month and 32 million pounds a year.

The cows are milked three times a day and it's an operation that's going 24 hours a day. Fifty cows at a time can be milked in the parlor, which has 25 milking stalls on each side.

After the cows are milked, the product goes to Ravenna, Neb., which is the dairy's pay point, said Thomas County Economic Development Director Gerry Fulwider. He said from there, it may go to Kansas City or other locations to be processed into cheese and other products.

Despite the high production, McCarty said he would like to see production increase. His goal is to up production to 3.9 million pounds of milk a month.

Part of that goal could be met through breeding.

Artificial insemination is used for breeding and the selection process leaves nothing to chance. The goal of the artificial insemination program is productive longevity.

Bulls are chosen from Select Sires, a company that specializes in providing frozen semen to farmers to improve their herds through genetics. McCarty uses bull reproductive and production information to choose animals to breed to his cows.

"It's a very serious breeding program and it's working very well," he said.

Most of the cows at the dairy are used for about four years. They have their first calves at two years of age.

"We still have some of the original cattle," he said, adding most are kept for three or four years.

## County commissioners approve 2005 budget

By **TISHA COX**

*Colby Free Press*

The 2005 Thomas County budget was approved at this morning's commissioners meeting. County Clerk Tracey Perkins said the budget is 36.539 mills or \$5,456,714. The budget was approved after a public hearing.

Last year's budget was 36.544 mills, or \$5,590,468.

Perkins said the county valuation is up this year, increasing to \$74,708,635, up more than \$2 mil-

lion over last year's \$72,249,842.

She said when the valuation goes up, there's more to work with in the budget so the mill levy doesn't need to be increased.

Perkins added the valuation is up because the market value of homes and real estate in the county went up.

Last year, the county levied \$2,640,338 and Perkins said they expect to bring in \$2,729,762, an increase of \$89,424.

The budget included a three per-

cent raise for county employees.

The commissioners also had a request at their meeting today from Midwest Energy which is applying for a rural economic development loan for McCarty Dairy, which is hoping to expand.

The commissioners also discussed putting together a resolution to recoup restitution on the day to day costs of housing prisoners in the county jail.

Commissioner Ron Evans said the state just passed legislation al-

lowing such a measure and the county needs to get moving on it.

He also discussed the upcoming November election and suggested the two new commissioners who will be elected should go to the Kansas Association of Counties meeting in November. Evans said it would be a good learning experience.

The next commissioners meeting will be at 9 a.m. Monday, Aug. 16 at the Thomas County Courthouse. The meeting is open to the public.

Colby  
Oakley  
Grainfield



## Thunderstorms, cooler

**Tonight...**Cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the lower 60s. South winds 5 to 10 mph and gusty. Chance of thunderstorms 50 percent. **Tuesday...**Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers. Breezy. Highs in the upper 70s. East winds 5 to 15 mph increasing to 15 to 25 mph in the afternoon. **Tuesday night...**Mostly cloudy in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. Breezy. Lows in the lower 50s. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph decreasing to 5 to 15 mph after midnight. **Wednesday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 70s. North winds 5 to 10 mph. **Wednesday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 50s.

### The numbers

Sunday's high, 88  
Low this morning, 59  
Records for Aug. 9 110 in 1938 (Colby's hottest August temperature on record) and 49 in 1989  
Year ago today, 95 and 61  
Weekend precipitation, 0.07  
August total, 0.13  
Soil temperature, 78

### The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

### Water use

• August 6-7-8 = (average) 2.074 million gallons.

### Water advisories

• Water **Watch** is 3.5 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.  
• Water **Warning** is 4.0 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.  
• Water **Emergency** is 4.5 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.

## Briefly

### 'Sneak Peak' at Colby Grade School

Colby Grade School will be open on Wednesday from 5-6 p.m. for students to meet their teachers and tour the classrooms.

### Blood drive scheduled

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is holding a blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 17 at the Colby Community Building. For information on donating blood, to volunteer or to schedule an appointment to donate, call (800) GIVE LIFE or to volunteer to help, call 462-2082 or visit [www.redcross.org/br/centralplains](http://www.redcross.org/br/centralplains).

### Leadership applications wanted

The Quest and Leadership Thomas County application forms have been sent to those nominated, said Leilani Thomas, one of the coordinators. The Quest is the informational piece which explains the program. It has also been sent to the executive officers of some of the larger organizations in Thomas County who may also nominate their employees. The sessions will be held the third Wednesdays beginning in October and running through April. For those who did not receive an application form and are interested in the program, stop by the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau and pick up a form. Applications are due Friday, Aug. 20 with the class being announced Sept. 17. For questions, call 460-3401.

### Girl scouts plan 'thermometer Exchange'

Colby Cadette Girl Scouts are inviting everyone to take part in the "Mercury Thermometer Exchange," from 6 to 8 p.m., Aug. 20 and Saturday, Aug. 21 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Thomas County Household Hazardous Waste Site, 190 W. 4th St. (formerly Pyramid Oil). Only metallic mercury fever thermometers will be accepted and in exchange participants will receive digital thermometers. "Mercury thermometers break easily and often," said Karen Shoemaker, assistant scout leader, "and when they break, they let off toxic vapors that can be hazardous to your health. We hope to make Thomas County aware of this danger and rid the community of this hazard." For information, call Jo Cheney at 462-2082 or Sandy Swob at 462-3438.

### K-State to hold field day Tuesday

K-State researchers and others will discuss developments Tuesday during an Subsurface Drip Irrigation Technology Field Day in Colby. The field day is free and includes afternoon and evening tours of the research site, as well as a series of informal, 10-minute talks designed to answer frequently asked questions; the evening meal; and a producers' panel discussion.

The tour's main topics are: Limited irrigation of corn using SDI; nutrient management for efficient water use; and Livestock wastewater utilization with SDI.



