



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Fair board may turn races over to Wark in 2004

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Letting someone else run the races during the fair was a topic of discussion at the Thomas County Fair Board's Thursday meeting.

Turning the fair races over to Kerry Wark to manage is an option the board now has under consideration.

Wark spoke during the recognition of guests part of the meeting and said several board members approached him about running the races.

"It'll work better for him," said board member Marty Crampton. He added that it would allow the board to free up some capital they could use for something else.

Mark Anderson, board member, said it sounded like most everyone was interested.

"I thing it's something that the board needs to look at," he said. "We're going to decide at the next meeting whether we're going to do that or not. We're seriously looking at it."

In other business, the board heard a report from Extension Agent Doug Musick. He presented the board with extension's expenses for the fair. The board approved paying half, which was about \$600.

Also discussed was removing the sand in the steer barn. Since the fair,

there have been odor problems. Anderson said the sand will be removed before winter and new sand will be put back inside sometime in the spring.

Committee reports were also given.

Jim Malcolm talked about the buildings and grounds. He said he's going to try to get some bids to replace some of the sheet metal on the horse, poultry/cattle and sheep barns.

Malcolm said the grounds also need to be winterized.

Board member Gary Garrett touched on the rodeo and said he has a verbal commitment for the announcer from last year to return. He's also working on bringing back stock contractor Bronc Rufford for next year.

Anderson said he's pleased with the progress already made for next year's fair.

"It's only October and everybody's thinking about what they need to do for next year," he said. "Things are coming along."

Even though next year's fair plans are gearing up, there's still a little unfinished business from this year's fair. Some premium checks haven't been picked up but Anderson said the remaining unclaimed checks will be mailed out in the near future.

A big rebound in farm income seen by expert

WICHITA (AP) — Led by a bountiful wheat crop, farm income is projected to rebound 40 percent in 2003 in Kansas and neighboring states, a Federal Reserve Bank economist said Thursday.

But in Wichita the aviation industry is king, and the king has a hangover. Economic recovery here may not come until early 2005, a Wichita State University economist said. More job losses are forecast — including an additional 2,000 lost jobs next year in the city's manufacturing sector.

Speakers at the annual Wichita Area Economic Outlook Conference brought into sharp focus the contrast between the state's rural and urban economies. Put plainly, the countryside is doing better than the cities.

The so-called prairie gateway states, which include Kansas, showed some of the strongest growth in farm income in the country, said Jason Henderson, economist for the Center for the Study of Rural America at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

Cash receipts for wheat are 25 percent higher than last year and 10 percent above the five-year average, he said. Record high cattle prices are also boosting income for ranches, cattle feeders and the meat-packing industry, he said.

Henderson said the farm debt picture conditions are also starting to improve, as shown in the last two quarters.

"The largest improvements were in Colorado and Kansas — two areas most severely scarred by drought last year," he said.

Net farm income for 2003 in the nation is projected at \$19.6 billion, up \$11 billion from last year, he said.

The farm recovery has led to strong land values, which the Federal Reserve estimates is up 4 to 7 percent, Henderson said. Also spurring farmland values are increased investments in land as investors look for alternatives to a volatile stock market.

Tempering the improved farm income outlook is the return of drought conditions in pockets.

Big move



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Taylor Motors, formerly Frontier Motors in downtown Colby, has moved to Southwind Plaza. Owner Tuffy Taylor said he ran the dealership in downtown Colby four years before the move. He said they've moved sales already and are in the process of

moving service. As part of a grand opening celebration next Friday and Saturday, Taylor said the Dodge Raminator monster truck will be on display Friday and will crush cars on Saturday at 3 p.m. Also included are radio controlled car racing and a barbecue.

No decision from city on SBC contract

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Colby City Council took no action on whether or not to terminate their contract with Southwestern Bell at its meeting earlier this week.

The council went behind closed doors for about 10 minutes to talk about the liabilities associated with terminating the contract before the expiration date of January, 2005. At its last meeting in September, the council approved S & T Telephone Company for their telephone services, but at that time, no date was decided when to switch over because of the pending decisions needed regarding Southwestern Bell.

In other council business:

- The council did not approve the fuel supply and branding agreement with Western Petroleum, a Minnesota corporation, for airport fuel.

Instead, the council directed Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, to review the matter with the Colby Municipal Airport board and put together a more simplified agreement. An update will be discussed at the Tuesday, Oct. 21 meeting.

- Armstrong talked about a recent conversation with the Federal Aviation Administration regarding airport projects. She explained that the administration said the city needs to hire a consultant and develop plans for specifications on replacement of the south apron and taxi lanes to the hangars. As for funding, she said there is \$250,000 to \$295,000 in discretionary funds to use for this project. There could be a special council meeting toward the middle of October requesting review of firms for layout and apron/taxi lanes, Armstrong said.

- There will be no signs placed on Maize Road following a study by

the Colby Police Department. "Out of 226 vehicles," Armstrong said, "the highest speed recorded was 34 mph and the remainder was below that level." The issue had first brought to the council's attention after residents in that area requested signage to alert motorists of children playing. At that time, the council directed Chief of Police Randy Jones to monitor the area and come back with his findings.

After the study, Armstrong believes there is no need for "children at play" signage based on the radar results. The council agreed.

- Ron Davis with Time-Warner Cable was present at the meeting to request a change in the franchise fee his company pays based on the franchise fee negotiated with S & T, which is not equivalent to what the cable company pays. At first the council was willing to change the fee so that it would be more in line

with S & T's negotiated rate. However, Councilman Mark Beringer said he wondered why the city shouldn't instead raise S & T's fee to be more equivalent to Time-Warner.

Other councilman said they were concerned that by raising the fee, the costs would then be passed on to consumers.

The issue was put on hold until Armstrong has a chance to evaluate how the costs could be more equitable to both companies by comparing lower franchise fees for Time-Warner or raising S & T's franchise fee to be more comparable to the cable company. The matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

- The council authorized Armstrong to allow the public works department to repair the sidewalk and storm drains on the east side of the Colby Community Building.

Gove County Attorney still awaiting report

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

No charges have filed as of today in a fatal accident dating back to Jan. 5 of this year that occurred in Gove County.

Gove County Attorney Mark Schmeidler said during several phone calls that he didn't know what charges to file yet because he didn't have the report because the sheriff's department hadn't finished it.

"He is not done with it," Schmeidler said Thursday.

Schmeidler hasn't said what kind of report he's waiting on.

Calls to the Gove County Sheriff's Office also yielded no results.

Capt. Kelly McGuire, troop commander with the Kansas Highway Patrol in Hays, said the amount of time it takes to get a report depends on the type of report.

However, McGuire did say accident reports have to be turned in to the state Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days.

Arrest reports and fatalities can earn an agency a little more time, McGuire said.

"We take more time on fatalities," he said of the highway patrol. "You

can get special dispensation on that. That may be what the hold up is."

He also said waiting for a blood test or other lab results can hold up a report, depending on what type it is.

Eighteen-year-old Cody M. Wilson, of Oakley, one of six passengers in the accident in question, died from injuries received in the crash.

According to the accident report, speeding and alcohol contributed to the cause of the one-vehicle crash that took place around 3:45 a.m. on a gravel road just inside the Gove County line.

The vehicle's speed was esti-

mated at 86 miles per hour.

Wilson and two others, Blake N. Pilkington, 19, the driver, and Casey L. Anderson, 17, were ejected from the 1997 Pontiac Grand Prix.

Other passengers in the car were Kyle A. Kersenbrock, 17, Jeffrey C. Dennis, 15, and Robert D. Dennis, 17.

The Sheriff's Department report also stated there were full and open beverages and containers in and around the car.

The report also noted that none of the teenagers were wearing seatbelts.

Killer rainstorms in Kansas not all that uncommon, geologist says

TOPEKA (AP) — A research geologist said rainfall as heavy as that which flooded Jacob Creek Aug. 30 and killed six people traveling on the Kansas Turnpike occurs somewhere in Kansas almost every year.

"A thunderstorm can dump 3 to 4 inches an hour," said Charlie Perry, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Lawrence. "It just happened in the wrong spot at the wrong time."

The torrent that engulfed the usu-

ally dry creek near Emporia was nearly three times the streamflow that the culvert under the turnpike can handle, he said. The raging water that night claimed the lives of a mother and four children from Glenaire, Mo., and a Fort Worth,

Texas, man who was trying to save them.

Results from a preliminary report by the Geological Survey's regional office in Lawrence said the water that ran 4 feet deep over the turnpike about 11 miles southeast of Empo-

ria was greater than what would have been expected from a 200-year flood.

The report will be a key document in an investigation of the causes of the flood and state agencies' reactions to it.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet

The Colby County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the Thomas County Courthouse. Included on the agenda will be Darin Miller from SBC.

Promotion meeting Tuesday

There will be a Colby Promotion meeting at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday in the Sunflower Bank basement meeting room. Topics to be discussed include announcing the upcoming holiday season's theme, information on ordering promotion shirts and interest in setting up an emergency or revitalization fund. The purpose of the Colby Promotion meetings are to share ideas that will further unite local businesses. Everyone is welcome to the meetings.

Tootsie Roll time arrives

The Knights of Columbus will hold its annual Tootsie Roll

fund drive on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to benefit people with retardation. Eighty percent of the contributions will go back to the local Knights of Columbus councils for donations to institutions of their choice with the remaining 20 percent used by the state council to fund the Special Olympics Basketball Tournament held at Fort Hays State University in the spring. Local council members are encouraging everyone to give generously when volunteers ask for donations.

Music booster cards available

Music Booster Cards are on sale now until Oct. 23 for \$5 each. If you have not been contacted by a vocal or band student, you can purchase one from Shelly Bielser at 462-7492.

Genesis seeks names for gift baskets

Genesis Thomas County is again planning to distribute Christmas baskets and would like to help residents of Thomas County. To submit names for food baskets, send a card

to: Genesis Thomas County, P.O. Box 214, Colby, Kan. 67701.

College offering certification courses

Colby Community College is offering certification courses for social service designees. The courses will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Oct. 13, 20, 22, Nov. 3 and 10 in the Robert Burnett Memorial Student Union. Four college credits and two certificates will be awarded for attendance at all eight classes. Two college credits and one certificate will be awarded for six classes. To enroll or for more information, call (785) 462-3984, Ext. 286.

Popcorn fund raiser underway

Colby area Cub and Boy Scouts are selling Trails End Gourmet Popcorn again as part of their annual fund raiser. Orders will be taken this month and money is collected when the popcorn is delivered in mid-November.

Maybe showers

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area
Tonight...Partly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of thunderstorms after midnight. Windy. Lows in the lower 50s. South winds around 25 mph shifting to the southwest 25 to 30 mph after midnight. Gusts up to 45 mph. Saturday...Partly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers then mostly sunny in the afternoon. Windy...Cooler. Highs in the upper 60s. Northwest winds 25 to 30 mph shifting to the north 15 to 25 mph in the afternoon. Gusts up to 45 mph. Saturday night...Mostly clear in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 30s. North winds 5 to 15 mph shifting to the northwest 5 to 10 mph after midnight. Sunday...Partly cloudy. Highs around 70. South winds 5 to 15 mph. Monday...Partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the upper 60s.

By the numbers

Thursday's high, 87
Low this morning, 58
Records for the date, 96 in 1920 and 25 in 1970

