



COLBY FREE PRESS

12 pages

Giving it their all



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby Grade School second graders Morgan Ohrman, Kelly Bechdoldt and Paige Armbruster were giving it their all as their choir rehearsed Tuesday afternoon for their Christmas program, "Once on a Housetop," an international holiday music celebration. The program will be performed at 1:30 and 7 p.m. Thursday at the grade school auditorium.

Colby airport plan receives approval of the city council

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

The airport layout plan and south apron/taxi lanes improvement projects were approved by the Colby City Council at its meeting Tuesday, but will still be subject to the Federal Aviation Administration's review and acceptance as well.

The decision to go forward with the plans came after the airport board met last week and recommended the council should approve the agreements and proceed with the projects.

The estimated cost to the city for both the design and actual improvements would be about \$100,000, said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, with FAA funding at \$300,000.

It is also possible, she said, that airport improvements and the layout plan could be done in two phases. The first phase being the layout plan next year and the second phase the actual improvement project.

The council also approved CB Heating, Plumbing and Air

Conditioning's bid for the new public works building. There were two bids from CB — one with an 80 percent efficiency at \$4,336.27 and the other at 90 percent efficiency or \$4,986.27.

The council voted to use the 90 percent efficiency bid. Other bidders included McKee, Inc. with an 80 percent efficiency at \$5,429 and Midwest Energy, Inc. at \$5,833.

There was discussion about an expansion opportunity for wastewater treatment, along with reviewing the entire improvement project for wastewater treatment.

Reed Miller and Thaniel Monaco provided three scenarios for the council to analyze to include a gravity sewer, forcemain sewer or lift station.

After listening to the presentations, the council decided its best option would be to go with the gravity sewer, which would require less to maintain than forcemain sewer or lift station.

The council approved the gravity sewer, which is estimated at \$1.5 million. Armstrong said with this decision, the preliminary design for

the wastewater treatment improvement project is finished and she will begin the application process to get money in place. The loan applications will be sent to the Economic Development Alliance and the state's revolving loan fund.

As part of the process when applying for the state's revolving loan fund, Armstrong said, a public hearing will be scheduled to make everyone aware of the construction for the new wastewater treatment plant. The final documents should be ready for submission within the next week to 10 days.

In other council business:

- Tuesday, Dec. 30 at 7:45 a.m. was approved for the end-of-year council meeting. In addition, the council agreed not to have a Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2004 meeting.

- Joel Kriss, city attorney, was given a 3 percent raise, which brings his monthly salary to \$2,400. Municipal Court Judge Rick Res was given a 3 percent increase bringing his monthly salary to \$2,250 and his clerk received a 5 percent increase making the monthly income \$900.

Staff issues confront trustees

By **TISHA COX**
Colby Free Press

Agreements and staff issues were on the agenda at Monday's Colby Community College board of trustees meeting. The board approved four agreements with Aegis Therapy, Inc.

College President Mikel Ary said the formal agreements allow students to gain clinical experience at a hospital, nursing or rehabilitation facility. The board also approved an agreement with Sandhill Orthopedic Clinic in Garden

City and Valley Hope of Norton.

Ary said the agreements are mainly for insurance purposes and to guarantee how the student will be treated.

The group also approved a resolution to make a change to certificates of participation used to purchase the new server and computer system the school bought at the beginning of the year.

Ary said the change was to do with the financial situation with the certificates of participation, which are similar to a bond. He said there

were two different agreements but they've been changed into one.

"It streamlined and makes the financial obligation more efficient," Ary said. "That's how they should have been anyway."

The board also approved the early retirement requests of Boyd Walker, head of the college's veterinary technology program and Sue Long, adult education coordinator. They also approved one resignation — nursing instructor Laura Tubbs won't be returning for the second semester.

Capital outlay a track option

By **TISHA COX**
Colby Free Press

Reestablishing a capital outlay tax levy is a possibility the Colby school board discussed at its meeting Monday.

The board would like to resurface the track at Dennen Field and also talked about moving the vocational agriculture and woods classes to the high school.

The track resurfacing project has garnered attention at the last two school board meetings.

However, the board has taken no action on the matter and bids haven't been solicited yet. The issue has only been discussed.

At its November meeting, the school board heard four presentations on resurfacing the track.

The companies suggested a range of new surfaces and also detailed the track's current condition. The two surface options are latex and polyurethane.

Board member Stan Molstad said he didn't like the fact each of the representatives was making the push to spend so much money up front and then more in later years for additional work.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said the board can discuss the matter

further in January.

He said the resurfacing project isn't a quick undertaking.

"You're not going to get it done before track season," Nielsen said, adding summer would be a better time to start.

Nielsen suggested capital outlay funds could be an option in the future to help pay for such projects.

"I think we might be able to do a bit more after this fiscal year," he said.

District financial officer Jo DeYoung said reappropriation part of the mill levy would help pay for projects like track resurfacing.

But changing anything would have to be put before a public vote.

"We wouldn't have to increase taxes to do that," she said.

In other business, the vo ag and woods classes were discussed.

Nielsen said the vocational agriculture and woods programs need to be moved to the high school at some point. Board member Kevan Taylor wanted to know how students get to class. Nielsen said they're bused from the middle and high schools.

High school principal Brian Kraus said it would be nice to have it all together because of time and transportation issues.



Bobbi Blackhart



Larry Jumper



Don Bixenman

Three more instant winners named

By **TISHA COX**
Colby Free Press

There are three more "Christmas on Us" instant winners.

Don Bixenman, Bobbi Blackhart and Larry Jumper are the latest winners in the Colby Free Press/Colby Merchants retail promotion.

Bixenman's winning ticket came from Great Western Tire. He said he's never won anything before.

Blackhart's ticket was from Colby Ag.

"It's the first time I've ever won anything," she said, adding she was "very excited" to win. She also doesn't know exactly what she'll buy with the \$50 but she has an idea or two.

She said she might spend it on something special for herself.

Jumper's winning number came

from Tubbs and Sons Ford. "It's the first time I've won anything," Jumper said. "The money is going to go to Genesis."

There are still a couple more tickets out there somewhere. Check the ads in today's "Christmas on Us" section to see if you might be holding one of them. If so, bring it to the Free Press office to claim your \$50 scrip money.

Briefly

Commodities still available

Commodities are still available for eligible persons who missed the Dec. 15 distribution. Contact the RSVP office at 462-6744 to make arrangements for pick up.

'Thank You' concert scheduled

As a "thank you" to the community for its support of Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass and Folk Festival, the McLemore Family and Larry Booth will present a seasonal concert for the public on Sunday at Fairview Estates. The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the dining hall. Fairview Estates is located just east of Dillons. Everyone in the community is invited and admission is free; however, canned food donations will be accepted for Thomas County Genesis.

Community choir to perform

A community choir will perform the Christmas musical

"Come, Let Us Worship the King" at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday in the Colby High School auditorium.

There is no charge and everyone is invited.

Christmas piano recital set

Piano students of Pat Ziegelmeier will perform in a Christmas recital on Saturday at 2 p.m. in the sanctuary of Colby United Methodist Church.

The program will be a combination of solos and ensembles. Everyone is invited.

Landfill announces holiday hours

The Thomas County Landfill will close at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24 and will not reopen until Saturday, Dec. 27. The landfill will be open regular hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the 27th and 1 to 4 p.m. on the 28th.

The landfill will be closed Thursday, Jan. 1 for the New Year's Day holiday.

Second graders to perform

The Colby Grade School second grade program, entitled "Once on a Housetop," an international music holiday celebration, will be performed at 1:30 and 7 p.m. Thursday in the grade school auditorium. The public is invited to the free performance

Stocking fund raiser continues

There is still time for one boy and one girl to win the "World's Largest Stocking," while at the same time helping the Colby Fire Department raise its 10 percent share of a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Administration to purchase a fire safety trailer, said Rick Dickman, assistant fire chief.

One of the stockings can be viewed at S&T Communications and the other at Santa City through next week, he said. The giveaway will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday at Santa City. To enter the drawing, talk with any firefighter or call 462-4454.



Not much change for next few days

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie forecast

Tonight...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. Northwest winds 10-20 mph.
Thursday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 40s. Northwest winds 10-20 mph.
Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 20. West winds 5 to 10 mph.
Friday...Partly cloudy. Highs near 50.
Friday night...Partly cloudy. Breezy. Lows in the lower 20s.
Saturday and Sunday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower to mid 50s. Lows in the mid 20s.

By the numbers:
Tuesday's high, 41
Low this morning, 20
Records for Dec. 17, 76 in 1939 and -14 in 1897
Year ago today, 57 and 217
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00
Month's precipitation, 0.09
Month's snowfall, 3 inches
Year's precipitation to date, 14.53
2002's precipitation to date, 12.60
Soil temperature, 34

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.

