



COLBY FREE PRESS

6 pages

D.C. to Colby Moran gets input at senior stop

By **DARREL PATTILLO**
Colby Free Press

Congressman Jerry Moran was in Colby on Wednesday to listen to concerns ranging from possible military action in Iraq to what the government is doing about drought relief.

"The number one question I ask myself," Moran told the more than 40 people at the Senior Progress Center, "is what can I do to make sure our communities are going to be around a little longer? A lot of what I do is related to agriculture. But I'm also concerned with healthcare, and keeping doctors in our communities."

Moran said Medicare is a major concern. "Medicare pays bills for 60-70 percent of the elderly in rural communities. When Medicare doesn't pay, businesses start to shut down."

He also talked about national security. "After 9/11, I was determined to become more knowledgeable about how this country can defend itself."

He opened the discussion to questions, and one lady asked what the government was doing about drought assistance.

"The main problem is that money for drought relief has to be taken

from somewhere else, and we're trying to find places to take that money from. One of the biggest problems is the perception that farmers are getting all this money from the farm bill, and people are saying 'why do the farmers want more money?' What those people don't realize is that the farm bill is about a lot more than just money. It's about programs for economic development, food stamps, rural healthcare...we're doing what we can to help with the drought."

Someone asked about Iraq. "It's a very difficult situation. I really don't see how the President can back away, after all the buildup going on. We seem to be caught in the middle. I do know we shouldn't turn this thing over to the United Nations. That hasn't worked to this point, and I don't think that's the solution."

He said that last August he went to Afghanistan, and learned that countries in that region don't think they could survive if they ally themselves with the United States. "Those leaders have said their people think there will be rioting in the streets if they side with us. It's just a very tough deal all the way around."



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

First District Congressman Jerry Moran emphasized a point during a visit Wednesday afternoon at the Senior Progress Center in Colby. He touched on several issues, and then answered

questions on various topics from the audience. Moran expects to cover 5,000 miles while visiting the thousands of people in his 69-county district.

Student finds opportunity here Few rural areas involved in her program

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

When it comes to partnering students in the physician's assistant program at Wichita State University with clinical settings in rural areas, there's not a lot of places to choose from, said Richard Muma, department chair of the program.

Yet for Gina Bailey of Scott City, who is a second-year student in the program, she's grateful that Colby Medical and Surgical Center is willing to support the program by giving her an opportunity for experience.

"There are about 100 clinical sites in Kansas that work with our students," Muma said, "but in Gina's case there are very few rural places qualified to participate in the program."

Muma said the physician's assistant program needs the support of communities like Colby to help the students gain the necessary training in many areas such as inpatient, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, surgery, emergency room and much more.

"Although we would like to find more sites in northwest Kansas, there are a lot of risks involved for the university," he said.

The decision to add new locations depends heavily on whether or not the site can meet accreditation

requirements, Muma said. Colby Medical and Surgical Center, he said, has been part of the program since 1998 and the partnership is intended to be valuable for both the student and the physician they work with during the rotations.

Bailey arrived in Colby on Monday, Jan. 6 and will continue her rotation with Dr. Victor Hildyard, who is in family practice at Colby Medical and Surgical Center, until Thursday, Jan. 30, she said earlier this week.

The main reason Bailey said she chose Colby as one of her eight rotations, was because she knew she would be working not only in the clinic setting, but also that she would be on-call in the emergency room at Citizens Medical Center and visiting inpatients alongside Hildyard.

As a student in the preceptorship program, Bailey said she is allowed to see patients and will assess the problem.

After doing so, she then discusses it with Hildyard who either agrees or disagrees with her evaluation.

During her first two weeks here, Bailey said she has felt welcomed and respected by the medical staff at the clinic.

"Even though I am a student," she said, "I have been treated with respect and as a professional. Dr.

PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Gina Bailey of Scott City is currently working with Dr. Victor H. Hildyard at Colby Medical and Surgical Center as part of her curriculum in attaining a degree as a physician's assistant from Wichita State University.

Hildyard is an excellent teacher."

Colby is the fifth location that Bailey has visited since she started her rotations. She said she will have three more following her training in Colby.

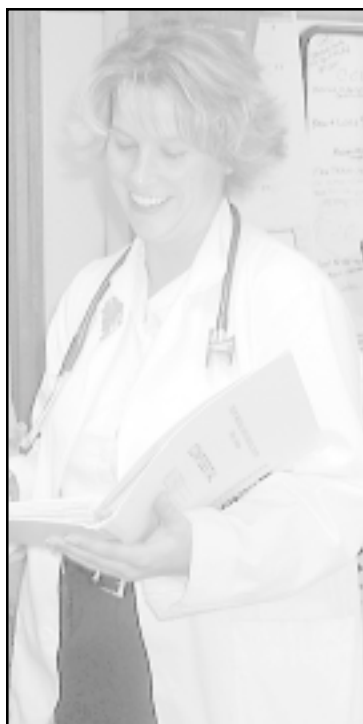
In her experience, thus far, she said she has not seen a clinic as busy as the one here and that runs so efficiently.

"Unlike some of the places I have been, Dr. Hildyard doesn't tell me what to do, but rather asks me, 'Why?' I have come to a particular conclusion and then will work through it with me," she said.

Bailey said she has been in health care since 1992 having started as a certified nurse's aide.

She later graduated from Kansas University receiving a bachelor's degree in medical technology.

Following graduation, she worked at St. Catherine's Hospital



in Garden City as a supervisor in the lab, but decided she wanted to continue in the medical profession as a physician's assistant.

Her plans are to return to Scott City after graduation next year and work in her community there.

Her husband, Josh, is the sales manager for Helmer's Motors, the Ford dealership in Scott City.

Hildyard said he is glad to be involved with the physician's assistant program.

"This is a good partnership and beneficial to the students and to us as well," he said.

Along with Colby, Bailey's other rotations will include four different locations in Wichita, Hays, Oakley and Satana.

SBC seeking to bar Internet regulation

TOPEKA (AP) — A top SBC Communications Inc. executive says it would be unfair for the state to regulate the company's high-speed Internet service.

Randy Tomlin, SBC's Kansas president, testified Wednesday before the House Utilities Committee in favor of a bill to prohibit state regulation of its high-speed network — also known as broadband.

Companies that provide other kinds of high-speed Internet access, such as cable or wireless, are not subject to state regulation.

But the Kansas Corporation Commission announced last week it would examine the rates that SBC charges other companies for access to its high-speed network.

"This bill will spur investment, helping the economy, and it won't cost the state of Kansas a dime," Tomlin said.

"It is not deregulation. It is a removal of an opportunity to regulate."

SBC is pursuing similar legislation this year in Missouri and Texas. Oklahoma legislators enacted a law last year, and Arkansas lawmakers, in 1997.

Tomlin spoke at the House Utilities Committee opened two weeks of hearings on the bill. Opponents are to testify next week, and committee chairman Carl Dean

Holmes, R-Liberal, said a vote was planned in February.

The measure would prevent the KCC from setting the rates for SBC to charge access to its system, or imposing more stringent access requirements than the Federal Communications Commission.

Other telecommunications companies fear that if the bill passes, SBC will be able to limit competition to its high-speed Internet service. SBC has said that would not happen.

Some legislators want to make sure that high-speed access becomes available in small, rural communities. The technology transmits data at least 25 times faster than dial-up connections.

"We have to figure out how we're going to get broadband from one end of the state to the other," said Rep. Eric Carter, R-Overland Park.

Carter proposed revising the bill to provide for KCC regulation several years in the future and to ensure that SBC competitors won't lose their access to SBC's voice lines.

Rep. Annie Kuetner, D-Topeka, suggested the committee consider requiring SBC to retain a certain number of jobs in Kansas.

Tomlin opposed those ideas, noting that SBC's cable, satellite and wireless Internet competitors wouldn't face similar conditions.

Not McDonald's fault, U.S. District Court Judge says

NEW YORK (AP) — People who wolf down supersized, high calorie foods cannot blame the fast-food industry for their weight and health problems, a federal judge has ruled.

In dismissing a class-action law-

suit that claimed that McDonald's food caused health problems in children, U.S. District Court Judge Robert Sweet said consumers "cannot blame McDonald's if they, nonetheless, choose to satiate their appetite with a surfeit of supersized

McDonald's products."

"If a person knows or should know that eating copious orders of supersized McDonald's products is unhealthy and may result in weight gain ... it is not the place of the law to protect them from their own ex-

cesses," Sweet wrote in the 65-page ruling issued Wednesday. "Nobody is forced to eat at McDonald's."

"Common sense has prevailed," McDonald's spokesman Walt Riker said after the decision. "We said from the beginning that this was a

frivolous lawsuit. Today's ruling confirms that fact."

Attorney Samuel Hirsch, who represented the plaintiffs, said they "have every intention of amending their complaint and refiling it."

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers
Wednesday's high, 17
Low this morning, 4
Soil temperature, 32
Year ago today, 37 and 19
Precipitation for month: 0.00
Records for this date: 75 in 1967, -12 in 1915
The forecast
Tonight, cloudy, lows mid teens, south winds becoming west late up to 10 mph. Friday, sunny, highs 45-50, northwest winds becoming southeast late up to 15 mph.
Friday night, cloudy, lows mid 20s. Saturday, cloudy, highs upper 40s.

Briefly

Rexford plans meal

The Rexford Lions Club is sponsoring a soup meal from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, at the Rexford Community Hall on Main Street. The menu will include chicken and homemade noodle soup, chili soup, desserts and drinks. The cost will be a free-will donation and all profits will go toward a portable public address system to be used at Golden Plains schools.

For questions or other information, call Deann Dible, at (785) 687-4861.

SHARE distribution nearing

This month's SHARE distribution is scheduled for 9 a.m., Saturday at the Sacred Heart School gymnasium, 1150 W. 6th, Colby. The menu for this month includes sirloin tips, summer sausage, shrimp, ham, chicken breasts, celery, lettuce, onions, potatoes, veggie medley, apples, oranges, grapefruits, pears and pudding. For questions or information, call Anna Fyfe, coordinator, at 462-3733.

Play auditions scheduled

Auditions for the Colby Community College spring production "Angel Street" and the college's touring children's show will be held Tuesday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center on the campus. Actors interested in "Angel Street" are asked to prepare a one- to two-minute monologue. Those interested in the children's tour will read from the script. For questions, call Walter Yuhre at 462-3984, ext. 783.

Deadline extended for program

There's still time to register for the Master Gardener Program scheduled to begin in February. This program is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension and will certify participants in horticulture and related areas, said D'Ette Scholtz, extension agent. For information or to pick up a registration form, call the Thomas County Extension Office.

Cemetery board meetings change

The Colby Cemetery District board meetings will be held

on Thursdays instead of Mondays for the next couple of months, said Relda Galli, board member. The meetings; however, will still be held at the Thomas County Courthouse beginning at 2 p.m. Board members should note that Thursday meetings include Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 20 and April 24. For questions, call Galli at 462-3670.

Blood drive is next week

The Thomas County American Red Cross blood drive coordinators report that there will be a blood drive in Colby on Wednesday, Jan. 29, from 7:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. at the Comfort Inn and organizers are encouraging your participation. More information will appear later in the *Free Press*. Questions can be directed to either Jackie Stephens at 462-8122 or Jo Frahm at 462-2082.

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.

