



COLBY FREE PRESS

12 pages

Blood drive set in Colby

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

The Thomas County American Red Cross has set a goal of having 150 blood donors at its next drive on Wednesday, March 16, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Colby High School, said Jo Cheney, one of the coordinators.

According to a recent survey by the American Red Cross, Cheney said, there are about 47 million potential donors who will not participate in blood drives because they believe it is possible to catch an infectious disease.

"Donating blood is a safe process," said Dr. Mei-Chien Fucci, American Red Cross Central Plains Region Blood Services medical officer. "Needles and bags used to collect blood are used only once and then discarded."

Those who donate blood will save more than four million lives each year, Fucci said, and nearly everyone knows someone who needs blood.

Another way to look at the drive, officials said, is to consider that if everyone eligible to donate did twice a year, there would never be a blood shortage. Unfortunately, Fucci said, only five percent of the population currently gives blood, when 60 percent of the U.S. population is eligible.

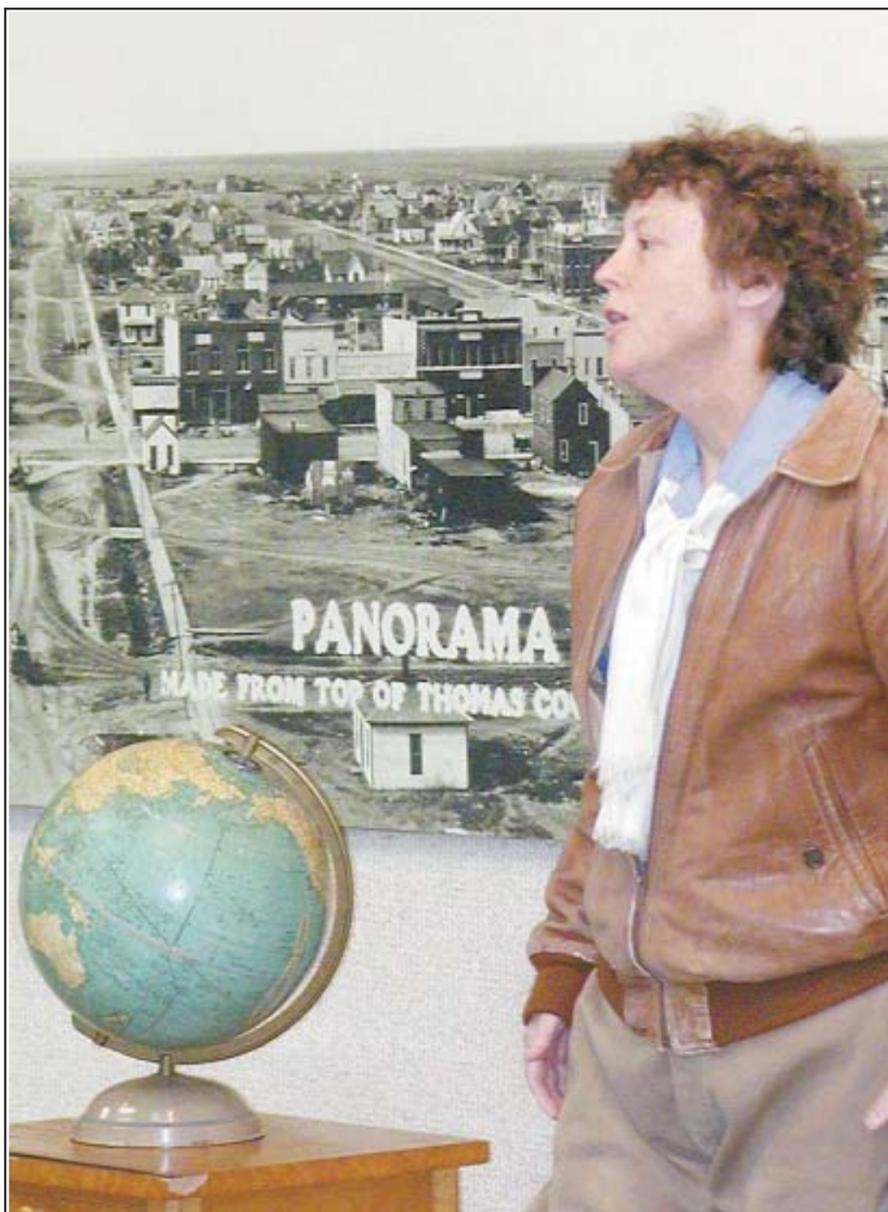
For the Colby High School drive, Cheney said, all blood types are needed and especially type O, which is given to almost anyone in an emergency.

Donating blood is safe and easy, she said, and takes about an hour with about seven minutes for the actual blood donation.

To make an appointment, Cheney encourages donors to call (800) 448-3543.

For questions about the drive or other information on eligibility, call Cheney at (785) 462-2082.

World traveler



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Dr. Ann Birney performed as aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart during "Flying High: Women's History Day" Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. There were exhibits on aviation and programming celebration aviation and women's history as part of Women's History Month. Birney's presentation was through the Kansas Humanities Council and was sponsored by the American Association of University Women of Colby.

Emergency preparedness county focus

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners found out more about what emergency preparedness director John Lygeros does at Monday's meeting.

Lygeros, who works part-time for the county, said he is the county's liaison between the Kansas Department of Emergency Management, the Army National Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

He explained what the county would be responsible for if a catastrophic event took place. He said the commissioners would be in charge, even if a disaster occurred in the city of Colby.

Lygeros said in the event of a disaster, the commissioners would need to pass a disaster declaration. Lygeros said the taking care of people, then property are the most important things and worrying about payment would come later.

He said the feds would reimburse the county if it was declared a disaster area. He also told the commissioners how much federal money the budget will get. He said it will probably be about \$94,000 for 2005 but it might not be available until the beginning of next year.

Lygeros said the county has received \$278,000 in federal money in the past few years. Of that, \$167,000 was put toward a new 911 system, equipment for first responders and other uses.

Lygeros will also be taking part in the state-wide tornado drill on Monday, March 14 which is part of the National Weather Service's National Severe Weather Awareness Week.

He said the drill is to test sirens and also to serve as a reminder that severe spring weather isn't that far off.

"It is a wonderful drill," Lygeros said, adding it's a chance for him and others to get a chance to do what they've been trained to do.

He's also in charge of opening the Kansas National Guard Armory for travelers in cases of bad weather.

Roads were also on the agenda. The commissioners heard a presentation from county road supervisor Clair Schrock on the Country Club Boulevard project.

He said he met with the city and found out how much the county's share of the project will be, which is about \$70,000.

The city will be completing Horton Avenue this summer, paving the street from where it ends just beyond the Oasis Travel Center to where it meets Country Club at the I-70 overpass.

The county is responsible for finishing Country Club and will complete pavement, curb and gutters from where the overpass ends to where the road meets Horton Avenue. Improvements to Willow were also discussed and the commissioners approved an agreement with the city.

The county is taking over responsibility for Willow from Country Club to Franklin in preparation for when construction on the new super Wal-Mart begins. There was also a short public hearing on vacating Royal Lane in Sunflower Acres. Tuffy and Linda Taylor, who own the property, wanted to vacate the street because it won't be used.

The commissioners approved the resolution to close the street.

Community planning core committee told it needs more input

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The community planning core committee held its first meeting at the Thomas County Office Complex in Colby on Tuesday.

The meeting was the first step in coming up with a new strategic plan for the county. The group discussed who still needs to be involved and started looking at some of the issues they will have to deal with.

Dr. David Darling, a K-State Research and Extension agricultural economist and rural community specialist, offered tips to help the group get started.

Committee member Scott Focke, man-

ager at Family Center for Health Care, was elected as the group's chairman.

A video on strategic community planning was shown and Darling then got down to the business of helping lay down how they should get started.

Darling said they need to work according to what makes sense in their own context. But first, he said the group has to be "legitimized" by getting countywide representation.

He said there needs to be an audit of current activity. That would entail finding out what is on the agenda of the city, county commissioners, school boards, college board, companies and other stakeholders.

Committee member Tama Unger asked if people were buying into what is trying to be done and wanted to know if that was why some areas aren't yet represented.

Darling said that will come if they can get more people on board.

The committee needs to get a signed letter from the commissioners showing they will support the effort and Darling said they also need to consider starting to look for funding to help pay for some of the surveys and other work that needs to be done. He said the county, and other communities in the county and the Thomas County Community Foundation are some places to start.

The next step would be to catalog the

assets in the community based on capital, which isn't just financial. Darling said there are six types — engineered, natural and environmental, human, financial, political and social.

The entire process can be broken into two parts — developing a vision and then deciding what issues needed to be resolved to realize that vision.

Darling said they need to come up with what they want the county to be, which will be the vision. That lead to discussion on focusing on either the county as a whole or just Colby, but he said it is a county plan that has to be developed.

In that vein, committee member Todd

Stramel asked if they could consider other counties and their visions of what they want their futures to be like.

Darling said a regional vision is a possibility and can be included as a dimension of Thomas County's own vision.

He said now that the first meeting has been held, the group needs to start "widening the circle" and bringing more people into the discussion and meeting again soon.

He said meeting weekly will help gain momentum. Darling said several committee members should try to come up with a mission statement before the next meeting, which will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 15 at the Thomas County Office Complex.

Colby
Hoxie
Oakley



Wind will win the battle

Tonight...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 30s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the northwest after midnight. **Thursday...**Windy. Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s. North winds 15 to 25 mph increasing to 25 to 35 mph in the afternoon. **Thursday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph. **Friday...**Breezy. Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph increasing to 15 to 25 mph in the afternoon. Gusts up to 35 mph increasing to 40 mph in the afternoon. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s.

The numbers

Tuesday's high, 56
Low this morning, 27
Year ago today, 65 and 27
Records for this date, 86 in 1904 and -5 in 1969
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
Precipitation for month to date: 0.00
Snowfall for month to date: 0.00
Soil temperature, 42

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.

Briefly

Fair board to meet

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the Thomas County 4-H Building at the county fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include Thomas County Extension agent report, financial report and bills, committee reports on the buildings and grounds, carnival, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising. The meeting is open to the public.

First aid and CPR class planned

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold a first aid and CPR course starting at 6 p.m., Tuesday, March 22. For those interested, call the Red Cross office at (785) 462-7161, said Roger Herren, executive director.

Singers, jazz ensemble perform Thursday

The Colby Community College Jazz Ensemble and Sunflower Singers will perform at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, in the Quinter High School auditorium. Admission is by Western Plains Arts Association season pass or at the door. Tickets are \$8, adults and \$4, children. Western Plains Arts Association is sponsoring the show.

Students collect items for soldiers

Student Senate members at Colby Community College are collecting items and or cash for U.S. soldiers in Iraq. Suggestions for donations include snack items such as sunflower seeds, cookies, hard candy, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, body lotion or powder, eyeglass lens cleaner; board games; playing cards; DVD movies; music CDs; or money to buy products. Donated items may be left at the Campus Bookstore or the dean of students' office located in the Student Union before April 1, 2005. For information, call Skip Sharp, dean of students' services, (785) 462-3984.

Area Agency on Aging to hold meeting

The board of directors and the advisory council of the Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging will meet at 10 a.m., Tuesday, at the Q-Inn Restaurant, Quinter. In addition, see page 8 in today's issue for details on the Silver-Haired Legislature election next week and polling locations in Thomas County. For questions or other information, call the agency at (800) 432-7422 or (785) 628-8204.

Parade entries wanted for celebration

A celebration is planned in conjunction with the Enlisted Association of the Kansas National Guard meeting in Colby on Friday and Saturday, March 18-19, said Leilani Thomas, executive director of the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau. As part of the celebration, she said, a parade is being organized and entries are requested. The parade will begin at 2 p.m., Friday, March 18 from Fike Park to the National Guard Armory. For those who would like to be part of the parade, call the Chamber of Commerce or Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-3401.

Second grade music program planned

Colby Grade School second graders will be performing "Temples and Tombs" under the direction of Jennifer Koel at 1:30 and 7 p.m. in the grade school auditorium Thursday, March 10. The public is invited.

Colby district music concert Tuesday

The Colby Public Schools Music Department presents "Music in Our Schools," the district concert, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 15 at the Colby Community Building. The concert will feature musicians from Colby Grade, Middle and High Schools. March is nationally known as "Music in Our Schools" month.

