



# COLBY FREE PRESS

14 pages

## Patching things up



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Sal Otolu, an employee with Cactus Roofing, carried materials from one rooftop to another Thursday at South Park Apartments. Otolu is one of a crew of 22 working on re-roofing the buildings at the complex. Judy Luedke, an employee with the Colby Housing Authority, which owns the complex, said all the buildings there and at Meadowlark Manor are getting new roofs due to hail and wind damage. At South Park, units J, K and L are also getting new siding which will complete a project started last year to re-side all of the units.

## College president announces plans to retire in November

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

After almost two decades, the president of Colby Community College announced his plans to retire in November at Thursday's special meeting of the board of trustees.

Dr. Mikel Ary, 64, made the announcement after an executive session with the trustees. His retirement places him as the third president in the school's history and one of the longest-serving community college presidents in the state.

During the interim, Skip Sharp, dean of student affairs, agreed to oversee the president's responsibilities at the college.

"I appreciate the confidence and support of the Board of Trustees and my administrative team during the past 17 years," Ary said.

"Teamwork has made the advancement of the college possible."

The chairman of the board, Don Kready, who has served as a member of the board for 26 years, said he wasn't totally surprised with the announcement.

"He has mentioned retirement many times recently and as the board looks to the future, there will be a number of challenges for CCC," Kready said.

"Change is never easy, but because of the efforts of Dr. Ary and his staff, the college is running smoothly.

Another board member, Cleona Flipse, now serving her third four-year term, talked about Ary's positive attributes.

"Dr. Ary guided the board through the Bedker building construction process and served as president of the Kansas Community College Council of Presidents — which is quite an honor," she said.

"Every Christmas, he and Delores (his wife) opened their home and spread goodwill by inviting local townspeople," Flipse said.

Ary accepted the position of president in 1988 and prior to that his career in higher education began in Oklahoma as an assistant professor of history at East Central University.

He rose through the ranks to become a full professor before leaving in 1981 to become vice-president of student affairs at Northwest

"I appreciate the confidence and support of the board of trustees and my administrative team during the past 17 years."

Dr. Mikel Ary,  
president of Colby College

ern Oklahoma State University.

Dr. Ary, a native of western Kansas, was born in Dodge City and spent his formative years in Edwards County graduating from Lewis High School, said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer.

"A historian by training, Dr. Ary received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Fort Hays State University and was awarded his doctoral degree from the University of Oklahoma," she said.

As president, Ary has led the college through many changes and achievements.

Shortly after assuming his duties, Schwanke said, the college applied for and received a \$200,000 per year grant authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to fund Student Support Services.

Since that time, the program has been annually funded at the \$200,000 level equaling a total of \$3 million.

Student Support Services provides personal and academic support services to first generation college students who enroll at CCC.

The college was also awarded a \$1.5 million Title III grant for the years 1988-1993.

Also during his tenure, the college experienced considerable growth and achievement. Specifically, said Schwanke, under Ary's leadership, the college experienced positive enrollment growth with full-time equivalency numbers (statistics which determine state funding) growing from a low of 735 in 1984-85 to highs of 1,247 in 1995-96 and 1,210 in 2001-02.

Contributing factors to the growth of the college were the addition of several academic programs including nursing and dental hygiene as well as the acquisition of venture capital through two significant grant sources.

Because of the growth of the institution, two new buildings were constructed during Ary's tenure.

The Health Sciences Building was completed in 1991 and the 20,000 square foot Bedker Memo-

rial Complex, the most recent addition to the campus, was finished in October 1997.

A 6,000 square foot addition to the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center was also included in the construction project. Fiscal conservatism under Ary's leadership allowed the college to fund this expansion without placing a new burden on the taxpayers of Thomas County. The retirement and restructuring of the school's existing debt, dollars allocated from the general fund, and private donations were utilized to fund the construction, she said.

"I have seriously contemplated retiring for several months," said Ary.

"Although I had considered announcing my retirement in April, it did not seem appropriate owing to the retirement of the academic dean Gracemary Melvin.

"There was a number of summer staffing concerns to be addressed following the dean's retirement. We hired several key instructors and staff members to fill vacant positions."

In addition to his duties at the college, Ary has served as president of the Jayhawk Athletic conference, which represents the 19 community colleges in Kansas, and was elected by the Kansas Council of Presidents to serve as President of the council for two successive years.

He was one of the founding leaders who conceived the idea and directed the establishment of EduKan, a consortium of six community colleges, which delivers online course work to place-bound students.

"EduKan is one of the greatest success stories in higher education in Kansas," Ary said.

"Enrollments are growing at a rate of 25 percent each year. It is recognized as a model program."

Ary and his wife, Delores, have two adult sons: Victor, an engineer in Tulsa, Okla.; and Vaughn, an attorney in the judge advocate branch of the Marine Corps in San Clemente, Calif.

## Crops helped by recent rains

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Three inches of rain last month are helping prospects for a decent fall harvest and wheat planting later this month.

Farmers will soon be ready to harvest corn, grain sorghum and sunflowers. It's also nearly time for farmers to get ready to drill wheat, said Brian Olson, extension agronomist for northwest Kansas at the Northwest Research-Extension Center.

Depending on whether or not crops got rain, harvest will vary because of moisture levels and location.

"We obviously had rain but it was spotty," Olson said.

On dryland corn and grain sorghum, he said there were places where corn burned up. However, Olson wouldn't be surprised if some dryland corn yielded 70-100 bushels an acre. Ninety to 100 bush-

els an acre is "a good surprise," he said.

"Farmers are pretty happy about that," Olson said.

Another dryland crop, sunflowers also look good, depending on how much rain they received.

Some irrigated crops will also be a hit or miss thanks to extremely hot weather earlier in the summer. On irrigated corn, Olson said any of that crop that pollinated before the hot July weather will have good yields but plants that didn't won't have good ear development, which means fewer kernels of corn.

For the most part, he said farmers should be happy with potential yields but the ones that missed out on the rain won't be.

"It's better than it has been the last couple of years," Olson said.

Drilling wheat is another activity farmers are gearing up for. They should be out in their fields within the next few weeks, he said, de-

pending on location.

There is adequate soil moisture also.

"Prospects are fairly decent for planting wheat in the next few weeks," he said.

In the next 14 to 20 days will be when most farmers plant, Olson predicted, but if farmers are going to use their wheat for cattle grazing, they'll probably be putting it in now.

Another issue farmers, along with everyone else is dealing with right now are high fuel prices.

Olson said it is a concern because unlike other products, farm market prices don't go up like other markets do because of the cost of transporting goods and materials.

Diesel goes up, it makes it more expensive to move equipment needed for harvest and planting, which affects a farmer's bottom line.

He said as fuel prices increase, the cost of nitrogen also goes up.

## Katrina disrupts railroads, more

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The grain elevators that take in corn, soybeans and wheat from Midwest farmers and the railroads that move it are waiting to see what impact Hurricane Katrina will have on them.

More than half of U.S. grain exports go through New Orleans, and it remained unknown Thursday when the crippled port and its shipping terminals might reopen.

That means railroads and elevators don't know whether grain that would normally go down the Mississippi River by barge will need to go elsewhere by rail or truck. Nor do they know how well the rail networks and other seaports would be able to cope with the added load.

"It's just too early to try to answer those," said Steve Forsberg, a spokesman for the Fort Worth, Texas-based BNSF Railway Co.

John Huber, a spokesman for the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., agreed: "We're just going to be watching and monitoring."

September and October are normally the region's biggest export months for corn and soybeans, said Jerry Fruin, a professor at the Uni-

versity of Minnesota's College of Agriculture and an expert on barge shipping.

If Mississippi River barge traffic cannot be restored within about two weeks, Fruin said, significant adjustments will need to be made for the new crop. Alternatives might include Pacific Northwest or East Coast ports, he said. And more grain may need to be stored longer on farms and in elevators.

But Fruin acknowledged there's only so much additional rail capacity out there.

Mark Davis, a spokesman for the Omaha, Neb.-based Union Pacific Railroad Co., said other ports will be able to handle some of the exports that would pass through New Orleans.

But it will tax the system if current forecasts of a bin-busting harvest come true.

The Union Pacific is North America's largest railroad, and Davis said it has historically shipped most of its grain bound for export through either Mexico or ports in the Pacific Northwest and Texas.

Likewise, Huber said only about 10 percent of the Canadian Pacific's

grain traffic is normally bound for the Gulf of Mexico.

While there was significant damage to Jacksonville, Fla.-based CSX Corp.'s rail line between New Orleans and Pascagoula, Miss., that will take some time to repair, its grain operations aren't likely to face major disruptions, spokesman Gary Sease said. Most of CSX's grain business connects farms in the Midwest with feed producers in the Southeast.

The Elbow Lake Coop Grain Elevator in west-central Minnesota ships most of its corn and soybeans to the West Coast and most of its wheat by rail to the East. But manager Allen Mashek is still concerned about the ripple effects of the closure of New Orleans and resulting higher transportation costs and downward pressure on prices.

"Overall this affects everybody," Mashek said. "It doesn't matter if it's the port down there or wherever. It just puts more pressure on ports that are already at capacity."

Add to that the higher fuel and fertilizer prices resulting from Katrina, then figure in the current low grain prices.

## Economic growth



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Work continued this week at the future site of Truck Town, north of the Oasis Travel Center. Colby building inspector Doug Lewis said concrete work has been going on at the site and the building floor was slated to be poured today and building setup is scheduled to begin next week. When completed, the business will include a showroom and work area for truck parts and repair as well as a truck wash. Lewis didn't know when construction will be completed. Woofter Construction is contractor for the project.

