



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Honoring veterans



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Commissioners decide against redistricting

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Thomas County won't be redistricting its extension office.

The county commissioners voted against joining extension in any combination with Rawlins, Gove or Logan counties at their meeting this morning.

However, they didn't rule out looking at it again next year after a discussion on the matter.

Extension council members Jeff Horlacher, Mark Bredemeier and Stan Strange along with extension agents Doug Music and Diann Gerstner and Dan O'Brien, Northwest Area Extension Director, were all at the meeting.

O'Brien said he knows they all have given the matter a lot of thought, and he thinks there would be advantages to redistricting.

Commissioner Paul Steele said he made a mistake when looking at the projected budget numbers and said there wouldn't be that much of an increase in the Thomas County budget. O'Brien said it amounted to between \$6,000 and \$9,000 in

taxes, and he said that would be offset by the additional \$17,500 received by the other counties.

They also again explained if they redistricted, the other counties would get that money which is set aside for counties with only one agent position filled.

Horlacher said the benefits would outweigh the cost, and redistricting is being encouraged by the state.

Redistricting would also mean a new extension board.

Evans said they talked to 11 commissioners in five counties, and even after that, he was still "nervous" about making a change.

Commissioner Ken Christiansen said they're behind extension but they didn't have the public feedback they needed to redistrict. Steele said they only received one letter in favor of the idea.

Evans added they have done a good job of looking into the matter and said they will consider it another year. O'Brien finished up by saying they appreciated the commissioners' thoughts and thanked them for their support.

Communications officer recognized

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Colby Police Department's chief communication officer was recognized for her dedication during a recent conference held in Salina.

Marlene Pfeifer was awarded the Lt. Col. Carl Gray Memorial Award, which honors communication officers for major contributions in public safety.

"This award has not been given out for a long time," said Colby Chief of Police Randy Jones.

Jones was glad to see Pfeifer get the award considering her good work and personal challenges in the past few years.

"Three years ago, she had a physical situation that kept her from work, but she was able to bounce back from this debilitating condition and maintain her position as chief communications officer," he said. "It was amazing she overcome this illness."

Pfeifer has been with Colby Police Department since May 27, 1990, and was promoted to her current position June 1, 1998.

The award was named for Gray, who was employed by the Kansas Highway Patrol as a major of communications throughout the 1970s. He was a strong supporter of Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, and believed communication operators needed and deserved quality training.

The association helps to supply this unique training and provides a way for employees from other departments to meet and discuss similar problems and offer possible solutions. After Gray's death, his wife and co-workers wanted to honor his

memory by paying a tribute to others who work in the communications field and are strong supporters of the association.

They decided to select one individual who has made a major contribution and present them with an award in his memory.

Jones said the reason Pfeifer received the award was because of how much she values networking and training within her field and works diligently to make sure the people she supervises receives appropriate training.

Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong also commended Pfeifer on doing an excellent job on behalf of the city and law enforcement communication.

"Marlene covers a lot of areas when there are vacancies in dispatchers or illnesses," she said. "I really want to personally thank Marlene for all her hard work and for going above the requirements necessary to assist friends, family and co-workers."

Citing a recent example, Armstrong said that just this week, Pfeifer has worked both the day and night shift because another dispatcher was ill.

"She has often worked double shifts because of another dispatcher — just one example of her dedication," she said. Pfeifer was also responsible for bring the association's annual meeting to Colby a year ago, Jones said, which was the first time the organization had been in this area.

Marlene is the daughter of Frances Eichman of Palco. She has one daughter, Angi, and grandchildren, Trinity and Wesley of Colby.

Bush faces 'tricky' trade issue

WASHINGTON (AP)—Preparing for a possible bird flu pandemic. Boosting global free-trade talks and tackling sticky trade issues with China. Promoting democracy. Keeping U.S. partners on track in ridding North Korea of its nuclear weapons programs.

President Bush embarks Monday on an eight-day Asian trip with a full plate. White House officials predicted that Bush's visits to Japan, South Korea, China and Mongolia would produce few tangible breakthroughs. Analysts said that was appropriate, since the trip's value lies in countering a drift in the region away from the United States.

China is growing in economic and military might and in its global involvement, which is causing some to worry whether Beijing seeks to rival, or supplant, U.S. influence. Meanwhile, a new collection of Asian states known as the East Asia Summit added participation by Australia, New Zealand and India, but still excludes Washington.

"It is good for the president to show up in Asia and say, 'We care about Asia,' because that is in doubt in the region," said Ed Lincoln, senior fellow in Asia and Economic Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

ABOVE: Area veterans and members of the Kansas Army National Guard carried a giant American flag down Franklin Avenue during the annual Veterans Day parade Friday. The parade started on Franklin Avenue at Fike Park and continued to Second Street, ending at the Thomas County Courthouse on Court Avenue. RIGHT: Brenly Terrell (left), Andrea Brown (middle) and Krysti Terrell handed out memory poppies to Darlene Mick, Thomas, Aron and Jennifer Mick before the start of the parade. The poppies were distributed as a way of honoring the dead by helping the living. November is Poppy Month and wearing the red poppy salutes the memory of those who sacrificed their health, strength and even their lives that all Americans might live in a free country.



New equipment to help assault victims

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Victims of sexual assault will have better care as the result of a new medical program available.

Tama Unger, director of fund development and community relations at Citizens Medical Center, said sexual assault victims will no longer have to travel long distances for evidence collection.

"The bottom line is that sexual assault victims historically have not reported the crime because of the he-said-she-said component," Unger said. "The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and Sexual Assault Response Team is a program where our staff is professionally trained to consult with and assist the victim, as well as collect evidence for DNA testing."

Directing the program at the hospital is emergency room nurse Tricia Carney.

"This program provides better care for the victim," Carney said. "Having someone trained in sexual assault enables us to provide better treatment and better investigation for law enforcement."

Carney and two other nurses trained for the program at Via Christie Hospital in Wichita.

"We had to take a 40-hour course and also had to tour a crime lab, watch a sexual assault court case and do 16 hours of pelvic exams. We rode with Wichita Police Department members and were told we had a good beat because we saw a



Tricia Carney, seated, showed detectives C. Dale Hopper of the Thomas County Sheriff's Office and Gary Shull of the Colby Police Department new equipment which will benefit sexual assault victims in a nine-county region of northwest Kansas.

lot," Carney said.

Prosecutors and law enforcement agencies from nine northwestern Kansas counties have agreed to use the new program at Citizens Medical Center.

Those counties are Thomas, Sherman, Sheridan, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Logan, Gove, Trego and Wallace County. Serving as liaison for the counties are C. Dale Hopper, an investigator with Thomas County's sheriff's office, and Gary Shull, an investigator with the Colby Police Department.

Hopper said Kansas Bureau of Investigation field agent Mark Kendrick has been particularly helpful in helping raise the money for the \$12,000 culposcope and

software. He said \$7,500 has been raised and another \$4,500 is needed to make the program self-sufficient.

"The culposcope is another tool for investigation and forensic evidence in rape and sexual assault cases for both men and women," Hopper said.

Carney said research she's done indicates there are on average five sexual assault cases each month in the nine-county region.

Hopper said, on average, the Thomas County Sheriff's Office works one case per month, and Shull said the police department averages eight to 15 cases per year.

Shull said the new program could extend farther than the nine-county

region once law enforcement agencies learn of it.

"The closest assault unit like this is in Garden City, followed by Salina, North Platte (Neb.) and then Denver," he said.

"With the culposcope, exams will include color video and photos as well as DNA collection so when the case goes to trial, it is based of facts and the prosecution of the case is valid.

"As a matter of fact, 88 percent of the cases don't make it to court because of the evidence," Unger said.

The cost of the initial \$500 forensic exam will be covered by the county from which the investigation originates. Costs over and above the initial exam, such as for other injuries, will be billed to the victim's insurance or directly to the individual.

Shull said another integral part of the program is to provide trained advocates which will assist victims from the onset of the investigation.

"Northwest Kansas Family Shelter gets grant money to provide advocacy to help victims and support them," Shull said.

"Victims who get counseling right from the start are three times more likely to follow through with prosecution."

For more information about the sexual assault program or to make a donation towards it, contact Hopper at (785) 460-4570, Shull at 460-4460, or Unger at 460-1214.

