



Happy Thanksgiving!

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New doctor to come

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A new doctor could arrive in Hoxie sooner than expected.

Joe Stratton, administrator of Sheridan County Health Complex, said Dr. John France might be working at the complex in February instead of April.



J. Stratton

"Dr. France could start Feb. 1 or earlier if all goes well," Stratton said.

France, and his wife, Dr. Ratchnee France, were hired through a cooperative effort between New Frontiers Health Services of Oakley, along with Hoxie Medical Clinic and Family Center for Healthcare of Colby to provide medical care.

The couple will live in Oakley, but Dr. John France will be on staff full-time in Hoxie.

Sheridan County taxpayers will compensate France \$160,000 plus benefits, which includes health insurance, retirement, vacation, and two weeks lodging per month in an apartment rented by the complex at Sheridan Estates.

"We feel we've been able to hire a very solid physician who appreciates the nature of this community and can develop a good relationship with the people," Stratton said.

"The added benefit is that we will be able to control our costs. It's a win-win situation and we are continuing in the right direction."

Since Dr. Celestine Ofoma left the community in 2003, Sheridan County Health Complex has relied on temporary doctors at a cost of nearly \$36,000 per month.

Stratton said this expense will again mean the budget ends up in the red.

Final figures won't be known until March.

At the complex's trustee meeting Monday, it was decided to raise the rate of long-term beds by \$6 per day.

"The cost of a private room will go from \$119 to \$125, and the cost of a semi-private room will go from \$104 to \$110," Stratton said.

In other business, trustees Richard Krannawitter, Charles Stewart, Randy Farber and Craig Cooper decided to have the auditing firm of Baird, Kurtz and Dobson of Wichita, once again prepare the financial audit at last year's cost of \$23,500.

Trustees Mary Karnes, Ross Carder and Allen Neal were absent from the meeting.

In addition, Topeka attorney Carol Ruth Bonebrake will now provide legal counsel for the complex, replacing Steve Schwarm. Bonebrake is a partner with the law firm Goodell, Stratton, Edmonds and Plamer and will provide cost savings to the complex because of working on an "as needed" basis.

Bonebrake is known in the area for her experience in medical care facility law and represents hospitals in Colby, Goodland, Hill City, Ulysses, Beloit, Seneca, and Wellington.

Little Pilgrims and Indians



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Puddle Duck Preschool students celebrated Thanksgiving Monday with their parents by preparing and sharing a meal with them. Students at the preschool and other schools in the county are out the rest of the week for the holiday.

Police report theft

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

A Colby business was broken into Tuesday night with one or more persons forcing the door open to gain entry, said Detective Sgt. Gary Shull with the police department.

The multiple businesses, Murray Enterprises, Murray Roofing, JM Tree and Lawn Service, and Sundance Spas, all located under the same roof at 780 E. 4th St., were targeted by the intruder(s) with laptops and checkbook stolen.

The incident was reported to police earlier today when employees discovered the damaged door and the missing items.

In addition to the theft in Colby, Shull said a second burglary was called in at an Oakley business, also Tuesday night. Details on the Oakley break-in were unavailable, but Shull said police hoped to have suspects in custody sometime today.

Adding to the urgency of finding the stolen items, Shull said a report from the Hays Police Department indicated that some of the checks were already being cashed in Hays.

"We believe our suspects are local," he said, adding that authorities also believe the Colby and Oakley break-ins are related.

Colby school district meets standards for progress

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Colby School District as a whole has met national and state standards. The school board found out the district and all of the buildings met average yearly progress in all of the categories at its Monday meeting.

Curriculum director Diana Wieland gave a presentation on the Kansas State Department of Education report card for the entire district.

She said the district and building met the necessary requirements in all aspects, and she was pleased they did so.

"The definition of average yearly progress is a method to determine if districts and the state are making progress in student achievement," Wieland said.

They must meet requirements in participation and performance on state assessments and attendance and graduation rates.

"We had to meet all the targets to

"The definition of average yearly progress is a method to determine if districts and the state are making progress in student achievement."

Diana Wieland,
curriculum director

meet AYP," she said.

Average yearly progress is part of President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" mandate and is something school districts must meet in addition to state requirements.

Meeting the yearly progress targets started in 2002, and Wieland said all students must be at proficient or above on state assessments by 2014.

The goal is to maintain what students achieve from year to year while elevating their performance

to the next level at the same time.

The board went into executive session three times to discuss a two-year contract extension for superintendent Kirk Nielsen.

The group approved the extension when it came back into open session.

They also heard updates on activities at Colby High School and Grade School during reports.

High school principal Rocky Robbins said National Honor Society induction was earlier this month and he was glad to see several board

members there.

Scholars bowl has already started and winter sports practices have begun.

Robbins added Eagle Street Bistro is planned for 7 p.m. Tuesday in the high school library.

Scheduling is going on, and they also recently had an Internet safety seminar for students.

Grade school principal Terrel Harrison said they also had a safety seminar for fourth and fifth grade students, which went very well.

The school celebrated Children's Book Week, and American Education Week.

Harrison said they had an informational session for parents on the new math curriculum, Everyday Math, that also went well, and have given out parent handbooks on the program.

Activities director Jeff Quenzer said fall sports are finally over, and winter activities are starting.

They're getting ready for the

Eagle Invitational wrestling tournament on Friday, Dec. 9 and Saturday, Dec. 10.

Eighteen teams will wrestle at three sites around Colby.

In other business, the board approved:

- The resignations of Cody Dale, Colby High School special ed paraprofessional and Brenda Kimberly, Colby Grade School secretary.

- The hiring of Brianna Moses, grade school paraprofessional and Becky Schiferl, grade school secretary.

- Supplemental contracts for Jamie Koch, Colby High School assistant scholars bowl coach; Sherry Kinderknecht, Colby Middle School scholars bowl co-coach; Marybeth Flanagan, high school girls "C" team basketball coach; T.J. Scholz as middle school head seventh grade girls basketball coach and Jordan Sharp, middle school girls assistant basketball coach.



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Helping others in need

Sharon Shirley's prekindergarten class from Sacred Heart School delivered their "bounty" to Genesis Thomas County. The children enjoy doing this community service project every year as they count, categorize and fill several Thanksgiving baskets for others. Left to right: Nataly Oliver, Seth Hutfles, Kory Finley, Shayleigh Bland, Isaac Rosales, Brenan Dixson and Jakob Tubbs.