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Saturday, Jan. 14

Wellness Fair has new test

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

With the holidays nearly over, the Wellness Fair committee is hoping everyone will consider a fresh start in 2006 by attending the fair from 9 to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14 at the Colby College Student Union.

As in year's past, the committee is again offering laboratory screening tests which are drawn prior to the event and results available the day of the fair, said Tracey Gilchrist, committee member.

Blood will be drawn at Citizens Medical Center 6 to 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 4; Thursday, Jan. 5; Saturday, Jan. 7; Monday, Jan. 9; and Tuesday, Jan. 10.

The lab tests available include the TSH (thyroid) at \$15; CBC/Lipid/Glucose, \$15 and PSA test for \$20, she said.

Anyone planning to have blood drawn will also need to register for a cost of \$5 at that time and all screenings will require a 10-12 hour fast.

"Laboratory tests for the Wellness Fair have been selected to give individuals an opportunity to monitor their level of wellness," said Jeanene Brown, committee member and education director at Citizens Medical Center.

"If abnormal results are obtained, participants are encouraged to share the results with their own physician for evaluation."

In addition, healthcare providers will be at the fair to share general explanations of test results at 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Jan. 14.

In determining which tests a participant might be interested in having, the committee has put together a brief description of each test.

The Complete Blood Count or CBC is a test that provides a complete blood count providing information about the blood.

The test can help a health professional evaluate symptoms (such as weakness, fatigue, or bruising) and diagnose conditions, such as anemia, infection, and many other disorders.

Another aspect of the CBC test is the Lipid Profile that tests the level of cholesterol — a type of fat (lipid) that the body uses to help build cells and produce certain hormones.

However, too much cholesterol in the blood may increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and coronary artery disease. When there is too much cholesterol in the blood it and other substances may begin to build up along the inside of the ar-

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Jeanene Brown,
Wellness Committee

tery walls, forming what is known as plaque. A large deposit of plaque may obstruct the flow of blood through the artery, affecting blood flow to the heart, brain, or other vital organs. If unstable plaque tears open, it may trigger the formation of a blood clot in the artery, which can result in a heart attack or stroke.

Another test, the prostate-specific Antigen or PSA is available for \$20.

Prostate-specific antigen is a substance released into a male's blood by his prostate gland. This test measures the amount of prostate-specific antigen in the blood.

The amount of prostate-specific Antigen in the blood normally increases as a man's prostate enlarges with age.

It is also increased by inflammation of the prostate gland and by prostate cancer.

The thyroid-stimulating hormone is a \$15 test and a new offering at the fair in 2006.

The thyroid-stimulating hormone is often used to detect a problem affecting the thyroid gland. An underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight gain, tiredness, dry skin, constipation, a feeling of being too cold, or frequent menstrual periods.

An overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight loss, rapid heart rate, nervousness, diarrhea, a feeling of being too hot, or irregular menstrual periods. The committee hopes that after participants review the specifics of tests available, they may want to request one or any combination.

Some tests may not be indicated or necessary for everyone, consequently, committee members encourage those wanting to take blood tests to discuss their needs with their physicians.

For questions, call either Brown at 460-4850; Committee Member Chris Carroll at 462-7511 or Gilchrist at 462-2602.



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Darrin Snyder of Oakley Motors put a dealer's tag on a 2005 Toyota Prius before taking it for a test drive Tuesday morning to

demonstrate the car's unique features — it has a gas engine with electric engine assist, making it a hybrid car.

Hybrid car uses less fuel

Hit the gas and the switch

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A high-tech car at an Oakley dealer is getting noticed for its unusual features.

Darrin Snyder, salesman at Oakley Motors, said a 2005 Toyota Prius is turning heads with its fuel economy and environmental friendliness.

"It burns less fuel than a regular car," Snyder said. "It has a gas engine with an electric engine assist so when it doesn't need the power of a gas engine it runs strictly off electricity."

Paying more than \$2 for gasoline, gasoline will be forgotten when driving the Prius.

"Basically it's good for the environment and with fewer toxins in the air there's less smog," Snyder said of the 1.5 liter engine. Gas mileage is much greater than traditional cars.

When running on electricity around town it averaged 55 miles per gallon and out on the highway it got about 45 miles per gallon."

Snyder said. The car far exceeded his expectations, particularly for short commutes around Oakley.

"There's times when I ran it in town and got 99.9 mile per gallon because it's running strictly off the electric engine. If you lived in a city or drive in town a lot I think you could pull 65 to 70 miles per gallon," he said.

Snyder is "very impressed" with the car's operation.

"It has a single gear transmission, compared to when you have a four- or five-speed automatic this one has one speed," Snyder said. "For instance, when you go to pass someone you feel a four-speed kick down out of overdrive to drive, but with this you don't feel that with one speed."

Snyder said while conventional cars have a normal breaking systems a hybrid car is similar to some four-wheeler's breaking system.

"While it does have a break pedal, it also has an engine break assist which slows with the engine speed," he said.

According to Toyota Corporation promotional information, when the brakes of a hybrid car are applied, heat from the brakes is transferred to the electrical engine and stored as energy to later be recycled.

One down side Snyder sees for hybrid cars is their acceleration rate is slower.

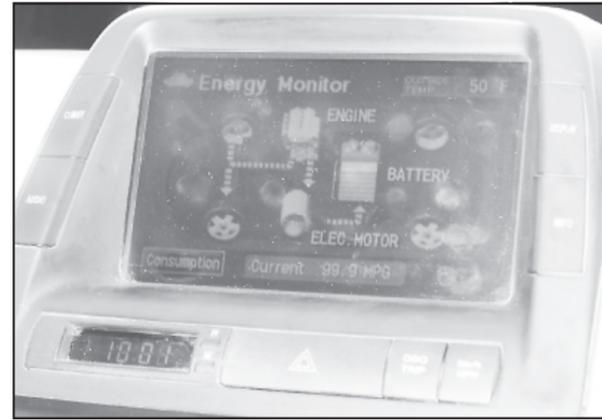
"There are still folks out there than demand fast acceleration. This compares to a Chrysler PT Cruiser or a Dodge Neon, and it's not going to set a track record," Snyder said.

Having driven the car for several days so he could become familiar with it, Snyder said there were a couple issues to "get used to."

"I had to get used to the gas engine shutting off at stop signs," he said. "It sounds like it died. As far as fuel usage, it's backwards.

Another unique feature to the car is that it does not require a key for entry or to start it.

A power button on the dash al-



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

A computer display in a gas-electric hybrid 2005 Toyota Prius on the lot at Oakley Motors showed 99.9 miles per gallon as it was being driven around town Tuesday morning.

lows the driver to see at a glance on a computer screen which engine is running and how much fuel is being consumed. The same screen prompts setting the audio and interior climate, and acts as an outside temperature display.

Snyder said over the Christmas holiday the hybrid car was test driven by a man from Dallas who has family in Oakley. He expects the car priced at \$24,995 will end up on the freeways in Texas in the very near future.

"I'm told in Dallas a used Prius is selling for \$1,000 to \$2,000 more than the original sticker price due to demand," Snyder said. "If you want a new one there's a six-month waiting period.

"When demand is high and dealers can't get their hands on one the consumer ends up paying more," Snyder said the demand for hybrid cars will continue.

"With the shortage the government is claiming on oil and with the ozone problems it will help," he said.

Snyder said hybrid vehicles are making their way off car manufacturers assembly lines in the United States as well as those overseas. He said Chrysler has a hybrid van but is only being sold to corporations as fleet vehicles.

"If you are big on saving the environment and want great gas mileage I'd say this is the perfect car," Snyder said.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

All in the family

Virginia, Jacob and Akaylah Trundle of Colby took advantage of the computers at Pioneer Memorial Library to spend time on the Internet as a Christmas break activity today. The library is open until 6 p.m. tonight and open until 8 p.m. Thursday. They will be open normal hours on Friday and Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The library will be closed Sunday and Monday for the New Year's holiday.

Thomas County included in federal disaster aid

Upon receiving a final damage report, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius requested federal assistance to help Thomas County and 17 other counties recover from the effects of the winter storm that hit the state just after the Thanksgiving holiday, Nov. 27 and 28.

The winter storm left about 1,200 people without power, including police departments, fire departments and hospitals and stranded motorists during one of the busiest travel weekends of the year.

"Local emergency responders and the National Guard should be commended for the assistance they provided to residents and travelers caught in the storm," said Sebelius.

"I'm requesting federal help in the recovery effort because of the damage to local infrastructure, particularly power lines and transformers."

The total estimated eligible damage in these 18 counties is more than \$10 million.

In addition to Thomas County,

other counties included are: Cheyenne, Decatur, Edwards, Ellis, Graham, Gove, Hodgeman, Ness, Norton, Pawnee, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Rush, Sheridan, Sherman, and Trego.

Four state agencies helped with response and recovery, as well as the American Red Cross.

The Kansas National Guard and non-profit relief agencies created temporary shelters for approximately 1,600 stranded travelers in western Kansas and mutual aid agreements between local rural electric cooperatives were activated in the affected areas.

Sebelius asked for the Public Assistance program to restore damaged infrastructure under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. These damages include such things as power lines and poles and extensive debris. Power has been restored to almost all affected areas, although many of the repairs are temporary measures.