

Getting ready



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Seen from across town, an oil drilling rig stands tall at Murfin Drilling in Colby. Clarence Denning, rig mechanic, said crews have been working on constructing the new rig, which should be completed and out in the field by the end of the month.

Attorneys in Dover lawsuit to visit Kansas

LAWRENCE (AP) — Attorneys who successfully blocked teaching about intelligent design in Dover, Pa., schools plan to participate in a forum on the University of Kansas campus later this month.

The event is scheduled for 1 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics and is sponsored by Kansas Citizens for Science and the National Center for Science Education, in Oakland, Calif. Both groups have criticized new science standards for Kansas public schools treating evolution as a flawed theory.

Participating in the forum are Eric Rothschild and Stephen G. Harvey, who filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of parents against the Dover school district for requiring that biology students hear information about intelligent design.

Intelligent design says an unspecified intelligent cause is the

best way to explain some orderly and complex features of the natural world.

But last month, U.S. District Judge John E. Jones ruled that intelligent design is merely repackaged creationism and the Dover policy represented an impermissible government endorsement of specific religious views.

"What we have to share about our experience in the Dover case is informative to anyone involved in the debate," Rothschild told the Lawrence Journal-World.

In his ruling, Jones concluded that intelligent design advocates' strategy included disparaging evolutionary theory to create a false impression that it is not scientifically solid.

Kansas' new standards, approved in November by the State Board of Education, say the theory that all life had a common origin has been

challenged in recent years by fossil evidence and molecular biology. They also describe "macroevolution" — the theory that one species can evolve into a new species — as controversial.

Neither statement represents the views of mainstream science.

Critics say the standards promote intelligent design, but supporters say they're trying to promote open classroom debate about evolution. Also, the standards contain a disclaimer saying promoting intelli-

gent design isn't the goal.

State board members who supported the new standards contend the Pennsylvania decision isn't applicable in Kansas, largely because the Dover board mandated the presentation of intelligent design.

"We're not requiring anything to be done," said Kansas board member Kathy Martin, of Clay Center. "What we're doing in Kansas is allowing freedom of ideas, that are scientifically based, to be discussed in science class."

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