



COLBY FREE PRESS

Snowstorm top priority with county

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Making plans for a blizzard and stranded motorists took top priority at Monday's meeting of the Thomas County Commission.

Thomas County Emergency Preparedness Director Jim Engel met with Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen. The commissioners signed an order allowing Engel the option to apply for state disaster money for issues raised by this week's blizzard.

The storm started shortly after midnight Monday and the order gives Engel authority as emergency director to oversee and interact with others making provisions available to those needing assistance.

Engel said he was in contact with the American Red Cross over the weekend and made a trip to Hays to secure more cots.

"I have 176 cots in storage and the Armory also has cots," Engel said.

The commissioners also signed a termination order which will vacate Engel's authority for seeking aid without further approval by them.

"Jim's doing a lot of precautionary work to make sure we are ready for a March blizzard," Evans said.

By 10:30 a.m. today, the Kansas Highway Patrol closed Interstate 70 at Colby to westbound traffic.

In addition to road closings, county officials reported slide-offs on secondary and major roadways throughout the county and area.

Road and bridge supervisor Clair Schrock also talked with the commissioners Monday morning.

Schrock told the board the purchase of a copy machine they'd approved by a three-way split needed revisited. The appraiser's office, road and bridge department and community corrections office were approved to purchase a new copier for the basement offices.



J. Engel



C. Schrock

Schrock said the staff of the community corrections told him they didn't want to participate in payment of the machine.

The commissioners approved the change to make the purchase a two-way split between the appraiser's office and road department.

Schrock also talked with the board about the fact Thomas County in the past has shared equipment with Cheyenne County's road and bridge department.

"Wouldn't you know it, they were using the recycler and it broke down," Schrock said.

Through a gentleman's agreement, the two counties have shared major items of equipment. The recycler which has 1,300 hours on its motor was overhauled 600 hours ago and is 15 years old.

Schrock said he'd started looking at the cost of repairing the machine and preliminary estimates are about \$13,000.

"I think we've learned our lesson now about overhauled motors," Steele said.

Schrock said Cheyenne County Road and Bridge Department Director Dave Flemming told him that county would share in the cost of the repairs.

"They aren't afraid to help out," Schrock said.

The commissioners directed Schrock to get some comparison costs about new and used equipment and tabled the discussion about the asphalt recycler.

Winter's last blast



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/ Colby Free Press

Although the Colby High School marquee at the corner of Range and Davis Avenue says it is spring break, it sure didn't look like it Monday, which was the first day of spring. A snowstorm so far has left 8 to 12 inches of snow across western Kansas. The Na-

tional Weather Service forecast is calling for another 3-7 inches today, and 1-2 more overnight with winds between 15-25 mph. The snow is expected to end by Tuesday morning. More snow is forecast Wednesday.

Former Colby physician dies at age 89

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

A former Colby physician died Friday in Denver at the age of 89.

Dr. Victor H. Hildyard, father of Colby physician Dr. Victor H. Hildyard, II, practiced family medicine with a speciality in ear, nose and throat in Colby from the late 1970s and into the 1980s.

In addition to his son, Victor, Dr. Hildyard has two daughters, Sandy Squibb, who owns Northwest Kan-

sas Hearing in Colby and another daughter, Karen, living in Denver. Another son preceded his father in death. Prior to moving to Colby, Dr. Hildyard lived and practiced in Denver, specializing as an otolaryngologist (treatment of the ear).

Toward the end of his practice in Denver, said Dr. LaDonna Regier, family practitioner at Colby Medical and Surgical Center, he moved to Colby not only to be closer to his son, but also to lend his expertise as an ear specialist.

"Dr. Hildyard was a highly respected physician," Regier said, "and one thing that stood out about him was that he was a kind man."

Even after his retirement and move back to Denver, Regier said, he would always visit her at the clinic.

"He would remind me of being an instrument for God and to keep the faith," she said.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m., Thursday, at Peace Lutheran Church, 5675 Field St.,

Arvada, Colo. 80002. Inurnment will be at Fairmount Cemetery. Contributions may be made in Dr. Hildyard's memory to the University of Colorado Hospital, Office of Development and Charitable Giving, Attn: Ear, Nose and Throat Department, P.O. Box 6508, Mail Stop F485, Aurora, Colo. 80045.

Olinger Crown Hill Mortuary and Cemetery, 7777 W. 29th Ave., Wheatridge, Colo., 80033 is in charge of arrangements. More details will appear later in the week.

Colby Chamber of Commerce banquet draws 200 people

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Members of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce learned why they are "lucky to live in Kansas" Friday during the annual chamber banquet.

The event, held at City Limits Convention Center, featured the swearing in of new chamber board members, a new president taking over, award presentations and entertainment by author Marci Penner.

New chamber president Todd Stramel assumed duties from outgoing president Charles Schwanke.

Before turning the podium over to Stramel, Schwanke said the turnout for this year's event was more than 200 people.

"This beats last year's banquet all to pieces," he said.

One of Stramel's first duties as chamber president was announcing the 2005 Chamber Community Service Award to Brian Staats, a certified public accountant with Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball.

Board member Darris DeGood presented the 2005 Ambassador Business Person of



Marci Penner was the guest speaker at the Chamber event Friday

the Year to Staats, and announced it was the first time both awards went to the same person.

Stramel said Staats is a former chamber president and is still on the chamber board. He manages the office at Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball and made partner in the firm. He is active in Colby Rotary and is a Paul Harris Fellow. Staats helped organize

the Colby Promotion and Strategic Planning committees, and has worked with the Proactive Planning committee.

He is also involved with many other activities.

Stramel then swore in new board members Randy Wilson and Quintin Flanagan, and then gave his first address as chamber president.

He touched on the banquet's theme of "Lucky to live in Kansas."

He said the answer is simple.

"It's our way of life," Stramel said, adding it's the things people take for granted, that city people only dream about.

"Living here has never been easy. It has



T. Stramel



B. Staats



Q. Flanagan



R. Wilson

been a fight for people who have lived here since day one."

The evening was capped off with a presentation by author Marci Penner, who penned "The Kansas Guidebook for Explorers."

Penner talked about her travels to all 627 incorporated towns in the state, and some of the things she learned

She said Kansas will never be a top tourist destination state, but could be a draw to explorers.

"It's an audience I think we can grow," Penner said. She gave an example of what explorers do.

In her travels, she found Lizard Lips, a

combination bait shop, deli and more in Toronto, in Woodson County.

The owner was going to take out a \$5,000 loan to pay her employees over the winter, but Penner made the suggestion 1,000 explorers could go and spend \$5 each. The challenge was a success.

Another challenge was set by a man who wanted to bowl at all of the bowling alleys in the state.

"Being an explorer is searching," Penner said.

"It's the people we are, it's who we are. I think explorers like that."

She added Lizard Lips is an example of how spending can make a difference.

"Our dollars make a difference," she said. "And where we choose to spend them makes a big difference. We should want to make a difference."

Penner also talked about how Colby is lucky because it's one of the larger communities in the region.

She said 92 percent of the towns in the state are smaller than Colby, and less than 65 percent of Kansas' towns have populations of 800 or less.

County courthouse closed due to weather

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Blizzard conditions prompted Thomas County Commissioners to close the courthouse at noon on Monday and send everyone home.

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms said courthouse employees were told to go home after Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen ended their meeting mid-morning.

"It was a short meeting," Harms

said of very few items on the agenda. Approved during the meeting were minutes from the March 13 meeting and the decision for all three commissioners to attend a meeting at City Limits on March 29 to talk about information exchange systems.

The commissioners will also attend a meeting which will take place at Colby Community College on April 12 for northwest Kansas county officials.

"It's a mini Kansas Association of

Counties meeting," Harms said.

In other business:

- Harms reviewed the 2006 dues which have been paid out for various county offices.

- Emergency Service Director Ken Gatlin talked about oxygen bottles and was instructed to get more information about renting or buying them.

- The March market update on natural gas was reviewed.

- Township annual reports for West Hale was accepted, but more

information for Wendell and Kingery is needed. Harms is to get the information.

- Courthouse custodian Jim McGuire was asked to contact Roofmasters about issues with the courthouse roof.

The county commissioners declined McGuire's suggestion to buy \$600 worth of window stabilizers and told that props such as rulers were sufficient.

All meetings are open to the public. For questions, call 460-4500.

Council meets Tuesday

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

The Colby City Council meets Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in council chamber to consider accepting a bid on system for the new wastewater treatment plant; discussion regarding guidelines for use of the city sales tax for economic development and fence around the recycling center.

In addition, the council will

decide whether or not to rezone land near the PetroLube site from residential to industrial; approve an ordinance amending subdivision regulations requiring sidewalks in new subdivision except industrial; and approving the first amendment to state revolving loan fund agreement.

All meetings are open to the public. For an agenda or questions, call 460-4410 or stop by City Hall, 585 N. Franklin, Ave.