



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Meetings will focus on saving Colby museum

Three town meetings to save Colby's Prairie Museum of Art and History will be held at 5:30 p.m. the next three Mondays, March 27, April 3 and April 10 at the museum. "With increasing costs of doing business and diminishing income from donations and earned income sources, the museum has been forced to cut services, hours and benefits," said director Sue Taylor. "It has been necessary to eliminate most of the educational programming for both adults and children."

In fact, Taylor said in the long term, continued lack of support might mean closing the museum.

"Community participation is needed to help find solutions to present and future funding needs for the Thomas County Historical Society and Prairie Museum of Art and History," she said.

The historical society raises over two-thirds of the museum's money. Out of the \$200,000 operating budget, Taylor said, \$65,000 is received from the county and the rest is raised through donations and earned income.

Taylor said the historical society operates the 24-acre complex next to Interstate 70.

Included on the site are six historic structures, the museum building, a metal storage building and a 10-acre native grass exhibit. The

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Sue Taylor,  
museum director

main museum building, completed in 1988, is 22,500 square feet.

The collections include the 30,000 artifacts in the Kuska Collection and the local history collections of 10,000 artifacts. The Thomas County Historical Society is also the repository for Thomas County history and the archives contain a conservative estimate of over 60,000 images and documents pertaining to local history.

Building on almost a half-century-long tradition of excellence, the Thomas County Historical Society, organized in 1959, first opened the doors of the museum in 1975.

"Today, the Prairie Museum of Art and History, serves as a quality cultural institution that attracts both resident and visitor populations," she said.

## Fan-tastic



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Dozens of Colby Lady Trojans fans cheered on the team Wednesday during Colby's 64-62 overtime loss to Odessa, Texas, in quarterfinal action at the NJCAA National Tournament at the Bi-

centennial Center in Salina. Colby plays in the consolation bracket at 8 p.m. today. For more about Wednesday's game, turn to page 8.

# Landfill supervisor tells commissioners his wish list

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Thomas County Landfill Supervisor Larry Jumper talked with commissioners Monday about equipment and land at the site.

"It's been a long haul getting into the new pit," Jumper said of the new debris pit constructed at the landfill east of Colby.

Jumper said the state has approved the new 200-foot by 400-foot pit and inspectors approved it Thursday.

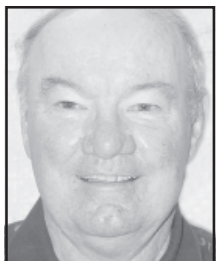
"As soon as the state gets all five copies of the (inspection) sheets we'll soon be able to move down into the new pit," he said.

The cost of opening a new trash pit can be as much as \$150,000.

Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen are required to take bids to have someone to close the vacated pit when the new one opens.



L. Jumper



R. Evans

The process of closing a pit entails trash compaction, wetting the area down to the point there is no further water penetration, and laying four and one-half feet of dirt on the site.

The cost of closing the pit could run up to \$250,000.

Evans said in order to keep the cost of closing the pit as low as possible, county workers would do some of the work.

Jumper also talked with the commissioners about the state's requirement that land-

fill pits be covered after each day's work to try avoid debris blowing away. Typically, the daily coverage consists of dirt compacted over the area to the depth of 6- to 12-inches.

"I have talked to other people since we've talked about alternate daily cover and we've got some options," Jumper said, "such as dirt or compost and we could save dirt."

He said if material from the landfill can be used the county should look first at that option.

"Why can't we use a screen like chicken wire and put it on at night and take it off the next morning and put in more trash?" Evans asked.

Jumper said the Kansas Department of Health and Environment "is open" to an alternative option to dirt such as screening.

"Even if we could use it 60 percent of the time that would save 60 percent of our dirt," he said.

Jumper also told commissioners the need for another loader in the future at the landfill.

"I just wanted to put a bug in your ear," he said.

The landfill is currently operating with two loaders, the oldest having about 7,000 hours on the engine and the newer having about 4,000 hours on its engine.

"Hopefully we don't have to do any major excavation," Evans said.

Jumper said he favors buying a third loader to offset the use of the other two. But the commissioners favored trading in the older of the two and buying either a new or used loader. Jumper also told commissioners the compactor at the landfill has 91,000 hours on it and the transmission and engine have already been overhauled.

"I'm wondering if now isn't the time to look at getting a new one," Jumper said.

"I don't want to be buying two big pieces of equipment at once," Steele said.

Jumper said if he had to choose between the two items he's choose the compactor.

Christiansen told Jumper he would like for him to "look around and see what's available" and report back to the board.

In other business relating to the landfill, Jumper said landfill well water testing will be done April 26 and that previous tests showed "no contamination."

He also asked commissioners for permission to purchase a refrigerator for the landfill building so staff could have a place to store lunches and drinking water.

"We've needed a place to put clean drinking water and food," Jumper said. "And if someone has been loading trees and asks for a cold drink we can't help them."

The commissioners gave Jumper permission to purchase a new refrigerator from Beringer Hardware's lowest bid of \$700. The refrigerator will include a filter for the well water it will use for drinking water and ice.

## Armory renovations nearing completion

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The Colby Kansas National Guard Armory is starting to look a little different on the outside. Inside is no exception.

1st Sgt. Manuel Rubio with the Det. 2, 170th Maintenance Company, said renovations are coming along and expects the completion sometime in May.

Work began Oct. 17, 2005. A wall between the restrooms was removed, along with a wall in the office to make one office bigger.

Restrooms were completely rebuilt, along with the training room. Rubio said offices and classrooms were insulated and drywalled. The training room also received its own control panel for the air conditioning and heating system.

New windows and doors are installed and an upgrade to the heating and cooling systems.

"The building will more energy efficient because of it," Rubio said.

The only upgrade to the shop area was a new garage door and

windows. A new fire alarm system is also going in.

"That's something we didn't have in the past," he said.

Other upgrades include telecom, new ceilings and floor coverings in the offices, and a fresh coat of paint in the gym.

Rubio said it's possible to put a small computer lab in the training room.

"More and more soldiers are bringing their computers with them," he said, "and a lab would help with online training."

This summer, Rubio said an open house is being planned. It may be held the weekend of the Thomas County Free Fair parade in August. Colby's guard unit was asked by the fair board to be grand marshals for the parade.

Colby's armory wasn't the only Guard facility in northwest Kansas to get an upgrade. The Norton armory had similar work finished four months ago.

The Goodland armory underwent minor renovations. Rubio said that building has a new roof, heating and cooling improvements and some new doors and windows.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Dustin Diederich, an electrician with Walters Electric of Ludell, worked on installing a fire alarm at the Colby Kansas Army National Guard armory today.

## Colby police warn of suspected prowler

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Colby Police suspect there is a burglar on the prowl in the northeast part of town and advise residents to take precautions to guard their property.

"A citizen reported Monday seeing footprints in the snow going from car to car all along East Ninth Street," said Detective Sgt. Gary Shull.

"The person may have been looking for property or maybe keys in the ignition," he said.

By the time the incident was reported and a policeman responded, too much snow had fallen covering any tracks, Shull said.

Although no property was reported stolen, police still want everyone in that area to keep their guard up.

"Earlier in March and on three different nights," Shull said, "the Colby Country Club was the victim of burglary, theft and criminal damage."

The first two nights there were no signs of forced entry; however, on the third night, extensive damage was done to the front doors.

**"Earlier in March and on three different nights the Colby Country Club was the victim of burglary, theft and criminal damage."**

Gary Shull,  
detective sergeant

A police officer patrolling that area discovered the damage at 2 a.m.

Another police officer had checked that area about 12:30 a.m. and nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

"All three times, there appeared to have been liquor taken and some cash was stolen the first night," he said.

Shull said the suspect may have walked to the club from the East Ninth Street area by crossing the railroad tracks.

Due to these recent burglaries, the police encourage residents to call 460-4460 with any suspicious activities.