



COLBY FREE PRESS

Board to take action on Hildyard

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

Members of the state's board of healing arts are expected to take action Saturday regarding a Colby doctor.

Presiding officer for the Kansas Board of Healing Arts Edward Gaschler in January found 16 of the 19 allegations of misconduct against Dr. Victor Hildyard did not violate any provisions of the Healing Art Act.

Hildyard and his attorney, Mike O'Neal of Hutchinson, will speak by telephone to the board Saturday. At the board of healing arts meet-

ing will be the 15 members and their attorneys, David Steed of Wichita and Diane Bellquist of Topeka.

O'Neal said Thursday he was notified the board's attorney wants the board to modify the Gaschler's recommendation on some of the patient care counts and order Hildyard to pay the costs of the board's investigation and the nine-day hearing held in October 2005.



Dr. Hildyard

According to statute, "if the agency head disagrees with the presiding officer's determinations, then he must be able to support by substantial competent evidence the reasons for the disagreement."

"We, of course, will argue that the hearing officer's decision was fair and based on the facts presented at the hearing where he was in a position to see and hear each witness and evaluate their credibility or lack thereof," O'Neal said. O'Neal is confident of Gaschler's findings.

"The Board of Healing Arts is

not in that position, being limited to reading a transcript of testimony," he said. "I expect the board to adhere to the findings and rulings of the hearing officer and if they don't, I plan to file an appeal of any modification with the district court."

Executive Director of the Kansas Board of Healing Arts Larry Buening said there are typically three outcomes when a doctor's license is scrutinized.

Those outcomes could be there was no violation of the Kansas Healing Arts Act; there was a violation but the board will take no

action against the doctor; or there was one or more violation and the board takes action to revoke, suspend, censure, fine or otherwise limit the medical license.

"Dr. Hildyard has had to foot his own bill in defending against these charges including the Board of Healing Arts hearing and the prior hearing where the hospital (Citizens Medical Center) took his privileges," O'Neal said. "The hearing officer found the hospital's actions to have been flawed from the outset and so fraught with violations of Hildyard's due process rights as to make the proceedings

a sham," he said.

"Still he had to pay to defend himself and now the board's attorney wants him to pay \$70,000 for the flawed Board of Healing Arts investigation and hearing expenses on top of that."

In addition to the board's attorney recommending modification and fines for Hildyard, the board's meeting will include Gaschler's initial order following the formal 10-day hearing Oct. 5-17, 2005, held in Colby and Topeka. The case involved more than 20 people testifying either for the Board of Healing Arts or Hildyard.

Commitment to Kansas would show as president

Editor's Note. This is the second of a two-part series about the two finalists for president of Colby Community College. Today's story is about Clayton Tatro from Garden City Community College. He spoke Thursday in Colby.

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Area residents got their chance to get up close and personal with the second candidate for the Colby Community College president job.

Clayton Tatro answered questions during a public forum at the Frahm Theater on the college campus.

Currently the chief academic officer at Garden City Community College, and has been since 1995. Tatro started teaching social science and psychology at the college.

When the dean of instruction stepped down in the spring 1998, he was asked to become the interim dean. He served as interim until February 1999 when he became the permanent dean.

The title later changed to chief academic officer.

Tatro grew up in Glasgow, which has a population of 500. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from Pittsburg State University.

He answered questions Thursday on everything from accommodat-

ing non-traditional students to funding extracurricular activities.

Tatro also addressed why he wants to come to Colby.

"My family and I are very committed to Kansas," he said. "We want to stay in Kansas."

He and his wife Melissa have two sons, Nathan and Garrett.

"There is something about Western Kansas," Tatro said, adding "its spirit and entrepreneurship make it what it is. I like what I've found in western Kansas."

They want to stay close to family, and he said they only want to make one move before their children enter middle or high school.

"We very much want to be here," Tatro said.

He has experience with building projects.

He said he has no experience as a president of a college but has been through the construction of several new buildings at the Garden City campus.

A new residence hall, student center and currently another new building is under construction.

"I have that experience in mind," Tatro said.

Colby Community College is in the process of raising money for a new wellness center, he said he is excited about the possibilities it brings.

He said Garden City's school is similar in size to Colby, but many



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Clayton Tatro, chief academic officer at Garden City Community College, is one of two candidates for Colby Community College president. Tatro spoke during a public forum at the college Thursday.

of the programs are different.

"The biggest differences are the vet tech, dental hygiene and physical therapy assistant programs at Colby."

Tatro has an interest in nontraditional students.

"A school can target nontraditional students by making sure course offerings are what they need, and are offered at convenient times, like nights and weekends. How can we put together the best package for those returning students?" Tatro said.

Course scheduling is the place to begin, and returning to school is a "big leap" for those students.

Tatro said he is still learning about Colby Community College's agriculture department,

but "It is and should be a mainstay of the school. It should be 'implicit' to have a strong ag program."

Vet tech is one area where the school could develop a niche market, and build on that, and set it apart.

He answered the question why he should be the college's new president. "It all comes down to relationship-building — energy, enthusiasm, human connections, integrity, passion and commitment. I'm crazy enough to want to do this," he said.

He's also heard people talk about how great Colby is.

"I want to be a part of that," Tatro said.

Greeley County, towns ponder consolidation

By Associated Press

Some city and county leaders in parts of western Kansas are trying a novel approach to combat a trend toward declining populations in rural communities.

Tribune, a small town near the Colorado border, has proposed to fuse its government with that of Greeley County. Residents say that would allow more efficient use of staff and equipment and give dying towns a chance at survival.

"There is a frontier mind-set — a survival, tough, entrepreneurial mind-set. I would credit that spirit as being a part of what has caused them to say, 'Hey, we have to be smarter and do it better,'" Terry Woodbury, president of Kansas Communities LLC, which specializes in county and city development, said Thursday.

"Their effort to unify city and county government come from their desire to use their resources well. They simply believe they have no room for waste."

Woodbury said over the past 18 months, civic leaders have been able to put together a small-scale plan to unify the governments, strengthening the community without drastic job or budget cuts.

More than 150 people — about 12 percent of the county — recently attended a grass-roots meeting to discuss the plan.

"We think if the state would get out of the way and quit micromanaging communities, they could figure it out on their own," said Randall Allen, president of the Kansas Association of Counties.

Allen said that with the exception of perhaps Illinois and Ohio, no other state has as many government units per capita as Kansas.

"The state needs to get out of the way and let locals begin to experiment and discuss alternatives," he said. "For being such strong, individualistic, prairie populists, we sure love our government. We have a lot of it."

Perhaps suggestive of the challenges found at the state and federal level, a bill introduced in the Kan-

sas Legislature to streamline the merger process breezed through the House but got bogged down in the Senate.

Negotiators are attempting to reconcile a House bill designed with Greeley County and Tribune in mind and a more encompassing Senate bill that would remove much of the state oversight in a variety of government consolidations.

"It's really indicative of the changes we need to make," said Dan Epp, publisher of the Greeley County Republican, a weekly newspaper.

The population of Tribune has dwindled from 918 in 1990 to 758 in 2004, according to U.S. Census data. The population of Greeley County has likewise fallen by more than 400, making it the most sparsely populated county in the state.

Unification is happening across Kansas, with several school districts merging along the Nebraska and Kansas border this summer. But rarely, if ever, have rural communities attempted whole-scale government unification to ward off declining population and slowing economies.

"Believe they've discovered that of all the consolidations in the United States, there is no other rural example," Woodbury said. "These have all been urban-dominated areas."

Officials in Tribune took their unification model from Wyandotte County, an urban setting that had witnessed a similar decline in population and economic viability. The unification effort there about 10 years ago helped stop the downward spiral.

"If you look at rural America and certainly small communities, part of it is we're looking for is a different story that says we can survive as a community," Epp said. "And we don't find those stories in Washington or Topeka."

House consolidation bill: HB 2809
Senate consolidation bill: SB 379

Museum planning meetings show progress

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The effort to improve Colby's Prairie Museum of Art and History's future is progressing. The second of three meetings was held Monday at the museum about those efforts.

Approximately 45 people attended, many from the first meeting, and a few newcomers.

Facilitator Duane Cheney reviewed the museum's areas of operation — finances, facilities, personnel, programming and public relations/marketing. The crowd then broke into the same small groups under those topic areas, as they did at the first meeting.

Museum Director Sue Taylor said the third meeting, at 5:30 p.m. Monday, groups will present their ideas as the final step in the process.

After the last meeting, the ideas will be prioritized, and put into a comprehensive plan the museum will use.

"It won't be possible to do everything, but they do have plenty of ideas to choose from," Taylor said.

Through the two meetings, she said two needs have come to the forefront.

"I hope the community gets behind it financially or with their volunteer help," Taylor said.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Duane Cheney, director of Western Prairie RC and D, acting as facilitator at a town hall meeting to decide the future of the Prairie Museum of Art and History, talked with one of the groups at Monday's meeting.

"Progress has been made," she said, "and the groups are asking good questions."

Taylor also talked about the identity and perception of the cultural landscape. She said people identify different places with their cultural institutions. Examples are like the Louvre and Eiffel Tower in Paris,

and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Colby's museum could be part of its identity.

"This institution belongs to the community and we are what you want us to be," Taylor said.

The museum is on its "bare minimum budget" at \$165,000 a year.

That supports two full-time and four part-time employees. In 1985, the museum had four full-time employees.

Past numbers show the museum has had more than 10,000 visitors a year in the past five years. The lowest attendance in that time period was last year's 6,219.

Abandoned child found in Colby, mother arrested

The Colby Police Department is investigating an incident involving a handicapped child left alone at home.

A preliminary report today from Detective Sgt. Gary Shull said the grade-school aged child, who cannot speak or walk, was found home alone at about 1:30 a.m. Thursday by a relative of the child and a police officer.

Shull said after the mother was arrested in Ellsworth County late Wednesday, au-

thorities started looking for the child.

The child was taken into protective custody by the police department and placed in a foster hom.

Reports will be given to County Attorney Andrea Wyrick to consider the filing of a child in need of care petition with the court.

The police department and Social and Rehabilitative Services will continue the investigation.