



Sebelius starts campaign

TOPEKA (AP) — After stockpiling campaign funds, bragging about the state’s improved economy and waiting for the Legislature to leave town, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius was ready to acknowledge the obvious — that she’s running for re-election.

Though a Democrat in a traditionally Republican state, she appeared to begin her quest for a second four-year term in a strong position. She’d even gained some national notoriety, named by Time magazine last year as one of the nation’s five best governors.

But she wasn’t bringing a running mate to her kickoff rally Friday on the south steps of the Statehouse. She still hadn’t settled on a potential successor to Lt. Gov. John Moore, who announced last week that he planned to retire.

She must make that decision before the June 12 candidate filing deadline, and her aides have said she’ll do it next week. Before Friday’s rally, she was dropping only broad hints about who was being considered.

“We’re looking for as broad a background as possible and as much expertise,” she said after an event Wednesday in Olathe. “We have got lots of good choices — that’s the good news.”

Sebelius’ kickoff rally comes a day after legislators adjourned their annual session. For months, Sebelius declined to talk publicly about a re-election campaign, professing to concentrate on her legislative agenda.

Lawmakers approved a three-year, \$541 million school finance mandate in hopes of meeting a Kansas Supreme Court mandate to improve funding for public schools and enacted tougher sentences for sex offenders, including 25 years for some first-time offenders who prey on children.

Republicans watched with frustration as Sebelius garnered favorable publicity from both initiatives, and as her administration took credit for the state showing job growth in 24 of the past 26 months.

Six GOP candidates are seeking the right in the Aug. 1 primary to challenge Sebelius in the Nov. 7 general election, including Sen. Jim Barnett, from Emporia; former Kansas House Speaker Robin Jernison, of Healy, and Ken Canfield, of Overland Park, the founder of an institute on fathering.

Barnett is running with Sen. Susan Wagle, of Wichita, while Canfield’s candidate for lieutenant governor is House Education Committee Chairwoman Kathe Decker, of Clay Center.

She began this year with more than \$1.75 million in campaign funds, and there was little doubt she could raise much more.



American flags tower over Colby’s Memorial Day service last year. Members of Colby’s American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars install the flags before the service which has been held for decades.

COLBY FREE PRESS FILE PHOTO

Time to serve again

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

When Dale Deaver was discharged after World War II he knew his service to his country was still not over.

For the past 40 years, Deaver has informed Colby about fellow veterans. Deaver, 81, is one of several area veterans who prepare Colby for the annual Memorial Day services.

“It’s a part of your service,” he said.

Since the mid 1960s, Deaver starts his Memorial Day while others are still getting out of bed. At about 6 a.m. Deaver and other members of the American Legion post and Veterans of Foreign Wars, start installing nearly 400 flags. Ten flags are placed at Sacred Heart Cemetery, 26 flags are at Beulah Cemetery and 350 smaller flags are placed on graves.

“The flags are at half staff to start. After services we raise them

to the top. That is how it is supposed to be done,” Deaver said.

Deaver said he does not know who determined it to be done that way, but he is following a longtime Colby tradition.

Then at about 4 p.m., flags are lowered and put away for another year.

Deaver admits his age is making the annual job more difficult. He said he is grateful for the assistance from the local Boy Scouts.

“Us old men are getting to be too old,” he laughed.

Deaver remembers when Memorial Day was recognized on May 30. Services were held on whatever day of the week that was before the last Monday in May was determined as the official holiday.

Deaver said there is no difference between American Legion and



Deaver

Memorial Day 2006

Colby’s Memorial Day service will be held at 10 a.m. at Beulah Cemetery beginning with the parade of veterans. The honor guard will have representatives from every American war dating back to World War II. All four branches of

the service will also be represented. The speaker will be Jim Griffin, commander of the American Legion Post.

The American Legion will be open after the ceremonies for refreshments.

VFW members on Memorial Day. Although the plan was for the groups to alternate preparing for Memorial Day, the groups have always done it together.

“We are all one person,” he said. “We all go out and help each other.”

Over the years, Deaver has seen his generation of veterans slowly decrease in numbers and other wars start around the world. Deaver served in the Army Air Corps.

“When I was discharged in ‘46, I thought we did something good,” he said. “But then a few years later, we were in Korea.”

After that, the United States was involved in Vietnam and now in

Iraq. No matter what the circumstances are, it does not change Deaver’s perception of being a Veteran.

“I’m proud to be an American,” he said.

Knowing what he is going to do on the last Monday in May has not been a problem for Deaver. He said he found time to do his job of farming and contribute to service groups and Memorial Day. He wishes younger veterans would join the groups to continue Colby’s Memorial Day tradition.

“It makes you proud knowing you are a vet.”

Early increased use of water concerns city of Colby officials

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

Colby residents might want to pay attention to water usage now, according to city officials.

The city is already seeing an increase in water usage that may lead to conservation efforts.

“Last year, we didn’t hit the 3.5 million gallons for three consecutive days until the latter part of July,” said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. “We are hitting those numbers in May.”

Armstrong wants residents to be aware water usage is increasing and to limit usage. Should residents fail to heed the warnings, the city council could be forced to look at other alternatives.

For example, if today’s water usage is more than 3.5 million gal-

lons, then Colby will be in a water watch. A water watch means the city is asking residents and commercial businesses to monitor their usage carefully.

Should the water usage climb to 4 million gallons for three consecutive days or more, then the city is in a water warning.

Under a water warning, city council could decide to go with a lawn watering system based on addresses. In addition, council could recommend no outdoor watering between the hours of 10 a.m. and 9 p.m.

“This would still be voluntary and not mandatory for residents and businesses in the water warning phase, but it should be taken as a serious warning,” she said.

In the event the water usage goes over 4.5 million gallons a day for three days in a row, then state law triggers mandatory conservation.

“This would include really serious increases in water rates and prohibiting water usage during certain hours.”

It could also get expensive in the event someone ignores the mandates.

Armstrong said fines could range from \$25 to \$250 every day someone violates the law.

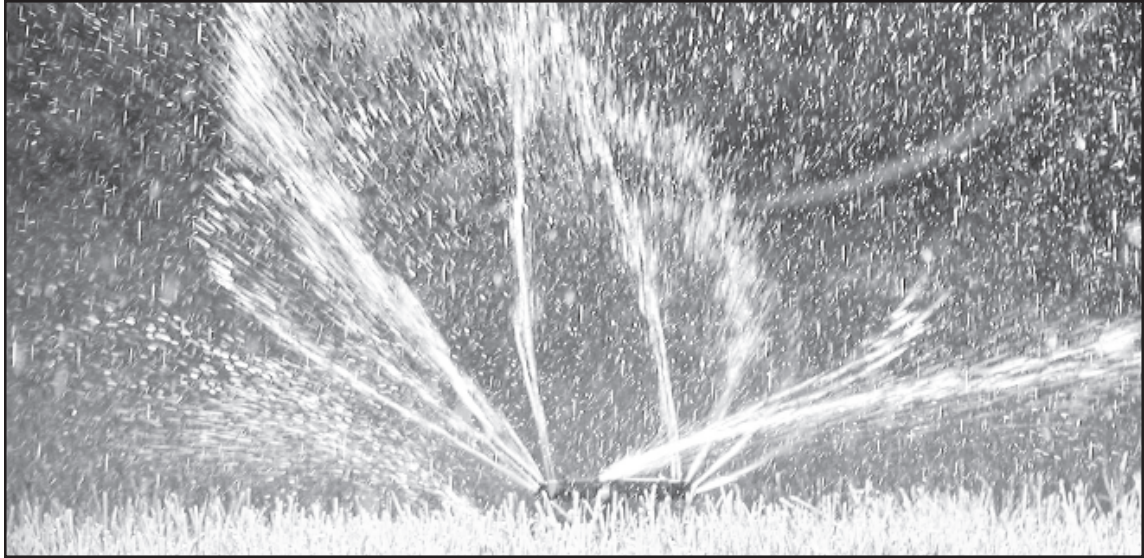
“The city council decides the fines and how it works in the event we go into the water emergency phase.”

Council can also raise the water rates. In 2004, council raised rates from 70 cents per 1,000 gallons to \$2 per 1,000 gallons. Commercial businesses were also affected by increasing from 63 cents per 1,000 gallons to \$2 per 1,000 gallons.

“Since the average commercial business uses between three and four million gallons a month, that is substantial,” Armstrong said.

The city is allocated 762 million gallons of water per year by the state. If the city were to go over that amount, the state would fine Colby \$1,000 a day. Thus far, the city has used more than 100 million gallons.

“We cannot have 4.5 million gallons of usage each day for 30 days



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Daytime lawn watering is one reason for increased water usage city of Colby officials have seen. Increased water usage may cause the city council to enforce conservation efforts.

or more and do that for four months,” she said. Armstrong suggests people curtail usage. One idea is to water lawns early in the morning before 10 a.m. or wait and wa-

ter after 7 p.m. to limit evaporation.

The city is already looking at water conservation regarding the baseball field, and other municipal-owned property.

“As everyone knows, we are in a drought condition,” she said. “Because we are experiencing the higher temperatures, we need to start conserving now.”

Skills benefit firemen

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The summer fire season has arrived and the Colby Fire Department has the experience and equipment to deal with it.

Five of the department’s full-time members have been active at least 20 years, and one volunteer, Jeff Unger, has 25 years of experience, said Fire Chief Bob McLemore.

Unger joined the fire department in July 1980.

“He’s the longest serving firefighter we have,” McLemore said. “He’s a good officer, a good firefighter.”

He said Unger is one example of the expertise each of the firefighters brings to the department.

Ross Carney is the second longest, having joined the fire department in 1981. He is one of the department’s six full-time firefighters.

Former firefighter Floyd Highland served the department for 30 years, and is now retired.

Of the other full-timers at the department, McLemore joined in 1985; Assistant Fire Chief Rick Dickman joined the department in January 1986 with Don Phillips and J.L. Ellis.

The other full-time firefighter is Shawn Hankins, who joined in 2000.

Although some of the names have not changed over the years, many changes in equipment firefighters wear to the technology available to fight fires has.

In 1985, firefighters wore a bunker coat, helmet and boots. Since then, their attire has evolved into being covered from head to foot, a hood under their helmets and each use a self-contained breathing apparatus.

“Firefighters are better protected now than they’ve ever been,” McLemore said. He said the breathing equipment is probably the biggest change.

“Now we use it all the time,” he said.

“You used to tough it out, breathe the smoke and do your job.”

With the use of more plastics in homes and cars, the breathers have become a must. He said when plastics catch fire, they can give off toxic chemicals.

Though better protected, McLemore said a firefighter still must be cautious, and because of more coverage, can get hot before they realize they’re in a bad place to be. That has lead to the use of infrared cameras to see fires hidden between walls.

The department receives an average of 80 actual fire calls a year and responds to 140 incidents.