



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Northeast Kansans water rates may rise

LAWRENCE (AP) — Consumers may soon pay the price of growing populations in northeast Kansas through higher fees for water.

State water officials are considering charging communities more to satisfy obligations to the federal government to pay for construction and maintenance of reservoirs used to store drinking water supplies.

"We have some concerns right now," said Cheryl Buttenhoff, public service administrator in the Kansas Water Marketing Program.

The higher fees would be passed on to consumers, but city officials aren't sure how high they will be.

"I'm still trying to analyze everything, but the prices they are showing me right now really do concern me," said Chris Stewart, Lawrence's interim director of utilities who oversees the city's water system.

Growing populations will need more water, which is available at Clinton Lake near Lawrence and Hillsdale Lake in Miami County. Both already supply water to nearby communities, with more water available if the state activates water storage contracts.

Those contracts are growing at a rate of \$1.5 million to \$2 million a year, paid by area communities even if they don't use any of the water. How much more each community must pay isn't known.

The marketing program charges cities and rural water districts 12 cents for each 1,000 gallons used, with the cost passed on to customers. Preliminary plans allow the rate to increase to 20 cents in 2007 and 85 cents in 2016. The fee would be about \$7 a month for a family using 10,000 gallons.

And those increases would be in addition to increases related to higher treatment costs and inflation.

For example, Lawrence water rates have been increasing by about 4 percent per year in recent years.

"It doesn't sound very troublesome at first, but you can see that at a certain point it will cause some people to feel some pain," said Scott Schultz, administrator for Rural Water District No. 4.

With water bills fluctuating monthly, fees may be only a few cents in the winter, but could be \$20 or \$30 a month in the summer with increased water demands.

Margaret Fast, planning manager for the marketing program, said the state would be looking for options other than increasing fees.

For example, the state may approach the federal government about deferring the interest payments.

Other states, including Oklahoma, also are seeking such help to deal with similar situations.

The contract money is owed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because when the corps built federal reservoirs in the 1960s, it asked the state if it wanted to help pay to make the lakes functional for large-scale drinking water storage.

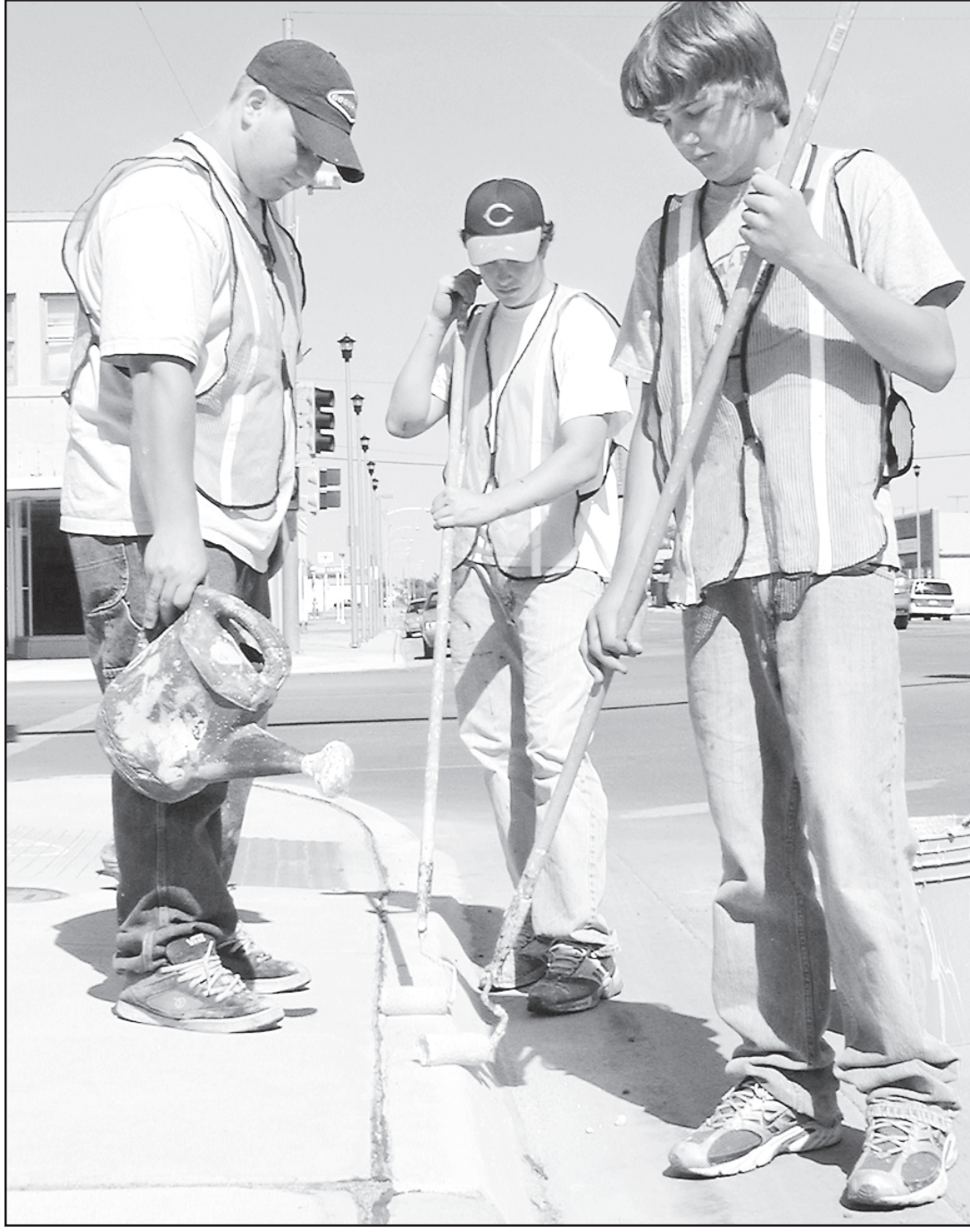
Picnic in the Park begins Thursday

Larry Booth of Colby, a folk song artist and cowboy poet, will provide entertainment at noon, Thursday at this year's first "Picnic in the Park" at Fike Park.

The annual event is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau jointly.

Each Thursday in June and July picnics will feature a different entertainer. Organizers ask everyone to bring a lawn chair, lunch and the family for an hour of fun in the park.

Lining it up!



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Three Colby High School students, left to right, Nate Call, sophomore; Dalen Schlageck, junior; and J.D. Donn, senior, are repainting the yellow lines on the curbs, streets and municipal parking areas for the City of Colby Public Works Department. It is a summer job that is expected to keep the teenagers busy until school starts in August. The students said they work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., five days a week.

Colby College credits connect Kansas classes

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

Colby Community College students will now be able to receive a bachelor's degree in business without leaving the Colby campus through a partnership with Kansas State University's branch in Salina.



S. Sharp

Known as a 2+2 agreement, students at Colby Community College can finish their technical management degree through interactive distance learning methods, said Skip Sharp, interim president of Colby Community College.

The agreement was signed at the college's recent board meeting. Dr. Dave Stewart from the Salina campus of Kansas State was also in attendance.

"The first two years of study will be with Colby College and the last two years with Kansas State through this joint program," Stewart said. "It's a win-win partnership for Colby College and Kansas State."

In addition to the 2+2 business degree program, a second agreement was made between the veterinary technician program at Colby College and Kansas State-Manhattan.

"This program is exemplary in Kansas and the nation," Sharp said. "It is also a program which is looked favorably upon by the Kansas Board of Regents."

What makes this particular program unique is that Colby College will also be delivering coursework to the Kansas State University campus.

This new program will not begin until the fall of 2007.

"We have a similar agreement with Fort Hays State University," said Debbie Schwanke, Colby Community College public information officer.

"Fort Hays delivers coursework to Colby for elementary education, secondary education, special education, nurse practitioner and many other graduate degrees."

Another agreement Colby shares is with Washburn University in Topeka.

This agreement allows students to get their bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

"The coursework is delivered to CCC for the last two years of that program," she said.

Although agreements with the Salina and Manhattan campuses of Kansas State are two of the newer distance learning offerings for Colby Community College students, Sharp said Colby has 2+2 articulation agreements with all of the state's four-year schools, along with Kansas Wesleyan for various degrees.

Time to dive: Colby pool opens Thursday

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Colby Swimming Pool will open for business at 1 p.m. Thursday.

Colby Recreation Director Ryan Sturdy said most of the major repair work has been completed for the pool to open.

The pool traditionally opens Memorial Day weekend but was delayed this year because of work to replace concrete.

"It's kind of a patch and mend deal," Sturdy said. "It is not a permanent fix."

Some of the concrete deck around the pool was replaced because the dirt underneath was settling, causing the concrete to sink. Replacing all of the concrete would be a permanent solution, but there wasn't money in the budget for such an undertaking.

Sturdy said crews will continue to fix problem spots as the need arises, but the major work, besides routine maintenance, is complete for the summer season.

Despite the recent 100 degree temperature days, Sturdy said there

haven't been any calls about the pool opening, but there were many in the two weeks before Memorial Day weekend.

"Our department did a good job of keeping people informed about what was going on, and the pool open," Sturdy said.

The pool also received an acid wash and new coat of paint. He said the acid wash gets rid of algae and is done every few years to make sure the pool runs efficiently. The pool was built in the late 1930s was a federal Works Project Administration project.

Pool maintenance can be a year-round effort Sturdy said. Depending on what needs to be done, more concrete work could be on tap this fall or next spring.

The pool's hours are 1-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 2-8 p.m. on Sundays.

Swimming lessons begin June 19. There will be two sessions each day. Level 4, 5 and 6 will have lessons at 9:15 a.m. Levels 1, 2 and 3 are held at 10 a.m. Lessons run five days a week for two weeks.

For information about the pool, call 460-4440.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Robert Lee, a maintenance worker at the Colby Community Building, checked the temperature at the city pool today. The pool will open at 1 p.m. Thursday. The pool opening was delayed from Saturday because of work on the pool deck.

President signs law limiting protests at military funerals

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — President Bush passed a startling sign on his Memorial Day drive into the burial grounds for thousands of military dead — "Thank God for dead soldiers," it read. Bush took action Monday in hopes that no more families see similar sentiments when they bury loved ones who died in the war.

Bush signed the "Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act," which was passed by Congress in response to the activities of a Kansas church group that has staged protests at military funerals around the country.

The group claimed the deaths symbolized God's anger at U.S. tolerance of homosexuals, and their actions sparked outrage among grieving families and lawmakers.

"The best way to pay respect is to value why a sacrifice was made."

President George W. Bush quoting a letter

The new law bars protests within 300 feet of the entrance of a national cemetery and within 150 feet of a road into the cemetery.

This restriction applies an hour before until an hour after a funeral. Those violating the act would face up to a \$100,000 fine and up to a year in prison. After signing the bill, Bush headed to Arlington National Cemetery for a ceremony to honor war dead. Since it was not a

funeral, the protesters were free to speak their minds and did so — a small group held anti-gay signs like "God hates fags" near the entrance as Bush's motorcade drove by.

Across the street, a few people from the Washington, D.C., chapter of FreeRepublic.com, a self-styled grass roots conservative group, held signs supporting U.S. troops. A large sign held by several people said, "God bless our troops,

defenders of freedom, American heroes."

Their message fit the theme of the day, as Bush set a large wreath in front of the Tomb of the Unknowns and then said the nation must continue fighting the war on terror in the name of those have already given their life in the cause.

"The best way to pay respect is to value why a sacrifice was made," Bush said, quoting from a letter that Lt. Mark Dooley wrote to his parents before being killed last September in the Iraqi city of Ramadi.

Noting that some 270 fighting men and women of the nearly 2,500 who have fallen since the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, are buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Bush said, "We have seen the costs in the war on terror that we fight

today. I am in awe of the men and women who sacrifice for the freedom of the United States of America," the president declared, drawing a long standing ovation from the troops, families of the fallen and others gathered at the cemetery's 5,000-seat white marble amphitheater.

The nation can best honor the dead by "defeating the terrorists... and by laying the foundation for a generation of peace," Bush said.

Bush signed a second bill that allows combat troops to deposit tax-free pay into individual retirement accounts.

Supporters of the legislation argued that rules governing these accounts were punishing soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq who earn only tax-free combat pay.