



COLBY FREE PRESS

County has its own project for 2006 fair

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A desire to educate Thomas County fair attendees about county business sparked a conversation between county commissioners during their meeting Wednesday.

"I'd like to challenge each department to develop a PowerPoint presentation for the county fair," Commissioner Paul Steele said.

Commissioners Ron Evans and Ken Christiansen favored Steele's idea to educate residents about county operations while attending the fair Aug. 1-5.

"I'm thinking kind of a day in the life of, say the road department or sheriff's office, as a way people in the community can see what our people do," Steele said. "They need the recognition about what they do."

Steele said he'd like to see members of each department pictured or

in short videos working their particular job. The display will be in a booth at the fair.

Department heads are being asked to brainstorm with their respective employees about the idea and get back with the commissioners.

In other business...

• Commissioners plan to attend a pandemic influenza point of distribution exercise noon to 5 p.m. Monday at the Thomas County Office Complex. The exercise is hosted by Thomas County Emergency Management Director Jim Engel and Thomas County Health Department Administrator Juanita M. Gatz.

• Items tabled to a future meeting

included an agreement between the county's fair board and Colby Community College's rodeo team. Commissioners returned the agreement asking for further documentation that no alcohol will be on the grounds during rodeo competitions.

• Also tabled was the renewal of the county's Blue Cross Blue Shield contract until employees can offer their input on the policy and premiums.

• Budget requests have come in and those yet expected by the commissioners, will be reviewed during work sessions in June. No formal action will be taken on the county's budget until after July 1.

The commissioners plan to conduct regular meetings on Monday, June 12, 19 and 30. They will have work sessions with dates yet to be scheduled. All meetings are open to the public; however no binding action will be taken during work sessions.



P. Steele

Jury's out: Thomas County increases jury duty pay

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Thomas County residents called for jury duty will get a bigger paycheck.

A new law starting July 1 gives Kansas courts the option of paying jurors up to \$50 per day for sitting on a jury. Jurors in Thomas County District Court have been paid \$10 per day, plus 40 cents per mile on a roundtrip to and from the courthouse.

"I think jurors should be paid \$10 the first day and if they are brought back that goes to \$25 a day," Commissioner Ron Evans said.

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms surveyed 21 counties to see what they planned to pay jurors after July 1.

After reviewing the data, Evans made a motion, seconded by Paul Steele, and passed 3-0 to pay jurors \$10 the first day and \$25 for each subsequent day of jury duty.

According to Harms, the pay increase brings Thomas County in line with what jurors will be paid in Gray County, but one-half of what will be paid in Lyon County.

Besides Gray County, only one of the counties who replied to Harms'

survey will pay jurors \$25 per day. One county plans to increase pay from \$10 to \$20 per day. Another county will cap out at \$50 per day. One county will pay \$10 if part of the jury pool called and \$50 if selected. Sixteen of the 20 counties plan to stay at \$10 per day. According to Thomas County District Judge Glenn Schiffner, there have been eight jury trials held in Thomas County since 2001, two trials took place this year.

A total of 233 people were part of jury pools called for the eight trials, all of which were paid for at least one day of service plus mileage.

Longtime city employee picks up where others leave off

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

It may not be the most appealing job, but someone has still got to do it.

For the past 38 years, city of Colby's Rex Buford has taken the lead for what residents leave behind. Buford directs the city's trash collection service.

In 1967, Buford left a job at the golf course to take a position with the city of Colby.

"I started out part time and then I worked the street and water departments, odd jobs," Buford said.

A year later, after Charlie Carpenter left the city, Buford became a full-time city employee. Since then, he has been full-time garbage man.

Like the post office's slogan, snow, rain and wind don't deter the city's trash crews from doing their job.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

City of Colby employee Rex Buford checked the controls on one of the trucks.

"Picking up trash is very hard work," Buford said, "and has to be done regardless of the weather."

Buford's duties include driving one of the city's three trash trucks on daily routes or actually picking up the trash.

How garbage is collected has changed since he started. Crews then had to pick up 55-gallon barrels filled with refuse and dump them into the truck.

"Now, it's changed to using a lift on the truck to dump tipster cans or other trash cans," he said.

Trucks are also more efficient now. "They're so much quicker than the old trucks," he said.

The green tipster cans preferred by the city are one of the biggest changes, and have made the job easier.

"We just put them on the truck's lift and they're dumped into the truck," he said.

But not every resident uses those handy garbage cans. Buford said some garbage cans must still be manually lifted and emptied into the truck because they don't fit on the lift.

He said the difficulty is the labor lifting the cans which vary in size and weight, in-

cluding the garbage inside. Other residents don't use a garbage can and just pile the garbage bags by the curb.

Buford prefers the tipster cans and wishes more residents would use them.

"It keeps it so much cleaner in Colby because of it," he said.

The city has three city trucks, but only two are used each day to run residential and business routes, picking up 25-30 tons of trash. There are three people on each trash crew.

Buford said they pick up garbage from approximately 500 places on the residential route and 200 on the business route. There have been more stops added over the years because of the city's growth.

Though the job is a tough one, Buford said it is who he works with rather than what he works with, that makes him like the job.

"I've most enjoyed the different people," he said.

Woof, woof



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Pioneer Memorial Library librarian Brittany Barton, left, and Pinkerton the Great Dane, far right, visited with children during the kickoff picnic for the library's summer reading program Wednesday. The theme of this year's program is "Paws, Claws, Tales and Scales."

Storm floods Goodland streets; record rainfall since 1957

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

The lack of rain in May became a surplus overnight as a thunderstorm dropped a record 2.42 inches of rain on Goodland on Wednesday evening.

The 2.42 inches eclipsed the old one-day record for May 31 of 1.37 inches in 1957, said Meteorologist Dave Floyd of the Goodland National Weather Service office.

Wind-driven rain mixed with hail from pea to marble size pelted the town beginning about 5:45 p.m. (MDT). The first storm, which moved north from Wallace County, brought most of the rain and hail. A second wave

of storms moved in from the west, lasting until 9:15 p.m. (MDT)

The Goodland National Weather Service office recorded sustained winds up to 43.7 mph when the first storm hit with gusts to 56.4 mph.

Street flooding was reported in several parts of town, but the worst was on 17th and on Main and Broadway from 15th to 17th. Hank's Café was asking the city about sand bags, and there were cars that stalled out in the high water at 17th and Broadway.

Police were called to help barricade the area on Main and Broadway to reduce the waves caused as people drove through the water.

There was a report of a car off the road on K-27 about a half-mile south of town, and the driver was

standing on the top of the car. Police called a wrecker to pull the car out of the water-filled ditch.

Storm drains were pushed to the maximum, and the wind drove water into some basements and under doors.

South on K-27, hail was deep enough to make it look like a winter scene, and a report from the north side near the airport said the hail was a couple of inches deep in places.

City Manager Wayne Hill said he saw what looked like snow drifts as he drove around the north part town Thursday morning to check on the drainage system.



PAT SCHIEFEN/Goodland Star News

Flash flooding made driving difficult in Goodland Wednesday as evidenced by one motorist driving at Caldwell and Tenth Street. The National Weather Service in Goodland recorded rainfall at 2.42 inches. The same storm left .42 inches of rain in Colby, according to the Northwest Research-Extension Center.

total to 3.96 — .5 of an inch ahead of normal. The total for the year jumped to 7.1 inches, .06 ahead of normal.

The forecast for the weekend is

for high temperatures reaching into the 90s with the lows in the upper 50s. There are no predictions for more rain. Floyd said they had reports of nickel- and quarter-sized

hail and wind gusts up to 70 mph north of Sharon Spring.

"Looks like Goodland and Sherman County got the brunt of the storm.