



# COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

## Turbine proposal denied

By John Van Nostrand  
Colby Free Press

The wind will continue to blow in Thomas County, but won't power homes and businesses in the near future.

City of Colby officials have been informed a proposed wind turbine project south of Colby will not be coming. Wind would turn generators to produce electricity.

The project was proposed in the spring by J. W. Prairie Windpower, LLC from Lawrence and involved John Deere as a corporate investor. The City of Colby was interested in the project as an economic development prospect for Thomas County.

"Since the city of Colby does not have the equipment to purchase windpower directly from turbines, we encouraged Midwest Energy, our energy supplier, to consider the proposal from J. B. Prairie Windpower," said city of Colby Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

Turbines would stand 241 feet. Including the length of the turbine blades of 105 feet, the entire turbine would be 346 feet. Preliminary cost of each turbine is at least \$1 million. Each turbine can produce 1.5 megawatts of electricity, enough to power about 350 houses a year.

Midwest Energy recently informed Armstrong, J. W. Prairie had not been selected as a final candidate in their process. Midwest Energy's policy is "to accommodate renewable energy up to but not beyond the point where it would increase costs for our customers."

## Two resign from county

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

Two resignations were accepted by Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen during their meeting on Monday.

Resigning the position of Household Hazardous Waste Director was Sandy Swob effective July 31. Swob will be relocating to Hays. Commissioners appointed Landfill Director Larry Jumper to fill the position.

"With the plan to relocate the household hazardous waste to the landfill it only makes sense for Larry to be the director," Evans said.

Karla Haggard submitted her resignation from the Thomas County Health Department effective June 30.

Haggard will work part-time in the county clerk's office through the Aug. 1 primary election.



File photo

Spontaneous Combustion fired up the audience at last year's Pickin' on the Plains bluegrass festival. The group is returning to this year's event, which begins Friday and runs through Sunday.

## Banjos, barbecue . . .

# 'Pickin' on the Plains' starts Friday

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

This event comes with strings attached. The 11th annual Pickin' on the Plains bluegrass festival begins 6 p.m. Friday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds in Colby.

An informal kick-off will be 6 p.m. Thursday with a community potluck at the fairgrounds. The festival ends 3 p.m. Sunday. Committee member Jo Booth said the event has grown, with new groups added and the return of familiar favorites.

"We have several new groups," Booth said. "This is the most groups we've had."

Three of the 11 groups at this year's festival are making their Colby debut. They are the Abrams Brothers from Canada, Bonham Revue from Oklahoma and Ozark Alliance from Missouri.

Returning are Spontaneous Combustion, Hot Strings, The New Old-Timers, The McLemore Family, Sappa Strings,

Larry Booth, Sons and Brothers, The Pearce Family.

Also returning is Marshal Allen Bailey, the host of "Western Swing and Other Things" on High Plains Public Radio. He will serve as the emcee for the festival.

The music will run from 6 to 10:45 p.m. Friday; Saturday's events start with the youth contest followed by open stage. Shows begin at 12:30 p.m. and run through midnight.

Sunday, a gospel show and sing-along will run from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. followed by shows to 3 p.m.

Booth said the Abrams Brothers could be a popular draw at the festival. Specializing in bluegrass gospel music, the group, from Ontario, Canada, has performed at the Grand Ole Opry. The group is made up of 15-year-old John, who plays fiddle and mandolin, 12-year-old James, their father Bryan and grandfather

Wayne. The brothers broke into the Canadian music scene in 1999 when they were 9 and 6, respectively.

They also have album on MasterShield Records.

Bonham Revue from Oklahoma, consists of Virgil and Glen Bonham who have performed bluegrass for 31 years. They have also released 18 albums over the course of their musical career.

Ozark Alliance from Salem, Mo., won the Youth in Bluegrass competition at Silver Dollar City in Branson, Mo., and has been performing since 2002.

Among the returning performers are Colby's McLemore Family and Larry Booth.

The McLemore's, made up of Bob, Susan, Blake and Brandon, has performed at Silver Dollar City. They have played as a family for nine years. They, along with Booth, have also played Colby's Picnic in the Park and other local events.

Returning with a mix of bluegrass and gospel is Sons and Brothers. From Westcliffe, Colo., the group was selected as the top group

at the 2004 National Bluegrass Playoffs at the Huck Finn Jubilee in Victorville, Calif.

Pickin' On the Plains includes other activities. Other offerings are children's crafts, vendors and food booths as well as horse-drawn wagon rides.

The "Smokin' on the Plains" barbecue cookoff is Saturday and sponsored by the Great American Trails radio show.

There will be a 4,000-square-foot shaded, water-cooled space for the audience during the concerts.

Booth said many people will be camping out again for this year's festival. Last year, 92 campers from out of town were at the festival. Booth said they're counting on that many again this year.

"That's the way it is at bluegrass festivals," she said. "It's really cool because you meet new people that way. The event could not have grown without the support of the community and area," she said.



L. Booth

## Child center asks for \$5,000

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

Requests for county money continue to cross the desk of Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen as they prepare the 2007 budget.

A \$5,000 first-time budget request was presented at Monday's meeting by David Fyler, co-director of the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center with offices in Colby, Scott City and Sublette.

"We provide a child friendly space for children suspected of child abuse or sexual abuse," Fyler said. "We come along side law enforcement in investigating those types of crimes."

Accompanied by Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn and Under-Sheriff Jason Moses, Fyler said he and co-director Kelly Robbins, a former Kansas Bureau of Investigation Agent, were asking \$5,000 from each of the 26 counties the center serves.

"We work closely with the center," Baughn said. "We just aren't trained to investigate child abuse cases like those at the center."

Evans asked whether the staff at the center were duplicating services offered by others.

Fyler said "yes and no." "It's really an all out effort to stop child abuse," he said. "This is the local effort on your part to have the center here. Our job is more the investigative piece. We try to find out the facts of the case."

Baughn called the investigative services offered by the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center law enforcement's best resource.

"The center staff makes the child comfortable and their investigative tools are the best we've seen," Baughn said. "We rely heavily on their expertise."

A nonprofit entity, the three centers in western Kansas are among nine centers in Kansas and the 500 centers throughout the United States.

As of July 1, six Thomas County children had been provided services through the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center.

Should the commissioners approve the center's budget request, it will make up 3 percent of the center's \$139,000 budget.

The center uses federal and state grants and donations from foundations and individuals.

"I appreciate the briefing you've given us," Steele said.

"This is a topic that involves a lot of pain and I appreciate the education about the center."

No decision was made.

## New president begins

New Colby Community College President Dr. Lynn Kreider worked with his assistant Beverly Anderson. Kreider began his duties as the fourth president of Colby Community College July 5. He has been meeting individually with board of trustees members, community leaders and college faculty and staff members. The first board of trustees meeting under Kreider's leadership will be 5 p.m. Monday in the board room in Thomas Hall. All meetings are open to the public.



DEBBIE SCHWANKE/Colby Community College

## Barbecue contest flavors bluegrass event

Some winners from '05 back for seconds

By John Van Nostrand  
Colby Free Press

Start your grills. The second annual barbecue contest during Pickin' on the Plains will be held Saturday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

"We did really well with it last year," said Larry Cox, one of the contest's organizers. "Last year we had donated prizes, and this year we will have cash prizes."

The first event had 14 contestants and Cox said at least that many have registered this year. Some of the people who entered are category winners from last year.

There are four categories: brisket, pork, chicken and spare ribs.

Winner in each category will receive \$150 prize. Cox said all contestants are eligible to win best overall recipe and up to \$500 in a grand prize.

"The overall winner does not have to be one of the category winners," he said.

Cox and other organizer John Anderson have found 20 judges.

Rules are, Cox and Anderson will provide the choice of meat. Contestants will provide their choice of cooking method; wood, gas or charcoal.

Meat will be distributed Friday afternoon for contestants who want to marinate the meat overnight. Judging will begin 5 p.m. Saturday. After judging, all of the entered meat will be sold.

To register, contact John Anderson at 460-7248 or Cox at 443-3865.