



# COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

## No changes in school board officers

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

The Colby School Board prepared for the coming school year with its reorganizational meeting Monday.

Tracy Rogers and Janice Frahm were selected as board president and vice president, respectively. Both served in those capacities last year.

The board also approved fees for the 2006-2007 school year. Most of the fees will remain the same as last year, but the cost of a monthly school-meal ticket increased \$1 from last year.

District financial officer Jo DeYoung said lunch prices are going up a nickel for students and adults. The reason for the increase is because of the rising cost of fuel. For grades kindergarten through fifth grade, tickets will be \$36; sixth through 12th, \$40 and adults, \$67.

However, breakfast prices will remain the same at \$18 for all students and \$26 for adults.

The district also increased its mileage reimbursement rate from 40 cents to 43 cents. The substitute teacher daily rate increased from \$79 last year to \$81.

Other fees approved that did not increase were: textbook rental, \$38; milk prices, 25 cents; drivers education, \$160; student summer music lesson fees, \$30; activity fees, \$20 per sport, per student, maximum cost \$60 per year; meal reimbursement for professional leave, \$25 per day.

Board member Stan Molstad asked if dropping the drivers education class was ever considered and letting private enterprise take over instead.

DeYoung said the state pays \$50 to \$60 per student, and the class has averaged 35 to 40 students per year for several years.

She also said there have been no complaints about the class, and gas prices have not had much effect.

"We don't use that much fuel," DeYoung said.

Also approved were the official depositories for the district, which are Farmers and Merchants Bank, Sunflower Bank, BankWest, The

### New wrestling coach named

Colby High School assistant wrestling coach Matt Sims was hired as the team's new head wrestling coach at the Colby School Board meeting Monday.

Sims, who also teaches eighth-grade math at Colby Middle School, replaces Mitch Beims.

Beims, 33, is leaving Colby to become the activities director/assistant principal at Holton High School in Holton, which is north of Topeka. He had been a coach and social studies teacher in Colby since 2000.

Bank, First National Bank and Peoples State Bank, all of Colby.

The *Colby Free Press* was also approved as the official newspaper of the district.

In other business, the board approved:

- The resignation of Aubrey Siebert, Colby High School food service.

- The hiring of Beth Anne Sanders, Colby High School social studies teacher.

- Supplemental contracts for: Julie Barnes, high school cheerleading assistant and middle school head cheerleading; Norm Behring, seventh-grade girls head basketball coach; Chris Finley, eighth-grade girls assistant basketball coach; Mary Beth Flanagan, eighth-grade girls head basketball coach; Chris Giersch, seventh-grade boys assistant basketball coach; Don Long, assistant coach for high school football and baseball; Barry Lucas, eighth-grade boys head basketball coach; Kelly Miller, middle school cheerleading assistant; Katie Wahlmeier, high school cheerleading assistant.

- Student/teacher handbooks for Colby grade, middle and high schools; Thomas County Academy, substitute handbook and superintendent's staff handbook.

### Doing the dirty work

## State groups tour area farmland

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

Conservation efforts in Thomas County were the conversation Friday.

Danielle Freeman, district manager at the Thomas County Conservation District, said members of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and State Conservation Commission took a tour Friday of some area farms.

The groups held a joint meeting Saturday at City Limits Convention Center in Colby. The meeting is held in a different location each year, she said, so different conservation methods can be viewed.

She said in eastern Kansas, because it gets more rain, some of their conservation efforts focus more on erosion across streams, and dealing with riparian areas. That, she explained, has to do with river banks or areas near streams or other bodies of water.

"The tour highlighted some cost-share programs," Freeman said.

The conservation district has money available at the state and federal levels to help pay for conservation projects for farmers and ranchers.

Freeman said the cost-sharing can pay for 50 to 90 percent of a program.

The group of nearly 45 people took a tour of three different farms — Bob Renner's farm north of Mingo and the Claude Herren farm and Allied Family Farms both south of Colby.

Freeman said the group looked at Renner's cool season irrigated pasture.

That kind of pasture grow in dryland conditions and can supplement native range by providing a month or more of nutritious grazing in the spring and, possibly, again in the fall. The conservation district cost-shared on a



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Farmer Bob Renner of Mingo talked about some of the conservation practices used on his farm during a conservation tour Friday for a joint meeting of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and State Conservation Commission held in Colby Saturday. **TOP LEFT:** Members of the associations and their families traveled by bus to look at three different Thomas County farms. **CENTER:** When and where cattle graze has been changed in Renner's fields with the addition of a cool-season irrigated pasture. **RIGHT:** Calley Burr of Colby peeked out a bus window.

pipeline, watering facility and water well.

"The purpose was to increase grazing distribution for cattle so they can be grazed in different areas," Freeman said.

At the Herren farm, field borders, grass terraces and wind strips were showcased. Freeman explained wind strips are grass areas planted

between fields to minimize soil erosion.

The projects at Allied Family Farms, owned by the Frahm family, were wind breaks to help decrease soil erosion, a grassed playa and grass corners on irrigated corn fields.

She said the corners help lessen the impact of soil erosion and pro-

vide habitat for wildlife as well.

Freeman said she and John Starns, Thomas County conservation board chairman and president of the Kansas Association, were pleased with the turnout for the tour and meeting. About 20 members of the groups brought their families along on the tour and held a barbecue at Fike Park.

## County won't match \$28,000 challenge to help museum

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

About 25 historical society and museum supporters left Monday's Thomas County Commission meeting disappointed when they learned the county won't match a \$28,000 offer from other entities.

Leilani Thomas, director of the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau, last week said she would give \$28,000 in hotel tax revenue if the county and economic development committee would match her offer to help the Thomas Historical Society and Prairie Museum of Art and History through a financial crunch.

Sue Taylor, museum director, said the visitors' bureau and economic development committee's money would mean an additional \$56,000, and she hoped the commissioners would make it \$84,000. "Of all the items of the some \$2.5 million dollar budget we are looking at, the item that got the most amount of discussion was the historical society and Prairie Art and History Museum," Commissioner Ron Evans said.

Taylor showed Commissioners Paul Steele, Ken Christiansen and Evans visual aids she prepared about things the historical society and museum boards would like to do as projects. Those projects included landscaping, playground



JAN KATZACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Prairie Museum of Art and History Director Sue Taylor, right, listened as Linda Davis Stephens told Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen she would like to see them match a \$28,000 offer to help the historical society and museum through a financial crunch.

equipment, picnic areas and a petting zoo in hopes of attracting more families to the facility.

Evans said while in the past the county has appropriated \$65,000 for the historical society to "use as it sees fit," including helping the museum, which is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit entity, the 2007 budget would most likely be increased.

"I have a passion for the historical society and was once on the board, and we're looking at giving the historical society \$80,000," Evans said.

"I'm going to be candid with you, you are challenging us to match money that comes from tourists who don't even live here with money from people who do live

here," he said.

The museum's budget stems from the county's appropriation of \$65,000; donations of \$42,000 and earned income from admission and other programs totaling \$53,000. Expenses which have exceeded revenue sources have created a financial crunch leaving no money for upgrades and program expansion.

Evans and Christiansen said they spoke with numerous taxpayers and none favored the county participating in the matching plan program offered by Thomas.

Steele said state law requires the county to appropriate money for the "collection, display and preserve historical documents and artifacts."

"It's specified in state statute and while the things you want to do are admirable, but they don't fit into the confines of the statute," he said.

Steele said, years ago his input was requested for work at Boot Hill in Dodge City and at a recent trip to that museum he learned Dodge City is having to subsidize the site.

"I've come to the conclusion that the traveling public is staying away from museums," he said. "I applaud your efforts to change direction to appeal to a younger population, but I want to remind you that the purpose of taking money away from taxpayers for the historical society is for the collection, display and preservation of historical documents and artifacts. We have to be

**"I'm going to be candid with you, you are challenging us to match money that comes from tourists who don't even live here with money from people who do..."**

Commissioner Ron Evans

mindful of what we are authorized to appropriate money for."

Others at the meeting room offered suggestions or commented about the museum.

"The biggest thing you could do for that museum is to stay open at night," Hank Vette said. "Those travelers want to get off the road and come out to the museum at night."

Vette said volunteered at the museum in the past and would like to see more programs attract other men to volunteer.

"You've got all that machinery out there, but you aren't doing anything to get males out there," he said. "The north side of (Cooper Barn) could be turned into a work area for older men."

Linda Davis Stephens, an instructor at Colby Community College, said she utilizes the museum for part of her course work.

"I want this museum to survive," she said. "I have a passion for this. There is some real quality displays there."

Stephens reminded the commissioners the old school house at the museum, as well as the courthouse and swimming pool were listed on the National Historical Registry and the sites needed to be supported or let go back to grass.

Colby resident John Kern wanted to know whether a small tax increase could be put in place to support the historical society and museum.

"We are sitting up here trying to do the best we can with the amount of money we collect with 25 to 30 entities wanting money," Evans said. Evans said the only way a tax increase could be set in place was to ask voters. Evans said the topic could be talked about at a later date.

The commissioners asked Taylor to bring to them copies of resolutions signed in the past about the historical society and museum for them to review. She provided documents dating back to 1977, which will be reviewed by the county attorney.