



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Fair board raises price for camping

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Only the monthly camping fee is going up at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. The Thomas County Fair Board approved a rate hike at its meeting Thursday.

The monthly camping rate is increasing to \$360 per month, up from \$275. Daily and weekly rates will remain \$15 per night and \$75 per week.

Last month, board president Stan Strange was told during a county commissioners meeting they would have to change their rates because they were in competition with Bourquin's Old Depot Restaurant and RV Park.

Bourquin's charges \$24 per night, \$144 a week and \$360 a month.

The fair board didn't want to change its rates because the fairgrounds camp sites don't have the amenities offered at Bourquin's, such as a restaurant, showers and laundry.

Board member Cynthia Bieberle said the commissioners told the board it needed to match the monthly fee at Bourquin's.

Audrey Hines, board member, suggested the daily rate be raised to \$20 because it would help the board raise some money.

Board member Nancy Rundel said the rate should not go up because they don't have those amenities.

"This is not a resort to camp at," she said. "The fairground camp sites are a service offered to people who are needed in the community,

such as harvest crews.

In other business, the board discussed how well the fair went.

Marie Skolout, organizer of the rodeo queen and princess contest, thanked the board for sponsoring the contest, and said it went very well.

It was one of the events the board discussed.

The board was happy with the fair, and was pleased with how well the mutton busting went. Mutton busting, children riding sheep, returned to the lineup. It was held two nights with 30 children participating the first night, and 36 the second, said board member Justin Alexander.

"It was a popular event," he said.

Anderson said it should be mandatory participants wear helmets for safety. The board did not approve Anderson's suggestion, but the board gave its consensus to provide the helmets for the 2007 event.

The board went into executive session for 10 minutes to discuss paying a premium that was withheld. 4-H member Brady Rundel was at the meeting to request he be paid his premium that was withheld because he removed his lamb from the fairgrounds.

Brady said he was taking the lamb to the Tri-State Royal the day after the 4-H livestock sale.

He said he had permission from superintendent to take the lamb home, and didn't clean up his stalls until after fair was over.

The board agreed to pay half the premium — \$6, because there were mistakes on both sides.

Entire state in drought

TOPEKA (AP) — Despite recent rainfall in parts of Kansas, the Gov.'s Drought Response Team has recommended that a drought warning already in place for 80 counties be extended statewide.

Only the 25 counties of east-central and northeast Kansas have been spared a drought warning declaration by Gov. Sebelius this year.

A drought warning is the second stage of the state's three-level plan for responding to lack of rain. When declared by the governor, the warning allows local governments to

impose mandatory water restrictions and lets the governor request emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres. The Drought Response Team met Friday and issued its recommendation after being summoned by Sebelius because of declining levels in streams and rivers. The 11-member panel includes water, agricultural and emergency officials from across Kansas.

Municipal governments have had relatively little problem supplying water to their residents.

Parents lead the class

By John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press

This week schools across Kansas and the country open for the 2006-2007 school year. For some of those students, they won't leave home at all.

Friday, the Christian Family Educators of Northwest Kansas held its annual picnic in Gem. Families who educate their children at home met to share ideas and plan events throughout the year for students to do together. Members are spread from Quinter to the Colorado state line.

The group has been operating for about 25 years and has recently averaged about 60 families a year. Last year, there were 125 students.

The state of Kansas cannot prevent parents from homeschooling.

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TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

ABOVE: Cancer survivors circled the track at Dennen Field Friday to signal the start of the Thomas County American Cancer Society Relay for Life. The event raised more than \$20,000 for cancer research. **BELOW:** Jeff Hartwell and his daughter Jordan of Colby looked at luminaries before the start of the event.

More than 600 luminaries were lit during the luminary service, and each one of the lights was in honor of people who have succumbed to or survived cancer.

Relay event brings in \$20,000 plus

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The 2006 Thomas County Relay for Life was a success according to an organizer Carla Sharp.

The event held Friday raised \$20,393 for the American Cancer Society. She said it was about \$1,000 less than last year. Sharp attributed the lower numbers to a struggling economy.

Fourteen teams participated in this year's relay, down six from 20 teams in 2005. This year's teams were Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, Dillon's (two teams), Thomas County 4-H, Mothers of Preschoolers of Colby, Farmers and Merchants Bank, Park Hill 2, Catholic Youth Organization, V Over Cancer Team, Citizens Medical Center, Colby High School cheerleaders (two teams), Workout Women, Gem Lions Club, Trinity Lutheran Church, Tina Harris Physical Therapy, Ya Ya Team.

The top three teams were Citizens Medical Center, which raised \$4,460; Dillon's, 41767 and Park Hill 2-Atwood, \$1,622.

She also said the auction held during the relay raised \$995.

"I was very pleased with that," Sharp said.

"The weather held up, despite looking stormy early Friday evening."

She said the balloon decorations provided by Someplace Special helped with the atmosphere.

"Those were new, as were sashes provided for the cancer survivors," Sharp said.

She said there were also many good comments on the music provided by Wild Ride, Pieces of Eight, the McLemore Family and Blake and Brandon McLemore. Nate Schwarz also played recorded music for the event.

"The music was fantastic," Sharp said. "Everybody enjoyed it."

She added there were 600-700 luminaries lit for the luminary service, and the luminaries stretched all the way around at the track.

Platinum sponsor for the event was Citizens Medical Center of Colby. Gold sponsors were KXXX/KQLS, Dillon's, Someplace Special, Horlacher Jewelers, F&M Insurance, Girl Scouts, Nate Schwarz, Unicef, Village Laundromat, Huttles Electric, Pizza Hut, Twisters, Thomas County 4-H, Wild Ride, Gem Lions Club, McLemore Family, USD #315 Colby schools, Orscheln Farm and Home, LeRoy's Printing and WOW.



Homeschool student enjoyed activities

By John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press

Colby Community College sophomore Amy Wilson does not look any different than the other students on campus. But how she reached college academically makes her unique.



A. Wilson

Wilson, 20, was homeschooled along with her four sisters, Kayla, 23, Brenda, 18, Sally, 14, Dana, 11, and brother Brent, 9, by her mother Lori.

"When people find out I was homeschooled, they don't see it," Amy said.

Lori, 39, decided to homeschool all her children after Kayla finished fifth grade in public school. Brenda and Amy were also in public school at the time. Sally, Dana and Brent never at-

tended public schools.

Lori's concerns of lengthy bus rides to school from their rural Thomas County home and wanting to control what her children learn influenced her to homeschool.

Lori said she is aware of the stereotype homeschool students lack interaction with peers and don't develop socially as well as public school students. Lori said that is not true with her kids.

"My kids like to do things," she said. "They still had their friends from when they attended school."

That was just one outlet for the Wilson children.

Lori said the children benefit from 4-H meetings, church youth group and Christian Family Educators of Northwest Kansas activities.

Amy remembers the times she missed public schools.

"I wanted to go back for a while to see friends, go to dances and the sports," she said.

But she found her way to get involved.

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JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Families register Friday at the Christian Family Educators of Northwest Kansas picnic in Gem. Last year about 60 families, totaling 125 students, regularly met during the school year to discuss homeschool strategies, curriculum and for activities for the students.