



COLBY FREE PRESS

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School budget increases

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Colby School board Monday approved the 2007 budget without any fanfare.

The budget approved was the \$12,712,880 proposed by district financial officer Jo DeYoung at the Aug. 7 board meeting. She told the board there were no changes to what they were presented.

The 2007 budget is an increase of \$583,418 over the 2006 budget, which was \$12,129,462.

DeYoung told the board it's Aug. 7 meeting two areas of the budget going up the most are at-risk programs and special education. At-risk is going up \$81,539 and special ed's increase is \$44,261.

She also said property taxes may go up a little because the county valuation is up two percent last year to \$56,808,636 for 2006-2007.

The board also heard reports from the principals and superintendent.

Diana Wieland, curriculum director and principal of Thomas County Academy, said the school has 20 students enrolled and applications for two more have been received. She told the board she would like to add another teacher to help facilitator Kristin Eberle because the school could use the additional help.

Wieland said she met with an area homeschool group Friday and many would like to be able to use the charter school's online curriculum instead of actually having to send their children to school.

"There were some parents interested in the virtual facet, and others were interested in the school itself, but their children are too young to attend yet," she said.

Thomas County Academy is for students in fifth through eighth grades.

Wieland also added more interest was generated for the school through a booth at the Thomas County Free Fair.

"Each night we had a lot of people stop by," she said. "They cleared up misconceptions and answered questions about the school."

Middle school principal Robb Ross said an in-service was held Monday for school staff, one of the last events before the start of classes Thursday.

Getting ready



ABOVE: Colby School District custodians Don Martin, left, and Curtis Cayton worked to measure off the end zone on the football field at Dennen Field Tuesday. The district is getting ready for the first day of school Thursday. **BELOW:** Custodian Pat Hamilton mowed hash marks on the football field in preparation for it to be painted for the Colby High School football scrimmage 8 p.m. Friday. The volleyball scrimmage which will be at 6 p.m. The Eagles' first football game of the season will be 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 1 with Hoxie.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

County buys new car

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A vehicle purchased Monday will help Thomas County Emergency Medical Service first responders get where they need to go when roads are packed with snow or muddy.

Ken Gatlin, EMS director, and Marty Rinehart, assistant director, earlier this month told Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen the Jeep Grand Cherokee they have been using has seen its better day.

"The Jeep has 178,600 plus miles on it," Gatlin said of the sport utility vehicle. It was seized by local law enforcement in a drug interdiction about six years ago.

Gatlin and Rinehart were at the meeting when sealed bids to replace the Jeep were opened.

After reviewing the bids the commissioners directed Gatlin and Rinehart to test drive vehicles and they recommended purchase of a 2003 Trail Blazer with 46,620 miles from MCAuto Outlet of Colby. The purchase price was \$15,500.

"For us, it's the pick of the litter," Christiansen said.

The second of three items on Monday's commission agenda was a meeting with county department heads to once again talk about a longevity bonus.

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms said when asked, a majority of department heads did not support a bonus plan. After Harms reported to the commissioners, the topic was dropped citing lack of interest as the reason.

Emergency Preparedness Director Jim Engel said he was not contacted about the topic and wanted it revisited.

Commissioners agreed to evaluate a longevity plan using five-year increments at a rate of 50 cents per hour payable the month after an anniversary date of an employee.

Harms apologized for her oversight in contacting Engel and said in the future would contact department heads by e-mail.

John Selley was approved as assistant noxious weed director. Selley will assist Clair Schrock with the newly combined weed and road department with a starting wage of \$13.01 per hour effective Sept. 1

Kansas Senators Brownback, Roberts lecture in Colby

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

Even though the war on terrorism is thousands of miles away from Kansas, Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., said the state is closer to the war than some people might think.

Brownback was a speaker Tuesday at the Colby Rotary meeting at Colby Community College. It was one of two public speeches Brownback made in Colby.

"With the new intelligence office, Kansas is expanding," Brownback said. Brownback recently visited a new military intelligence department within McConnell Air Force Base near Wichita.

Brownback watched military officials view surveillance from a drone in Baghdad, Iraq, that was with American troops while on patrol.

"It all happened in real time," Brownback said. And it is not just because of technology how Kansas, and the Midwest, is assisting the Iraq War.

During the extensive bombing raids of Afghanistan, Brownback said Air Force bombers were deployed from a base in Missouri. Brownback said military officials said it was difficult to find adequate space and security for the bombers to take off from a closer location.

Brownback said those kind of efforts can benefit Kansas military bases. Brownback is optimistic about the importance and utilization of Fort Riley near Junction City.

"It can become one of the premier army bases in the world," he said.

Brownback said the opportunities for military families at Fort Riley are plenty.

The soldiers' spouses could utilize the nearby universities and other family-related needs are accessible.

Brownback said the world needs to understand what the war is about.

"The war on terror is a bad name," he said. "It's a tactic, not a who."

Brownback categorized terrorists at Islamic fascists who want to restore Islam in the Middle East, "if not the entire world."

He emphasized terrorists do not agree with American ideals of freedom, rights and human rights.

"Those kind of Muslims are not in the majority, but still a substantial group," he said.

Weeks before the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11, Brownback said that fateful day was really the start of terrorist attacks on American interests.

Brownback said the World Trade Center bombing in the early 1990s, bombings at African locations and



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., spoke to Colby Rotary Tuesday. Brownback talked about Kansas' importance in the war on terror.

on the USS Cole in 2000 should also be considered as the reasons why America invaded Iraq.

"We take the war to them rather than they bring it to us," he said.

At home

Brownback spoke highly of utilizing American corn production for the increased use of ethanol to reduce the dependency upon foreign oil and to lower the cost of energy.

But he said more is needed than corn. Ethanol is derived from corn but other crops can also be used to create ethanol. Soybeans are also being used to create diesel fuel. In

addition to the crops, Brownback said he has researched the popular Toyota Prius, a hybrid car.

The car operates on a combination of gasoline and batteries. He recently saw a modified Prius model that gets 100 miles per gallon.

Brownback said nuclear power needs more interest and use. Recent stories have been about the increasing amount of greenhouse gases, which is connected to the global warming debate. Brownback said nuclear energy avoids all of that. "It doesn't have the CO-2 (carbon dioxide) release," he said.

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., rode the fence Monday when asked whether the nation can leave Iraq with a positive outcome.

"I don't know," Roberts said replying to Colby resident Patrick Toth's question.

Roberts stopped in Colby as part of his Big First District tour this week in Kansas.

But withdrawing troops from Iraq is just one part of the issue.

Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in the 108th Congress, Roberts called a question about the differences between the Iraq War's financial cost and the new bankruptcy laws "a difference of apples and oranges."

"Probably sour apples," Roberts said.

Roberts was asked why reformed bankruptcy laws force Americans to repay debt when the federal government has spent billions for the war in Iraq.

"We are paying for the war," Roberts said. "We are paying for it with an Emergency Supplemental Amendment."

Roberts said war costs are supported by the national budget and are evaluated on an annual basis. He said secondary skirmishes coupled

with the unknown factor Iran would be "such a big player" may have caused the United States to taken a second look at engaging in the war in Iraq.

"You don't know what's going to happen in a war," he said. "Maybe if we knew all this we wouldn't be in this war."

Despite costs of the war and rising energy costs, Roberts said the nation's economy is "very resilient."

"Bankruptcy reform was needed to get so many people to stop talking out bankruptcy," Roberts said.

Jeff Friesen asked Roberts where the government draws the line about invasion of privacy lies when it comes to private individuals.

Roberts defended the nation's intelligence policy saying, "It does not invade personal privacy."

Calling national security a "four-legged stool," Roberts said the stool consists of human intelligence, signal intelligence, detention and interrogation, and chasing the money.

"This is the highest security program we have," Roberts said. "It allows us to surveil incoming calls from terrorists."

He said the federal government, like local law enforcement agencies, can only intercept calls made