



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Colby Wesleyan Church plans a bigger future

By John Van Nostrand  
Colby Free Press

Colby Wesleyan Church officials want the church's congregation to grow.

To help make that happen, the church building must first grow.

The church has begun an extensive addition project. Plans are to eventually add a fellowship hall and expand the parking lot. The church, located at 320 W. Pine St., does not have room or the amenities to hold wedding receptions or banquets.

"It has made it awkward," said Rev. Gene Rothfuss. "We can do small groups, but we don't get the large groups, like potluck meals."

Rothfuss, who has been at the church for three years, said when there is enough interest to have such events, including food, the church must use the Colby Community Building or Heartland Christian School.

The church's current building opened in the late 1980s and fit the congregation's size at that time.

"We had a small congregation then," said Eugene Robert, a church board member. "We did not have the finances and just built the classrooms and sanctuary. We thought, as we grew, we would add on."

Robert said the congregation has increased over the years which encouraged the board to revisit those building ideas. This summer, the church board made its formal presentation about the proposal to the congregation. The congregation voted in favor of the entire project. Not only is the church wanting space for those activities, but the church also sees the work as a way to attract more and younger families.

Rothfuss said churches that don't attempt to attract younger families

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Rev. Gene Rothfuss,  
Colby Wesleyan Church

will see it on Sunday morning.

"They go gray," he said, implying the older age of congregation members.

Rothfuss said he has told people of the programs the church offers but knows the addition to the church will make Colby Wesleyan Church more attractive.

"We have to appeal to younger families," he said.

Robert said there is no definite timeline for when each phase of the project will begin or completed.

"But we do have some goals," he said.

Work began this summer with the relocation of the parking lot entryway. When that is complete, Robert said efforts will shift to planning the financing and construction of the ministry center.

**Phase one:** The parking lot entry is being moved to the west side of the building, creating a two-lane driveway for all traffic. Where the entry way used to be, plans are to create a fenced in playground for youth including access to the church building.

**Phase two:** Construction on the Family Life Ministry Center is ex-



Members of the Colby Wesleyan Church poured concrete last week for the church's new, relocated parking lot driveway. The driveway work is the first of four phases of addition to the church.

pected to begin in early 2008. The 6,600 square foot building is proposed to be built on a portion of the current parking lot, on the church's south side. The building will have a kitchen, large meeting room and other amenities. It will not be con-

nected to the church. The church is about 9,400 square feet.

**Phase three:** Plans are to pave the remainder of the current parking lot after the Family Life Ministry Center is complete. The revised parking lot is projected to have 47

spaces.

**Phase four:** Church officials will either sell and remove or demolish the house on its property east of the church. That lot will then be converted into a 55-space, paved parking lot.

## Officer awarded for anti-bullying campaign

LEAWOOD (AP) — A Leawood police officer who has won a national award for anti-bullying programs said he originally was motivated by troubles his own son was having with a bully.

In 1992, Randy Wiler's seventh-grade son was beaten by a bully who had bothered him since preschool. Wiler had the bully arrested, but said he realized his son's school had been unaware of the problem.

Two anti-bullying programs Wiler created in response have earned him the title of 2006 International DARE Officer of the Year. He is the first Kansas officer to earn the distinction since the award was established in 1990.

Wiler's programs, which focus on making children, parents and schools aware of bullying and how to stop it, are now used internationally.

Studies indicate that 60 percent of bullies will have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24. Their targets become anxious, lose sleep, see their grades drop and can have increased thoughts of suicide.

Wiler tested one program last at Brookwood Elementary School in Leawood, one of four schools where he teaches.

The program Wiler wrote for DARE uses role-playing and word puzzles to teach bystanders that they can and should help stop bullying by reporting it to teachers, supporting someone who is being bullied and possibly standing up to the bully themselves.

"He always told us just to imagine being in their shoes, imagine how you would feel if you were the one being bullied," said Caroline Dodd, 13, a former Brookwood student.

West Elementary School in Wamego used the program in early 2005. In one year, the school reported a 24 percent reduction in bullying behaviors and a 67 percent reduction in the number of students who bully.

## Price of hay has impact

NEOSHO, Mo. — Add the high price of hay to the burden on cattle producers coping with prolonged drought in parts of Kansas, Missouri and points south.

With hay production below normal and motor fuel prices soaring, ranchers are paying far more for the feed than they did a year ago.

Hay farmer Steve Roark, who also raises 200 beef cattle near Neosho in southwest Missouri, said the calls he has received from ranchers in Kansas and Oklahoma hoping to buy his hay suggest many face tough decisions before winter.

Timely rains and a surplus of hay from last year have allowed Roark to sell several hundred small square bales this year.

"Right now, hay is hard to find," Roark said. "And with diesel \$3 a gallon, that just adds that much more to the cost for someone to get the hay home."

At Nash Farms, a hay transportation and supply company in Columbus, Kan., owner Steve Nash said hay production is a fraction of normal. Meanwhile, his tractors burn eight to 10 gallons of diesel per hour, adding \$30 per hour to his production costs.

Nash said he is buying hay in western Kansas and Nebraska for \$65 per round bale, up from around \$20 per bale last year. By the time Nash hauls the hay to Texas, ranchers there can expect to pay \$100 to \$120 per bale for mixed grass and lespedeza hay.

Small square bales of alfalfa are selling for up to \$10 per bale, Nash said.

## Toll road



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Tell Benson, left, and his father, Tom Benson, a firefighter with the Colby Fire Department, took manned a voluntary "toll booth" Saturday at Fourth and Franklin in Colby during the annual Boot Block to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Assistant Fire Chief Rick Dickman said 16 firefighters and three kids raised \$1,800 for the association.

## Sheridan County man says his road has been forgotten

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

A Sheridan County man wants his and 10 other families' road repaired.

Mark Heim, who lives 15 miles northeast of Hoxie, told Sheridan County Commissioners David Zimmerman, Ron Schamberger and Keith Kennedy Monday it has been 10 years since the road leading from U.S. 24 Highway to his house has been crowned and sanded.

"Everything needs done," Heim said. "One thing is that it's never been mowed much because there are fences right on the road."

"Fences on the road?" Schamberger asked. "I wasn't aware of that."

Heim said fences owned by Leroy Reitcheck have been placed directly on the shoulder of the road forcing county employees to bypass mowing the area.

"So you think it should be mowed," Zimmerman asked.

Heim said the east-west road he and his neighbors are concerned about is 10 and one-half miles north of Hoxie. He said that ditches of the road have only been mowed one time this year, and as spokesman for the neighborhood, the group wanted the county to be responsible for their welfare.

"Like I said, there are 11 families, some who are in their 80s and if we get an inch of rain and you need to get an ambulance down that road you'd be in trouble," Heim said.

Sheridan County has 1,230 miles of road, 700 of which are gravel and the remainder are dirt. Besides the family homes, Heim said the area needs to be accessible to McGraw Methodist Church and Bainter Construction.

Heim said he has tried to talk to Sheridan County Road and Bridge Director Bob Schwarz Schwarz without success.

"I'm done with him," Heim said. Heim said he's also concerned about access to the road for the Hoxie School District's bus.

"It's time to do something," Heim said. "People are tired of pulling the bus out of the ditch at their expense."

Hoxie school board clerk Kaylene Oelke said the road is not a problem for the school district. She said the bus which services area has no more difficulty on the road than "any other road in the county."

Heim said the area's residents were concerned a culvert near Bainter Construction had recently been removed causing water to drain directly on to the road.

"I wasn't aware of that," Schamberger said.

"That's one of those deals Mr. Schwarz should have been aware of," Heim said.

Schamberger said the commissioners would look into the situation and have Schwarz deal with it.

Zimmerman, Schamberger and Kennedy all reiterated they would direct Schwarz to evaluate the road, signs and intersections in the area Heim talked about.