



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Barnett criticizes governor

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansas should not allow illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses or pay cheaper, in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities, Republican gubernatorial candidate Jim Barnett said Tuesday.

Barnett, speaking to reporters by telephone Tuesday from Washington, D.C., criticized Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius for signing a 2004 law granting in-state tuition to qualifying students who are illegal immigrants and for her past support of legislation allowing illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses.

"I think the key is partnership. We need to partner at the state level with the federal government to make our immigration policy and enforcement more effective," Barnett said. "That includes our support at the border to have a safe and secure border."

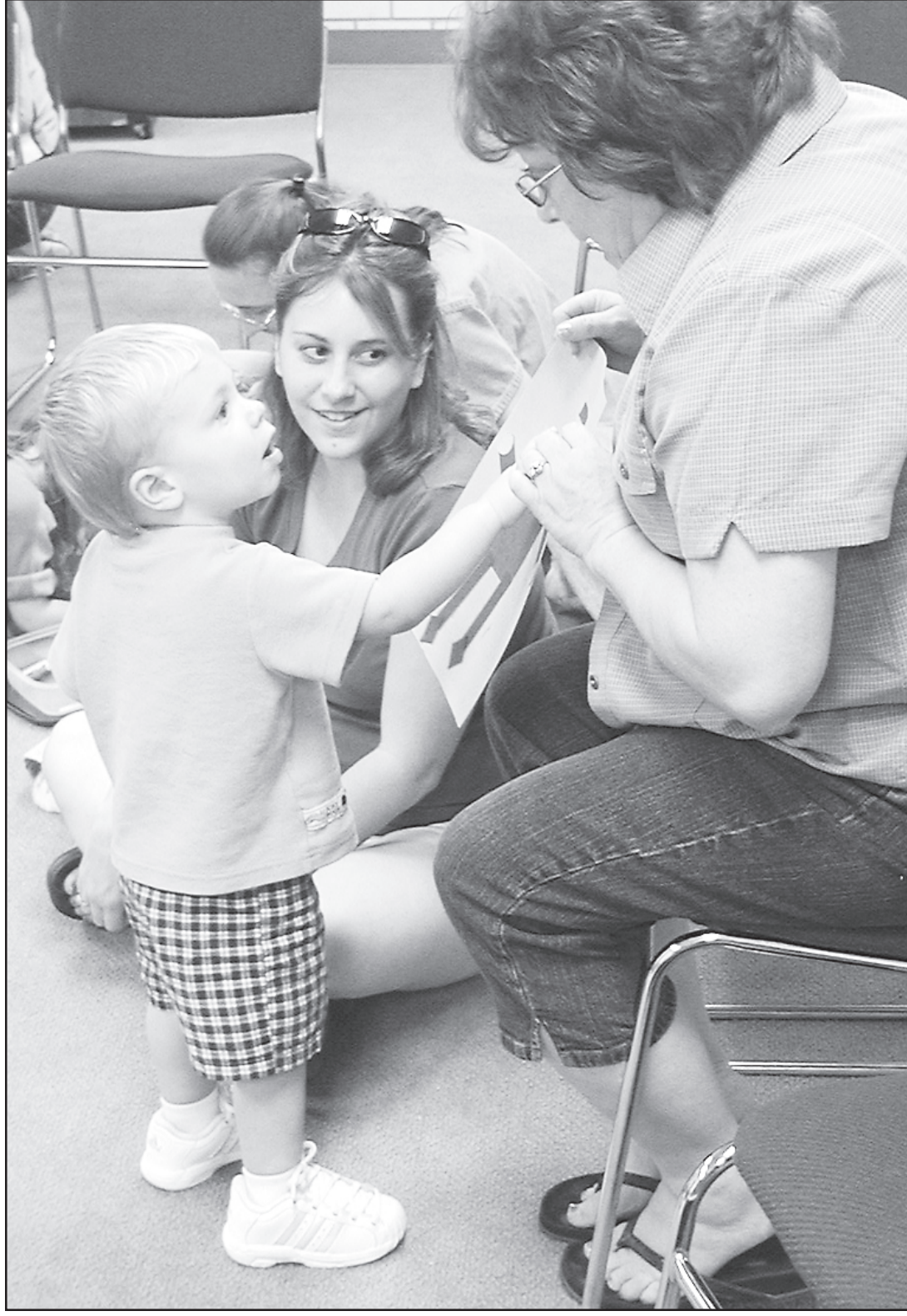
Sebelius spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran disputed Barnett's claim that the state wasn't working in good faith with the federal government.

"We at the state level have been a good partner," Corcoran said. "Whether it's accepting an offer from the Department of Defense to visit our troops in Iraq, working to get relief for our state, or sending troops to help secure the border once the mission was clear, Kansas has absolutely been a good partner under the leadership of this governor."

Sebelius has said the tuition law will help longtime Kansas residents who are seeking citizenship. She has said the issue about driver's licenses is moot because of a federal law enacted last year that requires states to begin verifying whether license applicants are legally in the United States by 2008.

Barnett leveled his criticisms the same day Sebelius began airing radio spots touting efforts by a Kansas Air National Guard unit deployed this summer to the Arizona-Mexico border. The unit built more than 2,000 feet of fence over two

See mommy



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Alec Wildeman showed his craft project to Pam Grindle, right, while his mother, Amy Wildeman, center, watched during Family Night Storytime Tuesday at Pioneer Memorial Library. Judy Kleinsorge, children's librarian, said the event will be at 7 p.m. each Tuesday through fall, except for an open house Halloween. Other storytimes at the library are: Toddle Time (for children 18 months to 3 years) on Wednesdays, 10:15-10:35 a.m.; Preschool (for children 3-4-5 years) on Tuesdays, 10:15-10:45 a.m. or 1:15-1:45 p.m.; or on Thursdays 10:15-10:45 a.m.; and Family Night (for the whole family) will be held on Tuesdays, 7-7:30 p.m.

Colby center estimated at \$1 million

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

Colby's Todd Stramel wants the area to have a one-stop shopping location for those looking for entertainment to a place to hold the family reunion.



T. Stramel

Stramel informed Colby Rotary Tuesday of his plans to build a multi-purpose facility in Colby. The past several months, Stramel has helped form various committees related to the planning and opening of the center which he emphasized is not a youth center.

"Yes, it is a youth center but not any more than it is a senior center or a place for moms to meet for a cup of coffee. It is so much more," he said.

During the past months, Stramel said the committees have created a legal corporation, written bylaws, a mission statement and is applying for 501-C3 status, which would make the center exempt from some taxes. The committees meet every other week.

"It's an incredible amount of planning," he said.

Stramel said he would like the center to be open in two years, but that all depends upon funding and the execution of the proposals within the center.

"We are fairly early in the project," he said.

One committee is researching the feasibility of building the center and acquiring an existing building to house the center. Stramel declined to specify locations. Plans for the facility include a coffee shop, Internet access, home furnishings, golf simulator, batting cages, a

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Todd Stramel, coordinator

skatepark, performance stage, recording studio, meeting rooms and a variety of other amenities to attract all ages of people.

"If you're 70, 47 or 7 years old you can go and be comfortable," he said.

Not only does Stramel want the center to benefit those who already live in Colby, Thomas County and northwest Kansas, but said the center can be used as a recruitment tool for new teachers, administrators, doctors, young families and former residents to move back.

"This will increase the quality of life," he said.

Stramel said he has already received some financial support for the center, which he estimates will need at least \$1 million to start. Stramel said a firm near Hays has been hired to assist with grant applications.

Stramel said there really is not an existing facility to give area residents an idea of what he has in mind. A center in Norton is more of a traditional youth center and a group in Wichita opened its second facility that offers some activities. But what Stramel wants is far more diverse.

"I can assure you, it will be done well and done right," he said.

Those interested can call Stramel at 460-3222 for more information.

Weeds creating hazards along Thomas County roads

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Crops and chemical use near county roads consumed more than an hour of Monday's Thomas County Commission meeting.

Ken Crampton wants Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen to do something about roads, particularly those in Barrett and Rovohl Townships.

"It should fall on the shoulders of the county commissioners and the township boards," he said. "These practices that tear down and destroy the roadways should not be deemed illegal, but hopefully considered at least a sin."

Deteriorating roads prompted Crampton

to photograph and measure portions of County Roads X, W, Z, 11, 14 and 15. Roads X, W and Z are east-west roads in both Barrett and Rovohl Townships. Roads 14 and 15 are north-south roads in Rovohl Township. Road 11 is a north-south road in Barrett Township. One photo showed a pickup sitting in a field entrance but only the very top of it was visible due to tall weeds.

"I think it would sum this up in such a way as to say that farmers ought to farm their ground and stay out of the right-of-way and that no-till folks ought to keep their Roundup out of the right-of-way," Steele said.

Crampton said killing both weeds and grass breeds more weeds due to "no competition."

"Ask yourself the question, 'Whose responsibility are those tall weeds?'" he said. "We've got to spray road ditches, but we can not be doing it with a nonselective chemical."

Christiansen said Barrett Township trustees a recently adopted a plan which includes hiring a new road grader operator, application of herbicides and mowing more often.

"I know the trustees are going to send every land owner a letter about the new program and practices," he said. "I'm hoping it will work."

Crampton said farmers, county personnel, township trustees, custom operators and both resident and nonresident land owners need to examine their attitudes toward care of rural roads. He said a weed

known as Palmer amaranth often stands 10-foot tall and obstructs many areas of the roadways.

"Over the years, technology that controls this prolific weed has been relatively successful controlling it in our growing crops," he said. "But introduction of Roundup has made it the predominate weed along our rural county and township road right-of-ways and noncrop areas."

Crampton said chemicals such as Roundup are not specific as to what is killed, leaving open the door for more weeds to grow where grass once grew.

"Kenny, it's obvious you've spent a lot of time with this and there isn't anything in it I disagree with, but I don't know what to do about it," Evans said.

Thomas County Road and Bridge Direc-

tor Clair Schrock said destruction of county roads Crampton talked about is against the law.

According to state law, anyone destroying right-of-ways by dumping debris or plowing them could be charged with a misdemeanor. Upon conviction, the individual could be fined \$200, plus the cost of cleaning the roadway or restoring it to its prior condition.

Schrock would like to see the commissioners enforce law, but the commissioners don't know how to do it.

Evans said the problem with the county's roads has existed for more than 30 years. He said part of the problem is there are 11 different township boards, the commissioners and the "12 different ideas about how to handle the situation."

Spearville wind farm has started generating

SPEARVILLE (AP) — The state's much-anticipated third wind farm is fully operational.

Officials from Kansas City Power & Light on Tuesday announced that all 67 towers of the 100.5-megawatt Spearville Wind Energy Facility in southwest Kansas were turning.

The facility will produce enough energy to supply about 33,000 homes. Much of it will be routed to the Kansas City area.

"Putting these wind turbines on the power grid is an important milestone in our comprehensive plan to meet the growing energy needs of the Kansas City area," Kansas City Power & Light chief executive Bill Downey said in a news release.

Construction began in April on the wind farm, spread over 5,000

acres north of Dodge City. It was scheduled for completion Oct. 1 at a cost of about \$166 million, but favorable weather helped contractors finish nearly three weeks early.

"I commend KCP&L for their site selection of Spearville out of the heart of the Flint Hills," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said, "and for their leadership in developing this clean and renewable resource."

The Spearville facility is the smallest of the state's three wind farms, behind the 150-megawatt Elk River Wind Power Project in Butler County and the 110-megawatt Gray County Wind Farm near Montezuma. But the Spearville plant is the first large-scale wind farm in the state to be owned and operated by a regulated electric utility.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Bonfire

Colby High School students and members of the community watched the homecoming bonfire burn Tuesday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. The evening also included a jersey auction and pep rally. Usually on the Thursday night before homecoming, the bonfire was moved to Tuesday because there are four sporting events on the road Thursday, said high school secretary Lynn Carpenter. Volleyball, cross country, golf and tennis are all away, which would have made many students unable to participate in the bonfire. See page 7 for another related photo.