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## County will not change bill cycle

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
*Colby Free Press*

Thomas County officials will continue to pay bills part way through and at the end of the month.

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms met with Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen on Monday to talk about accounts payables.

Harms said she is concerned only paying bills twice a month sometimes forces her to risk paying late fees. She cited the county's cell phone and credit card company as the two vendors which will not change their due date and billing cycle to account for the county's payment cycle.

County Treasurer Donita Applebury said she did not want to change the bill paying practice.

"I can't be moving money in and out of money market funds all the time," she said.

Evans made a motion, seconded by Christiansen and passed unanimously to continue paying bills twice a month. He directed Harms to continue trying to negotiate a different due dates with vendor as needed to accommodate the county's payment cycle.

Dan George met with the commissioners asking them to have a tax sale on property in southeast part of the county. George owns one-sixteenth of the questioned section of land and believes unpaid taxes may keep oil prospectors from drilling since part of the taxes are unpaid by other owners.

"It would appear to me this is a private matter," Steele said.

Steele told George it was not the county's responsibility to locate all the co-owners of mineral rights in order for someone to have the option of buying the land or drilling for oil.

Evans told George the county was planning a tax sale, but it was not scheduled for the near future.

"I submit to you if an oil company wants to lease your land they'll do it," Evans said.

The commissioners told George it was his responsibility to find a way to buy the mineral rights on the land.

Harms suggested talking to a lawyer and find out how to have a quit claim deed prepared to send to George's co-owners of the mineral rights.

## Hello froggies



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Puddle Duck preschooler Macie Redick held two small toads at the preschool Thursday. Teacher Amy Jennings said the children had a "frog fest" this week, learning about frogs, toads and lizards. The highlight of the week came Thursday, with watching the toads swim.

## Fair board considers new events

By Tisha Cox  
*Colby Free Press*

The same activities year after year at the Thomas County Fair has fair board members thinking it might be time for a change.

It was discussed at the board's meeting Thursday.

Board member Audrey Hines suggested the group think of new ideas for the rodeo.

"Does anybody want to do something different?" she said. "It's good to do something different."

She suggested a ranch rodeo, but board member Marty Crampton said their aren't many cowboys or ranch people in the community. Ranch rodeo contest include a variety of skills while working with cattle, like roping.

Instead, Crampton suggested moving the fair car races to the weekend before the fair.

That would free up an additional weekend for other activities, such as a monster truck show or concert.

Other ideas were opening up the rodeo arena, which would give more options, said board member Mark Anderson.

"It's time to have something different," he said.

"It is something the board should do regardless."

The rodeo arena can be altered to



A. Hines

have events other than a rodeo. Board member Clair Schrock said the arena fence and pens on the east and west ends could be made portable.

The south fence could be left intact, because it where the bucking chutes are, but he said everything else could be hooked onto the south fence when needed.

Schrock said he would further research the arena.

Hines said she would come up with more ideas for the rodeo and other activities for the October board meeting.

In other business, the board heard reports on the buildings and grounds.

Groundskeeper Ron Kogler said up to 100 feet of beef barn sewer pipe will have to be replaced. The pipe has separated from a coupler and has also become brittle.

The board also approved buying new padlocks for the various buildings and gates at the fairgrounds.

Board president Stan Strange said someone has been occasionally getting into the buildings and new locks and keeps will keep it from happening again.

The board found out the rodeo arena will be getting a new calf chute.

Schrock told the board Orscheln Farm and Home Supply is donating the chute, worth about \$2,600. Schrock and Colby Community College rodeo coach Allen Russell will install the chute next week, along with working on some of the arena gates.

## Oakley voters overwhelmingly approve sale

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
*Colby Free Press*

The sale of Oakley's electric distribution system was supported by voters in a 7 to 1 landslide election Thursday.

Logan County Clerk Pat Schippers mailed 1,240 ballots and 886 of them were returned, making a 74 percent turn out.

The 775 "yes" ballots to the 111 "no" ones means Midwest Energy now has the go ahead to ask the Kansas Corporation Commission

**"The people have spoken . . . I'm still trying to digest it . . ."**  
—Oakley Mayor Frank Munk

to support the \$2.5 million deal.

"We're pleased with the results of the election and we look forward to rolling up our sleeves and going to work for the folks in Oakley," said Bob Helm, manager of corporate communications for Midwest Energy. Since March, Oakley Mayor

Frank Munk and council members Jim McGuire, Kevin Uhrich, Larry Eberle, Charles Beamer have been talking with Midwest Energy about a proposed sale.

"The people have spoken," Munk said after the votes were tallied. "I'm still trying to digest it, but now

I'm thinking of all the work ahead of us."

Midwest Energy offered to buy the city's aging system which needs an estimated \$1.5 million in upgrades.

Munk has repeatedly said the city looked at all options for the system which currently services 1,000 active meters. Those meters generated \$1.8 million in utility sales in 2005, but cost the city \$1.9 million to furnish the electricity to customers.

It is expected Midwest Energy will create four new jobs in Oakley

in the near future.

"We are creating a new position for a gas/electric serviceman and will have a three-man construction crew there," Helm said.

Helm said Midwest Energy does not know how long it will take the Kansas Corporation Commission to decide whether to approve the sale but he expects a decision in a matter of months.

"We hope they will expedite the process once we can file with the Commission," he said.

Munk agreed.

## Getting ready for the big night



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby High School students, from left to right, Levi Schlick, Trevor Siebert and Ethan Stover showed off their Eagle spirit today while folding programs for tonight's homecoming football game against St. Francis. Game time is at 7 p.m. at Dennen Field.

## Black aviators focus of museum exhibit

WICHITA (AP) — An exhibit that tells the story of the important role blacks from Kansas played in the aviation industry will be unveiled today, and supporters are hoping it will prompt others to come forward with their stories.

The exhibit will open at the Kansas Aviation Museum, which educates people on Wichita's and the state's contributions to the aviation industry.

Members of the Wichita chapter of the group Black Pilots of America funded and created the exhibit and believe it makes the museum more credible, chapter member Rip Gooch said.

"You would think there weren't qualified (black) people or anybody that made any significant contributions just by looking around," said Gooch, the first black to own his own aviation company in Wichita.

Monroe Balton, a Federal Aviation Administration regional counsel based in Los Angeles, and several others featured in the exhibit

plan to attend its opening Friday evening.

About 21 people are included in the exhibit so far.

Museum Director Teresa Day said she is delighted with the new addition.

"We don't have anything right now except for a few items from a Tuskegee airman that specifically speaks to what African-Americans have done in aviation," she said.

The Tuskegee Airmen, who trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama during the 1940s, were the first black pilots in the U.S. armed forces.

George Johnson, another Wichita chapter member, hopes the exhibit will interest the younger generation.

When he was young, Johnson and his family would drive to the museum when it was the city's airport and watch planes land.

"It was so far away. I thought I would never do that," Johnson said of being a pilot.