



COLBY FREE PRESS

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County OKs agreement for grass drill

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Conservation District will be getting a little help from the county to buy a new grass drill.

The Thomas County commissioners approved doing a cost share with the conservation district on a project at the landfill. Lynette Koon with the conservation district and landfill supervisor Larry Jumper were at the meeting to discuss the matter.

The cost of the cost share is approximately \$1,575, said chairman Ron Evans, and it will be for a cover crop and grass seed to plant about 35 acres at the county landfill with grass. On the grass drill, the conservation district will make application to the state for help on the new grass drill. The money from that will go to the county, which will in turn give the \$2,400 to the district to help pay for its drill.

In return, Evans said, will be able to use the grass drill when needed. "As long as it's here, we can use it," Evans said, adding the plan sounded good and was in the best interests of conservation and the

county. In other business, the board approved the appointment of a new member to the Thomas County Fair Board. Nick Wells, head of the Colby Community College Endowment Association, was appointed to the board. He will replace either Liz Strand or Bruce Plumisto, who both moved out of the county this year.

The commissioners also heard from Tuffy and Linda Taylor and Brandon and Kami Booie about the proposed vacating of Heather Lane in Sunflower Acres.

Sherry McDonald had requested at the Wednesday, Aug. 31 meeting the street be vacated.

The Taylors and Booies came to voice their concerns about the matter, and would like the street to remain open, along with three trees removed.

County Clerk Shelly Harms said there will be a public hearing on road matter at 9 a.m. at the Friday, Sept. 30 commissioners meeting.

The commissioners also approved the hiring of Jim McGuire as custodian and groundskeeper for the courthouse and also groundskeeper at the Thomas County Office Complex.

Library offers new after-school event

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

The Colby library is introducing a new monthly program beginning Tuesday from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. for students in grades sixth through eighth, said Judy Kleinsorge, children's librarian.

"This will be an opportunity for kids to chill with friends, laugh a lot and try some new things," she said. In addition to the planned activity, there will also be games and snacks.

Every third Tuesday of the month, also known as *The Third 2*, there will be a different activity with all events being held in the Pioneer Memorial Library basement. The scheduled event Tuesday is "Fear Factor," followed by "Unfortunate Event," on Oct. 18; "Imagination Chronicles," on Nov. 15; and "Ho-Ho-Holiday-Humbug," on Dec. 20, Kleinsorge said.

"Though kids have busy sched-

ules, they really like to be able to hook up with friends and, make new ones, outside of school," she said. "We would like to encourage them to come whenever they can for some great fun."

Along with this newest program, Kleinsorge also wanted to remind everyone about the StoryTime schedule for toddlers, preschoolers and families.

Toddle Time, which is for children 18 months to 3 years is held Wednesdays from 10:15 to 10:35 a.m.; *Preschool Time*, for children 3, 4, and 5 years, is held Tuesdays from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m. or 1:15 to 1:45 p.m.; or on Thursdays 10:15 to 10:45 a.m.; and *Family Night* for the entire family, on Tuesdays from 7 to 7:30 p.m.

For questions on either of these programs or other activities, call Kleinsorge at 460-4470 or stop by the library at 375 W. 4th St.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Left to right: Scott Robertson, chief executive officer of Infinia Healthcare Companies; Clint Robertson, president; and Vicky Mendez, regional director for the state of Kansas based in Hutchinson, spoke about future plans at Infinia at Colby.

Open house Wednesday

Lantern Park under new ownership

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

Lantern Park Manor, one of two nursing homes in Colby, has a new name and is under new ownership.

Infinia at Colby took over operations at the first of September, said Scott Robertson, chief executive officer for *Infinia Healthcare Companies* based in Bountiful, Utah.

In addition, the company has planned an open house on Wednesday so that employees, families, residents, and other guests can meet one another and talk

with the new staff and management. Robertson said about *Infinia* that it is a family-owned operation that includes his brother, Clint, president.

Scott said he has been in health-care for 29 years and Clint has worked his way up through the ranks — knowing just about every aspect of the nursing home business.

"We are working on patient care first," Robertson said about the Colby facility, "and we are here to provide the highest quality of care possible."

The facility has about 75 employ-

ees in Colby, which is now one of eight nursing homes operating in Kansas under *Infinia*.

In total there are 26 properties in five other states beside Kansas. Those are Ohio, Nebraska, Minnesota, Utah and Arizona.

The Kansas nursing homes are located in Hutchinson, Wichita, Topeka, Oswego, Yates Center, McPherson, Smith Center and Kensington.

Along with managing the facility, Scott said *Infinia* is planning to buy the former Lantern Park building.

During the next 6 to 18 months, Clint said, the company plans to sta-

bilize the facility based on corrective actions that need to be made following complaints filed by the state when the facility was previously owned by Premiere Healthcare Management.

"We have submitted a plan of correction to the state, which they have accepted," Clint said.

"Our top priority is to the 44 residents and staff in Colby," Clint said.

Both Scott and Clint said they believe in an open door policy and are looking forward to meeting others in Colby during the open house this week.

Colby airport plans sixth annual fly-in

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

The Colby Municipal Airport is sponsoring its sixth annual open house, Saturday, Oct. 1, beginning at 6:30 a.m. at the airport. In addition to a fly-in breakfast, complete with pancakes and all the fixings, said Mark Ostmeyer, airport manager and coordinator, airplane rides, incoming helicopters, experimental aircraft, powered parachutes and

more will be featured. Eagle Med, Med-Star, the Kansas State University Aviation Department, Air Care, Rans Aircraft and the Kansas Highway Patrol will also have exhibits available for

spectators, Ostmeyer said.

The pancake feed will be served by Colby Boy Scout Troop 140 and airplane rides will begin from 1 to 3 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

Mayor to allow residents back to New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Mayor Ray Nagin's plan to officially reopen parts of New Orleans drew criticism from federal officials and health care experts who warn that city services might not be able to handle the influx of people.

Nagin said residents may return Monday to Algiers, a section of the city across the Mississippi River from downtown New Orleans that saw little damage from Hurricane Katrina. Over the next week and a half, Uptown, the Garden District

and the French Quarter, the city's historic heart, are also due to open to residents and businesses.

All are sections that didn't flood, but Coast Guard Vice Adm.

The flooded areas of New Orleans continued shrinking over the

weekend, but crews still searched by boat for the dead.

The state Department of Health and Hospitals said the hurricane death toll in Louisiana had risen to 646. The toll across the Gulf Coast was 883.

Taking a stroll



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Scoutmaster Mike Larmer, Nick Larmer, Andy Wood, Alex Juenemann, Mark Ostmeyer, William Mick, Cameron Crocker, Kevin Juenemann and Leanna Larmer stopped to look at the veterans memorial in front of the Thomas County Courthouse Saturday morning. The group, made up of Boy Scouts and Webloes, was out on its fourth 10-mile hike. They did an urban hike around Colby and are working on their hiking merit badge. They were from Scout Troop 140 and Webloes Pack 140.

Board of Education pursuing plans of internet broadcasts

TOPEKA (AP) — People who have followed the State Board of Education's often contentious dealings with evolution and other matters could soon listen in live — to most of the proceedings, at least.

The board asked its staff last week to come up with a proposal for streaming audio Internet broadcasts of their meetings.

"This would be a great benefit not just to Kansas folks, but worldwide," said Republican board member John Bacon of Olathe.

Bacon had wanted to have the State Department of Education handle the broadcasts, but other members were concerned about the staff time required and the startup

cost of \$17,500.

"The board has been burning through money," said Topeka Democrat Bill Wagnon.

Kan-Ed, a communications network under the direction of the Kansas Board of Regents, has offered to provide free broadcast services.

Broadcasting school-related meetings "is what we do," Kan-Ed director Hal Gardner said. The network is designed to connect libraries, schools, hospitals and other public institutions to high-speed Internet service.

One member expressed concern that worldwide interest in the evolution debate could overtax the Kan-Ed network when the board

meets later this fall to consider science standards that criticize evolution. With conservatives holding a 6-4 majority on the board, those standards are expected to pass.

"I'd hate to blow the network up," said Janet Waugh, a Democrat from Kansas City, Kan.

Gardner said Kan-Ed would monitor the broadcasts to ensure quality. Board members also said they would turn off the audio during the public comment segments of their meetings.

Chairman Steve Abrams, an Arkansas City Republican, said he did not want any personal attacks on board members to be broadcast worldwide.

Hill City man injured in car accident

A one-vehicle accident on Highway 24 Sunday sent a Hill City man to the hospital in Colby.

According to a report from the Kansas Highway Patrol, the accident took place at 12:44 p.m. on Highway 24 6.7 miles east of Colby.

A 1992 Chevy pickup driven by Michael Lester

Smith, 19, of Hill City, was headed west on Highway 24 when it went into the south ditch and hit a power pole.

Smith was taken to Citizens Medical Center in Colby with possible injuries, where he was treated and released.

