



COLBY FREE PRESS

Learning some moves



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Chelsie Calliham, Kaili Guy and Cayla Carter practiced their moves during a junior dance clinic put on by the Colby High School dance team Wednesday at the high school. The girls

participating in the clinic will perform with the dance team during halftime at the Colby Eagles football game at Dennen Field Friday.

Vehicle use on county's agenda again

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Emergency management was on the agenda Friday for the Thomas County Commissioners.

Emergency management director Jim Engel asked the commissioners to reconsider their stance on allowing him to use his county vehicle for out of county training and meetings.

At a meeting last month, the commissioners decided to not allow department vehicles, such as the emergency management vehicle and the emergency medical services first responder vehicle, to be used out of county.

Chairman Ron Evans said nothing

has changed.

"The emergency management vehicle is going to stay in town," he said. "We need it here in the county, and not somewhere else. It's common sense."

In other business, Engel discussed purchasing two antenna towers for the Thomas County Office Complex to help communicate with the law enforcement center, fire department and other necessary entities. The cost is \$9,150, and the towers will be put up by the city.

The commissioners also discussed who will construct the new household and hazardous waste building at the Thomas County landfill. Evans said landfill supervisor Larry Jumper is working on a grant from the state to help pay for the building.

The commissioners are researching the cost of construction using county staff and contract labor. No decision has been made yet.



J. Engel

New computer business ready to open in Colby

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Computer users in the area can turn to Colby's new Ntronic for sales and service.

Owner Will Dearden said it will encompass all aspects of computers, from technical support to custom-built computers. The business is already open for technical support.

The store front will open at 1055

Southwind Plaza next week.

Dearden will be able to build computers, supply parts, peripherals and build networks. However, the backbone of the business will be service and support.

"We can do



W. Dearden

almost anything," he said.

On the hardware side, Dearden can build computers for whatever a user wants. He said custom-built machines give the user more options.

If they want to change anything, they can expand or reduce what capabilities they have according to their tastes and preferences.

For example, someone could upgrade their memory or video card. "Bargain basement computers

don't come with those options. You get what you get," Dearden said. "You buy it as-is."

Computers built by Dearden will have a two-year warranty and include all brand-name parts.

"I think people should be able to count on their hardware," he said.

With the popularity of digital — storing pictures, home movies and other information on their computers — Dearden said computer owners deserve more advice than wip-

ing their hard drive to fix a problem.

Sometimes information is lost, and it can't be helped, but he will do what he can to help customers.

"It's about customer service," he said. "That's the main part of it."

He chose Colby because it is a growth-oriented community that can use the services he provides. Dearden was a partner in a similar business in Scott City before selling his half to his partner and deciding to set up shop in Colby.

He has 15 years of experience in the computer industry. His past experience includes helping engineer a wireless network covering 10 counties for Wheatland Broadband Services in Scott city.

He said he will have a full-time administrative assistant and hopes to add a technician by early 2007. From there, the staff will grow as the business grows.

Dearden will be moving to Colby to run the business.

Missing children found Tuesday

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

The search for two Hutchinson children who have relatives in Oakley ended Tuesday in northeastern Kansas in Miami County.

Reno County District Judge Richard Rome on Wednesday said Barbara Johnson of Hutchinson, the maternal grandmother Cheyenne Bloom, 12, and her step-brother Tyler Bloom, 3, was arrested about 6 p.m. Tuesday in Miami County.

Johnson, the subject of a nationwide manhunt, was wanted by Reno County authorities for trying to hide the children and hamper the prosecution's case against their father, James Ryan Bloom, formerly of Oakley.

The two children are grandchildren of James and Genelle Bloom, and great-grandchildren of Jimmy and Florence Bloom, all of Oakley.

James is charged with rape and aggravated indecent liberties with a child.

He is a former police academy instructor and his wife, Jessica, is also in jail in Hutchinson accused of helping him commit the crimes.

The Hutchinson Police Department, Kansas Bureau of Investigation and America's Most Wanted, were seeking Johnson in an effort to locate the children.

Investigators first believed Johnson was on her way to New Mexico, but found her about 35 miles south of Kansas City.

Rome said Johnson has been returned to Hutchinson and is being detained in the Reno County Jail on suspicion of aggravated intimidation of a witness or victim under the age of 18.

He said the children have also been returned to Hutchinson and placed in protective custody at an undisclosed location.

Rome said during pretrial motions on Tuesday he denied Chief Public Defender Sarah McKinnon motion to have the case dismissed.

Rome said he denied a second motion by McKinnon on Wednesday asking the trial be moved away from Hutchinson because of pretrial publicity.

Jury selection began Wednesday and was expected to finish Thursday for the trial's beginning.

Patching things up



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Brian Quagliano, left, and Kevin Helus, employees of the city of Colby, worked to seal a crack on Wheat Ridge today. The work is part of the city's ongoing effort to winterize streets.

Kline to visit Sunday

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline will be in Colby at 2 p.m., Sunday, at the Quality Inn, 1950 S. Range Ave., as part of a grassroots tour in his bid for re-election.

The purpose for his visit is to address his supporters and lay out his action plan for re-election as attorney general, said Sherriene Jones, communications director for Kline's campaign. "We will have bumper stickers, palm cards and yard signs," she said. "This is your chance to find out about many of the events and how you can help re-elect him."

Kline will inform supporters how the campaign is going.

After stopping in Colby, Kline will continue his western Kansas tour by visiting Garden City at 5 p.m. at the Plaza Hotel.

Anyone planning to attend the Colby visit is encouraged to call either Rich or Judy Epp, coordinating the event, at (785) 443-1994 or e-mail: repp@st-tel.net.

"Although RSVPs are not required," Jones said, "we would like to know so there's plenty of refreshments."

Kline's opposition is Paul Morrison, the Johnson County district attorney, who has accused the attorney general of allowing his strong opposition to abortion to drive a narrow, personal agenda.



P. Kline

Governor and challenger debate healthcare, education

TOPEKA (AP) — Given the chance Wednesday night to say why tourists should choose Kansas, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius mentioned the Kansas Speedway and the Rolling Stones.

It was a lighthearted moment in a debate in which the Democratic governor and Republican challenger Jim Barnett mainly reminded voters of their positions on issues such as health care, education spending and the economy.

The governor noted she spent the

weekend watching NASCAR races in Kansas City, then went to Wichita for the Stones concert.

"For aging rockers like myself, that's available," Sebelius said, also mentioning the state's good beef and country music as attractions.

For his part, Barnett touted the scenery of the Flint Hills, "the most beautiful area, I believe in this nation."

"The people, as well, are second to none in this nation," Barnett said.

"We welcome you to come and

bring your friends and make this your home, as well."

The two candidates participated in a 30-minute debate televised in the Topeka and Wichita areas from the studios of WIBW in the capital.

Barnett, a senator and Emporia physician, tried to distinguish his positions from the governor's, noting that she proposed tax increases in 2004 to pay for school spending. He said Kansas' economy is lagging behind other states.

He also discussed his health care

plan, which would create a mechanism for an estimated half of the 300,000 uninsured Kansans to find coverage through one access point.

Sebelius rejected his claims about the economy, pointing to growth in state revenues over the past four years.

She also noted the announcement last week that a California biosciences firm had chosen Junction City for a new plant to turn genetically modified rice into medicine to fight childhood ill-

nesses. Washburn University political science professor Bob Beatty said both candidates did well, given that the format of the debate didn't allow them to rebut each others' answers.

However, he said Sebelius showed a more personable side when she answered the question about why someone should visit Kansas.

"She nailed the answer when she mentioned NASCAR and the Rolling Stones."