



COLBY FREE PRESS

Registration deadline near for election

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The general election is Tuesday, Nov. 7. The last day to register to vote in the election is Monday. That same day, advance voting begins at the Thomas County Courthouse. Registered voters can apply for an advanced voter application until Monday, Nov. 7. Voting can be done by mail ballot or at the clerk's office at the courthouse. Hours for walk-in voting are 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Oct. 23-27, Oct. 30-Nov.3; 8 a.m.-noon Nov. 4, 6. For information, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Polling locations for Tuesday, Nov. 7 are:

The Colby Community Building is the voting location for the city of Colby precincts 1-4; the townships of Rovohl, Summers, East and West Morgan, North and South Randall.

Golden Plains High School gym in Rexford is the polling place for Rexford and Gem cities, the city and township of Menlo and townships of Wendell, Lacey and Smith.

Brewster Senior Center is where voters in Brewster, Levant and the townships of Barrett, East and West Hale and Kingery will go to the polls.

There are many races that will be decided during the general election.

Starting at the national level, voters will have to decide on a United States Representative. Incumbent Jerry Moran, R-Hays, faces competition from John Doll, D-Dodge City and Reform Party candidate Sylvester Cain of St. Marys.

At the state level, there are several pivotal races. The first is the governor's race.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, D-Topeka, is running for re-election. Her running mate is Mark Parkinson of Olathe.

Republican Jim Barnett of Emporia and running mate Susan Wagle of Wichita are Sebelius' biggest competition.

Libertarian candidates for governor are Carl Kramer of Wichita and running mate Kalor A. Hebron of Derby. Reform candidates are Richard Lee Ranzau of Wichita and running mate Ellen L. Verell of Meade.

For secretary of state, there are four candidates to choose from, including incumbent Republican Ron Thornburgh of Topeka. His opposition is David Haley, Democrat, of Kansas City; Rob Hodgkinson, Libertarian, of Stillwell and Joseph L. Martin, Reform Party, of St. Marys.

In the state attorney general race, incumbent Phill Kline is facing opposition from Democrat Paul Morrison of Lenexa.

State treasurer Lynn Jenkins, R-Topeka, has competition from Democrat Larry Wilson of Topeka.

For the state commissioner of insurance, it is at three-way race among incumbent Sandy Praeger, a Lawrence Republican; Bonnie Sharp, D-Kansas City, and Libertarian Patrick Wilbur of Lawrence.

For the state board of education race, District 5 which includes Thomas County, voters choose between Tim Cruz, a Democrat from Garden City and Republican Sally Cauble from Liberal.

Voters will also have to decide on state representative for the 121st District. Jim Morrison, R-Colby, incumbent, has two people running against him, Dennis Robison, Libertarian, St. Peter, and Art R. Richmond, Reform Party, Selden.

Enrollment down in county and area

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Enrollment in area schools continues its downward spiral. But one superintendent does not see fewer students as the catalyst for alarm.

"I think this is a trend throughout northwest Kansas," Hoxie Superintendent Scott Hoyt said.

"Last year we were fortunate, we had a lot of people move in, but they moved out as fast as they came in."

Each Sept. 20, school districts across Kansas must report enrollment numbers to the Kansas Department of Education.

Enrollment determines the amount of money schools receive from the state. Part of what helps determine a district's student population is the amount of students eligible for free meals, transportation or help with special needs.

While Hoxie's enrollment at 329 this year, the district's full-time equivalent number is 291.5. Full-time equivalency is the number of students used by the state to determine how much tax money a school district receives per student.

That figure for the 2006-2007 school year is \$4,316 per pupil, up from last year's amount of \$4,256. Last year in Hoxie, enrollment was 362 students, while the full-time equivalency was 325.5. Hoyt said a more mobile society means students may attend school in more than one facility, let alone state, during their education years. He said a drop of 33 students took place in Hoxie.

"It's significant, but it's not alarming to me, it's just the trend,"

Hoyt said.

Oakley's superintendent, Bill Steiner, is also seeing fewer students.

"We are down about 17 students," Steiner said.

"We just didn't have as move in as move out."

School officials in Oakley reported 452 students enrolled for a full-time equivalent number of 393.9.

Last year, Oakley had 462 students for a full-time equivalency of 410. Student numbers in Golden Plains as well as Brewster are down.

Golden Plains Superintendent Roger Baskerville said in 2005-2006, the district had 200 students, but this year has 196 students. Full-time equivalency last year was 188.1, while it is 186.1 this year.

Baskerville said 19 students are bilingual. He said those students speaking both English and Spanish are in all grades levels, with larger numbers of bilingual students attending at the elementary level.

No specific numbers were available per class.

Brewster Superintendent Sherri Edmundson said a small part of the decline in the district's enrollment is due to the trend of graduating 15 to 18 students, but only have five and eight students in kindergarten.

This year's enrollment is 109 students, down from the 133 last year. And as far as full-time equivalency, this year is 125.8, down from last year's number of 132.5.

"A small percentage of the decline is because of families moving out of the community for employment reasons," Edmundson said.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

State Sen. Jim Barnett, R-Emporia, left, visited with Rich Epp of Colby and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, R-Grinnell during a campaign stop today at the Quality Inn in Colby. Barnett is one of three candidates taking on Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

Governor candidate visits Colby

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Thomas County residents had the chance to meet one of the candidates running for Kansas governor today. Sen. Jim Barnett, R-Emporia, spoke at the Colby Quality Inn with about 25 people attending.



J. Barnett

Barnett has served six years as a state senator and chairs the Senate Health Committee.

He said this was his third trip to western Kansas, a trip he is happy to make, and he is glad to talk to the residents here.

Barnett is a fourth-generation Kansan who grew up in Reading and now lives and practices medicine in Emporia.

"I love medicine," he said. "I enjoy what I do."

But he said political office is just another way to look after people.

He also served on the Emporia Board of Education, which was his first elected office.

The state's economy and education funding were two of the first matters he talked about.

Barnett said he didn't vote in favor of the education bill signed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

"The governor has dug a deep hole and we are in a mess."

Sen. Jim Barnett,
GOP candidate for governor

The last two years of that bill, no money is appropriated

"The governor has dug a deep hole and we are in a mess," he said.

Kansas is ranked 42nd in job growth; first in the growth of government jobs and 50th in private sector job growth, he said.

"I want to offer a credible plan for growing this state's economy," he said.

He proposed four steps to do just that.

They include doing away with the estate tax; phasing down income tax rates; increasing dependent tax credit to \$500 for young families and create a 10 percent investment tax credit.

He also said demand transfers need to be restored, instead of forcing the burden of funding things with property tax back on the local level.

He also touched on illegal immigration. Barnett said he isn't against immigration.

"That's how we got to be a great country," he said. "We're all immigrants."

But when it comes to illegal immigration, he does not support driv-

ers licenses for illegal immigrants or in-state tuition.

"We should treat illegal immigrants better than residents," Barnett said.

He also advocates making English the official language of Kansas.

Health care is also another key issue. Barnett said it is an important issue to him, and something that needs to be addressed.

He said 16 percent of the gross national product is spent on health care.

"That is not acceptable," Barnett said.

He would like to change things so individuals own their insurance, not their employer.

"That's a very significant point," he said. The uninsured and working couples who have to choose between insurance policies are also important.

He said not having insurance is one of the leading causes of bankruptcy.

Also, by expanding the use of pre-tax dollars for insurance, he said premiums could be cut by up to 25 percent.

Barnett also advocates open enrollment for insurance for Kansans, and to focus on issues such as wellness. He said it is easier to spend money on preventive care than down the road when problems develop with an illness or pre-existing condition.

He also answered a few questions.

One question was on how he would address rising tuition costs for students.

Barnett said at the state level, money is being spent to grow government, which means less support for state schools.

By controlling state spending and spreading the economic base, more money would be available for things like tuition support, the state highway fund and more.

He said it is time to start controlling state spending.

Barnett also answered a question on the concealed carry law that went into effect this year. He voted in favor of the bill despite his own experience with the issue. Barnett said after consideration, it isn't law-abiding citizens who would be applying for the permits who would be breaking the law.

Barnett and his wife, Yvonne, a special education teacher, have been married 28 years. They have two grown children, Blake, 24, and Chelsea, 20, who is a pre-law student.

Organizer: Auction was a big success

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

The official tally isn't completed, but organizers of this year's Sacred Heart Auction, held Saturday at the City Limits Convention Center, believe they came close to the goal of \$45,000.



D. Norman

"The auction was a big success," said Jeanne Solko, one of the committee members, "and we appreciated all the support from the community and parishioners."

In addition to the more than 400 items in the live and silent auction that were sold, Solko also said this year's event had some "firsts."

In previous years, the auction was held at TNT, but this year it was moved to the City Limits Convention Center with the other first being an "itemless item."

Solko said ticket sales were up on corporate table reservations with 23 businesses taking advantage of that offer.

Even though attendance was about the same as last year with 280 people, the new location offered more visibility of auction items.

"The itemless item is purchasing and the installation of air conditioning in the basement of the church, which is an ongoing project," she said.

More than \$9,000 in cash and pledges was raised for the project, she said, but that money is separate from the auction total.

Among the highlights, Solko said the backyard barbecues sold well and bags of seed corn bids were at the high end of what the product is valued.

One item, dinner for eight with Bishop Paul Coakley of the Diocese of Salina, brought in \$450 and the Schwinn motor scooter donated by Tubbs and Sons went for \$1,300.

The winner of the raffle drawing for a half karat diamond, donated by



JOE HAYES/Colby Free Press

Dana Bolyard of Colby put her bid in at the silent auction table Saturday during Sacred Heart's annual event.

Donelans, and valued at \$1,200 was Deb Norman.

Committee members this year included John and Mert Strecker,

chairpersons; Brette Pfeifer, Rodney and Danette Ryan, Robin Tubbs, Jennifer Van Eaton, Father Dana Clark and Solko.