



COLBY FREE PRESS

14 pages

Welcome hunters!

School's stadium project back to drawing board

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Plans for a new Dennen Field stadium hit a snag Thursday during a special Colby School Board meeting when it was discovered the project must go to bid.

The issue came up after the Oct. 23 school board meeting, said superintendent Kirk Nielsen.

The Colby Booster club has led the project only with the school board's approval.

After a discussion with the Kansas Association of School Boards and the school board's legal counsel, John Gatz, it was discovered the project will have to go to bid.

Gatz explained the money for the stadium the booster club has set aside in a trust fund will become public money when handed over to the district, and must be treated as such.

The Colby Booster Club already had an agreement with CBS Con-

structors of McCook, Neb., to assist with building the stadium. The board approved an architect to oversee work. Glenn Strait of Strait Associates of Colby was selected. Strait said he will play whatever role the board asks of him.

Board president Tracy Rogers said the board was approving the necessary steps for the project to become a district project, not the booster club.

Board member and booster club representative Joel Powell said he was concerned about possible work delays. He said the club agreed to a 1,033-seat stadium from the McCook company. The bid process may change the stadium's design.

"I'm afraid we won't get the same options we have now," Powell said.

He hoped the bid process could be started soon so the board will be able to accept a proposal quickly. He also said financing is not a problem.

"We've got the money to do

this," Powell said.

Half of the proposed reserved seat sections are already sold.

"It would have been nice to know about this a few months ago," Powell said. "We have been working on this a long time.

"People are excited about the project. But many people will be disappointed if the project doesn't move ahead as planned."

Insurance, bonds and plans were also a concern. Gatz said the district should be responsible for the construction.

Gatz said the board is also responsible for the proper steps to make sure the project is done correctly. Gatz commended the efforts of the booster club, and said the stadium is "great project," but "things need to be done the right way."

The board has scheduled a special meeting for 7 p.m. Wednesday for bids for the stadium project.

Get ready to vote!



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms looked at one of the new voting machines today that will be used only for the second time during Tuesday's general election. The courthouse will be open until 8 p.m. today and from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday for advance voting.

Incumbent has no secrets

By John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press

Rep. Jim Morrison (R-Colby) wants to hide nothing should he be elected for an eighth term in the 121st District.

He wants the rest of state government to be the same way.



J. Morrison

Morrison is running against Dannis Robison, a Libertarian from St. Peter, and Art Richmond, a Reform party member from Selden in Tuesday's election. The district includes all of Thomas, Sherman, Sheridan and Graham counties.

"I want an open committee," Morrison said.

And he's already doing that.

Morrison, 64, is chairman of the Health and Human Services committee, has a Web site dedicated to virtually every action the committee does. Included in the site are the dates the committee met, list of who was in attendance and minutes of the meeting. With the use of other technology, people can watch the committee in action.

"No other chairman are asking for this to occur in their committee," Morrison said. "When asked by me, many just don't want to. Commit-

tee chairmen are incredibly powerful people."

Morrison said the Web site brings accountability to the committee, himself and one piece of state legislation. Morrison wants the Web site to ease the criticism state government receives about not distributing information voters may be interested in.

"The more we can discuss, the better legislation will be," he said.

Morrison is also interested in making the economics of health care more exposed. He said the reasons of rising health care costs, and how some of the financial-related situations, are not well documented.

"Transparency in health care is my primary push next year," he said.

"I want to list the charges of every hospital and practitioner." Sometimes, a health care provider is paid for services not even done.

For example, Morrison said it's possible someone with a sprained ankle may have paid a doctor only after the doctor referred the person to a physical therapist for treatment.

"I expect negative feedback with this," Morrison said. "Hospitals do not like transparency."

Morrison has been an optometrist since the late 1960s.

Other issues for Morrison include how state government can initiate projects, without actually completing the project.

Morrison has an interest in developing wind turbines in western Kansas. Earlier this year, a wind turbine project was proposed for Thomas County but was shelved because of needs in transmission lines for the electricity generated. Morrison said if those private companies do not want to do the upgrades, he will try and make the state do it.

"We will do it if the utilities won't," he said.

That may act as an incentive for the private companies, Morrison said. "Private companies don't want government running those things."

Morrison expects after state government offers to take the lead, the companies will follow through and complete the job.

There is more than electricity to transfer from one side of the state to the other Morrison said. The Kansas Department of Transportation has fiber optic wire along the entire route of Interstate 70 in Kansas, but Morrison said the high-tech wire is not used enough.

Adjacent communities and entities could attach to the fiber optic increase their technology which could create a variety of benefits for those towns.

"I want to see a technological build up in Kansas that is fairly and cooperatively shared by all parties, private and government."

Candidate wants major change

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Reform Party candidate Art Richmond, 58, of Selden, is challenging incumbent Republican Jim Morrison for the 21st District Representative seat in the Kansas legislature. "I have nothing personal against Jim," Richmond said about Morrison. "He is a friend and was my optometrist for many years."

However, Richmond said he thinks that Morrison has served long enough as the representative in this district.

"We need a change and two terms is more than enough for any politician."

Richmond boasts he is not a politician, but rather a person who wants to bring the integrity of the office back to the people.

but I promise to bring honesty into the arena."

Some of the main issues Richmond said he would bring forward as a legislator included health insurance, home loans and restoring rights. Richmond, who is a diabetic, said he cannot find affordable health insurance because of his condition.

"I owe more than \$125,000 in medical bills and I cannot get health or life insurance coverage thanks to the legislature passing a bill in 2002 limiting coverages," he said.

On loans, Richmond said in order to get additional loans on a home, the legislature passed a law requiring lenders to appraise both the inside and outside.

"I don't want people in my home, it makes no sense," he said. "I am angry with the legislature and how they treat Kansans."

As for rights, Richmond said that

there's too much censorship on the things we watch and listen to.

"When I watch a documentary or listen to the radio, I don't want someone censoring the information or deleting words," he said.

Born in Grand Forks, N.D., Richmond worked for Schwann's in northwest Kansas as a driver and in 1987 started a business in Colby called Computer Warehouse. He moved to Minnesota and continued in the computer field with TNT Graphic of Minnesota.

Richmond lost the sight in his right eye in 1981 and the left eye in 1982, because of diabetes, but continued his computer business. He also is a distributor of "Reliv," a health food product. Since July 2000, he and his wife, Patricia, have lived in Selden.

He has two living children: Randall 37 and Tracie, 34. Daughter Kerry died in November 2003.

Former queen thanks God

Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series about two former Northwest Kansas women who were Miss Kansas.

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Sherri (Mayer) Armstrong does not know what she would have done without the influence of being Miss Kansas 1987.

Daughter of Rex and Doris Mayer of Brewster, Armstrong graduated from Goodland High School in 1979, and in 1984 from Loretta Heights University of Denver with a fine arts degree.

Currently operations manager of Armstrong Custom Cattle Service in Lakin, Armstrong said listening, interviewing and conversation skills learned as Miss Kansas have helped her in her job overseeing 40 employees.

"I promote, 'You can do what you set your mind to,'" Armstrong said. "Although I may not be interviewing for a job, I am always in management meetings that require how to be a good listener, how to lead a conversation to your company's advantage and how to present your self well," she said.

Besides being a full-time career woman, Armstrong is also a full-time wife and mother of two sons, Reno, 12, Matt, 9, and daughter, Megan, 11.

Armstrong, 45, said when she entered the Miss Kansas pageant at 26 years old she didn't know what direction she wanted her career life to go, but knew then she wanted a family.

Having originally entered the pageant circle to earn scholarship money, Armstrong quickly learned she could receive much more than money.



LEFT: Sherry (Mayer) Armstrong during her crowning in 1987. RIGHT: Today, with children Megan, Reno and Matt.

She said the professional appearances and contacts gained were invaluable. Despite being Miss Kansas for a year, Armstrong said the experience did not make her change her goals.

"I wanted to be a career woman and leave my mark on something," she said. "But at the same time, I knew that my most important role would be that of a mother. I am able to set my hours around my children's schedules and play a major role in our company and the cattle industry."

Armstrong said being Miss Kansas had no drawbacks and she strongly supports young women entering the pageant. Over and above these roles she now holds, she said her key role now is "being a good person."

"The most important aspect of my spiritual being was the role that God played in my life at that time," she said.

"I knew God was with me and helping me, and he continues to be with me and my family and is continuing to bless us."

Armstrong said the physical aspects of pageant competition is one which helps her today as well.

remember what you were and you feel expected to continue to stay in good shape. That factor is a motivator to stay in shape," she said.

She said as Miss Kansas the young women are taught to hide physical flaws and enhance good qualities.

"Those are tricks you never forget," she said.

Armstrong said the year spent as Miss Kansas is a boost for a young woman's self-esteem.

"Actually, all in all, training to become Miss Kansas is learning to be the best you can be at any given time and being comfortable with who and what you at that time," Armstrong said.

"I think that is the most important lesson I learned through out my years competing for Miss Kansas."

While not involved in pageants, Armstrong said the most important part of her reign was talking to children in Kansas schools. She said she wishes she knew then what she knows now.

"I wished I could have been older and wiser, because now I understand more the importance in sharing with young people to dream, pursue those dreams and in the importance of their own self-esteem," she said.