



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Meth issue close to home

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

Methamphetamines are created, used and trafficked through Thomas County.

And it's a problem that won't go away without help.

That was the focus of "Meth: Tweaking the Message," a seminar on the dangers of the drug held Thursday at the Colby Community Building.

The seminar was presented by the Regional Prevention Center, with a panel that included Jason Moses, Thomas County Undersheriff; Daren Organ, Northwest Kansas Community Corrections; Brenda Platt, Junior Justice Authority case manager officer; and Sarah Brown, Thomas County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council.

Sue Evans, director of the Regional Prevention Center in Colby, said the seminar was to raise local awareness of National Methamphetamine Awareness Day. A proclamation was signed by President George W. Bush. Monday.

Evans said the awareness day is a new effort to call attention to meth and its associated problems.

Moses explained exactly what methamphetamine is and how it works. A synthetic drug, it is more harmful than cocaine or heroine, and also acts as a stimulant.

Meth causes a three- to four-day high where the user does not sleep, followed by sleep and eventual depression, along with tweaking, or paranoia.

"Users can imagine black helicopters are following them, or a person could be attacked by tree people," Moses said.

Eventually, meth destroys the brain's ability to produce dopamine and can also cause a person's body to cannibalize itself.

The ingredients for meth are normal household chemicals or items, such as camp fuel, starter fluid, coffee filters, behind-the-counter drugs containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine and more.

Once cooked, the final product is in crystalline form, and can be pale yellow, pink or white in color.

A common belief is the ingredients are cooked out, but Moses said that is not the case. All of the ingredients remain, regardless of the method used to make the meth. He cautioned people should not pick up anything in ditches or anything they might suspect of being used to make meth because the chemicals can be highly volatile and dangerous.

And so are the people who make meth. "This is a problem



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Undersheriff Jason Moses talked about some of the common household items used as ingredients to make methamphetamines during a seminar to raise awareness about the drug Thursday at the Colby Community Building.

## Event helps raise awareness

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

More community involvement is needed to combat methamphetamine labs and the problems created by the drug.

Sue Evans, director of the Regional Prevention Center, said the seminar held Thursday in Colby is the first step of many.

The point of the seminar was to state the problem didn't originate with illegal aliens, out-of-state criminals, but by people living in the county.

"The problem is ours," she said. "It didn't get imported, or forced on us, it's here."

Evans was disappointed with

the seminar's turnout. She said only five people attended who were not involved with the issue professionally. Evans would have liked to see more people from the community.

Sheriff Mike Baughn also expressed concern over attendance. He said it is a problem when 90 percent of the people attend such an event are involved professionally.

"The problem lies in the home and people in the community need to be reached," he said.

If more people are interested, the prevention center will hold another seminar. For information, call the center at (785) 460-8177.

that plagues everyone in the United States right now," Moses said. Meth is a problem in Thomas County.

"Law enforcement is working diligently to find meth labs, but the help of the community is also needed," Moses said.

"It's in our schools. Anyone who tells you it isn't doesn't know what they're talking about. If you bury your head in the sand, it just gets

worse. It's everywhere."

He also said new laws help, such as Kansas law requiring medicine made with ephedrine or pseudoephedrine to be kept behind the counter.

"Some laws work against law enforcement," Moses said.

Moses asked staff from Citizens Medical Center if they would contact the parents of a 13-year-old brought into the emergency room

for meth use.

Moses said the hospital could not do that because of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, a federal law regarding privacy and medical records.

Daren Organ with Community Corrections said new laws have helped, but meth continues to be a problem, along with the issues it causes.

"People on meth have other issues besides their addiction, such as criminal activities caused by the addiction. Meth use leads to other things, I guarantee," he said.

Meth users also become paranoid and dangerous. Organ deals with a seven-county area and doesn't see as many meth-related problems in Thomas County, but meth is here.

The drug is up to four times more addictive than heroine or crack, and users become addicted by trying to get back to their first high.

Another reason meth is so attractive for some, namely women and young girls, is because it causes quick weight loss.

Signs of meth use include sores on the body or face from scratching or picking, and teeth issues.

## County talks to applicants for health job

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

The search for a new administrator for Thomas County Health department has begun.

The commissioners interviewed two applicants Thursday at the courthouse.

Chairman Ron Evans said the two interviewed were Lisa Molstad and Sarah Powell, both of Colby.

The job opened up after administrator Juanita Gatz's resignation was approved Nov. 6.

Her last day is Dec. 31. Gatz started the position in January, replacing Juanita Dewey, who resigned in December 2005.

Another issue at the health department was on the agenda.

Molstad wrote a grant application for the health department, and gave a report on its status.

She said the county health preparedness grant was submitted with a budget and work plan.

Money from a prior grant year still remains — \$2,850 in supplemental funding needs to be spent as soon as possible, and the commissioners need to look at the suggested ways to spend the money.

Preparing for the next year was also a topic.

Commissioner Ken Christiansen brought up expiring board terms.

Terms end Dec. 31 for Steve Ziegelmeier, who serves on the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance, and Paul Bailey, a member of both the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning Commission.

Both are willing to be re-appointed, and Christiansen said the matter should be taken care of this month.

The commissioners also took action after a public hearing on vacating an alley in Levant.

The commissioners also went into executive session for 25 minutes with Connie Walden and Kathy Ryan from the health department to discuss personnel issues. No action was taken afterward.

In other business, the commissioners approved:

- Appointed Dr. LaDonna Regier as interim Thomas County deputy coroner, effective until Jan. 8, 2007.

- The purchase of a 1996 Volvo semi truck for the county road department in the amount of \$18,950. It will be used to haul water and sand.

- Maintenance contracts for the 911 system. One from ESRI, Inc. of Wichita for \$817.37 for the wireless mapping system; and \$5,040 to Voice Products, Inc. of Wichita to maintain the phone lines at the Law Enforcement Center.

## Decorating contest now in full swing

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

See a house or business decorated nicely for the holidays? The Colby Promotions Committee wants to hear about it.

The committee is sponsoring a Christmas decorating contest with two categories — residential and business.

Lezley Tubbs of Bickner Electric, is helping with the contest. She said the contest has been held for a couple of years, but different this year is how people can get involved.

Now people can select their favorite decorated house or business.

Drop boxes are located at Dillons and Wal-Mart in Colby.

Nominations can be dropped off at each location until Friday, Dec. 8.

The nominated houses or businesses will be judged by two people from outside the community Saturday, Dec. 9.

The prizes this year are \$100 for residential first place and \$75 for second place.

**“That’s a good idea (decorating contest) . . . Used to, we would have to drive each street in town.”**

Jeff Horlacher,  
Promotion Committee

Business first prize is \$75 and second place is \$50.

Jeff Horlacher, of Horlacher Jewelers and a member of the committee, said the group took over the contest about three years ago.

He likes how the nomination process was introduced.

"That's a good idea," Horlacher said.

"Used to, we would have to drive each street in town."

Having out of town judges pick the winners makes the judging objective, he said.

## Five more \$50 instant winners announced this week

By Patty Decker  
Free Press Editor

Five more people became \$50 instant winners in the *Christmas On Us!* promotion.

Ryan Zwegardt, Dewey Augustine, Marj Mowry and Kathy Arensdorf, all of Colby, and Tara Avelar of Goodland, all joined last week's instant winner, Ron Biggs of Colby.

There's still four more instant winners who will be chosen during the next two weeks when new numbers are published in Wednesday's edition.

Arensdorf, the second winner, got her ticket at the Prairie Skillet Mexican Restaurant inside Quality Inn.

This is the first time she has won



Arensdorf



Zwegardt



Avelar



Mowry



Augustine

anything in the promotion. Her \$50 isn't spent yet, but she has plans for it.

"We plan on having a merry Christmas for us," she said.

The third winner, Zwegardt, got his ticket from T.O. Haas. Avelar visited Colby to buy an item at Beringer Hardware.

Mowry, the fifth winner, got her

ticket at the *Colby Free Press*. Augustine said he had one of the lucky winners from Colby Implement.

With four winners of \$50 in scrip money still out there, *Colby Free Press* publisher John Van Nostrand said it's easy to get involved in this promotion. For those who haven't visited any of the local merchants participating in the drawing, there's

still time to gather tickets for either one of the remaining \$50 instant winner prizes or the \$500 and \$1,000 grand prizes.

Now in its eighth year, the *Colby Free Press' Christmas on Us!* promotion is back with 10 other Colby merchants making the holiday season a great way to buy local while adding fun for shoppers.

The way this promotion works is shoppers receive one ticket for every \$10 transaction at any sponsoring business. There is a limit of 250 tickets per person per transaction at

any sponsor.

The \$50 scrip money instant winners claim prizes through Tuesday of each week. Every Wednesday, new numbers are hidden within the ads and former numbers are no longer valid.

The two biggest prizes, \$500 and \$1,000, will be drawn Saturday, Dec. 16. Winning tickets need to be presented at the drawing to claim the big prizes.

This year's participating merchants include: Beringer Hardware; Colby Ag; Office Works and Home Furnishings; Cal Spas; Farm Bureau Financial; Image Makers/McKee Inc.; Prairie Skillet; Colby Implement; Great Western Tire and T.O. Haas. For questions about the promotion, call 462-3963.

Colby  
Community College's wrestling dual scheduled tonight against Neosho Community College has been canceled because of road and weather conditions near Chanute.

Colby's dual with Labette Community College Sunday will be held at 2 p.m. at the Colby High gymnasium.