



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Holiday parade lights up Colby

The winners of the ninth annual Colby Christmas light parade have been announced.

The theme for this year's parade was the "Magic of Christmas."

The first place winners will receive \$50 in gift certificates and second place is awarded \$25.

Winners in the lighted float category were Colby Ag, first, and Martin Tractor, second.

Organization winners were the Girl Scouts, first; Toys for Tots, second.

The business winner was Dillons with a unique display of reindeer shopping carts.

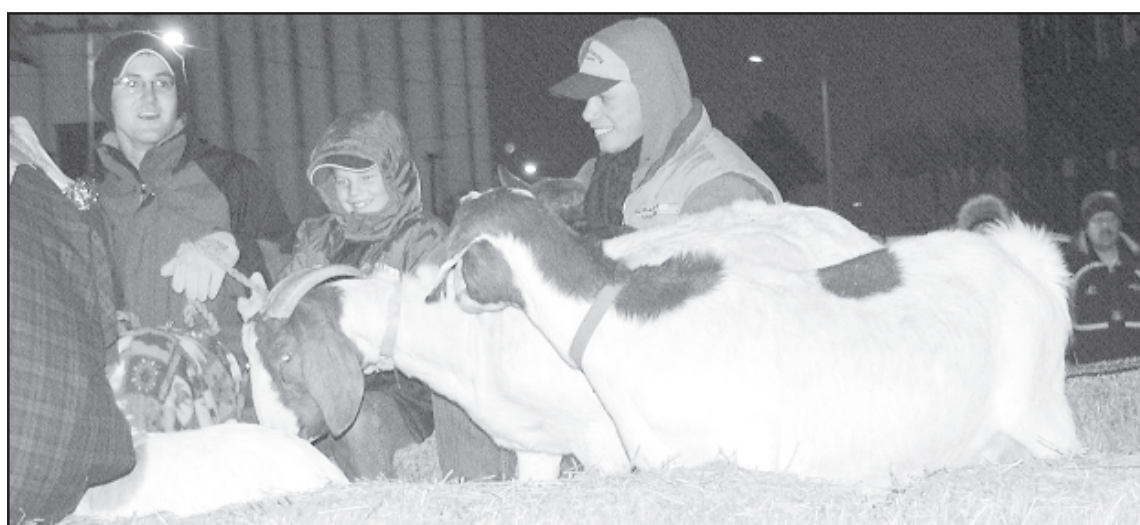
Second place went to Bickner Electric with a living room scene including Christmas tree and children.

Youth winner was the Plumisto family. The Colby United Methodist Church youth group received second place.

In the religious category, Colby Community College Campus Crusade for Christ received first place; second place went to Heartland Christian School. More photos on page 5.



ABOVE: Farmers and Merchants Bank decorated its float with a Christmas scene that included a snow globe, Christmas trees and children. **BELOW:** Colby Community College Campus Crusade for Christ had a nativity with goats and other animals on their float.



ABOVE: A little cowboy was one of many horsemen in the Colby Christmas light parade Sunday. **BELOW:** A Welsh corgi and his owner were among the many who rode on floats during the parade. All photos by Tisha Cox.



Colby College president sets five goals for school year

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

After just a few months on the job, new Colby Community College president Dr. Lynn Kreider outlined his five goals for the school.

Kreider presented those goals during a board meeting in November.

Those goals include contacting all the chambers of commerce and school superintendents in the college's 14-county service area; developing a strategic plan; changing financial reporting and having a financial report available for the board each month; a design and financial plan for the

proposed wellness center and negotiating a master agreement for the college staff.

Some deliberation went into choosing the goals.

"Given time, I reflected on things I was prepared to do and things already started," he said. "I wanted to provide the board with goals that are agreeable and achievable for me."

More than just these five are on Kreider's mind. He said has more he would like to



L. Kreider

work on each year, but these are priority.

"With solid information the best decisions can be made to get the college moving in the right direction," he said.

A master contract agreement with the staff, will be the first contract he will work on in Colby. The agreement outlines pay scales and benefits for staff.

Working with area chamber of commerce's and schools relates to Kreider's desire to increase the college's exposure in the area.

"I've pretty much achieved that," Kreider said. "I felt the school needed someone to go out and promote it."

The college exists to serve not only

Colby, but all of northwest Kansas by providing education and helping with economic development. He said alliances and collaboration are needed for both.

Kreider's second goal came is similar to what other companies do — give the institution a sense of direction.

"Any successful business has a strategic plan in place," he said.

Kreider said a strategic plan should meet the needs of the community and the college. Because the college is in the business of education, it needs to be handled as such.

His third goal, changing the financial report, will be finished by the end of the fiscal year, which ends in June. He wants a

report that can be broken down in all areas of the college and easily understood. For example, if the board wanted to see if the dorms or bookstore were making a profit or loss, it would be in the report.

"We're a few months away from that," Kreider said. The fourth goal, a design for the wellness center, is in progress. He said a design could be ready by the end of the year. The goals are not just for the college. Kreider wants them used to gauge his own performance.

"These goals will be part of my evaluation at the end of the school year," he said.

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Resident asks about election aftermath

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Sheridan County resident Doren Follis sought specific answers from commissioners today in Hoxie about the county's controversial general election.

"These are my thoughts and opinions formed from the questions asked of me," Follis said.

Although chairman for the county's Republican Party committee, Follis said he was acting on his own behalf seeking answers to questions posed by party members, taxpayers, voters, print and broadcast news crews and state officials.

"One state official said this stinks to high heaven and is a bunch of B.S.," Follis said.

Follis told Commissioners David Zimmerman, Keith Kennedy and Ron Schamberger he questions their integrity, ethics, and treatment of everyone involved in the Nov. 7 election and recount.

He said he did not like their allegations of dishonesty toward County Clerk Paula Bielser, her election workers and others in the community who helped at the 4-H building on election night.

Since Nov. 7, Sheridan County has been in turmoil since voting machines failed to count 50 ballots. Fifteen of those ballots pertained to a highly contested race between Schamberger, a first-term incumbent and Victor Bielser, husband of County Clerk Paula Bielser. Schamberger's election night vote count of 220 topped Vic Biel-

County clerk will not seek re-election

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Sheridan County Paula Bielser was back at her desk today after being on vacation since Nov. 22.

Bielser's absence from her office was questioned in the wake of controversy over her involvement in the Nov. 7 general election.

Commissioners David Zimmerman, Keith Kennedy and Ron Schamberger are accusing Bielser of mishandling the election.

They say:

- Bielser did not properly seal the ballot box and ballot sacks,
- Didn't accept help from voting machine company the night of the election after 50 ballots were not read by the machine.

ser's 214 votes. But a recount authorized by Paula Bielser ended with Bielser winning 227 to 220. However, that recount was not certified when commissioners learned state law requires a canvassing board, not a county clerk, to order a recount.

"As far as our integrity," Zimmerman said, "it should be questioned. We should have people questioning us and taking us to task. As far as the best interest of Sheridan County, that's my goal."

Follis asked why the commissioners thought a second election,

• Her husband's, Victor, request for a recount was not secured by a bond

• Paula was alone with ballots on several occasions that she delayed addressing ballot concerns on election night.

• The integrity of the election is not valid and community members interfered with one resolution board while counting ballots.

Paula Bielser, county clerk for the past 14 years, denies all of the allegations.

She admits not having ES&S make a special trip to Hoxie election night to check the equipment. She said the cost would be "exorbitant," so she decided to have the company pick up the machine and run diagnostics on it.

"I thought they would have

picked it up by now, but they have not," she said.

Bielser said it really does not matter to her whether ES&S determines what went wrong, because she will not use the machines in future elections. "Everything will be hand counted," she said.

Bielser said in light of what she said is unfair treatment by the board of commissioners and allegations against her, she has decided this is her last term in office.

She has advised her deputies, Lea Herl and Virginia Feldt, and will train them in all aspects of the office in case one or both of them decides to run for the office in 2008.

"It's done," Bielser said.

Kennedy said the commissioners never asked Hirsch how much his hourly rate was when they contacted him to come to Hoxie. Commissioners said they could not canvass ballots on Nov. 20 due to their attendance at a Kansas Association of Counties meeting in Topeka that week.

Follis asked why the public was not notified about the special meeting. Kennedy defended the commissioner's position that they did

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Spreading good cheer



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Amanda Rivera, a clerk at Dillons, set out bags for the store's "Harvest of Hope" campaign Friday, which is benefiting Genesis of Thomas County. Grocery patrons can pick sacks for two prices — \$5 or \$10, and donate the sacks to the food bank. After purchase, the sacks are left at the service desk and later delivered to Genesis.