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Colby ready to fiddle July 20-22

Michelle Myers
Free Press Intern

There's plenty to pick from during Pickin' on the Plains later this month.

Colby's 12th annual Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass and Folk Festival will be showcasing nine bands July 20-22 at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

"We try to draw real quality and entertainment, while keeping it in a budget," said Susan McLemore, member of the host band, the McLemore Family, and one of the event coordinators.

"There's something for everyone. People out of town comment on how friendly the community is," said McLemore.

Before the event takes off, a free potluck will be held at the 4-H building 6:30 p.m. Thursday. Larry Booth will lead the jam session afterwards.

Friday's schedule includes Bonham Revue from Oklahoma, Ozark Alliance from Missouri, Blue Canyon Boys from Colorado, Sappa Strings from Colorado and Colby's local favorite, the McLemore family. The show is from 6-10:30 p.m.

Saturday will feature the festival's headlining group, The Rarely Herd, from Ohio, West Virginia and Indiana. The five man band has won over 120 awards and nominations, including "Entertaining Band of the Year" for 10 consecutive years and Gospel Music's "Dove Award." They will be performing Saturday only.

"The Rarely Herd is a nationally known group. They are really hot and really good," said Jo Booth, committee member.

Also playing Saturday is Spontaneous Combustion from Missouri,

Bonham Revue, Ozark Alliance, Blue Canyon Boys, the McLemore Family and Sappa Strings.

Sunday program will begin at 10 a.m. with a half-hour gospel show and sing along. Day shows will be from 11:40 a.m.-2:40 p.m. with Ozark Alliance, Spontaneous Combustion, the McLemore Family and Sappa Strings.

"We really try to get a wide variety to show people that bluegrass is more than the old time singing through your nose thing," said McLemore.

Besides enjoying bluegrass and folk music talent, attendees can participate in drawings, arts and crafts, horse-drawn wagon rides, games and workshops throughout the weekend.

"We'll have a lot of food vendors and other things for sale," said Booth.

Saturday will include a youth contest at 10 a.m. for ages 19 and under to win cash prizes.

New to this year's event will be the workshop held that afternoon where anyone can come learn about the banjo, rhythm guitar and bass and possibly a fiddle. It will be hosted by one of the performers. A drawing for a Blueridge Model 40 guitar donated by Strings & Things at Pastimes will be held Saturday evening.

"We always say bring your lawn chairs so you can sit under the large canopy," said Booth. The 4,000 square foot canopy delivers "outdoor air-conditioning" with water misters near the canopy.

Tickets can be purchased at the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau, Pastimes, F & M Bank branch at Dillons. Advance tickets for the 3-day event is \$30. At the gate is \$35 and \$10 for youth (12-



ABOVE: Spontaneous Combustion fired up the audience at last year's Pickin' on the Plains bluegrass festival. The group is returning to this year's event. **RIGHT:** The crowd at the 2006 bluegrass festival kept cool under the canopy.

16 years old). Friday or Sunday only tickets will have a gate price of \$15, and all shows for Saturday is \$25 at the gate. Under 12 years old are free with an adult.

Major sponsors include KXXX/KQLS, S&T Communications, High Plains Public Radio/Western Swing and Other Things, Strings



and Things at Pastimes, Wal-Mart Supercenter and the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Full-service camping and electrical hookups will be available on site, along with unlimited for dry

camping. Full hookups are \$20/day, electric hookups are \$15/day and dry camping is \$5/day.

For more information about camping reservations, call the Colby Convention and Visitors

Bureau at 1-800-611-8835 (days) or (785) 460-7643 (evenings or weekends).

For more information about the festival, contact Bob or Susan McLemore at (785) 460-3474.

City, county has minimal problems with fireworks

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

July 4 festivities in Colby this year had the added benefit of a new city ordinance. Fireworks were legal in town for three days leading up to Independence Day, and on the holiday itself.

This was the first year it was legal to shoot off fireworks inside city limits. City manager Carolyn Armstrong was pleased with how well the holiday went.

"We really did not have major problems," Armstrong said.

"I think we had a really safe Fourth con-

sidering fireworks are now legal."

In the past, people were doing it anyway. The city could not get people to stop, but the new ordinance set a time frame to set off fireworks.

The ordinance, approved by the city council last month, allowed fireworks from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 1-4.

There were limits on the type of fireworks that could be set off.

"It was foolish to prohibit it and not be able to enforce it," Armstrong said.

In the county, there were no issues, said Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn.

"We haven't had any complaints of any

fireworks problems," he said.

It is not unusual to not have any problems.

"We rarely have complaints, unless we have a dry year," Baughn said.

In that instance, people sometimes have called when they see anyone setting off fireworks near fields with wheat stubble.

According to a report from the sheriff's office, there was one reported incident of eight or nine people shooting fireworks at each other Wednesday in Menlo.

The incident took place at 11:22 p.m. at the corner of F Avenue and Main Street. A deputy spoke to the group, and no other

action was taken.

The Colby Police Department received several fireworks complaints Wednesday. According to reports, the first was at 2:18 a.m. at the Oasis Travel Center, where truckers were setting off fireworks.

The next incident was at 10:01 p.m. on East Ninth Street, where it was reported someone had large fireworks.

At 10:48 p.m., large fireworks were reported in the 300 block of West Fifth Street. Officers could not locate the suspects.

Another was reported at 11:20 p.m. in the alley between East Eighth and Ninth streets.

People were seen shooting off fireworks in the alley, and an officer spoke with them. It was agreed they would stop.

The last incident was at 11:27 p.m., with reports of several people setting off fireworks on South Court near Plum.

Two fireworks reports were turned in to the police department July 3.

The first was at 8:13 p.m. at the 600 block of North Range. People were throwing fireworks. The officer found no one.

The second was at 9:10 p.m., with a report of people throwing fireworks out of the back of their pickup. An officer located the pickup and confiscated the fireworks.

Local help available for abuse victims

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

When people in the area need advice, shelter or someone to talk to about domestic or sexual violence, they don't have to go too far.

The Northwest Kansas Domestic and Sexual Services, Inc., a satellite office in Colby since December 2006, is available to help people 24 hours a day, seven days a week, said Becky Bond, sexual violence advocate.

Bond, along with Michelle Morris, Orientation Assessment Referral Safety advocate, serve 18 counties in Northwest Kansas.

"In our area, a total of 513 people reported either being abused or sexually assaulted in 2005," Bond said.

The breakdown revealed 467 cases of domestic violence and 41 cases of sexual violence.

In Thomas County, 31 people reported domestic violence and 11 sexual violence.

Other services include non-judgmental support, crisis intervention,



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Michelle Morris, left, and Becky Bond, reviewed material used for domestic and sexual violence victims.

information on domestic violence and sexual assault, counseling for both the victim and family members, support groups for children and adults, and legal, medical and financial assistance.

"These services are available at no charge," Bond said.

In addition to the services, Mor-

ris and Bond offer through the satellite office they also spoke about frightening statistic associated with domestic and sexual violence.

"One out of every six women in the U.S. will be beaten or sexually abused," she said, "and one out of every three women in the world will be raped or beaten.

Abuse isn't just against women either.

Of the men who are abused, Bond said, only 3 percent of them will ever report it.

Bond said the organization is funded by a grant through the governor's office, tax dollars from the city and counties served, the Ellis County United Way, and private donations.

Morris said they are always looking for volunteer help too.

The 18 counties include Cheyenne, Decatur, Ellis, Gove, Graham, Logan, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Russell, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Thomas, Trego and Wallace.

"We are here to help in whatever way we can," Bond said. "Whether it's filling out applications to help someone afraid to seek child support, or someone needing a safe house or just someone to talk to," we are there."

For questions about how to help or if help is needed, call (785) 443-1130 or the hotline at (800) 794-4624.

Attorney general won't file gambling lawsuit yet

TOPEKA (AP) — Attorney General Paul Morrison is at least two months away from filing a "friendly" lawsuit that backers of state-owned casinos hope will result in a court ruling upholding the state's new gambling law.

Spokeswoman Ashley Anstaett said Morrison doesn't plan to file his lawsuit until the Kansas Lottery Commission develops rules for the new casinos, including how many slot machines and table games are allowed.

Some regulations for casinos and slots at race tracks will be ready this month, but those dealing specifically with casinos probably won't be ready until at least September, said Lottery Director Ed Van Petten.

"You want to know as many details as you can have about how the casinos will be run be-

fore you litigate, and rules and regs from the Lottery Commission will do that," Anstaett said during an interview.

"What we are checking is whether state owned and operated casinos are constitutional, so we have to know how they are run." The new law, which took effect in April, allows casinos in four areas, Ford County, Wyandotte County, either Crawford or Cherokee county and either Sedgwick or Sumner county.

It also permits slots at dog and horse tracks in Frontenac, Kansas City and Wichita.

The Kansas Lottery will own the casinos, but private companies will build and manage them, an arrangement supporters believe will comply with the Kansas Constitution, which permits a state-owned and operated lottery but not privately owned, non-tribal casinos.