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Thomas County sheriff's race contested

Jan Katz Ackerman

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Local officials are gearing up for the Aug. 5 primary election and one contested race is already slated for the ballot.

First term Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn is being challenged by election newcomer Cloyd D. "C.D." Hopper, investigator with the county attorney's

office," Hopper said.

"I am seeking the office of shera difference through responsible

Hopper grew up in Colby and graduated from Colby High

He attended Metro State College and Colorado Christian Unisource management.

Despite never having held office, Hopper is a seasoned law enforcement officer and currently works as an investigator for Thomas County Attorney Andrea

"I began my law enforcement career in 1960 with the Colorado state Highway Patrol," Hopper

"From there, I was hired as a deputy for the Jefferson County (Colo.) Sheriff's Office."

Prior to moving to Colby, Hop-"I have never held an elective per worked with police departments in Lakewood and Wheat Ridge (Colo.), the Boulder Couniff because I believe I can make ty Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Army Military Police.

Incumbent Baughn plans to run for a second term.

He grew up in Monument and after graduation attended Asbury College in Wilmore, Ky. He earned his Master's Degree from versity in Denver, where he earned Fort Hays State University and a bachelor's degree in human re- also holds an associate degree in law enforcement from Colby

I am seeking the office of sheriff because I believe I can make a difference through responsible change."

Cloyd D. Hopper, challenger

Community College, as well as executive management certification from the National Sheriffs Institute in Longmont, Colo.

"I have been in public service my entire adult life," Baughn said. "Beginning as a classroom teacher in Brewster in 1970, and in 1976, I became the secondary principal at Brewster."

During that same timeframe, Baughn served as a special deputy, then later as deputy marshal and finally marshal of Brewster under Sheriff Lloyd Lunsway.

"I remained a special deputy under Sheriff Lunsway, then under Sheriff Dale McFarland, and

again under Sheriff Lunsway," Baughn said.

"In 1985, I began full-time as a deputy for Sheriff Tom Jones, and prior to my being elected sheriff in November, 2004, was undersheriff for nine years."

the Brewster City Council, and in 1979 became mayor, a position he still holds.

Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms said prior to the Aug. 5 primary, first on the list of activities in her office will be to open the mail ballot voter application

That process begins Tuesday,

as County Courthouse at 300 N. Court in Colby.

Other key dates leading up to the Aug. 5 primary are June 10, the closing date for filing or withdrawing as a candidate; July 16, the date advance ballots will be mailed; July 21, the last day for voter registration for the Aug. 5 primary; and a public test of election machines which must take place sometime between July 29 and Aug. 4.

Following the Aug. 5 election day, votes must be canvasses be-In 1974, Baughn was elected to tween Aug. 8-11. On Aug. 6, voter registration books will reopen in anticipation of the Nov. 4 general election.

> Besides the office of sheriff, others who plan to run are Harms, seeking re-election as county clerk, and Richard Ress, seeking re-election as magistrate judge.

Other Thomas County offices up for re-election this year include

April 1. Harms' office is located those of trustee and treasurer posion the second floor of the Thom- tions from the 13 townships; Commissioner District No. 3 currently held by Ken Christiansen; Commissioner District No. 2 currently held by Paul Steele; and those of county attorney, currently held by Wyrick; register of deeds, currently held by Maybelle Moore; and treasurer, held by Donita Applebury.

Along with these local elections, names of those seeking state and national offices will appear on the Nov. 4 general election ballot. And should they decide to run, Thomas County voters will see slots for First District Congressman Jerry Moran, R-Hays; 40th District Rep. Ralph Ostmeyer, R-Grinnell; 121st District Rep. Jim Morrison, R-Colby; 15th Judicial District Judges Glenn Schiffner, R-Colby, and Jack Burr, R-Goodland. Thomas County holds elections for city and school board positions in odd numbered years, the

Buying furniture could be violation

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Concerns of a possible policy violation stirred up the Thomas County Commissioners meeting Monday.

Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers told Public Health Administrator Lisa Molstad that one of them reviews bills which are paid on a weekly basis. Christiansen said a red flag was raised when he learned Molstad charged nine chairs and two cabinets on the credit card issued to her depart- and chairs, so we know, just comment totaling \$1,250.78.

"That purchase was through the public health preparedness grant,' Molstad said.

Molstad said she ordered the furniture for the waiting room at the public health department located at the county office complex in the 300 block of South Range Avenue. The purchase was from Domestications, an online and catalog home furnishings company.

'The chairs have a washable finish," Molstad said. "Each item was less than the \$350. That's why you were not advised."

Commissioners have tried to determine if Molstad violated policy outlined in the employee handbook. That policy states all capital expenditures for more than \$350 must have commission approval.

Bantering back and forth between a yes or no answer whether Molstad violated the policy, Christiansen said the answer remains 'yes and no."

"Right now, it's no, until we get (the handbook) revised so there is absolutely no question as to what we meant when we have it in the handbook," Christiansen said. "Her interpretation of what the handbook said was different than what we think it says, which is \$350 whether you buy one item or 10." The furniture purchase issue surfaced in February when Molstad made a \$500 payment on the county credit card to free up available credit to send an employee to training. At that after Molstad asked the county to said.

purchase.

Molstad said since the nine chairs and two cabinets each cost less than \$350, she did not believe she needed to advise the commissioners she planned to buy them. She said her understanding of the \$350 capital expenditure clause in the handbook refers to items which can be depreciated and have a life expectancy of greater than one year. Molstad asked for a clarification of capital expenditure.

"Like I said," Christiansen said. "It relates to this office furniture municate with us."

Despite saying Molstad did not violate county policy, Christiansen said the purchase is "contrary to what the employee handbook

ing things as a whole, not by the item," Molstad said.

Steele said since commissioners approved the grant application and Molstad's subsequent use of the money, he remains uncertain whether she violated the policy.

"I'm not a county attorney," Steele said. "But there certainly is a chance for misunderstanding. Maybe when she brings a grant to us she should advise us it has capital expenditures in it." Steele said customary protocol

purchase will be made.

Jumper as someone who advised the commissioners about plans to purchase shelving for the household hazardous waste building, Steele asked Molstad to do likewise in the future.

department is slow.

time, the credit card, which has a istrator is working 12 hour days, maximum limit of \$2,000, had a training a new clerk and dealing balance of \$1,800.08. It was only with a nurse resigning," Molstad

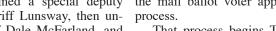
reimburse her the \$500, commissioners learned of the furniture

"It looks like you are consider-

for county department heads is for them to apprise the commissioners of expenditures greater than \$350 and from which budget the Citing Landfill Director Larry

"What the commissioners need to know is that when you are going to purchase something, come to us and tell us so we are informed," Steele said. Sowers wanted to know why the turn around time for paying bills at the public health

"Probably because the admin-





Thomas County Red Cross manager Sherry White worked on a display for the open house planned from 5 to 6 p.m., Thursday, March 27, at the office complex, 350 S. Range Ave., Colby. The open house is free and will give everyone a chance to see what services are available.

Red Cross open house scheduled

By Patty Decker

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March is Red Cross Month and to celebrate the Thomas County office is planning an open house from 5 to 6 p.m., Thursday, March

"This will be a great opportunity to learn about what services the local Red Cross has provided to its citizens," said Sherry White, manager, "and also what we continually provide for our communities right here in northwest Kansas."

White said this will be the first time an open house has been held during her 18 months as the man-

"The open house is also a good time to honor all the donors of Red Cross — whether someone has donated financially, contributed to a blood drive or volunteered time," she said.

March is also a good time for

about severe weather by reviewing safety procedures.

White encourages everyone to follow three steps in the event of bad weather. Those are having a kit, making a plan and staying informed.

she suggests including a flashlight, battery-powered radio (plus batteries), manual can-opener, non-perishable food, personnel hygiene items, bottled water and fun activities like cards or coloring books. The kit should then be placed in a safe room or basement somewhere it will be remembered should severe weather hit.

One of the most neglected steps in making a plan, she said, is emergency contacts. Everyone should have contacts outside their area to check in with if their town is hit by disaster.

Staying informed is another important factor. White said people Cross provides training in CPR

stations for watches and warnings. It is also beneficial to take a class in first aid and CPR, she said, to know what to do if an emergency were to happen at home.

"For information on becoming a local volunteer or to sign up for When putting a kit together, a CPR/First Aid class, call us at (785) 462-7161," she said.

Another aspect of Red Cross month is supporting the local pro-

"Last year was busy for the American Red Cross in our community and across the state," White said. "Ice storms, tornadoes, floods and blizzards affected thousands of Kansans, including those in our community.'

Response to these disasters was fast and effective because of volunteers and financial supporters.

"In addition to helping disaster victims, including victims of three house fires last year, your Red

people to raise their awareness need to check radio and television and first aid and swimming lessons," she said.

> "In 2007, our chapter taught 818 people to swim or how to perform CPR and first aid."

> Other services included informing the public on how to be prepared for disasters and other emergencies and teaching 193 school children how to avoid illness through the Scrubby Bear program.

'Our mission is to help people and we couldn't do it without you," she said.

"I am asking you to help us be there for those who need us again this year by making a financial donation to support your local Red Cross.

The local Red Cross serves Thomas, Gove, Logan, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Wallace, and Sheridan counties. Donations may be sent to: American Red Cross, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 8, Colby, Kan.

Briefly

Cheer, dance tryouts set

Colby Community College will host cheer and dance team open tryouts from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 5, in the college gymnasium. Kelly Gates was recently selected as the cheer and dance team coach for the Trojans and has more than 16 years coaching experience. Her teams have won eight national championship titles, college officials said. She has coached Pop Warner, middle school, high school and competitive all-star cheerleading for ages kindergarten through college in southern California. Her teams received consecutive bids to nationals for the

past 12 years. "Participants will be taught a cheer, dance, stunting and various jumps at the tryouts," she said. "Men and women, experienced and inexperienced are all welcome." Some scholarships will be awarded for select applicants. Private auditions are available by appointment. Call (785) 460-5479 or email kelly.gates@colbycc.edu.

Egg Hunt Saturday

College Drive Assembly, 245 W. College Dr. in Colby, is sponsoring an Easter Egg hunt from 1 to 2:15 p.m., Saturday. Registration opens at 12:45 p.m. with lots of games, prizes and music planned.

A coloring contest is also scheduled and officials encourage those participating to go to: www.collegedriveonline.com to download the sheet.

Landfill closed March 23

The Thomas County Landfill will be closed Sunday, March 23, in observance of Easter. For questions, call 462-8139.

Basketball tourney set

The Colby Lady Eagles are hosting "Battle of the Back Courts" 3-on-3 basketball tournament, Satur-

day, April 5. A boys and girls division for ages third through eighth grade is available. For information or an entry form, call 462-5300.

Spring tea set for April 5 Heartland Christian School will host its annual

spring tea 2 p.m., Saturday, April 5 at at Heartland Christian School. The speaker is Amy Wilson of Thomas County and who is Miss Rodeo America 2008. Musical guest will be Eternity Focus. Tickets are available at Heartland Christian School, 1995 W. Fourth St., Colby, or call 460-6419.

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