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COLBY FREE PRESS

Colby people tag state with new idea

By Jan Katz Ackerman

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Two Colby couples' efforts, artwork and faith will be displayed in about a 12 inch by 6 inch space.

Francis and Geri Landry, along with John and Betty Bremenkamp, wanted a car tag to let others know they are Christians and are not afraid to show it.

"It seems like everyone is taking God out of our country," Francis Landry said. "We thought this would put him back in and stand up for what we believe in."

While visiting their son, Keith Landry of Greencastle, Ind., late last year the couple noticed Indiana vehicle tags with the words "In God We Trust" on them.

Upon returning to Colby, Francis Landry went to the Thomas County Treasurer's office and asked about getting a similar tag for his cars. He said he was told it took Legislative action to get a tag approved in Kansas and he would need to talk to his local representative.

Which he did. "I was requested to introduce legislation by my neighbor," said Rep. Jim Morrison, R-Colby. "We have many different types of personalized plates expressing support for or providing information about various causes. This allows one to express a belief in God and God's leading in one's life, just like on our money."

Morrison said the Landry and Bremenkamp families worked tirelessly to get the legislation passed in only three months, unlike most legislation which takes years to complete.

"I'm proud to have been of assistance and a part of the process resulting in successful passage into law of this special plate," Morrison said. "The plate will be available in January 2009 as the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ABOVE: A sample of the approved license plate emphasizing "In God We Trust" created by Colby residents.

state gears up for what is believed to be the most popular personalized plate ever sold in Kansas."

While the final design has yet to be approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Kansas Highway Patrol, the one submitted by the Landrys and Bremenkamps will have shafts of wheat in the lower left-hand corner with the words "In God We Trust."

Unlike many other Kansas license plates, the "In God We Trust" plate will not have leading zeros, but will be issued with the first number being the number 1.

"We'll have number 1 and number 2," Francis Landry said. "Jim (Morrison) has reserved the first 400 tags for those of us in his district."

"He did a good job on this project," Geri Landry said. "He's a good legislator."

The plates, like other specialty

plates in Kansas, will cost \$40 over and above standard taxes and fees and the number will need to be renewed every year at that cost.

Bonnie Brown, public information officer with the Kansas Director of Vehicles Office, said while the House Bill 2704 was signed into law by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius on Monday, there are many steps that must happen before plates will be sold.

"We are just getting started," Brown said. "We have to meet all the rules and regulations on plates and the Kansas Highway Patrol has to authorize it to make sure troopers can see it in daytime and at night. Kansas Highway Patrol is part of the approval process."

Brown said the final design must be approved before a prototype plate can be produced. The final "look and feel" for the

plate will be up to the Landry and Bremenkamp families, who will work with a Department of Motor Vehicles plate designer to make sure the plate is exactly as they want it.

"With it just being signed five days ago, it's all pretty much early and we'll need to get the Division of Motor Vehicle officers together and start the (plate) process," Brown said.

Francis Landry said one of the hoops he had to jump through for getting the specialty plate passed through the Kansas Legislation was to convince legislators he did not want any of the money from plates sales.

"All the revenues will go back to the state," Landry said. "The state (legislators) couldn't believe the revenues would go back to the state."

"I think it's wonderful,"

Bremenkamp said.

Using a photo of wheat he had grown on his farm, Bremenkamp applied his computer skills to create the winning design.

"I took parts out of the picture and added clouds and wheat stalks," he said. "I'm glad the design is becoming part of Kansas history."

Morrison introduced and supported HB 2704 which was passed in both the Kansas House of Representatives and the Senate. All but three Legislators voted in favor of the bill. Voting against it were Sen. Jay Emler (R-Lindsborg); Rep. Nile Dillmore (D-Wichita); and Rep. Tom Sloan (R-Lawrence).

"I have voted against all specialty license plates in recent years," Emler said. "License plates, in my opinion, are not billboards. I do not believe it is appropriate to make law enforcement officers

memorize 40 different license plates."

Voting against personalized plates 39 out of 40 times, Emler said the only plate he has supported was one for cancer.

"The only plate I have voted for in recent years was the cancer plate the last time," he said, "and I voted against it originally."

Sloan said he voted against the measure because it was a "political statement."

"When you purchase a KSU, KU, breast cancer awareness or other tag, these are nonpolitical statements," Sloan said. "In God We Trust is a political statement and therefore, in my opinion, inappropriate for a license plate."

Dillmore was not necessarily against the In God We Trust plate, rather the process of getting into law. He said when the bill was presented to the House of Representatives Feb. 25, he said more important state issues were at hand.

"The (Melvin Nufeld, R-Ingalls) had at this time held up a number of bills and issues in response to mounting opposition to the Holcomb plant expansion," Dillmore said. "It was high time someone stated that enough is enough."

Dillmore, in his explanation of vote published in the House Journal, said the House should have attacked broader work of state business.

"It is time the House begins addressing some of the critical issues facing our constituents," Dillmore said.

"As we approach half way through our session we have not talked about health care, minimum wage, immigration or tax relief for fixed income seniors. Instead, we spend our time naming highways and issuing commemorative license plates. Someone needs to say enough is enough and demand we get down to business." -30-

Truckers to help patrol

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Kansas Highway Patrol troopers is not getting all of its information about traffic violations from its traditional patrol cars.

The patrol has stepped up security with a program to monitor traffic from within big rigs.

For the second year in a row, the Kansas Highway Patrol's Trucks on Patrol for Safety program is making its way across highways throughout the state. The program pairs commercial vehicle companies and drivers with the Patrol, and is supported by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The goal of TOPS program is to help reduce injuries and deaths related to large truck crashes on Kansas roadways.

"It's vital to continue raising citizens' awareness of the importance of safety on the roadway," stated Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. "With the number of trucks on Kansas roadways each day it's



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

A semi driver passes through Colby this morning on Interstate 70. The Kansas Highway Patrol is partnering with trucking companies to watch for traffic violators.

important we work together to decrease the number of injuries and fatalities throughout our state."

During an open house today at the Holiday Inn Express in Colby, the Patrol showed off one of the tractor-trailer units which is part of the TOPS program.

One of the primary focuses of the TOPS program is to heighten public awareness of the added precautions that must be taken when sharing the road with large trucks, a spokesman for the Patrol said. Benefits of educating the public and striving to reduce

traffic deaths on the highways, the Motor Carrier Safety Administration is encouraging more states to get involved in programs similar to the TOPS program.

"Last year's program was very successful, and I am pleased that our efforts will continue with another year of TOPS," Patrol Superintendent Colonel Terry Maple said. "The participation of our partners in the trucking industry demonstrates their commitment to traffic safety in Kansas and educating drivers about safety around large trucks."

In 2006, large trucks were involved in 5.3 percent of all traffic crashes and 14.3 percent of all fatal crashes in Kansas, according to the Kansas Department of Transportation. There were 61 fatal collisions involving large trucks, and drivers of the large trucks had at least one contributing factor in 23, or 38 percent, of these crashes.

There were 3,447 crashes in 2006 involving heavy trucks, which equates to one crash every 2.54 hours. In those 3,447 crashes, 69 people were killed and another 1,026 were injured.

Clean up days in May

The City of Colby and the Thomas County Commissioners are combining efforts and sponsoring a "City-Wide/County-Wide Cleanup Week," Monday through Friday, May 5-9.

"Area service clubs and church groups are asked to commit their organizations to clean public areas of the city," said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

"People and businesses are also encouraged to make an extra effort during this week to spruce up their yards and share in the pride of having a clean city," she said. Among the areas that need special attention are parks, ball fields, and all roadsides and entrances in Colby.

Armstrong, on behalf of the city, is asking if anyone is willing to volunteer their services to assist the elderly and infirm to call Jo Strange, assistant to the city manager, at 460-4410 and leave your name.

"Those of you who need assistance should also call the City Office and leave your names. The City will then try to match up those who can help with those who need help," Armstrong said.

City crews will follow the regularly scheduled routes for yard waste and trash pickup during the week; however, there will also be

personnel available to handle the extra trash generated by cleanup week, said Chris Bieker, director of the city's public utilities department.

"Trash should be boxed or bagged and placed at the street for pickup," he said. "Appliances, furniture, and other large objects which are cluttering yards can be removed during this week; however, you must call the city office to schedule a time to pick up these items," Bieker said.

"Any appliance which has contained or which does contain refrigerant must either have a certificate showing that a certified technician performed the removal of the refrigerant, or a fee of \$25 must be paid by the owner before the appliance is removed by the City of Colby and accepted at the Thomas County Landfill."

Bieker said the landfill is not offering free disposal of waste tires this year — the city will haul tires to the landfill, but the regular tire disposal fees must be paid before they leave your property.

For car and pickup tires, the cost is \$2; regular truck tires are \$5. The full list of tire disposal fees is available at City Hall, 585 N. Franklin.

"Let's make Colby the best it can be," Armstrong said.

Briefly

Gaither concert Sunday

The Colby Berean Church, 1000 S. Franklin Ave., is hosting a Gaither Homecoming Video Concert, "Rock of Ages," at 6 p.m., Sunday. "Come and enjoy a concert featuring all of the Homecoming singers," officials said. The concert is open to everyone and will be viewed on the big screen television. Free refreshments will be served.

Board meets Monday

The Colby College Board of Trustees will hold their regular meeting at 5 p.m., Monday, in the board room at Thomas Hall on campus. Agenda items include food service bids; contracts; agreements; resolutions; feedlot certification program approval; res-

ignations; budget discussion and other reports. The meeting is open to the public.

Band concert May 1

A spring band concert will be held at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 1, at the Frahm Theater on the campus of Colby Community College. Director for the instrumental concert is Bradley Herndon. Everyone is welcome and admission is free.

Spring Dog Show

The 4-H Spring Dog Show will be held Saturday, at the 4-H building. The 4-H portion of the show will begin at 10 a.m., with open class following in the afternoon. Handles will compete in different levels.

The public is invited. Lunch will be available.

CROP Walk Sunday

The annual CROP Walk will start at 2 p.m., Sunday, from the Colby United Methodist Church, 950 S. Franklin Ave. The acronym CROP stands for "Community Response to Overcome Poverty," and the fundraising event helps the Genesis food bank in Thomas County and also fighting poverty worldwide, said Wayne Horlacher, one of the organizers. "Nine churches are taking part this year and people walking are taking pledges for the event," he said. Anyone interested in participating can pick up a packet at the church or call 460-2761 with questions. "This is a church world service project to fight poverty and everyone is welcome to walk with us,"

Horlacher said.

Orchestra Sunday

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will conclude its 2007-08 season with a children's concert, *Musical Through the Ages*, at 3:30 p.m., Sunday, in the Colby High School auditorium. The concert is free-will donation open to the public.

Marriage conference set

Couples Conference 2008: Making Good Marriages Great will be live via satellite and is being sponsored by Colby Wesleyan Church and Church Communication Network from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Saturday, April 26. To reserve a place or questions, call 462-8391.