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Crunch time



Two competitors in the demolition derby collide at the Thomas County Fairgrounds Saturday. Kirk Friesen of Colby won the derby organized by the Thomas County Speedway.

JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

New agent likes variety

By Jan Katz Ackerman
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Diversity is the most enjoyable aspect of the job for Thomas County's newest agent at the K-State Research and Extension office.

"There's a lot of things happening all year," said 27-year-old Clint Milliman. "There's always something going on, and there's diversity and I like that."



Milliman

Milliman grew up in Newton, Ill. and began his career with K-State Research and Extension in 2004 at the Post Rock Extension District in Osborne County. He earned his bachelor's and masters' degrees in agribusiness economics at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. While at the university, Milliman competed on the rodeo team for three years, during which time he received the "Cowboy of the Year" and "Hard Luck" awards.

An avid equestrian, Milliman, along with his wife, Jessica (Beebe) Milliman, enjoy riding horses and judging horse shows. His wife serves as the Extension agent for Sheridan County and the couple lives in Hoxie.

Milliman said he applied for the job of Extension agent having only been in Kansas "one or two times" prior to moving here from Illinois.

"I was involved in 4-H and looked for Extension jobs in Illinois and applied for some in Kansas," he said. "I worked in Osborne County for three years and then we decided to get married."

Married on Saturday, Oct. 6, 2007, in Cooper Barn on the grounds of the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby, Milliman started his new job the following Monday on Oct. 8.

"I'm one of two agents in this office," Milliman said. "Diann

Gerstner is the Family Consumer Science Agent and I'm the Agriculture Agent."

Milliman said he and Gerstner and gearing up for what is a busy time of year preparing for the Thomas County Fair.

"We are getting out in the county meeting with agriculture people and getting ready for the 4-H fair," Milliman said.

He said the Thomas County Fair is "actually two fairs in one." He said the fair is made up of the Thomas County Free Fair and the Thomas County 4-H Fair.

"The Free Fair is for open class exhibits and is along the same lines of the 4-H Fair, but is judged separately and has evening entertainment," Milliman said. "People in the open class compete against peers, older and younger, and they don't compete against a 4-Her unless the 4-Her has an exhibit in the open class. It's basically open to the world."

Milliman said he and Gerstner are currently overseeing about 160 youth in 4-H.

"We have 34 different divisions, including livestock, agriculture, crops, horticulture, foods, nutrition, clothing and arts and crafts," he said.

On the job for six months now, Milliman said the best part about his job is learning about the variety of crops in northwestern Kansas. Unlike Illinois which grows predominately corn and soybeans, Milliman said it has taken him some time to get used to the multiple harvest seasons here.

"There's some wheat in Illinois, but it's on a different scale," he said.

"Basically there's not a big wheat harvest like there is here."

He said he has had to learn to work around the fact the area has multiple crops and a drier climate than where he grew up.

"Scheduling meetings around harvest or planting season has been challenging," Milliman said.

"There's always something going on, so it's hard to schedule around those times. And getting adjusted to the climate has been challenging."

Lady Trojan mashes old record

By Joey Falkoff
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Before the start of the semester, Colby Lady Trojan sophomore designated hitter/pitcher Ninostka Amaro made a rather brash promise to her mother in Puerto Rico.

"I promised her I'd hit 20 home runs this year," said Amaro.

"She's cocky," joked teammate Courtney Duell.

While a brash statement like the one she made to her mother months back may fit her personality to a tee, as it turns out, Amaro was just being modest.

The 6-2 sophomore from Maunabo, Puerto Rico, entered today's games at Barton County leading the nation in home runs with 25.

Her 25 homers is the most by any Jayhawk Conference player since single season home run total statistics were earliest available in 2000. It's the also the most home runs by any Division I per-

"In my 15 years, she's the best power hitter we've had."

Lady Trojan Coach Ryan Sturdy

former since Lauren Christensen of Middle Georgia College hit 26 in 2006.

The all-time home run record is 37 set by Lauren Papik of Otero Junior College in 2005. While that may be a bit out of her reach, Amaro is nonetheless proud of what she's accomplished this season.

"Awesome," said Amaro. "I'm pretty excited."

Short on words, Amaro's monster sophomore season will make her a big part of the Trojan record books for years to come.

Amaro has shattered the school's home run record of 17 set by Lynette Bohannon in 2000. She broke the record against

Dodge City April 16. Her 1,035 slugging percentage also ranks as the best in school history just ahead of Cara Liuzzi's 1,029 mark in 2001.

Amaro is also just six runs short of Bohannon's record 69 in 2000 and 11 RBIs shy of her record 80 driven in that same season.

"In my 15 years, she's the best power hitter we've had," said Lady Trojan head coach Ryan Sturdy.

"She's been a team leader for us offensively."

It's Sturdy who has had the good fortune of being able to coach Amaro the last two seasons, but it was his predecessor, the now-deceased Carl Adams,

who was responsible for bringing her to Colby.

"Coach Adams went down to Puerto Rico, and our former volleyball coaches (Manolo Concepcion and Eddie Rivera) had some connections with their national softball team," said Sturdy.

"That's how we got hooked up. We actually recruited six players from Puerto Rico the last two years, and four decided not show up at the last minute, but Nina came."

It wasn't long after she arrived in Colby that the Trojan coaching staff knew they had a very gifted athlete on their hands.

"It was pretty apparent from the first week she was here that she was going to be a special kid," said Sturdy.

"The first day we hit batting practice out here she hit five balls out off the pitching machine."

"I've always been a big home run hitter," added Amaro.

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County commissioners to consider road graders at next meeting

By Jan Katz Ackerman
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During the Thomas County Commissioner's meeting last week, bids for three new county road graders were reviewed but none approved.

The commissioners reviewed bids for three county road graders. Bids from Van Keppel Company, Garden City; Murphy Tractor and Equipment Company, Dodge City; Martin Cat, Colby; and Berry Tractor and Equipment Company,

Garden City have been taken under advisement until the commission meeting Wednesday. From 9:30 to 10 a.m., Road and Bridge Supervisor Clair Schrock will talk with the commissioners about the bids.

Using specifications outlined by Road and Bridge Director Clair Schrock, the bids ranged from an annual payment for five consecutive years of \$28,374 to \$71,707, and balloon payments ranging from \$333,000 to \$587,655 depending on how the graders were financed and equipped.

Also on the table for review were two bids for the hazard mitigation plan Emergency Management Director Susan McMahan talked with commissioners about earlier this month.

McMahan had until July 1 to apply for federal grant money which could help lessen the severity of damage should a disaster strike the county.

Examples of use for the grant money include acquisition and relocation of structures from hazard prone areas, construction of tornado shelters in public facilities or schools and flood protection

of critical facilities. Currently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state are cost sharing having the plans prepared. McMahan said FEMA will pay 75 percent with the state paying 25 percent of the cost which ranges from \$30,000 to \$50,000.

McMahan said the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program was designed to help state and local governments carry out "long-range mitigation projects following a major disaster declaration."

Two companies, Brake and Associates, L.L.C. of Manhattan and E-Fm

Consulting, L.L.C. of Lawrence, submitted bids. Brake and Associates bid came in at \$30,000, and E-Fm's bid came in at \$26,763.

The lowest bidder does not have to be selected for the project. Commissioners asked McMahan to talk to other emergency management directors across the state about which company was used and the results provided. McMahan is to report her findings to the commissioners at the May 5 commission meeting.

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Briefly

County health closed

The Thomas County Health Department will be closed Wednesday for staff attendance at the Annual Governor's Public Health Conference. The office will reopen at 8 a.m., Thursday, said Lisa Molstad, health department administrator.

Day of prayer Thursday

Area Christians are invited to participate in a National Day of Prayer Praise and Prayer Rally from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, in the Colby Community Building's Little Theater, 285 E. Fifth St. "This will be a time of honoring God through singing praises and praying for our nation," said Karen Merryman, one of the coordinators. For more information call her at 443-3715 or visit the National Day of Prayer website at www.nationaldayofprayer.org and click on events and the map of Kansas. Follow the links for all prayer events across the state.

Archeology school offered

Participants in the 2008 Kansas Archeology Training Program field school will have a rare opportunity to excavate at a nationally significant site from May 31 through June 15, said Virginia Wulfschuh, public

archeologist with the Kansas State Historical Society. "The Pawnee Indian Museum State Historic Site (14RP1) sits on the bluff overlooking the Republican River in Republic County, and the field school will recover new and valuable information about this fortified village that was occupied by the Kitkahaki band of the Pawnee tribe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries," she said. Details of the project will be included in the registration packet, which is available in hard copy and posted on the state historical website: ksks.org/resource/katpcurrent.htm. Registration forms submitted by May 2 qualify for reduced rates.

Although field and laboratory activities continue without stopping for the 16-day period, volunteers may participate for a single day or the entire time. Participants must be at least 10 years of age, and those younger than 14 must plan to work with a parent or other sponsoring adult at all times. A legally responsible adult must accompany participants between 14 and 18 years of age. For other details, call (785) 272-8681, ext. 266 or locally, people can call Nancy Arendt in Colby, 460-6653.

Gospel music May 4

Homeward Bound, a gospel music group from

Colorado, will be presenting music and testimony 10:30 a.m., May 4, at the First Baptist Church located at Grant and Webster streets in Colby, said Rev. Carroll Morony. Homeward Bound features Southern gospel-style music. "A love offering will be received for their expenses and a carry-in dinner will follow the worship," Morony said. The public is invited. For questions, call 462-2867 weekday mornings.

Friendship Day planned

May Friendship Day will be recognized by the Colby Presbyterian Church May 2. May Friendship Day is an annual event that unites Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian women in a common worship experience building and strengthening friendly relationships within the community, said Joyce Gatlin, one of the coordinators. Fellowship will be held at 9:30 a.m. A worship service begins at 10 a.m. For other questions, call 460-3656.

Soccer tickets available

The Colby Soccer Club has tickets for a Colorado Rapids soccer game to be held at 1 p.m., Sunday, May 4, at Dick's Sporting Goods Park in Denver.

Daniel Morris, board member of the American Youth Soccer Association in Colby, said this would be a great way for people interested in the sport to see a game and at a reasonable price.

The tickets have been discounted and Morris hopes that many people in the area will consider attending the game in Denver.

For ticket costs or questions, call 443-3325. Morris said the deadline has been extended for those interested through Wednesday.

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.

Kindergarten visitation set

Visitation for students entering kindergarten from the 2008-09 school year will be held from 9 to 11 a.m., Friday, at Colby Grade School, 210 N. Grant. If a child did not receive an invitation, call the grade school office at 460-5100, said Principal Terrel Harrison.