



COLBY FREE PRESS

Amber waves of grain



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

A combine driver harvests wheat in a field Friday sandwiched between Dillons and Colby Community College on Colby's south side. Wheat harvesters have battled rain and hot temperatures while gathering the grain.

County reviews health job

By Jan Katz Ackerman
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The search for a new public health administrator inched along at Monday's county commission meeting in Colby.

Thomas County Public Health Administrator Lisa Molstad and Registered Nurse Connie Walden voiced opinions to county commissioners during the meeting.

For the past two months, the commissioners have waded through paperwork Molstad gave them about hiring options. Molstad will leave the public health office to move to Florida.

Molstad and Walden, are concerned too much work is put on the nursing staff when they are trying to serve a population of 8,000 people.

Molstad fine-tuned a staffing diagram that keeps Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers as overseeing the public health department.

The new diagram, Modified Option C, places Walden as manager of the clinic side of the public

health department.

In June, Molstad had the commissioners look at four staffing options, ranging from a single manger setup like in place now, to one that has a registered nurse overseeing the medical side and a business manager overseeing the schedule and billing side.

While the commissioners previously selected Option B, that would cost \$141,760 in salaries alone to run the department, the new version would run more than \$142,657 because Walden is asking for \$25 an hour in salary.

"I checked around with all the (public health) administrators around and they get about \$25 an hour and that's about where I'd like to start," Walden said.

"I think you need to understand I'll be the only one with experience in public health."

Under the plan, the staff at the public health department would consist of someone to replace Molstad; Connie Walden, full-time registered nurse; a new full-or part-time registered nurse;

See "COUNTY," Page 3

Rest area suspects face battery and robbery charges

By Jan Katz Ackerman
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Warrants have been issued for the arrest of three people who led law enforcement officers on a chase Sunday morning that started west of Colby and ended in Burlington, Colo.

"I have recommended charges of aggravated battery and aggravated robbery to Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick," Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn said.

Baughn said while the initial charges may be revised, charges had to be filed in Thomas County Court in order to bring William R. Blake, 52, Sharon A. Horne,

38, and Raven Frayre, 24, back from Colorado to face charges in Kansas.

A 911 call at 8:28 a.m. alerted officers to John D. Stephens, 50, of Colby, who had been struck in the head with a blunt object and robbed while maintaining the rest area restrooms at the Interstate 70 rest area just about five miles west of Colby.

Stephens was transported to Citizens Medical Center in Colby by the Thomas County Emergency Medical Service where he was treated and later released.

A second victim, Deborah L. Hall, 37, of Bartlesville, Okla., was threatened with a box cutter, Baughn said.

Hall has four children, ages

"The suspects assaulted Mr. (John) Stephens in the women's restroom while he was cleaning it, then they put a box cutter to Mrs. (Deborah) Hall's throat and robbed her."

Mike Baughn,
Thomas County Sheriff

4, 11, 15 and 16, with her at the time of the incident. No one was injured.

"Apparently the suspects' vehicle was abandoned," Baughn said.

"Then Mrs. Hall parked a couple stalls away. The suspects

assaulted Mr. Stephens in the women's restroom while he was cleaning it, then they put a box cutter to (Mrs. Hall's) throat and robbed her."

Baughn said those responding to the scene were the Thomas County Sheriff's Office, Kansas

Highway Patrol, Thomas County Emergency Medical Service, Kansas Bureau of Investigation and Colby Police Department.

"The KHP left and went looking for the suspects' vehicle and found it in Sherman County," Baughn said.

"Then they went on to help Colorado State Police, the Burlington (Colo.) Police Department, and the Kit Carson County Sheriff's Office in apprehending them."

Baughn said agents from the KBI stayed at the scene and conducted an investigation of it, while officers from the Colby Police Department helped him with interviewing the victims and children.

Blake, who was driving a silver minivan, led officers on a chase that reached speeds of 120 mph on the interstate and 70 miles per hour in a residential area of Burlington.

The chase ended when Blake crashed the van and was taken to the Burlington hospital, then flown to St. Anthony Central Hospital in Denver for treatment of injuries from the crash.

Blake was reported in serious condition on Monday and Horne was in good condition.

Frayre is being held in the Kit Carson County Jail until she and the other two can be returned to Thomas County to face charges in Thomas County District Court.

Farm accident claims life

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A farm accident Monday has claimed the life of a Colby pre-teen. Teryn Haremza, 12, died at Citizens Medical Center shortly after being transported there by the Thomas County Emergency Medical Service Monday evening.

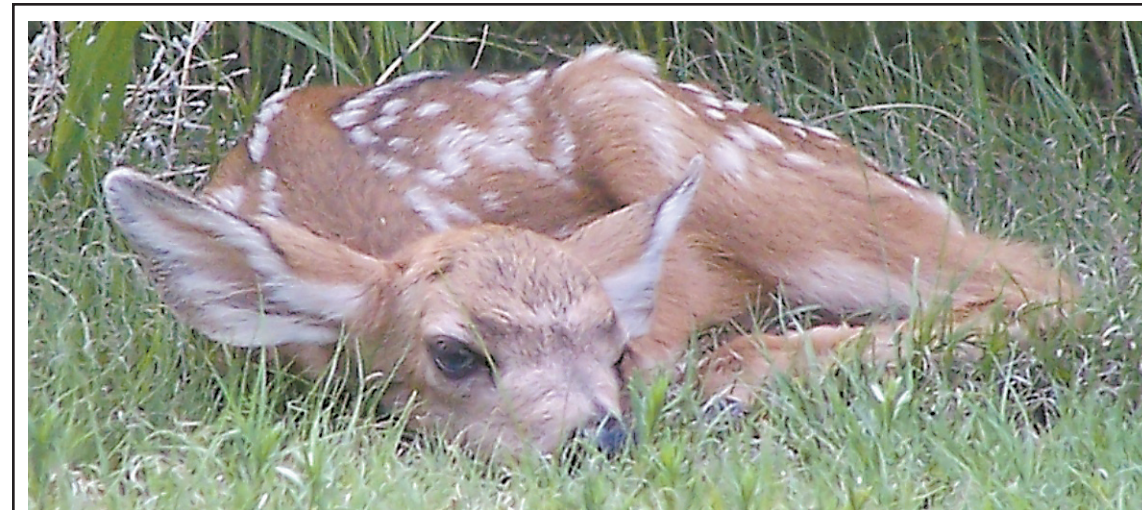
Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn said his office received

a report of a 4-wheeler accident in the 2400 block of County Road T at 6:04 p.m.

Baughn said Haremza had been spraying weeds on the family farm four miles east and one mile north of Colby when the 4-wheeler he had been riding overturned on him.

Parents of the boy are Ron Haremza of Colby and Kimberle Haremza of Farmam, Neb.

Funeral arrangements are on page 4.



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Oh, deer

A fawn rested under a cedar tree recently in Hoxie while it waited for its mother to find it. The spotted baby deer was seen wobbling across a dirt road on the west side of town shortly before seen resting under the tree.

Briefly

Contestants sought

The Thomas County Rodeo Queen and Princess Pageant is looking for contestants for the 2008 contest. Girls ages 8-11 are eligible for the junior princess; those 12-15 for the princess and young women, 16-23 for the queen contest, said Marie Skolout, coordinator. "Contestants will be judged in horsemanship, interview, speech and modeling," she said. "A trophy saddle is awarded to the queen along with other great prizes for the princess and junior princess." This year's contest will be held Wednesday, July 23 with entries due by Saturday, July 19. For entry forms or questions, call Skolout at (785) 586-2228.

Food donations sought

Pickin' On the Plains Bluegrass Festival organizers are wanting to help Genesis of Thomas County

by collecting canned goods at the Thomas County fairgrounds ticket booth, July 18-20, said Bev Biel, food drive coordinator. "All items need to be non-perishable and due to regulations, items cannot be opened or partially used." Some items given to those less fortunate in Thomas County include green beans, corn, peas, soups, canned fish or meat, Hamburger Helper/Tuna Helper, peanut butter, cereal, toilet paper, sugar and many other similar-type foods and staples. "Please help those in need through your donation to the food bank," she said.

Fair board to meet

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m., Thursday, at the 4-H Building on the fairgrounds. Agenda items include discussion of buildings and grounds (security lights, open class signs and grandstand seating project); rodeo (sponsors for the chaps for the Partners for Cancer, wrist bands for

donations, and no mutton busting before the rodeo); parade and entertainment (Tami Hall concert, McClain Ranch Rodeo, mutton busting and Old Settler's Day); Demolition Derby (two motel rooms for judges and workers furnished by Comfort Inn); the fair book; advertising and old business. The meeting is open to the public.

Square dance Saturday

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club will meet from 8 p.m. to midnight, Saturday, at the Colby Community Building.

Scholarship contest set

The Colby Recreation and the Colby Police Departments are sponsoring the First Annual Iron Athlete Scholarship Competition, said Stacy Lee, recreation director. This event is open to the public but

scholarship prizes of \$1,250, \$750, and \$500 will only be awarded to 2008 Thomas County seniors. The competition will be held at 9 a.m., Saturday, July 26 and will start at the gazebo in Fike Park. The race will begin with a bike ride of 30 miles for males and 28 miles for females, then to the pool for a 600 meter swim, and will end with a 5K run. There is no entry fee. Registration is due by Tuesday. For questions or to register, call 460-4440.

Homerun Derby planned

The Colby Recreation Department is hosting a Homerun Derby during the men's and co-ed softball tournaments for all league participants. Participants must provide their own pitcher, shagger, and ASA approved balls. A minimal competition fee is required. First place winners for each division will receive cash pot from entry fees. Participants must be at least 16 years old. To register, call 460-4440.