

COLBY  
FREE PRESS

10 pages

Employees  
want raises

By Jan Katz Ackerman

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Thomas County employees want more money in 2009 to keep up with rising prices at the stores and at the gas pumps.

Speaking for the county's department heads, Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms said they want Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers to consider their needs before appropriating money to outside entities.

"We are already losing people to other jobs or they are staying home because they can't afford to drive in (to Colby)," Harms said.

Steele said the commissioners for the past couple months have been working on the 2009 budget.

Landfill Director Larry Jumper asked the commissioners to research the rate of inflation and factor that in to what, if any, salary increase they budgeted for 2009. In 2008, county employees received a three percent across the board pay hike.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, it costs \$4.48 more in 2008 for every \$100 spent in 2007. Since January, the rate of inflation has hovered around the four percent mark, with the latest month reported by the Bureau of Labor being in May and standing at 4.18 percent, up from 3.94 percent in April. In May of 2007, the inflation rate in the United States stood at 2.69 percent.

Today, it costs \$263 to purchase

the same item it did costing \$100 in 1980.

Jumper said he is concerned about fuel costs which run at or more than \$4 per gallon.

"I'm wondering, 'Did I budget enough?'" he said about a budget he turned in to commissioners to incorporate into the 2009 county budget.

County Appraiser Mary Cech said she runs her office as frugal as possible, keeping computers as long as they will run to keep costs down.

"I used to have a client that had a sign in his office, 'It's hard to get rich in Colby because everybody is watching,'" Steele said. "That's what's good in government."

Emergency Preparedness Director Susan McMahan said the commissioners and taxpayers need to be contacting their local legislators and demand funding for the E911 system. Currently supported at the state level, McMahan said the law will sunset in 2010 and local government bodies will become responsible for paying for it.

Harms said it is hard to budget for things when not all departments turn in statements so tax dollars can be allocated to bills.

"Lisa (Molstad) has not submitted bills since May," Harms said referring to an earlier session of the meeting when Molstad met with commissioners about leaving next week. Molstad, the public health administrator, leaves Aug. 1. Molstad said she will have her office updated and grant paperwork done before she leaves.



DEBBIE SCHWANKE/Colby Community College

Dean of External Affairs Barry Kaaz at Colby Community College demonstrated the correct technique during the training session for archery instructors held last week on the college campus.

## College provides archery training

Colby Community College hosted the second training session for National Archery in the Schools Program recently in the college gymnasium.

Ten schools including Almena, Brewster, Colby, Healy, Hoxie, Oberlin, Otis-Bison, Phillipsburg, Quinter and Smith Center participated in the first session held in the spring. Three additional schools, Fort Hays State University, Ruppenthal Middle School in Russell

and Smith Center, were represented at the July training session.

This is a joint program between the Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Department of Education, said Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs at Colby College.

The program, which originated in Kentucky, was initiated in Kansas in 2006. Designed to teach international style target archery in physical education classes, grades 4-12, core content covers archery

history, safety, technique, equipment, mental concentration, core strengthening physical fitness and self-improvement.

"Before presenting the two-week archery course, teachers undergo an eight-hour National Archery in the Schools Program Basic Archery Instructor Training," he said.

Kaaz and Gary Keehn from the Department of Wildlife and Parks in Topeka provided instruction.

Equipment for the schools allowing them to participate in the program was donated by the Department of Wildlife and Parks to Colby Community College.

The kit will be provided to participating schools on a rotational basis. The \$2,800 equipment donation includes 11 bows and stands, 60 arrows, five targets and an arrow curtain for back stop.

For questions about this program, call Kaaz at 462-3984.

## Wichita judge to rule on dismissing abortion charges

WICHITA (AP) — A Sedgwick County judge said Tuesday that he will rule within the next two weeks on whether to dismiss criminal charges against one of the nation's few late-term abortion providers.

A written decision will be issued before a July 29 status conference with attorneys in the case against Dr. George Tiller, Sedgwick County District Judge Clark

Owens said. He did not indicate how he would rule.

A decision on the defense request for a dismissal of the case on constitutional grounds has been pending since a November hearing on the matter.

"I have been working on it for the last several weeks, in fact, evenings and weekends. I actually got some time to do

it during work hours today," Owens said. "But usually I have to do it evenings or weekends, because around here we don't ever get a letup. We are in one case after another, and there isn't any break to take major cases like this."

The Kansas attorney general's office filed 19 misdemeanor charges against Tiller in June 2007, alleging he broke a

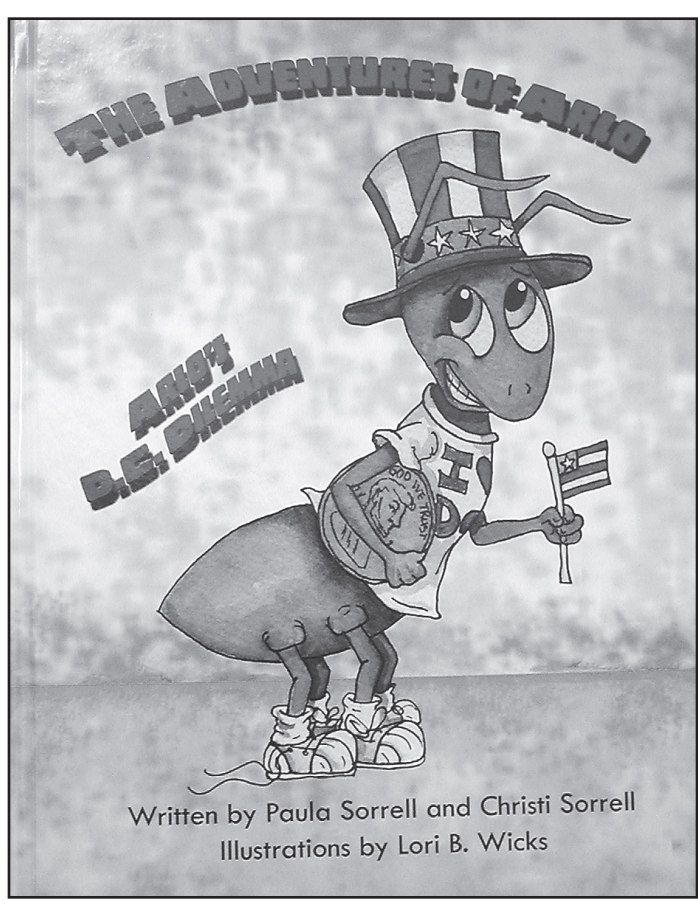
1998 state law requiring that a second, independent Kansas physician sign off on most late-term abortions. Two doctors, without financial or legal ties, must conclude that if the pregnancy continues, the mother will die or face "substantial and irreversible" harm to "a major bodily function," which has been interpreted to include mental health.

Tiller relied on Dr. Ann Kristin Neuhaus, of Nortonville, for his second opinion for abortions in 2003, and she had a financial relationship with him that is against the law, according to the criminal complaint.

Tiller's attorneys contend that the law creates an unconstitutional burden on a physician's right to practice medicine.

Colbyite  
introduces  
Arlo the Ant

Lori Wicks of Colby will be at the Pioneer Memorial Library from 10 a.m. to noon, Thursday, for a book signing and to present the new book series, "The Adventures of Arlo." She will be showing the first book, "Arlo's D.C. Dilemma," which she illustrated. The book will also be on sale that day. Everyone is welcome to stop by and visit with her about the book.



Written by Paula Sorrell and Christi Sorrell  
Illustrations by Lori B. Wicks

## County looks at budget increases

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County Attorney candidate Bruce Flipse spent time with county commissioners on Monday and talked about the office budget.

"I'm running for county attorney, and in no way assume I'm going to win, but if I do, I have some facts for the budget," Flipse said. "If I do get elected, I'd like to have a budget I can work with."

Flipse is opposed by Oberlin attorney Preston Pratt who is also running for Logan County Attorney, a position currently held by Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick. Pratt met with the commissioners for an introductory session on July 1.

The current county attorney, Andrea Wyrick, is paid \$57,683, broken into 12 monthly payments of \$4,807.

She receives an overhead allowance each month of \$1,708,

or \$20,500 per year, and Thomas County reimburses Logan County, where she also serves as county attorney, \$5,634 each year for her health insurance. Currently working on the 2009 budget, Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers have said they are considering setting aside \$3,000-5,000 of the money budgeted for county attorney so they can hire special council when needed.

Steele on Monday said he visited with District Judge Glenn Schiffner and learned there is a shortage of attorneys in the county who are willing to accept appointments as defense counselors.

"Our draft 2009 budget is showing a 28 percent increase for county attorney," Steele said.

Currently at \$98,500, a 28 percent increase would set the budget for county attorney at \$126,400.

"I think the budget you are proposing, although 28 percent more, will work," Flipse said. Money

seized during arrests or assets converted to cash after judicial proceedings goes into a money making account for use by the county attorney, sheriff and other law enforcement offices.

There is currently \$47,959 in Wyrick's portion of the account.

Steele is worried Wyrick's current spending rate will deplete the account before it's necessary. During 2008, Wyrick has spent or donated money out of the account to the Thomas County Community Foundation, American Bar Association, Office Work Inc., the Brewster school district, the Golden Plains school district and Heartland Christian School totaling \$47,285.

Flipse said he knows some of the money in the account stems from arrests on Interstate 70.

"But I don't think it's the county's job to patrol the interstate from Kansas City to Denver," Flipse said. "There are a lot of different ways to (fund the budget)."

## Briefly

## Car wash set Friday

The Colby High School cheerleaders will be raising money for the "Relay for Life," an event which helps cancer victims, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday, at the Wal-Mart parking lot. This year's Relay for Life is scheduled Friday, July 26, at Fike Park. All proceeds from the car wash will go toward the event.

## Potluck planned Thursday

In order to help those less fortunate, committee members for the Pickin' on the Plains event, scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds are asking those who are able to

bring non-perishable food items to help the Thomas County Genesis food bank. The food will be collected at the ticket booth. In addition, the festival will kick-off with a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, for those wanting to take part in a jam session. "Please bring a covered dish and table service," organizers said. "drinks will be provided." Anyone who plays a stringed instrument is encouraged to bring it along to the Thursday event.

## Sunday discounts planned

In order to raise awareness of the positive message and great family atmosphere at the Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Festival, scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Thomas County Fair-

grounds, the Colby Bluegrass Committee is doing a new gospel promotion for the churches this year, said Susan McLemore, committee member. "We annually hold a gospel sing-along at 9:30 a.m., Sunday, and it has long been a favorite event for both festival attendees and bands," she said. Consequently, McLemore said that if a group of 10 people come to the ticket booth together on Sunday morning and identify themselves as members of a given church, they will be able to purchase a Sunday ticket and receive a \$5 discount. For questions, call 460-7643.

## Contestants sought

The Thomas County Rodeo Queen and Princess Pageant is looking for contestants for the 2008 con-

test. 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. All entries due by Saturday, July 19. Cornerstone Ag is sponsoring the contest. For entry forms, call (785) 586-2228.

## Class of '98 reunion July 25

Members of the Colby High School Class of 1998 are planning a 10-year reunion. The plans are to meet at 8 p.m., Friday, July 25 at City Limits fireside lounge, then at noon, Saturday, July 26 at Fike Park for a brown bag lunch with families, pets etc. Also on Saturday, at 6:30 p.m., the class will be dining together in Montana Mike's conference room. finishing at 8 p.m. Visit: www.eaglesalumni.org.