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COLBY FREE PRESS

Commissioners close township road

By Jan Katz Ackerman

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County commissioners on Thursday closed a road that lies within a piece of irrigated farm ground and are researching closing a road that criss-crosses farm ground.

Commissioner Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers approved Keith Baalman's request to close the northeast corner of a section of land which runs from U.S. 83 north to the Kyle Railroad west of Rexford.

The land is just north of McCarty Dairy and closing the road drew no opposition at a hearing that took place at 9 a.m. during the commission meeting.

In June when Baalman talked to the commissioners about closing the road, Christiansen said the road has not been used for "more than 50 years."

A petition for closing a road that was submitted by Sowers, acting in the capacity of taxpayer not commissioner, did draw opposition.

Sowers, along with his wife, Linda; James Dwight Sowers and his wife, Jeanette; Frank Howard and his wife, Betty, signed the petition to close part of County Road K.

The portion of the road they want to close runs between Section 7-9-31 and 12-9-32, extending north and terminating at County Road L, which is a portion of County Road 31.

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Loren Guill,
Township member

road because the south fork of the Solomon River crosses it in an S-shape and it's difficult to fence," Sowers said.

Sowers said he has not seen anyone use the road in years.

Lonnie Wilson, who lives in North Randall, opposed closing the road.

"Marvin Albers said he has gone through there to save the three mile detour," Wilson said.

"Mr. Albers is not here today," Steele said. "He elected not to be here."

Landowner Terry Wendell also opposed closing the road. When Wendell started using profanity toward County Road and Bridge Supervisor Clair Schrock, Steele directed Wendell to cease derogatory statements, which he did.

Loren Guill, a member of the Menlo Township provided notes from an agreement drafted on March 29, 1954, about upkeep of the road in question.

The agreement was made between Menlo and North Randall Townships.

The commissioners asked County Appraiser Mary Cech for her opinion about the agreement and she said she would have to research it before offering an

opinion about its legality.

"As far as Menlo Township is concerned," Guill said. "We have no interest in that road."

Wilson told the commissioners if they closed the road they would be denying future business opportunities to companies that might want to drill for gas or oil, or landowners who might want to lease or sell land to wind farm operators.

"You guys can not predict the future," Wilson said.

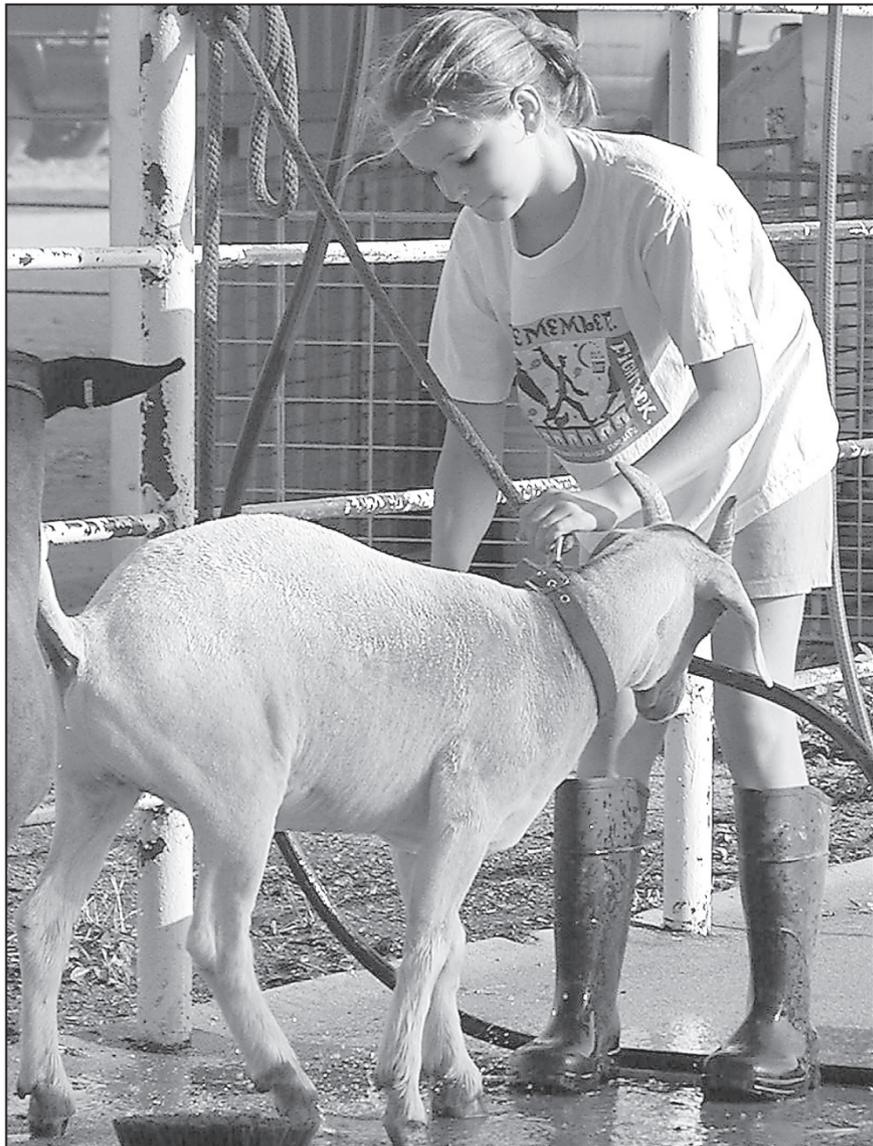
The commissioner have tabled closing the road until they meet Aug. 18.

In other business, the commissioners accepted at bid from Murphy Tractor of Ulysses for \$184,688 for a 644K wheel loader. The county has a guaranteed buy-back of the loader in the amount of \$125,000 after five years or 5,000 hours of use.

Payments on the loader will run \$11,933 per year, which was the lowest of four bids submitted. Other bid annual payments were \$20,673 from Martin Tractor of Colby, \$18,585 from Berry Tractor of Garden City, and \$18,000 per year from Van Koppel of Garden City.

All bids had guaranteed buy-backs.

Clean coat for a goat



MICHELLE MYERS/Colby Free Press

Taylor Thummel, 10, washed her goat before the 4-H Livestock sale today. Each year, the livestock auction is sponsored by the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce. The Thomas County Fair will continue through Saturday.

Admiring talent



MICHELLE MYERS/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Fair attendees browsed the 4-H building Thursday night where all 4-H and open class exhibits were displayed. The carnival will be open the rest of the week from 7-11 p.m.

County divides health position

By Jan Katz Ackerman

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Thomas County Commissioners split the responsibilities of who will head up the public health department during their meeting Thursday.

Lisa Molstad had an exit interview as she left the job of administrator for Thomas County Public Health which is located in the county office complex at 350 S. Range in Colby.

Molstad left to live closer to her son in Florida. The exit interview was conducted behind closed doors and involved Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers, and Molstad.

Following the 15 minute executive session, the commissioners conducted salary negotiations with Connie Walden, a Hoxie resident who for the past 10 years has

“I have to live with the world I have. . .”

Paul Steele,
Thomas County Commissioner

worked for Thomas County as a registered nurse.

Walden will assume the duties of clinic director and will oversee the medical side of the public health department.

Walden, who currently makes \$20.36 per hour, requested she be paid \$25 per hour, or \$52,000 per year, for the move to director. Steele told Walden the move to a co-director line-up, as well as hiring a second full-time registered nurse would push the budget to its maximum. Sowers said the change to the co-director status had to still work with the current, and upcoming

2009 budget.

"I have to live with the world that I have, not the world that I want," Steele said. "We are dealing with professional people and I want to give them respect for what they do and for the people that they deal with."

After about 30 minutes of negotiating, Walden agreed to work for \$45,000 per year starting today, Aug. 1. That figure works out to about \$3,750 per month, or \$22.77 per hour.

Walden thanked the commissioners for the promotion, and thanked Molstad for her service

with the public health department.

"I really want to thank her for all she brought to the department," Molstad said.

"She had a lot to deal with when she came and she did a good job."

While applications have been accepted and interviews conducted for someone to fill the slot of business director, no one has been hired. The commissioners on Thursday offered the job to one of the applicants at \$15 an hour, but it remains open due to lack of a response from the individual.

"The search is still on for someone for the business side," Christiansen said this morning.

Walden told he commissioners she will be on vacation from Aug. 6 to Aug. 13 and due to lack of staff the public health department will be closed during that timeframe.

"I think everyone will understand we are starting over," Christiansen said.

Man killed when deer hits car windshield

SCOTT CITY — (AP) — A Scott City man was killed in western Kansas when a deer careened off another car and smashed through his windshield.

Thirty-one-year-old Jason Kanak died Wednesday night after a deer hit by another vehicle flew into the windshield of his pickup truck on Highway 4 in Scott

County. The State Highway Patrol says the deer went completely through the truck and out the back window. Kanak's wife, Lisa, was able to grab the steering wheel and

get the truck back onto the road after it swerved into a ditch. Lisa Kanak and the couple's 4-year-old son were taken to a Scott County hospital for possible injuries.

Briefly

Commodities set Monday

USDA Commodity Distribution is scheduled from 1:30-2:30 p.m., Monday, at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office in the Senior Progress Center, 175 Fike Park, Colby. Commodities include grapefruit, orange juice, corn flakes, peanut butter, green beans, beef stew and canned chicken. For question or eligibility, call 462-6744.

Enrollment scheduled

Enrollment for Sacred Heart School in Colby is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday, Aug. 11. All students attending are asked to enroll at that time.

Mutton Busting Saturday

The Mutton Busting Ranch Rodeo will begin fol-

lowing the Thomas County Fair parade Saturday which begins at 10 a.m. from Fike Park. The event will be held in the small arena on the fairgrounds once the parade has concluded between 11 and 11:30 a.m.

Vets wanted for parade

All Veterans of Foreign Wars and members of the American Legion, along with both auxiliaries, interested in riding in the Thomas County Fair parade are asked to meet at the VFW Building, 220 N. Lake, Colby, at 9:15 a.m., Saturday. The parade will begin at 10 a.m. For questions, call Dale Deaver, 443-1113.

Book sale ends Saturday

Pioneer Memorial Library is sponsoring a "Book

Sale Blowout," during regular library hours, through Saturday, in the library basement. Officials said "everything must go." For questions, call 460-4470.

Academy Monday

The Colby High School band will be having its Marching Academy from 9 a.m. until noon, Monday through Friday, Aug. 4-8, in the high school bandroom. Every member of the Colby High School band program is requested to attend, said Joey Nickols, instructor. Students will be receiving informational packets in the mail soon. For questions, call Nickols, 460-0599.

Open house Sunday

Colby artist Bev Kern will exhibit her paintings throughout the month of August at the Prairie Mu-

seum of Art and History, 1905 S. Franklin Ave. in Colby. The High Plains Art Club will honor Kern, who is also a club member, with a reception at from 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 3. During the reception, Kern will talk about her paintings and answer questions. Her favorite mediums are acrylic and oil, although she sometimes uses acrylic in the same way one might use watercolor by thinning it with water to achieve a more delicate effect. The event is open to the public.

Tractor show Saturday

The Antique Tractor show has been moved to Saturday, after the parade, officials said. This is in order to allow the tractor owners to participate in the parade without having to haul their tractors to town twice. The show will begin at about 11 a.m. in the 4-H Building parking lot and run until about 3 p.m.