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## Energy topic of tour

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The last stop on a 10-county tour of northwest Kansas brought Sen. Sam Brownback to the Goodland Energy Center on Wednesday afternoon to see how the ethanol and power plant projects are doing.

He left promising to do what he could to get a loan approved to help finish the power plant.

Alan Townsend, a farmer who is president of the ethanol plant board; John McCullough, an engineer with JMC Engineering; Larry McCants of First National Bank; Steve West of Western State Bank and Jan Kohut, project manager for JMC, took Brownback, his son Mark and daughter Jenna, for a tour of the two plants along with State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Dennis Mesa from Brownback's office.

The senator said the project had come a long way since his last visit, and asked how each plant was doing.

McCullough said the ethanol plant is getting closer to operation. He said some tanks have to be finished and the boilers have to be installed to fire the plant.

As he showed the group through the plant, he answered questions and showed how much progress has been made in getting the plant ready to run.

Brownback asked about the prospects for success for the plant with the higher price of corn, used to make the alcohol fuel.

McCants said the plant is efficient enough it should make money, and that once the power plant is finished and the extra efficiency from using its waste steam is added in, the ethanol plant should do even better.

He said the smaller size of the plant makes it more efficient, and that he believes a good portion of the ethanol produced will be sold in this area.

He said the plant is positioned where it can sell the finished product to oil companies in all four directions. Inside the ethanol plant, Townsend said that most of the inside work is completed, and things are getting closer to making the plant operational. He said he hopes that will happen later this year.

Over at the power plant, McCullough said delays because of red tape and the potential sale mean they are losing the good months for construction. He said most of the interior part of the power plant has been completed, and what has to be finished are the environmental parts, including facilities for delivery of coal and tire chips.

McCullough explained how the plant would be able to burn fuels other than coal, adding that they are working on getting the proper type of tire chips to burn in the boiler. He said the plant will have a crusher to take oversized pieces and grind them to the proper size, but wants most of the material to be the right size to begin with.

He told Brownback people's fear about black smoke from burning tire chips is wrong, be-

## Welcome back students!



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Hundreds of new arrivals picked up materials during new-student orientation today at Colby Community College, above. They got a welcome from Dr. Lynn Kreider, president of the college. "The parking lots are full and we're optimistic about student numbers," said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer. Students moved into the dorms Sunday and later were invited to a barbecue donated by Tubbs and Sons Ford in Colby. Student Senate sponsored activi-

ties today include a "drive-in" movie on campus. Tuesday, the students can do "Extreme Bowling" at Colby Bowl or a movie at the Colby Cinema. A Casino/Carnival night will begin at 8 p.m. Wednesday in the student union and at 6 p.m. Thursday is Mud Volleyball. Below left: Students talked in front of the Health Sciences Building today. Below right: Brenda Kinderknecht helped students during orientation at the comprehensive learning center.



## Congressman opens Sunflower Celebration

Introduced as a friend of sunflowers, Congressman Jerry Moran (R-Hays) opened Goodland's ninth annual Sunflower Celebration on Friday saying he was glad to see the rain.

Lynn Hoelting of Goodland, National Sunflower Association president, welcomed about 50 farmers and others who registered at the 4-H building, and introduced Moran.

Moran said he was one of those who helped override President Bush's veto of the farm bill, adding that in some ways he felt it would be the last real farm bill.

"I was one of those who did not want to have Congress take a vacation," he said. "I felt we should be there until we voted on a comprehensive energy policy."

He said he had tried to get President Bush to call Congress back into session to deal with energy, but that has not happened.

"Agriculture has an important

**"I like all of Kansas, but it seems to me farmers are the more innovative in northwest Kansas. I believe you are trying new ways . . ."**

Jerry Moran,  
U.S. Congressman

part of that," he said, "and on the other side of that the rising costs make the margins narrower for farmers."

In the farm bill, Moran said, he was glad they were able to keep direct payments and the crop insurance programs.

He said these are important, especially where the climate is challenging like that in western Kansas.

"This is not a place where you can plant seeds and watch them grow," he said.

Moran said the farm bill passed this year does not even have the word farm in the title, and he feels this will really be

the last of what is known as a farm bill. He said 73 percent of the items covered in the bill are food stamp and nutrition programs. Only 11 percent deals with farm payments.

"This will be the last time the farm people will be able to help pass and form a farm bill," he said. Moran said more and more of the Congress is elected from urban areas, and these members do not have a clue about what farmers do and what farmers need.

He said there are issues with crop insurance and that the program needs to be viable and flexible for those farmers who

depend on the direct payments and insurance when the weather does not produce a good crop.

He said sunflowers are not expected to receive payments and that he was disappointed some of the direct payments were cut in the bill.

"I like all of Kansas," Moran said, "but it seems to me farmers are more innovative in northwest Kansas. I believe you are trying new and innovative ways to make a living."

Moran was asked why the farm bill could not be separate from all the food stamp and nutrition parts. The problem, he said, would be finding enough support for a "farm" bill.

He said to get a large bill like this passed, a lot of things are added to get enough votes to get the measure through both houses. He said what was passed in the end was different than the farm bill the House had passed out of the Agriculture Committee. "Without the other pieces," he said, "we would not have enough

votes to pass a farm bill. "Another part is that Congress passed a budget that was insufficient to pay for what we wanted."

Moran said he is disappointed in the partisan philosophy in Washington today, where it is becoming an "us versus them" battle rather than both sides working together for the best answers.

"I believe agriculture is important, and to have moms, dads and kids working together," he said. "I am afraid that this is something we might lose."

Those attending the program boarded a school bus for the ride out to irrigated test plots at the Steve Evert farm south of Caruso and then a stop at the dryland test plots along old U.S. 24 near the ADM Northern Sun plant on County Road 14.

The group returned to the 4-H building for lunch and heard from Sen. Ostmeyer and a speaker from the sunflower association.

## Briefly

### Church has free supplies

Colby Wesleyan Church is offering free school supplies for Colby students. "We are doing this as a way to show God's Love to the Colby community," said Gene Rothfuss, pastor. Supplies may be picked up at the church, 320 W. Pine, today through Thursday. To arrange a time, call 462-8391.

### Meet and greet' today

Everyone is invited to an ice-cream social "meet and greet" from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday in the courtyard behind the Colby School District administration building, 600 W. Third St. This informal, come-and-go event gives people a chance to meet the administrators, board members and new teachers.

### Group offered well testing

The Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group in Colby does testing on private wells. For

questions or to make an appointment, call (785) 462-8636 or stop by the office, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 4, Colby. Residents can also call the Thomas County Health Department, 460-4596.

### Pet adoption available

Colby Animal Clinic has animals ready for adoption. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

### Yearbooks available

The 2008 Colby High School yearbooks can be

picked up when school starts next week. Graduates can stop by the office during regular business hours for their copy. Donna Henry, journalism teacher, said extra books can be purchased for \$50. For questions, call 460-5300.

### City council meets Tuesday

The Colby City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in council chambers. Agenda items include discussion of pond near the airport; clean-up at 1120 E. Fourth St. and accepting bids on a grader. All meetings are open to the public.

