



10 pages

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## Hospital talks about plans, finances

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Citizens Medical Center plans to expand its surgery, laboratory, cardiopulmonary, physical therapy, education and pharmacy department and specialty clinics over the next two to three years, officials said at a public meeting Thursday.

Janice McCart, president and chief executive officer, said the hospital also wants to have all patient rooms converted to private rooms by 2011 or 2012.

The hospital also plans to finish the basement in its clinic, the Family Center for Health Care, by next year. McCart said half of the basement was completed in 2005.

Another project next year, she said, is to upgrading the heating and cooling systems in the hospital.

The hospital acquired a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine with the newest technology to let doctors see inside the body better.

"It improves clarity and quality," McCart said.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Kenneth Gattin, county emergency medical services director, chatted with Janice McCart, president and chief executive officer of Citizen Medical Center, after a public meeting Thursday evening at Colby High School.

The center created a serenity room this year for patients nearing the end of life, she said. The room is made available to patients entering their last days, McCart said, giving them and their family a more home-like surrounding. The room has a refrigerator, two televisions, microwaves and a couch that rolls into a bed.

McCart said they wanted the room to be a place where the patients could spend their final days in dignity with their families.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included the grants the hospital has received over the last several years. These include a surprise \$500 grant the Thomas County Community Foundation recently gave the center.

The center also received state grants, including \$8,500 from the Small Hospital Improvement Program in 2002. The money was used to improve the Infant Security System. In all, McCart said, the center has raised \$54,000 for the system.

The center also received a \$10,000 Disaster Preparedness Grant from the state in 2003. Since the inception of those grants, the hospital has received \$91,000.

The center will receive \$11,500 national grant for improving quality of care as part of the 5 Million Lives Campaign, sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, an independent nonprofit.

McCart also talked about the partnerships the center has with other agencies. These include the Colby Public Schools,

Colby Community College, Fort Hays State University, Creighton University, Wichita State University, the University of Kansas Medical Center and Northwest Kansas Technical College.

McCart said the center is the second-largest employer in Thomas County, trailing only the college. It has 270 employees, she said, 194 full time and 76 part time.

She said the center has the largest payroll of any employer in Thomas County, more than \$9 million this year.

The center's finances are strong today, McCart said. It has seen an increase in net income over the last three years. After losing \$141,974 in 2004, she said, the hospital has made money every year since, pulling down \$658,199 last year.

In closing, the administrator heaped praise on her employees.

"We have wonderful, talented people who care about their patients and coworkers," she said.

"We really appreciate you being here," she told the audience, which included public officials and community leaders, as well as hospital employees. "You have shown you really care about health care."

## Big Brothers bowling effort recruiting teams

The annual Colby Bowl for Kids Sake, the major fund raiser of the year for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Thomas County, will take place Sunday, Feb. 22.

Money raised at the event will help volunteers provide guidance and support to kids by matching children ages 5-17 with adult vol-

unteers.

The group says that matched "littles" are 46 percent less likely to use illegal drugs and 55 percent are less likely to skip school. They get along better at home and at school and are 33 percent less likely to use violence to resolve problems.

Finding and matching volunteers is vital to the many children awaiting a match.

The organization is looking for volunteers to be a team captain for this event. Captains chose five friends, co-workers or relatives to be on their team.

Each team member is supposed to \$135-\$150 in pledges by getting sponsors.

The day of the event, captains need to arrive 30 minutes before their scheduled bowling time with the completed pledge sheet and donations.

Some form phantom teams. The captain passes out pledge sheets and brings the team's sheets to Colby Bowl on Feb. 22, but the team doesn't bowl. Even those who aren't bowling can stop by, eat pizza and try for prizes.

For information, call Director Diane Stithem at (785) 460-9125.

## A head start on the season



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Donelan Jewelry kicked off the season Thursday evening with a holiday open house. Co-owner Bonnie Werth (left) talked with Landon and Mariah Skoulout while their father, Gery, (behind) scanned the store and Joan Zieggler planned her next

## Paper out Tuesday next week

The Colby Free Press for Wednesday will be printed a day early, on Tuesday, so our carriers and staff can have more time with their families for Thanksgiving.

Papers will be delivered and mailed on Monday and Tuesday. No paper will be distributed on Wednesday.

The Free Press office will be closed Thanksgiving Day. There will be no paper that day.

Publication will resume on Friday, and the office will be open all day.

Deadline for the Wednesday paper is noon Monday for ads and 3 p.m. Monday for all news. Deadline for the Friday paper will be 3 p.m. Tuesday for ads and noon Wednesday for news.

We will follow this schedule for the weeks of Christmas and New Year's Day also.

## Foundation surprises hospital, others with checks

Melinda Olsen, executive director of the Thomas County Community Foundation, presented Bob Standage, chairman of the Citizens Medical Centers board, with a surprise \$500 grant earlier this month.

"It was a wonderful surprise," said Tama Unger, Director of Fund Development and Communications for the Center.

"Citizens Medical Center had a large number of attendees at the foundation's an-

ual meeting this year, and we are thrilled that they showed their commitment to the betterment of the community by spending their evening with us," Olsen said to the board.

The foundation occasionally gives out surprise grants (issued without an application) to nonprofit organizations, she said, and the board decided that the medical center would get one of these.

"This was an example of how the community foundation supports important functions within the community," Unger said. "We thank them for honoring us with their support."

Past recipients of surprise grants include Santa City, the Thomas County Amusement Association, Mothers of Preschoolers, the Thomas County Academy, the Colby Swim Club, and Sacred Heart Catholic School,

she said.

Olsen said surprise grants are one way the foundation provides money to improve the quality of life for the county's citizens. Any Thomas County nonprofit organization in need of money for projects could apply for a grant from the foundation, she said, but sometimes the foundation likes to choose on its own.

## Briefly

### Classes selling goodies for trip

The juniors and seniors of Heartland Christian School will hold a bake sale Saturday to raise money for a trip to Washington. They will be selling homemade pies, cakes and cookies from 9 a.m. to noon at Wal-Mart.

### Women golfers offer brunch

The Colby Women's League will hold its annual holiday brunch from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Donations will go to support the Thomas County Historical Society and museum. For ticket information or questions, call any of the league members: Pat Criss, Jo Booth, Sandy Harper, Anita Hills, Sandy Kriss, Nancy Sadler, Judith Sears, Melany Shalz,

Sidney Strait, Carol Jo Sweat, Becky White or Esther Woofter.

### Church youths making dinner

The senior high youth of the Colby United Methodist Church will be serving a traditional Thanksgiving dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday at the church. Donations will be accepted for mission and ministry work. For information, call the church office at 460-6521

### Craft fair Dec. 6 at vets' hall

The second annual Holiday Craft and Gift fair will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec 6, at the Colby Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, 220 Lake Street, said Patty Drake of Nanna's Comfort Foods, the fair's sponsoring agent. She expects

more than 20 tables of gifts and holiday ideas. A concession stand will be available all day, serving breakfast burritos, cinnamon rolls and sandwiches. For information, call Drake at 460-3054.

### Clinic has lab, lots of kittens

Colby Animal Clinic has a half-grown, long-haired kitten and several 6-month-old kittens ready for adoption. They also have a stray adult male black lab that needs a home. For questions, call 460-8621.

### Outdoor water gets expensive

Colby water meters were read Thursday. All water used between then and Feb. 20 will be used to figure indoor use for next year's sewer bill. This means any outdoor use during the winter, such as lawn watering or washing a car, might drive up your sewer bill for the entire year. For questions, call 460-4400.

### City crew trimming trees

The Colby city crew is trimming trees over streets and sidewalks as the weather allows. Trees will be trimmed to 13 feet, 6 inches above streets and trimmed to 8 feet above sidewalks, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. For questions, call the city office at 460-4410.

### Genesis needs food, money

Genesis-Thomas County is looking for nonperishable food and money to buy items to put in Christmas baskets. Donations can be left at Genesis from 10 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays or at LeRoy's Printing, or Sacred Heart Catholic, First Presbyterian, Colby United Methodist or Trinity Lutheran churches. Send checks to Genesis-Thomas County at Box 214, Colby, Kan. 67701. For information, call (785) 460-7930.

