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## Deputies save man making suicide attempt

By Andy Heintz

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Thomas County sheriff's deputies Kraig Cervosky and Mark Walker prevented a 42-year-old Thomas County jail inmate from committing suicide this month, Sheriff Mike Baughn said.

Baughn said the man attempted to hang himself by using his shirt as a noose on Dec. 6.

The man had been arrested by the Colby Police Department for theft and disorderly conduct, Baughn said. He was placed in the jail at 12:37 a.m., the sheriff said. He was in a holding cell when the officers noticed him hanging by his shirt

from an air vent. Cervosky rushed in and cut the shirt. The man had been drinking when he was brought in, the sheriff said.

The man fought the officers, then appeared to go into a seizure, Baughn said. He said the officers called the Emergency Medical Services and an ambulance came and picked the man up.

He was taken to the Citizens Medical

Center at 2:20 a.m. A worker from the High Plains Mental Health Center determined that the man needed mental care, and he was taken to the Larned State Hospital at 7:30 that morning, said Baughn.

It wasn't the first time an inmate has tried to commit suicide in the jail. Baughn said inmate suicide attempts are rare, but they do happen now and then. He esti-

mated less than one suicide attempt takes place in the jail each year.

Baughn said deputies get suicide prevention training to prepare them for this type of situation. Prisoners are screened for medical and mental problems before entering the jail, he said. This allows the officers to monitor the behavior of mentally unstable prisoners.

## Wheelchairs, police move towards safety

By Andy Heintz

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Some Colby citizens have questioned how the city treats people using motorized wheelchairs on city streets, but the police chief says, like anyone else who gets out in traffic, people in wheelchairs need to be careful and use common sense.

Jari Skiles, who says she is physically handicapped and uses a wheelchair, wrote a letter to the Colby Free Press complaining about the way a city police officer had treated a friend of hers. The friend had been pulled over by the officer while she was driving her motorized wheelchair on the street, she said. The letter was printed in the newspaper on Nov. 12.

Skiles said the officer told her friend that the police department had received several complaints over her use of the wheelchair in the street. The officer would not let her explain why she did not use the sidewalk, Skiles said.

"If she is supposed to use the sidewalk, why are the sidewalks not designed wider and with a ramp, so we disabled can use our wheelchairs and scooters to gain access to them and our destination no matter where we are going in this town?" she asked.

Police Chief Randy Jones said Skiles apologized to him later and said she did not mean to disparage the entire police department.

Skiles said she had no problem with the police, just with that one officer.

"I didn't want to give the police department a black eye," she said. "I wanted the public to know how hard it was for disabled people to

navigate on the sidewalks."

The rules pertaining to wheelchair access to roads are not clear, Jones said.

Stan Whitley, information specialist at the Kansas Department of Transportation, said wheelchairs are not allowed on state highways or Interstate routes. He said access to city streets that are not highways is up to the city.

Jones said he encourages wheelchair-bound people to use the sidewalk where curb cuts are available. Curb cuts are a space where the curb is cut away and the sidewalk lowered to create a ramp for people in wheelchairs and bicycles to cross a street.

When on a street with regular traffic, he said, anyone in a wheelchair needs to be careful. Wheelchairs are low and can be hard to see, and drivers may not be looking for them.

"They should be as far out of the lane as possible and as close to the curb as possible," the chief said.

He said disabled people, like anyone else on the road, need to look out for traffic all the time.

Jones also said anyone out in a wheelchair at night should use reflectors and lights so drivers can see them.

Skiles said she thinks Colby needs to become more handicap accessible.

"There are sidewalks in Colby that are not wide enough for people in wheelchairs," she said. "Some of these sidewalks have tree roots under them, so they are very rough to ride on."

She said that if the city had more wide sidewalks, disabled people might not feel like they

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## Playing sweet music



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Piano teacher Sharon Kriss watched with a smile as Miranda Kern played the piano at a Christmas recital on Sunday at the Colby United Methodist Church. Miranda, a fourth grader

at Heartland Christian School, is the daughter of Christy and David Kern. Seventeen students were scheduled to play at the recital.

## Most shops to close early for holiday

If you wait until Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to put finishing touches on your holiday dinner, you may be too late.

Dillon's and Wal-Mart both will close at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve and will be closed all day Christmas Day. They will both open for regular hours on Friday. Both plan to be open New Year's Eve as well as New Year's Day.

It may be hard to get anything to eat other than at home, too. The Village Inn restaurant will close at 2 p.m. on Wednesday and will reopen Friday morning. City Limits Bar and Grill will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

El Dos de Oros restaurant at the Quality Inn will close at 9:30 p.m. Christmas Eve and will be closed Christmas Day.

Colby city offices will close at 5 p.m. Tuesday and will be closed Wednesday and Thursday. Trash routes for Wednesday and Thursday, for residential and commercial customers, will be run on Friday.

County offices will close Wednesday at 3 p.m. and won't reopen until Monday, Dec. 29.

## Church services set

Many Thomas County churches are planning special services for Christmas:

The Presbyterian Church, at 515 W. Fourth St., will have a Christmas Eve service at 11 p.m., but no Christmas morning service.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 1065 W. Sixth St., will have Christmas Eve masses at 4 and 7 p.m. and a Christmas morning mass at 9 a.m.

The Colby United Methodist Church, 950 South Franklin Ave., will have Christmas Eve services at 6:30 and 11 p.m.

Ascension on the Prairie Episcopal Church, 1170 Wheat Ridge, will have a Christmas Eve service at 4 p.m.

The Wesleyan Church, 320 W. Pine St., will not have a Christmas Eve or Christmas service this year.

College Drive Assembly of God, 245 West College Dr., plans a family Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. at the church. Sunday services will be at 10:15 a.m. at the high school auditorium.

Trinity Lutheran Church, 855 E. Fifth, will have Christmas Eve services at 7 p.m., Christmas Day service at 10 a.m. and New Year's Eve at 7 p.m.

Redeeming Love Ministries, 345 N. Franklin Ave. will have no Christmas Eve service, but will have New Year's Eve prayer and praise party from 10 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

First Baptist Church, 615 W. Webster, will have a candlelight Christmas Eve service at 5:30 p.m.

First Christian Church, 385 W. Third, plans a candlelight service at 5 p.m.

The county also will be closed at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 31. Jan. 1, and court offices will close The Thomas County landfill

will close at 3 p.m. on Wednesday and reopen Saturday at 9 a.m.

The Senior Progress Center will have Christmas brunch at 11 a.m. Wednesday and then close for the week.

The county transportation van will quit running at 3 p.m. Christmas Eve and resume service next Monday.

Library hours for the week will be 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. today, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, and closed Wednesday and Thursday. The library will be open Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Other holiday hours for the library are Monday, Dec. 29, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 30, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday, Dec. 31, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and closed Jan. 1. The library will resume normal hours beginning Jan. 2.

The Colby post office will close at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday and reopen Friday.

Love's Country Store will remain open both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

## Schools dismissing early for Christmas holiday

Most area school have half a day of classes on Tuesday before releasing students for the holidays. Golden Plains students are already on their two-week break.

Colby Public Schools will dismiss class at 1:30 on Tuesday. Teachers will have a flexible staff day next Friday, Jan. 2.

Golden Plains Schools dismissed classes at the end of the day Friday.

Brewster Schools will dismiss classes at noon on Tuesday. Grade-school students will have lunch at the school.

Heartland Christian School, Colby, also will dismiss at noon on Tuesday.

Sacred Heart Catholic School, Colby, will dismiss at 1:15 Tuesday.

Students at all the schools will return to classes on their regular schedule on Monday, Jan. 5.

## Briefly

### Pets available for adoption

Colby Animal Clinic has a small black-and-white terrier, more than a year old, and a young German shepherd mix available for adoption. There also is a black lab at the clinic which could go up for adoption later in the week if not claimed. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

### Vocal concert will be tonight

Colby Middle School and High School students will give their winter vocal concert at 7:30 p.m. tonight in the High School Auditorium. Performing will be the sixth-grade choir, seventh and eighth-grade choir, the high school Women's Choir, the CHS Singers and the Concert Choir, said music teacher Jill

Nickols. Don't miss this wonderful night of music to get you in the holiday spirit.

### Pool open over holidays

The Colby Community College swimming pool will be open as follows during the holiday break: Lap swim, 5-7 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; 11:30-1 p.m. Dec. 26, 29, 30, 31, Jan 2; 5-7 p.m. Jan. 5-9. Open Swim: 2-5 p.m. Dec. 27, 28; 4-7 p.m. Dec. 30, 31; 2-5 p.m. Jan. 3, 4. The Fitness Lab will close Saturday and reopen for regular hours on Monday, Jan. 5.

### Library taking Food for Fines

Have a book that's a little overdue? You've got one more day to take advantage of the Pioneer Memorial Library's

Food for Fines campaign, which ends Tuesday. The library is giving people the chance to pay their overdue fines by donating canned food. The food will be given to Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank. For information, call the library at 460-4470.

### Holiday trash will go on Friday

The Colby Sanitation Department will pick up Wednesday and Thursday residential routes on Friday, Dec. 26. There will be no pickups Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

### County offices to close early

The Thomas County courthouse, office complex and landfill will be closed from 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, through Friday, Dec. 26, and on Thursday, Jan. 1. The county transportation van will not run during those times.

### City to close Christmas Eve

City Hall will be closed both Wednesday and Thursday for Christmas Eve and Christmas. The office will reopen at 8 a.m. next Friday. Colby city offices will be closed New Year's Day, Thursday, Jan. 1, and reopen at 8 a.m. on Jan. 2.

### Court clerk needs time to figure

The Thomas County District Court clerk's office will close at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 31, so employees can complete end-of-the-year accounting.

### Emergency medical class set

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services will be offering an emergency medical technician B class starting in January. For information, call training coordinator Dawnelle Umberger at (785) 460-4585 or 443-0176.

