



COLBY FREE PRESS

Bye, 2008

Elections, Wonders, businesses made news for year

By Cynthia Haynes

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Colby Free Press

Colby and Thomas County had some growing pains in 2008, but despite the downturn in the national economy, businesses here were expanding, moving and putting up new buildings, and people were busy working for a better future.

While its tough to pick out the most important stories of the year, here is our top-10 list:

1 The big story of the year was a hard-fought, sometimes acrimonious sheriff's race, pitting an ex-deputy against his former boss.

In January, Cloyd D. Hopper, an investigator for the county attorney's office, announced he would run against incumbent sheriff Mike Baughn. In early April, former deputy Rod Taylor had also tossed his hat into the ring, making the Republican primary an three-way race.

Taylor won the primary with 718 votes to Baughn's 704 and Hopper 293. Since there was no Democratic candidate, it was assumed Taylor would win the November election. However, Baughn decided that he had enough support to mount a write-in campaign, which he did with vigor.

It was a tough race with passionate supports on each side. Accusations, innuendo and endorsements appeared almost daily in the Letter to the Editor section and advertising columns of the paper.

Taylor criticized Baughn for what he saw as a lack

of accountability. Baughn, countered that he thought Taylor lacked the administrative experience needed to run the sheriff's department.

When the smoke cleared on Nov. 4, Taylor had won the election with 52 percent of the vote.

2 In late summer, everyone got to vote on the 8 Wonders of Thomas County. Winning the most votes were: the Thomas County Courthouse

at 300 N. Court Ave., Fike Park, the First Presbyterian Church at 515 W. Fourth St., the Colby City Hall at 585 N. Franklin, the Kansas State University Research and Experiment Center at 105 Experiment Farm Road, the Houston House in Rexford, the Cooper Barn at the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby, and the museum itself. The contest was put on by the *Colby Free Press* and the *Hays Daily News*, which helped put on similar contests in counties across the western part of the state.

The contest was an offshoot of those run by the Kansas Sample Foundation. The Cooper Barn was named one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas Architecture in one of the state-wide contests and the Buffalo Bill statue in Oakley was named on the 8-Wonders of Kansas Art in a later contest.

3 Colby welcomed several new businesses, including a new Bosselman's Truck Stop on East Willow Drive at Exit 54 off of I-70. The truck stop and travel center has gasoline and diesel pumps and a Wendy's Restaurant. Other new eating estab-

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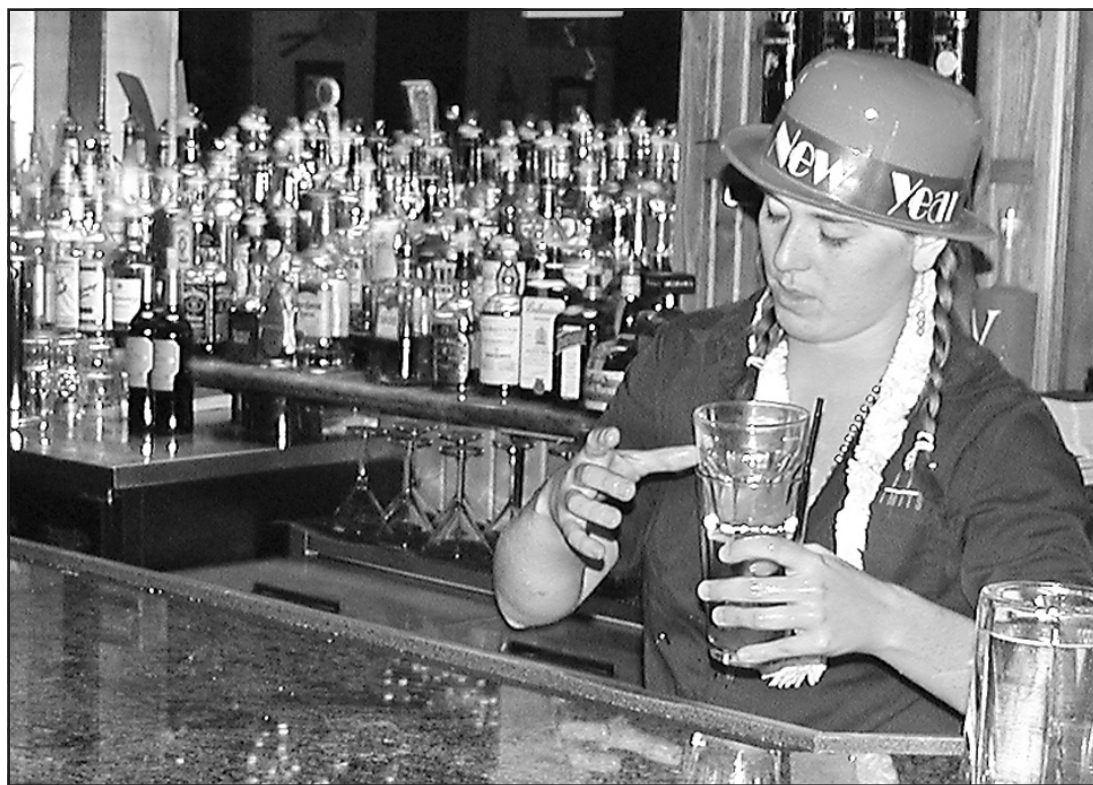
The old Cooper barn, shown here being moved to town, became one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas Architecture.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

On election night, Sheriff Mike Baughn sat on the steps and talked with C.D. Hopper, a supporter and former opponent, as he waited to learn his fate at the Thomas County courthouse.

A toast to the new year



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Kristie Colton celebrated her New Years Eve in style while serving drinks at City Limits on Wednesday night. The bar and grill in the Comfort Inn was one of several places having holiday celebrations.

Recycling center officials solve holdup on grant papers

By Andy Heintz

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Thomas County commissioners received a letter at their meeting Dec. 22 from Charles A. Peckham, a board member to the Northwest Kansas Recycling Organization, saying a grant application was being held up by a lack of documents, said County Clerk Shelly Harms.

The matter was cleared up after Peckham, an Atwood lawyer, spoke with program coordinator Lynette Koon on the telephone, Harms said. Randy Hrabec of the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission had gathered all the paperwork from the counties and the application was sent to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment by the end of the year, she said. The regional recycling organization hopes to get a \$175,000 check from the department, she said.

With no one from the public

attending to protest, an amended 2008 budget was approved by the commissioners. It raises the amounts for direct election expenditures from \$28,025 to \$38,000 and building maintenance expenditures from \$185,000 to \$400,000.

"We exceeded the year's expenditures, so we had to amend the budget," said Harms.

The county's auditor, Brian Staat with Adams, Beran and Ball, submitted a proposal for performing audits for 2008-2010, reflecting a 4.5 percent inflation factor over the 2007 fee.

The commissioner approved the audit fees as follows: \$18,655 for 2008, \$19,494 for 2009 and \$20,371 for 2010. They also approved a budget fee of \$2,483 for 2009, \$2,596 for 2010 and \$2,713 for 2011.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved an agreement with the state Department of Transportation and the Northwest Kansas

Area Transit Coordinating Council for a replacement for the county's on-call transit bus. The project's final budget is \$47,369, Harms said, and the 20 percent local share is \$9,473. The 80 percent federal/state share is \$37,895. The grant is being used to buy a 13-passenger transit bus, which will have a metal wide-bodied 2009 Starcraft Allstar on a Ford E-350 chassis, she said.

- Talked with courthouse custodian Darrin Bell about the condition of the building. County Commissioner Ken Christiansen told Bell that there have been several public complaints about the appearance of the building. Christiansen said Bell needs to focus more on mopping, polishing floors, dusting windows and general cleaning.

He told Bell he would be placed on probation, adding that the commissioners would make changes if they continued hearing com-

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Briefly

Kids back in class on Monday

Teachers and students will be heading back to class on Monday in all area schools. In Colby, class will start at 8 a.m. at the high school, 8:07 a.m. at the middle school and 8:10 a.m. at the grade school. Buses should run regular routes and schedules. Classes at Sacred Heart School will start at 8 a.m., as will those at Brewster schools. Golden Plains Schools will start at 8:20 a.m. for both grade school and high school.

Museum offers soup, thought

On the third Thursday of the next three months, the Prairie Museum of Art and History will offer Food for Thought programs with a soup lunch and history program from noon to 1 p.m.. Different presentations will be offered on Jan. 15, Feb. 19 and

March 19, with presenters including Mike Baughn, Evelyn Hoyt-Ward, Doris Johnson and Ray Imhof. Call the museum at (785) 460-4590 for details.

Pool open over college break

The Colby Community College swimming pool will be open for lap swim from 5-7 p.m. next week. Open swim will be 2-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The Fitness Lab will reopen for regular hours on Monday.

Pets available for adoption

Colby Animal Clinic has a black male shepherd-lab mix about a year old and a gray tiger-striped kitten available for adoption. Lost or strayed animals are brought to the clinic to be claimed. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and

costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Fitness program deadline near

The deadline is coming up to join an eight-week nutrition and fitness program sponsored by Thomas County Extension and Colby Recreation Department in place of the annual health fair. Registration for the Wise Up and Count Down Thomas County program must be received at the extension office or city recreation office by 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9. No late registrations will be accepted. The cost is \$30 per person; the program is for teams of four.

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 8 feet above sidewalks, said City Manager Carolyn Arm-

strong. For questions, call the city office at 460-4410.

Emergency medical class set

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services will be offering an emergency medical technician B class starting in January. Classes will run for five to six months and financial assistance is available. For information, call training coordinator Dawnelle Umberger at (785) 460-4585 or 443-0176.

Group does private well testing

The Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group in Colby tests private wells for bacteria and other contamination. For questions or to make an appointment, call (785) 462-8636 or stop by the office, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 4, Colby. Call the Thomas County Health Department, 460-4596, to set up an appointment.

