



8 pages

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Gov. Sebelius to assess state at 7 tonight

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' State of the State address is the main business for legislators on the first day of their annual session.

Both chambers of the Legislature are scheduled to convene at 2 p.m. today to handle the swearing in of new members and other housekeeping chores.

Sebelius is scheduled to give her address at 7 p.m. to a joint session of both chambers in the House.

It will be carried live on Smoky Hills Public Television.

Lawmakers are waiting to hear what she says about the budget, though they won't get her detailed recommendations until Tuesday.

Legislative researchers project that Kansas will end its current fiscal year on June 30 with a \$186 million budget deficit. Closing the gap will be their first big job.

The session is scheduled to last 90 days.

Officer defends purchase of gun

By Andy Heintz

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Undersheriff Allen Marcum says he took pains to make sure he paid the county a fair price for a sniper rifle he bought after it had been used for a couple of years.

Sheriff-elect Rod Taylor complained earlier this month that county commissioners sold the rifle below the new cost. That has been estimated at around \$2,900.

He said that Marcum's purchase was "unfair to the taxpayer."

Last week, Marcum said that's just not accurate.

"It wasn't paid with taxpayer dollars by any means," the undersheriff said.

He said he obtained the sniper rifle for the sheriff's office in a trade with Northwest Arms and Service in Atwood about two years ago. The department traded an old pistol and two old rifles for two new rifles, he said.

One of the guns was the sniper rifle that was eventually sold to Marcum, but at the time the rifles

were issued to deputy Brant Baird and Marcum. After Baird left the department, the rifle was issued to K-9 officer Marc Finley, said Marcum.

Marcum said when he wanted to buy the rifle for personal use to get a fair market price. Jim Engel, manager of the Great Outdoors Gun Shop in Atwood, estimated the gun would be worth \$900 to \$1,200. Bill Thornburg, owner of Bill's Shootin' Shop in Goodland, set the value at \$995, Marcum said. The commissioners agreed to sell Marcum the gun for \$1,100.

Engel and Thornburg both verified Monday that those were the estimates they gave, but Engel said he wished he could have seen the weapon before making the estimate. He said seeing the weapon would have helped him give an accurate value.

Marcum said he added a scope to his rifle, but he said the scope had been paid for with drug forfeiture money as opposed to money taken out of the general budget. No taxpayers' money was spend on either item, he noted.

Town buys turbines to capture the wind

JETMORE (AP) — Within weeks, the western Kansas town of Jetmore plans to become the first in the state to own its "wind farm," with towers and turbines producing wind energy.

It's taken two years of research and planning, but the town of 933 residents 29 miles north of Dodge City hopes to have its two refurbished wind generators operating by the end of the month.

Various Kansas schools have wind turbines, but Jetmore is the first official town in Kansas to have its own wind turbines and towers, said Jim Ploger, climate and energy programs manager with the Kansas Corporation Commission.

For more than 30 years, the town's power plant has been used only for a backup source, said Ray Burns, city superintendent.

Jetmore gets its power from Midwest Energy. It will continue that arrangement but when the two wind chargers are operating, they will feed directly into the city's grid, producing up to 12 percent of the town's power.

The two units were built by West Wind Energy of Otis and used in California.

The towers will be a mile east of town on land owned by Hodgeman County. Each on will cost \$250,000 with a five-year operation contract. That doesn't pay for running the lines into the power grid, which is similar to hooking into an extension cord, said Lea Ann Seiler, Hodgeman County economic development director. Jetmore paid for the wind chargers by cashing in underperforming certificates of deposit.



New line will water businesses

City crews were working south of Interstate 70 on Friday (left), extending a water line from near Truck Town east to the new Colby Ag Center being built on Horton Avenue. Marty Tarman (above, foreground with measuring stick) checked the trench for correct depth while other workers prepared a section of pipe. With a shovel (below), he helped get the trench ready for the pipe. Workers tape a wire to the top of the line as it is laid. This can be used as an antenna should the exact position of the pipe need to be found later.

EVAN BARNUM / Colby Free Press



Briefly

Hospital offers blood tests

Though there will be no health fair this year, Citizens Medical Center will be drawing blood for lab tests from 6 to 9 a.m. each day through Saturday. A complete blood count and comprehensive chemistry profile, including a lipid panel, will cost \$25. The thyroid stimulating hormone test is \$20, the prostate specific antigen test for men is \$25 and the hemoglobin A1C, which shows peak blood sugar, is \$20. The tests are open to everyone, not just those enrolled in Wise Up and Count Down Thomas County.

Knights plan free-throw toss

The Colby Knight of Columbus will hold their annual free-throw contest at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Colby Grade School gym. Plaques will be given in each age group for boys and girls who were age 10 to 14.

by Jan. 1. Winners will go on to the district competition here Sunday, Feb. 1, with regional and state contests after that. Bring a copy of your birth certificate to register. For information, call Dewey Augustine at 443-1548.

Expert to detail ancient sites

Dan Busse will talk about regional archeological sites at 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. This talk is cosponsored by the High Plains Chapter of the Kansas Anthropological Association and the museum. Refreshments will be served and there will be a chapter meeting after the talk. For info, call Nancy Arendt at 460-6653.

Senior potluck will be Tuesday

The group More Fun To-

gether is looking for anyone over 50 who is widowed, divorced, separated, has a partner in nursing home, never married or otherwise lives alone. The group plans a potluck at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Colby Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fifth St. For questions, call 462-6342 or 460-3879.

Museum offers soup, thought

Former Sheriff Mike Baughn will talk about the Smoky Hill Trail Association from noon to 1 p.m. Thursday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. The talk is part of the Food for Thought program, which feature a soup lunch and history program the third Thursday of the next three months. Call the museum at (785) 460-4590 for details.

Emergency medical class set

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services will be offering classes for the emergency medical tech-

nician B certificate, starting with an information session at 7 p.m. Thursday at the EMS garage, 1275 S. Franklin. The first class will be at 7 p.m. next Monday at the garage. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585 or 443-0176.

Dance team fixing soup, chili

The Colby High School dance team plans a soup supper from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday at the Colby Community Building before the Eagles' basketball games. On the menu are chili and cream of potato, homemade chicken-noodle and cream of broccoli soups, beverages, brownies and krispy-rice treats. Donations will be taken for the team.

Church to hold life seminar

A "Life Overflowing" seminar will be presented by DVD with a brown bag lunch on Saturday at Redeeming Love Ministry, 345 N. Franklin.