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Robert Turkington, an intern from England, (above) was moving a combine Tuesday at Jim Deibert's Harvesting. Anthony Oakes, also from England, and Cathal Neary, an Irish intern, were working on equipment in the garage.

Cut budget, help farms, crowd says

By Andy Heintz

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U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran spoke at the Colby Chamber of Commerce today, talking about several issues, including agriculture and energy independence.

The congressmen drew more than 50 people to the meeting room at the Thomas County Office Complex on Range Avenue. Moran said it was by far the biggest crowd he'd seen in Thomas County. He was here for a stop on his annual "listening tour" of the 69-county 1st Congressional District.

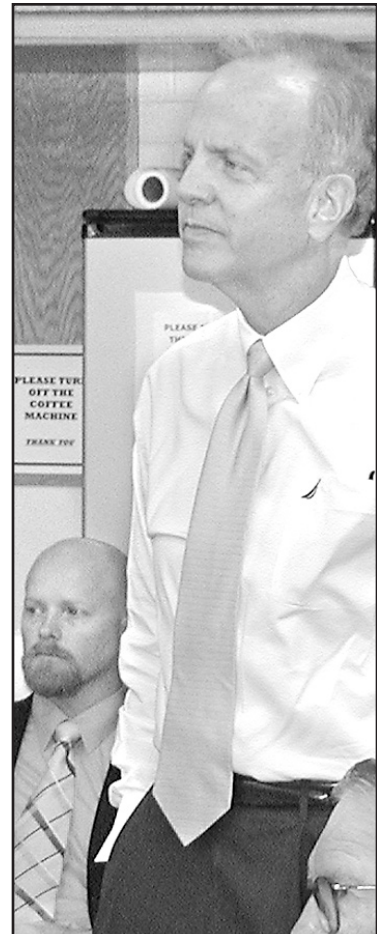
Many were concerned about the 13-figure federal budget deficit. One man said he didn't think politicians understood how much a trillion dollars was.

Colby Community College President Lynn Kreider said he was worried about the overwhelming Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. He said he thought the government needed to be more balanced.

Moran noted that Congress spent the least money was when Bill Clinton was president and the Republicans controlled the House and Senate, because there was a system of checks and balances to keep one party from having too much control.

Mike Schultz, a Brewster stockman and city official, talked to Moran about how American cattle producers had reduced supply while more imports had been brought into the country. Moran said the cattle industry is to the Kansas economy. We need to export more of our cattle into Japan, he said.

Rick Farris, a custom harvester from Edson, asked Moran about a bill to provide a waiver of state length-limit laws for agriculture he had been working with the congressman's staff on. He said harvesters need to move combines and other equipment across state lines. Farris said they'd like to have 81 and a half feet, so they



Rep. Jerry Moran talked at the county office complex today.

could tow a flatbed for a combine and another trailer.

Moran said that is tied up with re-enactment of the transportation bill, and the whole bill is important because transportation is vital to agriculture.

Another man brought up term limits on politicians. Thomas County Commissioner Paul Steele said he opposes term limits. He said he's learned that it takes more than four years to figure out what's going on, so at the end of their first term, many officials are just getting comfortable with their jobs.

Steele told Moran that something had to be done about the gas tax, because as people start driving more energy-efficient cars, road taxes will fall. The money from the fuel tax goes toward rebuild-

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Interns learn U.S. farming on crew here

By Andy Heintz

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People from different cultures and nationalities around the world have been coming together to work right here at the Oasis on the Plains for the past 19 years, running combines and driving trucks for a Colby custom harvester.

Since 1990, Jim Deibert, owner of Jim Deibert's Harvesting, has been involved in an agricultural intern program run by Ohio State University that brings young farmers from foreign countries to America to work for eight months. Deibert said he has taken in students from four con-

tinents, from countries including England, Scotland, Ireland, Zimbabwe, the Czech Republic, Wales, Australia, Switzerland and New Zealand. Flags from the home countries of former students hang from the walls in the back of the garage at Deibert's business.

Deibert's crew this year includes five men from Ireland and two from the England. Deibert said he has had workers from Ireland and Britain who have told him they would have never talked to someone from the other nation if it weren't for the program because of the historical conflicts between the two countries.

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Prairie Museum of Art and History
Chris Griffin, registrar at the Prairie Museum of Art and History, put finishing touches on "Great Legs," a furniture display, ready for an upcoming open house on Sunday, April 26.

Museum to open 'back room' for 50th

By Vera Sloan

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If you've ever wondered what's in the back room at the museum, here's your chance to take a look.

The public is invited for a "behind-the-scenes tour" of the Prairie Museum of Art and History when the Thomas County Historical Society celebrates its 50th anniversary from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 26.

The major function of the society, organized in 1959, is to collect and preserve material that illustrates the history of the area and to maintain a museum that makes it accessible to people here and visitors alike.

The society drove the campaign which raised money to build Pioneer Memorial Library,

which also housed the museum for a while.

The collection soon outgrew that building, however, and the society put together \$750,000 to build a Thomas County museum. That included \$250,000 Olive Garvey gave as seed money, which had grown to \$400,000. The remaining \$350,000 was raised here to build the current museum at 1905 S. Franklin.

The museum houses more than 50,000 images documenting information about all the towns and communities in the area, family photographs and information on agriculture and the culture out here, says Director Sue Taylor. Its resources include indexes to Thomas County births, marriages, obituaries, cemetery records and blueprints of businesses.

More than 17,000 photographs have been scanned and added to a searchable database

program, PastPerfect, she said.

The museum recently received 20 boxes of information about the "Sons & Daughters of the Soddie" from the Ron Thiel estate. The information will be uploaded to a web site, using money from the estate, Taylor said, but that will take several years to complete.

Other projects on the burner are a set of video tapes belonging to Linda Davis-Stephens documenting life on the High Plains, the Vic Oelke collection of interviews with World War II veterans, and the Thomas County Historical Society oral interviews of first- and second-generation settlers.

Come for the society's annual meeting at 2 p.m. preceding the open house, and then stay for tours of the back room and have some birthday cake. For information, call 460-4590.

Briefly

Come to library for lunch, talks

The Pioneer Memorial Library plans book reviews, talks by authors and lunch at noon each day this week for National Library Week. The library plans book reviews each day. A free lunch will be served at noon. (Participants can give a donation if they wish.) Book reviews begin at 12:15 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

City to pick up grass clippings

City crews will begin picking up grass clippings on Monday, April 27. Clippings must be at curbside by 8 a.m. on your regular trash day. They must be in a separate paper can from household trash. Put clippings in the tipper loose, not in plastic bags. For questions, call the Public Works office at 460-4420.

County van is out of service

The Thomas County community van will be un-

available today and Friday due to schedule conflicts. For a ride or information, call 460-2901 or 443-9208. A \$1 per stop donation is requested.

Legion dance open to public

The Colby American Legion will play host for the annual 6th District Convention over the weekend. The public is invited to attend a dance with live music from 9 p.m. to midnight Saturday at the post home on West Fourth Street. Cost is \$5 per person. Call Phil Finley at 460-7836 for information.

School plans scrapbook event

Heartland Christian School is having a "scrapbook extravaganza" from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday. Cost is \$30 for all day and \$15 for half a day, including three meals, eight-foot tables to use, prizes and lots of fun. Call Deena Bandy at (785) 460-6419 to reserve your table.

Mentor program says thanks

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Thomas County plans to hold an ice cream social as a thank-you for volunteers and contributing supporters and to celebrate National Volunteer Week from 7 to 8 p.m. Monday at the Pioneer Memorial Library. Anyone who has volunteered for the program or contributed in any way is welcome. For questions, call Diane Stithem at 460-9125.

Church offers financial talk

Colby Wesleyan Church will offer a televised "Town Hall for Hope" session at 7 p.m. next Thursday at 320 W. Pine, Colby, a nationwide live broadcast with Dave Ramsey on the big screen. Ramsey is a personal money-management expert, a national radio personality and best-selling author of "The Total Money Makeover" and "Financial Peace." For

information, call the church office at 462-8391.

Safe driver program planned

Volunteer instructor Don Keihl will teach the American Association of Retired Persons Driver Safety Program, which can help drivers remain safe and save money on insurance premiums, in Colby. The eight-hour class, using a combination of group discussion and video clips, is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, April 24, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 855 E. Fifth St. Class size is limited to 30; register by calling Dwayne at (785) 460-7555 or Don at (785) 890-6638.



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