



14 pages

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## Board takes another swing at budget cuts

By Kevin Bottrell

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The Colby School Board approved another round of budget cuts Monday, hoping to counter an expected cut in state money for public education without undermining the quality of education students receive.

Superintendent Terrel Harrison said the district already had cut across every department, and the administration has

been working hard on finding ways to cut the budget that won't devalue students' education.

"Overall, we have tried not to hurt academics," Harrison said. "That's our goal."

The money that the district receives from the state depends on enrollment, she said, and is weighted for things such as special education and ethnic demographics. Harrison said the district sees an average enrollment drop of 3 percent each

year.

This year, the state cut its "base" to \$4,400 per student, but the number for next year is not yet known. Harrison said the state Department of Education has recommended that districts make cuts to accommodate an expected 3.8 percent cut in the budget. This amounts to a about \$500,000 for the Colby School District for the 2009-2010 year. However, the Legislature has not yet approved an exact amount for the cut, which, Harrison said,

is part of the problem for school districts.

"One superintendent said it's like a moving target," Harrison said. "I think he's right."

According to a United School Administrators of Kansas survey, 1,292 staff and faculty positions have already been cut across the state.

Harrison said the federal stimulus money that the Colby district has received has not helped much. The district did not get much, she said, and there were many re-

strictions on what it can be used for. For instance, the money cannot be used to pay existing staff.

One thing Harrison said the stimulus money can go toward is special education through the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center, with which the district contracts for special education.

Cuts made at the Monday meeting include:

See "BUDGET," Page 3



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Manchester Pro Shop owner and certified bow technician Sean McDonald demonstrated how to level a bow, so that the arrow is released at the correct angle. The arrow needs to be at a perfect 90 degrees off the string, McDonald said.

## Booming Brewster welcomes new growth

By Vera Sloan

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Not many big towns get to welcome three new business operations to their town in a month, and especially not in one day.

Brewster, population 250, may have qualified as a "boom town" on Thursday, when the Thomas County Area Chamber of Commerce participated in ribbon cuttings to welcome three new businesses to the small, but vibrant rural town. Between 55 and 60 people attended the ribbon cuttings.

A new business on the town's main street,

the Brewster Steak House, 402 Kansas Avenue, opened last month. "We've been busy," said owner Erla McConnell

Patron, Doris Mayer, said "we are just so happy to have a nice restaurant right here in town, and it's just what we needed."

Central Harvest States, 181 Highway 24, a seed, fertilizer and agricultural chemicals outlet was doing business before the facility was formally opened. Rex Jamison, manager, said the company would do over \$3,000,000 in seed sales this year and more than \$1.5 million in chemical

See "BREWSTER," Page 3

## Walk Kansas wraps up with awards reception

By Vera Sloan

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Walk Kansas finished up its annual trek across Kansas activities Wednesday evening, with a recognition reception at the 4-H building.

A total of 62 teams made up of 248 walkers logged 28,180 miles, or 422,700 minutes of exercise.

First place honors went to "In it For Life". Team members are LaRita Schrock, Clair Schrock, Holly Lane and Alice Wolf. They walked a total of 1065 miles.

Second place team was "Werth It," with members Michele Werth, Layton Werth, Wyatt Werth and Marge Ausmus, who walked a total of 976 miles.

"Brewster Fleet Feet" walkers, Kathy Baird, Andrie Baird, Ben Baird and Melissa Baird chalked up 887 miles to capture third place.

Diann Gerstner, Thomas County Family and Consumers Sciences Agent handed out prizes for the teams who had walked the farthest.

The inspiration team, "323 and

still Walking" have been walking and exercising together for 30 years. Their combined age is 323 years. The youngest of the group just turned 72.

Lois O'Brien was the grand prize winner of the drawing, for the Golds Gym Stride Trainer 300. Her team was the Brookside Lane group made up of O'Brien, her husband Dan, daughter, Cosette, and Becky Darling.

"Now keep up all that walking," said Gerstner, "and you'll all be in shape for next year's event."

## Grade school program bounces to a new beat

By Kevin Bottrell

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Can something as simple as bouncing a ball help improve a person's ability to learn? For a group of 26 students at Colby Grade School, the Bal-A-Vis-X program is helping them do just that.

Bal-A-Vis-X, which stands for Balance/Auditory/Vision/Exercises is a national program that involves different rhythmic exercises using balls, bean bags and balance boards to help focus attention, improve teamwork skills and improve coordination.

Tami Brown, one of the program's instructors and team fitness leader at the grade school, said

there are over 300 different exercises, that can be done singly, in pairs or groups. Some are simple, such as dropping and catching two balls, and some are more complicated, such as bouncing three balls and switching one with a partner on every third bounce. Many of the exercises can be done sitting down.

Tossing or bouncing bean bags and balls helps improve visual tracking, the ability of the eye to accurately follow a certain object, rather than jump ahead. According to Brown, this can help improve a student's reading comprehension level by training their eyes not to look ahead and miss words or paragraphs.

Brown said the students are re-

quired to do all the exercises right handed and left handed. All of the exercises are done to a rhythm. The difficulty level increases with each exercise, and some students are at different levels of proficiency.

The program currently includes 26 students from Colby Grade School. Five students from Colby Middle School also come in to help. The group meets four days a week with different instructors. Brown said initially the program was held after school, but was moved to before school.

Brown said the program is not only used for school age children. It has been used successfully with autistic children, disabled adult, and physical therapy patients.

## Making life a just little greener



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

J.C. Carter (left to right), Mickey Miller, Virginia Hopper, Cayla Carter and Carol Raile helped plant flowers in a planter at the Prairie Senior Living Complex. The project, conducted by members of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, is part of the citywide clean up effort. Not pictured are Jim Gaede, Kathleen O'neal, Ralph Hanses, Betty Hansen, Becky Quenzer, Troy Quenzer, John Schmidt and the Cline family.

## Briefly

### Gymnastics meet Saturday

About 95 area students age 3 to 13 will compete in the Tumbleweed Tumblers Gymnastics competition from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at the Community Building. Events will include bars, beam, vault, pommel and floor. For information, call Ashley Haines at 443-1601.

### Legion has band for dance

The Colby American Legion will have a dance for the public from 9 p.m. to midnight Saturday at the post hall, 1850 W. Fourth St. The Jacksons will be playing. Cost is \$5 per person at the door. There will be refreshments. For information, call Jim Griffin at (785) 269-7074.

### Heartland play this week

Heartland Christian School's spring production, "Real Evidence," will be at 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the school. Donations will be accepted to help

with drama class expenses. For information, call Tiffany Shaw at 460-6419.

### Carriers to collect food

Colby letter carriers will be collecting nonperishable food donations along their routes Saturday for delivery to the Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank in the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" drive. The National Association of Letter Carriers, the carriers' union, says this is the largest one-day food drive in the nation. Donations should be placed by the mailbox before mail is delivered. For questions, call Sharlene Scheck, 462-7904.

### Center offers free physicals

Colby Medical and Surgical Center will be offering free sports physicals on Monday from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Colby High School students will be accepted at 5:30, Colby Middle School students at 6 and Brewster and Golden Plains students at 6:30. The center is located

at 175 S. Range. For information call 462-3332.

### Girls scouts to collect flags

Members of Troop 165 of the Colby Girl Scouts, led by Kathy Kersenbrock Ostmeyer, are collecting old U.S. flags to conduct an honorable disposal. People can put worn flags in a box in the lobby of the Pioneer Public Library from Monday through Wednesday, May 20, she said. "Flags should be disposed of if they appear to be excessively dirty, faded, repaired to a point where they are no longer recognizable, or in general disrepair," she said. For information, call Ostmeyer at 460-3298.

### College band concert Tuesday

The Colby Community College instrumental music department's Spring Concert will be at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center, featuring the Concert Band and Jazz Band directed by Tony Schroer. Everyone is invited to this

free performance. For information, call Schroer at 460-5519.

### Ball league sign-up due soon

The deadline to sign up for all kids' summer ball leagues - T-ball, softball and baseball - is Wednesday. Registration for adult softball leagues is due by Friday, May 22, and swim lesson sign up is due by Wednesday, May 27. Girls summer-league basketball registration is due Wednesday, May 20. Players and parents should doublecheck their information on summer activities to get kids and teams signed up on time, and to pay close attention to late registration policies. For questions, call the Colby Recreation Department at 460-4440.

