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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Many different events to enjoy at the Free Fair

Proving there's more fun to be had at the fair than just showing livestock, Mallory Branham (above), 5, got a distance of 20 feet, four inches at the Pedal Tractor Pull Thursday. Parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters all gathered round to watch. The top three scorers in each age group earned a trip to the state fair. The Thomas County Home-Owned Carnival is another big attraction. People lined up at Farmers & Merchants Bank on Tuesday morning (right) to try to be among the first 100, who each received half-price wristbands for an entire night of rides at the at the fairgrounds. The carnival continues at 7 to 11 p.m. every night through Saturday. For more photos from the Thomas County Free Fair, see Page 5.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Fire station to increase property taxes

By Andy Heintz

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Colby property owners will have their city taxes raised by about \$100 this year.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the reason for the increase is because the city begins paying off the costs of the new fire station this year. The \$2.7 million fire station will be paid back in 20 years, she said.

The tax levy last year was about \$1.2 million, said Armstrong. This

year it's about \$1.6 million.

Armstrong gave an example of how this would effect property owner. Using a house that is worth about \$100,000, a property owner would pay about \$375 in city taxes on the property last year. This year, she said, these taxes would be about \$475.

Taxes for Colby citizens will probably not go down until the fire station is paid off, said Armstrong. She said if the sales tax or interest rate increase it could bring a slight reduction in the city tax.

New crime bill comes into effect

Governor Mark Parkinson held a ceremonial signing Monday in Lawrence of a wide-reaching crime bill approved by the state legislature earlier this year. He was joined by Attorney General Steve Six and House Minority Leader Paul Davis of Lawrence.

"Kansas businesses and families count on their local law enforcement to keep them safe and secure," said Parkinson. "With the Omnibus Crime Bill, law enforcement is given the additional tools they need to let Kansans rest

easier. I thank the Legislature and the Attorney General for working together to pass this legislation."

One provision of the new law allows a person to be charged with fleeing an officer even if the officer is in an unmarked car. According to a release from Press Secretary Beth Martino, this grew out of a case in Lawrence where a sex offender had attempted to lure a teenager into his car and then drove off, pursued by an officer in

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Brewster student returns from Ireland

By Vera Sloan

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Not everyone is brave enough to set off to live in another culture on the other side of the globe, especially when they're only 16 years old.

Ashton Domsch, a senior at Brewster High School this year, is quite a different story.

She arrived home on June 13 after spending 10 months in an Education First program, as

an exchange student in Monaghan Collegiate School in Monaghan, Ireland.

Domsch said the decision to go to Ireland happened quite by accident, as she was actually looking on the Internet to see how she might find a way to go to Australia.

"The Education First program, just sort of popped up, so I investigated it, and got accepted," she said.

She said she spent the whole summer raising funds by making and selling jewelry, quilts and food at the city-wide garage sale and to

hungry harvesters.

She left for Ireland on Aug. 22, 2008, and returned home on June 13, 2009, with a different appreciation of home. She said holiday time was especially tough, because she had time on her hands, and thought about home a lot.

Domsch said her host family was an older couple, who took in students during the school year from other countries in Europe. She said her host dad worked in granite sales, and her

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Panel details who should get swine flu vaccine first

ATLANTA (AP) — Pregnant women, health care workers and children six months and older should be placed at the front of the line for swine flu vaccinations this fall, a government panel recommended Wednesday.

The panel also said those first vaccinated should include parents and other caregivers of infants; non-elderly adults who have high-risk medical conditions; and young adults ages 19 to 24.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted to

set vaccination priorities for those groups Wednesday during a meeting in Atlanta. The panel's recommendations are usually adopted by federal health officials.

The recommendations are designed to address potential limits in vaccine availability this fall if there is heavy demand and limited supplies.

The government estimates that about 120 million swine flu vaccine doses will be available to the public by late October. Roughly 160 million people are in the pri-

ority groups considered most vulnerable to infection or most at risk for severe disease.

Although the number recommended to get doses exceeds the projected supply, health officials don't think everyone will run out and get vaccinated. Traditionally, less than half of the people recommended to get seasonal flu shots get them. Only about 15 percent of pregnant women get seasonal flu vaccinations.

If there is ample vaccine, vaccinations also would be recom-

mended for all non-elderly adults, the panel also voted. And if there's still plenty of vaccine, the swine flu shots and spray doses should be offered to people 65 and older. Fewer illnesses have been reported in the elderly, who appear to have higher levels of immunity to the virus, health experts say.

However, the elderly should be pushed to get shots against seasonal flu, which is a significant health risk to older adults.

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Last picnic of the year



VERA SLOAN/ColbyFreePress

Despite threatening skies and a few rain drops, the father-daughter combo of Larry and Taylor McLemore of Goodland wound up this year's Picnic in the Park events. McLemore is the Collision Repair instructor at Northwest Technical College in Goodland, and Taylor, 18 will be a freshman at Kansas State University this fall. The weather resulted in a smaller crowd than usual.

Briefly

District to hold public meetings

Colby School District Superintendent Terrell Harrison and Business Manager Jo DeYoung will conduct two public meetings at 7 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday in the Colby High School auditorium. The purpose of these meetings is to allow the public the opportunity to hear about the district's budget status and cuts that have been made. The public will also be able to ask questions. For information, call the administration office at 460-5000.

Food distribution Monday

Department of Agriculture Commodity Distribution will be 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program Office in the Senior Progress Center. Eligible persons may receive the commodities, which include juice, beef stew, peas, potato flakes, pork, and peaches, according to income guidelines. Distribution is on a first-come first-served basis and

participants are asked not to arrive at the office more than one half hour in advance. For information, contact the office at 462-6744.

College to hold budget hearing

The Board of Trustees of Colby Community College will hold a special meeting at 5 p.m. on Monday in the board room of Thomas Hall. The meeting will be a public hearing of the 2009-2010 budget. For information, call the college at 462-3984.

School registration Aug. 6 and 7

K-12 returning student enrollment will be from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. next Thursday at Colby High School. New student enrollment will be at 8 a.m. Friday, Aug. 7 in each school. The first day of athletic practices will be on Aug. 17, with time to be determined by the coaches. The first day of classes will be Aug. 20. The district also has class of 2008 diplomas available for

pick-up at the administration office. For information, call the district at 460-5000.

Equivalency classes offered

The Adult Education Department at Colby Community College is offering free General Education Development (GED) preparation classes beginning Aug. 17. The diploma is widely recognized as credible and valuable by employers and colleges. One in 20 students enrolled in post-secondary education nationwide holds a general education diploma. Class times are flexible. To enroll call Nance Munderloh at (785) 460-4663.

Salvation Army has fans

The Thomas County Salvation Army representative has box fans available for anyone who needs them. Call Sue at 460-4842 if you need a fan.

Dance planned for Friday

There will be a singles and married couples dance Friday, Aug. 7, in the Community Building from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. This is a free dance for Janet Phelps' 75th birthday. Please, no gifts. For information please call Lue Duffey (785) 855-2341.

Sacred Heart enrollment Aug. 10

Sacred Heart School will hold enrollment for all students in preschool through fifth grade from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 10, at the school, which is located at 1150 West Sixth St. For information, call the school at 460-2813.

