



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

A large hole was left in the south side of the High Plains Mental Health Center Building after it was rammed by a van Thursday afternoon.

## Van hits side of health center

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press  
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Employees at High Plains Mental Health Center received a bit of a shock Thursday afternoon when a van crashed into the side of their building.

Colby Police Officer Jerad Lang said his preliminary investigation indicated that Clarence Rudell of Oakley, 83 years old, ran his 1992 Chevrolet van into the center's south wall at about 1:30 p.m. creating a large hole in the brick building facing the parking lot.

Rudell's wife Ellen, 63, was also in the car. She was taken by ambulance to Citizens Medical Center.

Lang said Rudell's foot had slipped off the brake and, while trying to get his foot back on the brake, he accidentally stepped on the accelerator and crashed into the building.

The building will be closed until Monday.

The van was towed by Vans Body and Frame at 2 p.m. Secretary Ashly Guy said the front bumper and fender on the car were pushed back.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Clarence Rudell's 1992 Chevrolet van was towed by Vans Body and Frame after the accident. Ashly Guy, secretary at Van's, said the van suffered minor damage.

## Groups warn of more budget cuts

In a release Wednesday, several Kansas organizations representing public school boards, educators and parents said state funding cuts are eroding the state's high quality education system, and more cuts may be on the way.

"If districts have to absorb the cuts that are now possible, there will be fewer school districts, fewer school buildings, fewer educators, and fewer programs and services for students," said Mark Tallman, assistant executive director/advocacy for the Kansas Association of School Boards. "It will harm student achievement, economic development and the quality of life across Kansas."

After budget cuts approved by the 2009 Legislature and further allotments by Governor Mark Parkinson, school districts lost \$136.5 million for general operations, which reduced the base budget per pupil from \$4,433 to \$4,218, a reduction of 4.8 percent. The Legislature also eliminated \$2 million in state aid for teacher training and incentives.

The Legislature eliminated \$25.6 million in match-

ing money for capital outlay funds, which reduced funding for districts with lower property values. Finally, the Legislature cut \$4 million from special education funding. Special education services are mandated by state and federal law, and districts face increasing demands for students with autism, dyslexia and emotional and behavioral needs.

School leaders fear that significant school budget cuts are not over. The Kansas Legislative Research Department currently estimates the state general fund will face a \$530 million deficit next year, fiscal year 2011. If just half of that were applied to K-12 education, it would double the amount of cuts imposed in the current year, and equal a base budget per pupil reduction of \$417 or nearly 10 percent.

In addition, federal stimulus funds expire the following year, 2012. Kansas used \$138.7 million from federal stabilization funds for general state aid and \$57.7 million for special education aid this year,

See "BUDGET," Page 3

## Briefly

### Dance team to sell food at game

The Colby High School Dance Team will have a hot dog and nacho bar during the football scrimmage tonight at Dennen Field. All money earned will be used to help send the girls to perform during half time at the Liberty Bowl in Memphis, Tenn. on Jan. 2. For information, call coach Denita Rodgers at 460-5300.

### Firefighters to hold charity drive

The Colby Fire Department will participate in the national Boot Drop charity fund raiser from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. Firefighters will be accepting donations for muscular dystrophy at Dillons, Walmart and at the intersection of Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue. For information, call the department at 460-4454.

### Library to hold book review lunch

The Pioneer Memorial Library program "Booked

for Lunch," will be at noon Wednesday at the library. A free lunch will be served and donations will be accepted. At 12:15, Linda Goossen will review the book "Extreme Measures: A Thriller," by Vince Flynn. For information, call 460-4470.

### Riders to hold event in Colby

The Honor Run, a charitable motorcycle ride across the United States, will stay overnight in Colby Monday. There will be free activities in Fike Park, with food, music and other entertainment beginning at 6 p.m. when the riders arrive and speeches beginning at 7 p.m. Donations will be accepted for the Fisher House Foundation charity. For information, call Jim Oliver at 462-0040.

### Offices closed for Labor Day

The Thomas County courthouse and office complex will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7, for Labor

# County officials attend flu summit

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press  
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

The H1N1 flu virus, commonly known as the swine flu, is becoming a major concern for federal and state governments with the approach of the fall flu season. About 700 officials, emergency coordinators and medical personnel gathered in locations around the state for a swine flu summit on Monday.

Kasiah Rothchild, finance administrator for the Thomas County Health Department attended the meeting in Hays, held at Fort Hays State University. The speakers, she said, were in Topeka and broadcast on big screen for everyone in the satellite locations. Several other county officials attended the summit, including County Commissioners Byron Sowers and Ken Christiansen.

Rothchild said that the summit was not necessarily about giving out new information, but about keeping people at every level up-to-date on the government's plans for possible outbreaks and dissemination of the vaccine.

Gov. Mark Parkinson spoke at the summit, saying the government is concentrating on how the virus will affect the country in the fall, when seasonal flu viruses usually get more severe, and how

## Seasonal flu clinics schedule

The Thomas County Health Department will be holding Walk-in Flu Clinics throughout September:

Wednesday, Sept. 2	1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 9	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 10	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 14	9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Tuesday, Sept. 15	9 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 16	1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Thursday, Sept. 17	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Further clinic dates and H1N1 vaccination dates have not yet been announced. Clinic dates and times for Doc's on Call and Family Center for Health Care have also not yet been announced. The cost of the shot will be \$25. Consent forms are available at the Thomas County Courthouse, the health department office, Dillon's and Walmart. For information, call the department at 460-4596.

to plan for the eventual release of the swine flu vaccine.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius also spoke at the summit. She said her department has been working with various computer models to see how many people in the United States could become infected over the next several years. One model predicted as many as 1.1 million people infected in Kansas in the next two years.

Sebelius also updated the audience on the swine flu vaccine, which is currently in development. The vaccine will probably be available in October.

Rothchild said the audience was

told there would be about a million doses of the vaccine distributed to Kansas before the end of the year. The priorities for the vaccine will be pregnant women and children ages six months to four years.

Rothchild said one of the things her department as well as the state health department are concentrating on is deciding how to get the vaccine out to the public. Some possibilities include a drive-through clinic, where people would drive up to health department personnel and receive the shot without having to leave their cars. The department may also

See "SUMMIT," Page 3

## Governor promotes efficiency program

WICHITA (AP) — Gov. Mark Parkinson is calling attention to efforts in Kansas to make homes more energy-efficient with \$56 million in federal stimulus dollars.

The money will be distributed over three years to nonprofit groups that provide weatherization and other services.

The effort targets elderly and disabled Kansans as well as households earning less than twice the fed-

eral poverty level, or about \$44,000 for a family of four. Each family is eligible for up to \$6,500 worth of help.

Parkinson was on hand in Wichita on Tuesday as resident Bernice Jones received a new furnace, air conditioning unit and refrigerator.

The governor also joined another Wichita resident, Renee McAnarney, for an energy audit of her home.

## Installing a brand new sign



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Hans Krohn and Pastor Steve Todd from College Drive Assembly of God Church were busy getting the sign in place for The Rock on Wednesday. The Rock is a Christian youth center in South Wind Plaza. They will host their fourth annual Back to School Bash for high school students from 5-8 p.m. on Saturday, and for middle school students from 5-8 on Sunday. All youth are encouraged to join in the games, fun and food this weekend.

Day. The county transportation van will not run that day. The Thomas County landfill will close at noon on Sept. 5 and reopen Sept. 8. For information, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at 460-4500.

### Church to hold kid's Bible club

The Awana program, an interdenominational children's Bible club, will be meeting at 7 p.m. each Wednesday starting Sept. 16 at the Colby Berean Church. Colby-area children age three through fifth grade are invited to attend. For information, call James Claassen at (785) 694-1677 or the church at 460-2763.

### Western artist's work at museum

The work of nationally known artist Keith Avery is on display at the Prairie Museum through next Monday. Avery's realistic items include detailed paintings and drawings of horses and cowboy life. The

exhibition is open during regular hours. Call (785) 460-4590 for information.

### Sheriff can check vehicles

The Thomas County Sheriff's Office is now checking vehicle identification numbers for cars, light trucks and motorcycles. The office is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call Sheriff Rod Taylor for information or to set up an appointment at 460-4570. Taylor said trailer inspections still have to go through the Kansas Highway Patrol office in Hays. The fee is \$10.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3