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Colby kids stay ahead in state tests

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Colby Public School students improved their scores on state standardized tests last year and met the state's adequate yearly progress goals in every subject and subgroup for the 2008-2009 school year.

The Kansas Department of Education has released the state and district level adequate yearly progress scores early this month. These are a measure of how well students are performing in different subjects at the state, district and school level.

The tests are administered under the No Child Left Behind Act, which requires the states to test students each year. Schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress are put into "improvement programs" aimed at raising their scores or allowing students to find other schools to attend. After five years without improvement, a school can be shut down completely.

Colby School District students have consistently met yearly progress standards, said Diana Wieland, district curriculum director.

In the 2007-2008 school year, 85.1 percent of students were proficient in reading and 79.6 percent in math. Last year, the students

continued to improve, with 90.6 percent proficient in reading and 86.1 percent in math. The district's "subgroups," including students with disabilities and free and reduced lunch, have also been at or above yearly progress goals.

"Our staff, as well as students, deserve a pat on the back," Wieland said. "They've all been working really hard."

One problem area, until this year, has been the students with disabilities subgroup. In 2006-2007, 52 percent of students with disabilities were proficient in reading. In 2007-2008, that number jumped to 70 percent, still below the goal. In those two years, 42.8 and 51.3 percent of students with disabilities were proficient in math.

However, for the last school year, 82.6 percent of students with disabilities were proficient in reading, and 77 percent were proficient in math, both of which met the yearly progress goals. Wieland said the increase could be due to any number of factors, adding that the teachers have been working hard to accommodate learning disabilities, such as if a student needs test questions to be read to them.

"If we're finding that a student is struggling in reading," she said, "but is being assessed (higher) in

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Got the Homecoming spirit



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Colby High School students (from left) Christian Wilson, Jordan Voss, Garrett Rogers and Andrew Flanagin went above and beyond for Saturday Morning Entertainment dress-up day on Tuesday. The four dressed as the Teenage Mutant Ninja

Turtles. The dress-up day was part of the week-long Homecoming celebration, culminating with a parade, pep rally and football game against Phillipsburg on Friday and the annual Homecoming Dance on Saturday.

Former inmate guns down Segwick County Sheriff's deputy

WICHITA (AP) — A former prison inmate who killed a Kansas sheriff's deputy had no known ties to him and apparently just waited to ambush any officer who responded to his bogus 911 theft call, authorities said Tuesday.

Deputy Brian S. Etheridge, 26, was shot twice Monday after he went to a southeast Wichita home on a routine call.

Sedgwick County Sheriff Robert Hinshaw identified the shooter as former prison inmate Richard L. Lyons. The 27-year-

old suspect was killed in a shootout with officers several hours after Etheridge was wounded.

Hinshaw said one of the focuses of the ongoing investigation is finding a motive, but acknowledged officials may never know exactly what that was.

Lyons called to report a theft, then hid in the backyard of a house with a rifle and a small cache of ammunition, the sheriff said.

"It could have been any law enforce-

ment officer. ... This was just a call to 911 to get any officer to respond," Hinshaw said.

The deputy followed standard procedure when he arrived and no one came to the front door, Hinshaw said. The officer called dispatch over the radio asking for a contact number and then walked to the rear of the house, where the suspect was hiding, armed with a 30-30 lever action rifle.

Lyons opened fire, shooting the deputy

in the back. The shot penetrated the deputy's body armor. Investigators believe Lyons walked up to the deputy and, when the rifle malfunctioned, took the deputy's Glock 17 pistol and shot him, Hinshaw said.

The shooting sparked a massive manhunt.

Authorities mistakenly believed he was holed up in a residence and fired two rounds of tear gas into the home. They were about to set off explosives to blow

open the front door when the suspect was spotted, said Wichita Police Chief Norman Williams.

Officials from the Kansas Highway Patrol and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were searching a nearby field in a Humvee when they saw Lyons hiding in a tree line. The suspect ran into the field firing the deputy's pistol at the agents, who returned fire. The

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Corn isn't the only harvest getting into gear in northwest Kansas. Combines, trucks and a crew from Jim Deibert Harvesting were

out cutting this field of soybeans about two miles north of Colby on Tuesday.

Soybeans, sorghum almost ready for harvest

By Kevin Bottrell
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It's getting to be harvest time, and not just for corn.

While there are only a few soybean fields in Thomas County, that harvest is underway. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reporting that, as of last week, the Kansas soybean harvest is 3 percent complete, but the quality is more than 77 percent fair or excellent.

Grain sorghum, or milo, is a major crop here, and Thomas County Extension Agent Clint Milliman predicts that the harvest will begin within a few weeks.

Sorghum grown in this area is used mainly for livestock feed, and often grown in rotation with

wheat. The Agriculture Department is reporting that, as of last week, the sorghum in northwest Kansas was 85 percent colored but only 3 percent mature. The coloring is ahead of where the crop was last year, but behind the five-year average.

Sorghum comes in many colors, from dark red to bronze and even white, depending on the variety. Milliman said that when the head turns from green to one of the colors is an indicator of how far along the plant is.

"When they start to turn colors, it means they're maturing," he said.

Milliman said last year, farmers were worried that the sorghum

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Briefly

Hospital to break ground on Friday

Citizens Medical Center will hold a ground-breaking ceremony for Phase 1 of the expansion to the main hospital building at 10 a.m. Friday. The expansion, on the northwest side, will include a new heating and air conditioning system and an enlarged physical therapy area. For information, call Tama Unger at 460-1214.

Dance team to give away ball

The Colby High School Dance Team will be selling tickets for a drawing at half time of the Homecoming game Friday to raise money for the girls' trip to the Liberty Bowl. The prize will be a football signed by the members of this year's team. For information, call Donita Rodgers at 462-1325.

Students offer free massage

The Therapeutic Massage Department at Colby

Community College plans public clinics on Wednesdays beginning tonight in Thomas Hall, room 402. Cubicle massages are 30 minutes and chair massages 15, starting at 6:15 p.m., 7 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Massages will focus on arms and shoulders tonight, arms, shoulders and back next Wednesday; neck, shoulders and chest on Oct. 14; feet on Oct. 21; and legs and feet on Oct. 28. Donations will be accepted. To make an appointment or for information, contact Director Debra Waites at (785) 460-5427 or e-mail debra.waites@colbycc.edu.

Foundation to meet Monday

The Thomas County Community Foundation will hold its annual meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday at the City Limits Convention Center. The speaker will be Michelle Cummings, founder of the Colorado-based Training Wheels, an organization that puts on community development talks and

workshops. For information, call Executive Director Melinda Olson at 460-9152.

Food offered at senior center

U.S. Department of Agriculture commodity distribution will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Any eligible person can get these commodities, which will include peanut butter, vegetable soup, canned chicken, juice, mixed fruit, egg mix and peanuts. They will be distributed according to income guidelines on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are asked to bring a sack or box. For information, call the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program office at 462-6744.

Medical class to form next week

An information meeting for Emergency Medical Technician B classes will be at 6 p.m. next Wednes-

day at the Thomas County Ambulance Building. Classes begin Tuesday, Oct. 13. For information or to sign up, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585 or 443-0176.

Kiwanis plans pancake feed

The Colby Kiwanis Club will hold a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 10, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall at 220 N. Lake Ave. The cost will be \$4 per person for all-you-can-eat pancakes. Tickets are available from any Kiwanis member. For information, call Kenton Krehbiel at 462-7904.



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