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MELINDA OLSEN/Thomas County Community Foundation

Shelly Mosier and other "elves" helped out at Santa's Workshop, sponsored by the Thomas County Community Foundation's. This year, the workshop will be open from 9 to 11:30

a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, providing a place for kids to shop for their family members. The gifts will cost up to \$4 each, and elves will help kids pick and wrap them.

School board trying to stay ahead of cuts

By Kevin Bottrell
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Faced with another round of state budget cuts, the Colby School Board is hoping to stay out in front on the issue.

At a board meeting Monday meeting, Superintendent Terrell Harrison said she had put together a sheet of talking points for the board members to use when talking to people about the budget cuts.

All told, the district has lost about \$600,000 in state money for the current school year. With the state facing yet another revenue shortfall, Gov. Mark Parkinson has already announced that he would be making more cuts before the legislative session in January. According to the Associated Press, Parkinson will be announcing next week the exact breakdown of \$260 million in proposed cuts and adjustments.

got is that about \$350 will be cut from base state aid, which would cost the district at least another \$360,000. Part of the problem, she said, is that enrollment and the number of free-lunch students are up across Kansas, which means the state has been paying out more in base aid.

The Colby district, she said, will be in a better financial position than some because during the budgeting process last summer, they budgeted for a 4 percent decrease in students and therefore a 4 percent decrease in base money coming in from the state. However, the district only saw about a 1 percent decrease in enrollment. The district expected to have less money, and so made up the budget to use less.

"Our cut's not going to hurt as much," Harrison said.

The cuts will hurt, though, as many districts are finding out around Kansas. Some are taking adjustments.

Harrison said the estimate she

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Foundation has the perfect gifts

By Andy Heintz
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The Thomas County Community Foundation is encouraging people to embrace the spirit of giving by sending a Holiday Giving Card to a family member, teacher or friend, while donating what you might spend on another gift to funds run through the foundation.

Melinda Olson, executive director of the foundation, said you can also send an unrestricted donation to the foundation if you want to. She said you can buy Holiday Giving Cards by going to the home page on the group's website, thomascountycommunityfoundation.com, and clicking on the link, "Making a List, Checking it Twice." The link will be next to the image of a white Christmas present with a red bow.

The link allows access to another link that gives you access to a donor form and two other links that will allow you to look at all the funds the foundation supports so you can

decided which one you want to give to. The donor form link "reads click here for the personalized holiday greeting form card" and the two other links are "click here to view a list of TCCF funds" and "favorite fund at Thomas County Community Foundation."

You can print, fill out and mail your form along with a check to the foundation at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 South Range Ave. The check can be for whatever amount you want to give, Olsen said, and it will go to the cause you select. The foundation will send a card to the person you selected.

The form you fill out includes several steps, including your name and address, and then the fund you want to support. The funds are listed under 12 categories, including 4-H, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Arts and Education, Children and Youth, Historical Society/Prairie Museum, Hospice, Leadership Thomas County, Multi-purpose, Senior Citizens or Various Community Needs and Projects.

If you choose to support the Public Schools

Education Fund listed under the Arts and Education category, for instance, you also must circle one of the subcategories under the Public Schools Education Fund that you want the money to go for. These include Agriculture Education, Athletics, Fine Arts (music and arts) and Teacher Mini-Grants.

The third step requires you to list the person or persons you want to send the card to, their address and your relationship with them.

Olson said the foundation will be doing Santa's Workshop again this year, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, at the office complex. She said the workshop allows kids to go Christmas shopping for their family members and friends with one of the "elves" at the complex. The kids can buy up to four \$4 gifts, she said.

The items have been donated by community members. Olson said several elves will be available to make sure each child will have someone to help them pick out and wrap gifts. The money will go to charities in Thomas County.

A holiday star



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

The city put up this artificial Christmas tree at the Colby Visitors Center last week, but workers at the center said there's some question as to whether all of the lights will work. In past years, apparently, they've had trouble with getting all the lights to shine at once, but the tree has been rewired this year and the city hopes to have all the lights on at once.

Colby student first to win K-State award

By Vera Sloan
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A Colby student and her project partner have become the first winners of the David and Virginia Braun Innovation Award at Kansas State University.

Elaine Lamm, a senior in civil engineering, and Kait Howard of Wichita, received the award as winners in the College of Engineering's open class display during the All-University



Elaine Lamm

Open House, for the 2009 fall semester.

The Brauns, who live in St. Paul, Minn., gave the college \$35,000 to increase student awareness of the patent process and to enhance their ability to market and promote ideas.

Braun, who earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from K-State in 1967, was an inventor for the 3M Company before he retired.

The girls' display replicated

part of a water purification system, Lamm said, using principles of environmental engineering.

The pair created a filtration device containing three layers of gravel, sand and charcoal. The gravel filters the largest particles, sand filters out smaller particles and grows a bacterial layer that eats other bacteria and viruses, and activated charcoal infused with oxygen improves flavor by absorbing contaminants.

The bigger part of the picture is that many people in the world consider clean water a luxury. Lamm and Howard, however, said

they consider clean water a basic human right.

"All our hard work has truly paid off," Lamm said, "and being recognized and able to share this information with everyone is really special. I am proud to represent the Department of Civil Engineering with this honor."

Braun said that hearing a project aimed at providing abundant safe water was gratifying to him and his wife, adding that they sent congratulations to the winners.

Elaine is the daughter of Freddie and Donna Lamm of Colby.

Briefly

Food bank needs donations

Genesis-Thomas County food bank needs nonperishable items for its Christmas Food Basket project. Drop them off at the office, 350 S. Range, Suite 13, between 10 a.m. and noon and 1 and 4 p.m. Wednesdays, or at Leroy's Printing, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, First Presbyterian Church, Colby United Methodist Church or Trinity Lutheran Church. For information, call the office at 460-7930.

German heritage at museum

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will sponsor a talk by German language and literature professor William Keel from the University of Kansas at noon Thursday. Keel will speak about German heritage in Kansas as part of the "Food for Thought" lecture series every third Thursday at the museum through March. A light soup lunch will be served. For

information, call the museum at 460-4590.

Red Cross blood drive Thursday

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Thursday in the Colby Community College Student Union. To schedule an appointment or for information, call the college Health Sciences department at 460-4797 or the Red Cross at (800) 448-3543.

Study to explain 'Messiah'

The Colby First Presbyterian Church will hold a four-part Bible study of George Handel's "Messiah" beginning at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at the church and continuing Dec. 3, 10 and 17. The cost will be \$10 for the study book. The study will cover the Biblical passages behind four of the choruses in the Advent portion of the "Messiah," said Pastor Carol Rahn.

Call the church office at 462-6342 by next Monday to sign up.

Alliance to offer holiday service

The Thomas County Ministerial Alliance will sponsor a Community Thanksgiving Service at 6 p.m. Sunday in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College. Ministers and musicians from area churches will team up for the event. Donations will be accepted to help with programs the alliance operates throughout the year. For information, call Jarrod Spencer at 443-2403.

Legion seeks deployed soldiers

The Colby American Legion Auxiliary is looking for soldiers deployed overseas to send holiday "care packages" to. If you have a family member or friend serving overseas, send information on where

the auxiliary can send them a care package to Megan Quenzer at nmquenzer@st-tel.net or 443-3611 or Abby Barnett at abbyjo_82@yahoo.com or 694-1626 by Saturday. The auxiliary is accepting donations for things to go in the packages until Dec. 6. For information, call Quenzer or Barnett.

Get your Christmas decorations

The Colby United Methodist Church is having a Christmas decorations flea market from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday in the church fellowship hall. Decorations, greenery and other Christmas items will be available. For information, call the office at 460-2761.

