



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

## Reptile wrangler thrills Colby seniors

Ken Henderson (above) gave one of his alligators a quick smooch Monday as he showed the reptile to Ardith Boersma, a resident at Fairview Estates, and Administrator Gary Stewart. Henderson, who says he lives in North Pole, Alaska, brought another, smaller alligator and a tortoise to visit Fairview Estates. Boersma (right) was particularly taken with the Brazilian red-footed tortoise (right) asking it, "How do you like it in Kansas?" The animals were just a few from Henderson's truckload, which he calls his petting zoo. Besides two 'gators and the tortoise, he was hauling a rooster, two iguanas, a South American toad, two more tortoises, two turtles and three dogs. Henderson said he has raised or tamed all of his animals.



## Governor slashes state budget again

By Kevin Bottrell  
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conference Monday. "Unfortunately, we are now to the point of potentially making crippling cuts to state services."

An apologetic Gov. Mark Parkinson cut \$258.9 million from the state budget Monday in what observers called a sweeping, unprecedented and "potentially crippling" move.

In Colby, school officials said this round of cuts would hurt, and a plan to close 18 National Guard armories could affect the unit here.

"It's very serious," said Superintendent Terrell Harrison.

District Business Manager Jo DeYoung said the state will make the cuts by taking \$206 per student off base state aid. The district was to get \$4,218 per student this year, and with the new cut, it will be getting \$4,012. DeYoung said that last year, the district got \$4,433 per student in base state aid, the amount on which the entire budget is figured.

The \$36 million cut from the state boils down to a loss of \$291,099 for the Colby District, DeYoung said. Harrison said that more cuts will probably be coming when the Legislature meets in January.

"To the recipients of funds who are hurt by this, I am sincerely sorry," Parkinson said at a news

Parkinson said he was responding to new, lower revenue estimates that put the state budget, already cut several times this year, in the hole by about \$260 million for the current fiscal year.

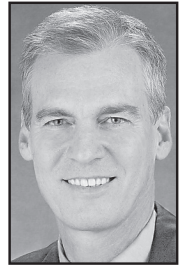
Much of the focus this year has been the Legislature's and governor's cuts to public schools, though they were far smaller than those to other programs. In this round, education will lose by another \$36 million. The governor said the state couldn't afford a \$155.8 million budget increase suggested because of higher enrollment and property tax revenue.

Parkinson also reduced supplemental money for schools by \$85.9 million, but said he use federal stimulus money to compensate. The money had been earmarked for the 2011 budget, he said, but states have the discretion to use it at any time.

Other cuts to the state budget include:

- Closing 18 armories. Kansas Adjutant General Tod Bunting said Wednesday that the specific armories will be announced next

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Gov. Parkinson

## Santa City grew from humble start to polished event

By Vera Sloan  
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The beginnings of Santa City seems to be a mystery as far as the dates go, but the consensus is that the annual Christmas display got its start when some of the downtown Colby merchants put their heads together to do something that would excite the kids.

"Barry Hiatt was on some kind of a committee," said Julie Adolph, former owner of Adolph Interiors, "and he asked me if I would be in favor of doing something for the kids, so I said sure."

"We put an ad in the paper asking for old Christmas decorations, and my gosh, you should have seen all the stuff people dropped off! We sorted through it, and it was so much fun."

"We got people involved, and we decorated the old Lyric Theater. It all came together, and it turned out just beautiful."

"I remember that little octagon-shaped hole in the wall that all the little kids could crawl through, and how much fun they all had. This all started in the very late 1970s."

An overview of Santa City in an article from a 1995 edition of the *Colby Free Press* reported,



VERA SLOAN/ColbyFreePress

A display of "Here We Go a Caroling" carolers in Santa City, a gift from the Dave Jennings family, can be seen nestled among the trees across from Santa's chair at the popular holiday site in Fike Park.

"The project became so popular that the Colby Area Chamber of Commerce decided to seek a permanent and easily accessible location where the magic of Christmas

could expand and grow year by year."

The Scout Hut at Fike Park seemed a likely place near downtown, and the Scouts were willing

to let the merchants use the building.

So in 1979, the hut became the permanent home for Santa City, which is celebrating its 30th birth-



COLBY/THOMAS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
Santa City as it was in the early 1980s. The display has come a long way since then, taking on a new look each year to attract kids and adults alike.

day this Christmas season.

Over that time, Retired Senior Volunteer Program workers have been baking and decorating 3,000 cookies every December just for visitors to Santa City, said Laura Withington, program director. You do the math, but that's a lot of cookies!

Looking back even further, there's probably more than a few Colby residents who remember when years ago, around Thanks-

giving time, a cute little wooden structure that sort of resembled an outhouse was moved into town and placed on the vacant lot just north of the old Colby Super Market, on South Franklin where TNT Auction is now, to await the start of the Christmas season.

The little structure's meager furnishings included one bare light bulb and one fairly sturdy chair

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## Briefly

### County to close Thursday, Friday

The Thomas County Courthouse, Office Complex and landfill will be closed Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving holiday, and the transportation van will not run. The landfill will reopen Saturday. For questions, call Kristi Mann at the county clerk's office at 460-4500.

### Trash days change for holiday

The city sanitation truck will not be running on Thursday or Friday because of the Thanksgiving holiday. Trash was to be picked up today for people on the Thursday route and Saturday for people on the Friday route. Have cans to the curb by 8 a.m., said Public Works Director Chris Bieker. For information, call 460-4420.

### Food bank needs donations

Genesis-Thomas County food bank needs nonper-

ishable 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.

### Order cookie trays by Friday

Kappa Upsilon, a community service sorority, will hold a Christmas cookie and candy sale from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, at the United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. You can order cookie trays until Friday, said Linda Van Horn. All proceeds will be donated in town. For information or to order, call Van Horn at 460-2284.

### School plans annual banquet

Heartland Christian School invites everyone to its

annual Partners for the Future Endowment Banquet, "Continuing the Vision," at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 4, at the school. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased from the school office at 460-6419 by Tuesday.

### Get 'Booked,' lunch at library

The Pioneer Memorial Library will have a "Booked for Lunch" book review and meal at noon next Wednesday. Darryl Henry will review "The First Billion is the Hardest: Reflections on a Life of Comebacks and America's Energy Future," by Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens. Lunch is free but donations will be accepted. For information, call the library at 460-4470.

### Bible, lunch merge for Advent

The Thomas County Ministerial Association is sponsoring "Advent Brown Bags and Bible" from noon to 12:50 p.m. Wednesdays in the Fellowship

Hall of the Colby Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth Street. The theme this year is "Joy to the World." Pastors who plan to speak are Carol Rahn (First Presbyterian) next Wednesday, Jarrod Spencer (Church of Christ) Dec. 9, Steve Todd (College Drive Assembly of God) Dec. 16 and Larry Booth Dec. 23. Bring a sack lunch; dessert and beverage will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

### Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has six 8-week-old black-and-white mix puppies and one 8- to 12-week-old kitten available for adoption. For information, call 460-8621.



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