



# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Monday

December 21, 2009

Volume 120, Number 198

Serving Thomas County since 1888

8 pages

## County may improve the Campus Road

By Vera Sloan

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Help may be on the way for an often bothersome stretch of county road known as the Campus Road in southeastern Thomas County.

Dennis Odom, with Team Lab Chemical Corp., and road supervisor Claire Schrock visited with Thomas County commissioners on Monday about a treat-

ment that could cut maintenance on gravel roads to as little as a couple of passes with a grader each year.

"We mix a noncorrosive chemical with water in the water truck," Odom told the commissioners, "and then as the truck sprays the water on the road surface, it would be followed by the scarifying machine which would tear the road surface up to four inches deep and mix the chemical with the aggregate."

"It's a good road stabilization process.

We've pulled samples from some of the roads you're having trouble with, and the treatment will reduce maintenance, eliminate washboarding and potholes. What it does is it glues the fines, such as dirt and clay, and ties them up and solidifies them and makes them hard."

Odom said his company has been doing the treatment for 20 years, and did three miles of road in Ford County in May.

"I'd be interested in trying it on a built-up section of the Campus Road and see

how it compares to the rest of the road," said Schrock.

Odom told the commissioners the chemical and process are patented. He said it would take 340 gallon of chemical per mile, and the cost would be around \$6,800 per mile. He said the chemical falls under the government specs for corrosives, and will not even kill weeds on the sides of the road.

"How about the life expectancy of the road after it's treated?" asked Commis-

sioner Paul Steele.

Odom said the chemical never completely leaves the road, and it would never have to be torn up again to a depth of four inches. He said if traffic is heavy, it may take a top coat each year, but the rate of application would be only 55 gallons per mile.

"In the event you do ever get a pothole, you can work it from surface and never

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## Aide leads talk on health bill

By Vera Sloan

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A top aide for Congressman Jerry Moran found interest in the health-care reform bill so intense at a "Town Hall Meeting" on Thursday at the Pioneer Memorial Library that he had to stay an extra half hour.

The meeting, slated for noon to 1 p.m., ran over by more than 30 minutes due to interest in the much-debated health care bill now in Congress.

Brian Perkins, a legislative assistant to Moran, put the crowd at ease by noting that the "Big 1st" District represented by the congressman is larger than the state of Illinois, and that Colby could boast of having something Washington didn't have. He said he spotted a Sonic sack in the crowd, and that was something he craved, but couldn't get in the nation's capital.

He told the crowd the hot topic everywhere he goes is the health care bill, which has already passed the House in one version and is awaiting Senate action.

He said a lot of the action on any bill takes place in committees before a bill goes to a vote, and that he hasn't seen a plan yet, but that the leadership is trying to move the bill this week.

Perkins said the primary objective of the bill is to control health care costs, saying that is what is broken in our system. For the bill to pass, he said, it has to be one that will actually cut costs, but in western Kansas and the rest of rural America, the big issue is access, to be able to get health care.

He said taking money out of Medicare and Medicaid will not lower the overall cost of care.

"Only in Washington can you pull money from a program that is going bankrupt," Perkins added.

"Why are you calling it medical reform?" asked one member of the audience. "Why not tort reform?"



Brian Perkins, House aide

(referring to the cost of malpractice lawsuits)."

"We do completely agree with tort reform," said Perkins. "Right now, doctors are actually practicing defensive medicine, because lawsuit threats are driving up the costs of practicing medicine."

He said that Sen. Orin Hatch had sent a letter to the Congressional Budget Office asking for figures on tort reform because it would be a huge savings if that could be addressed.

"We've been told by the President in an address to the nation, that the funding for health care would not be taken out of Medicare," said a listener. "Can you tell us exactly what the truth is, and what other countries do?"

Perkins told the group that what the president is saying doesn't make any sense to the Republicans. He said the staff in Moran's office went through the bill, and came to the conclusion that it

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## Dancers serve soup to pay for bowl trip



Colby High dance coach Denita Rodgers (above right) talked with freshmen Cameron McLaughlin (at left) and Gabby Brown, who were taking donations during the dance team's soup supper Friday at the Community Building. Sophomore Kayla Skiles (left photo) poured a cup of water, while McLaughlin and Brown tried to avoid having their picture taken. The team was raising money for its trip to appear at the Liberty Bowl in Memphis on Saturday, Jan. 2.

ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press



## State gambling that Old West mystique will help casino draw

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

DODGE CITY — Within a half-hour of opening Tuesday, the Boot Hill casino had a favorable omen. Carlos Quintana, a 41-year-old oil-field worker, won a \$1,600 slot machine jackpot, had his picture taken with an oversized check and described the place as beautiful.

Elsewhere, Kansas' experiment with state-owned slots, dice and card tables is off to a rockier start. A sluggish economy has delayed projects for the Wichita and Kansas City areas, and there's no prospective developers for a casino in southeast Kansas.

But the new southwest Kansas casino attracted hundreds of customers in just its first afternoon. Quintana made an 85-

mile trip from Great Bend to Dodge City, the once-wild cowtown that later became the setting for television's classic "Gunsmoke."

Boot Hill's operators are betting that Dodge City's colorful history, the casino's location by itself on the Great Plains and its relatively small size will secure a niche in gambling. So is the state, which will claim 22 percent of the gaming rev-

enues.

"It can definitely be a strong regional player," said David Schwartz, director of the Center for Gaming Research at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

Boot Hill opened Tuesday, then started around-the-clock operations Wednesday after a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Gov. Mark Parkinson. The Kansas Lottery owns the rights to the gambling and

the gambling equipment but has a contract with Boot Hill's management company to operate the casino, the only one allowed by law in the region.

Casino backers still face skepticism about whether its success automatically translates into economic growth for the area. Last year, a consultant for the state

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## Briefly

### County offering H1N1 flu shots

The Thomas County Health Department will offer H1N1 flu shots at a clinic from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30 (not this week), at the department's office, 350 S. Range Ave. No appointment is needed and there is no charge. For information, call the flu hot line at 460-4599 or the department office at 460-4596.

### Last Advent lunch this week

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will hold its final "Advent Brown Bags and Bible" session from noon to 12:50 p.m. Wednesday in the Fellowship Hall of the Colby Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. The theme is "Joy to the World." Larry Booth will speak. Everyone is welcome. Bring a sack lunch; dessert and beverage will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

### Library plans long weekend off

The Pioneer Memorial Library will be closed four days for Christmas, from Thursday to Sunday, Dec. 24 to Dec. 27. For information, call the library at 460-4470.

### Want to be a Master Gardener?

It's time to sign up for Master Gardener Training to be held in Colby in February and March. The deadline is Thursday and the cost is \$90. For information or to register, contact the Thomas County Extension office at 460-4582.

### City trash schedule to change

The Colby Sanitation Department will have the day off Thursday and next Friday for Christmas. Thursday's trash route will be picked up Wednesday, said Public Works Manager Chris Bieker, and next

Friday's route will be picked up Saturday, Dec. 26. People on these routes should have their trash on the curb by 8 a.m. For information, call Public Works at 460-4420.

### Fatherhood program to start

The Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center's "24/7 Dad" fatherhood program will be offered again starting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 5, at the First Presbyterian Church in Colby. For information, call the center at 460-8177.

### Hospital plans birthing classes

Citizens Medical Center will hold a four-week series of childbirth education classes from 7 to 10 p.m. Thursdays beginning Jan. 7 for women due to deliver before May. The partner who will be with the mother during labor should attend. Classes will

be held on the hospital campus. The next classes will begin April 1. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown in the Education Department at (785) 460-4850.

### College pool open weekdays

The Colby Community College indoor swimming pool is open to the public for lap swimming from 5 to 7 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Open swimming is 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Cost for general admission is \$3. Monthly and yearly passes are available. Call Kipp Nelson at 460-5476 for information.



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