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Area shops, offices close for Christmas

 By Vera Sloan
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If you don't want to cook on Christmas Day, the China Buffet at 1935 S. Range will be open, or you can grab a bite at Love's Country Store, 265 W. Fourth St., or Kabredlo's at 1615 W. Fourth. All will be open regular hours Friday.

Starbucks in the Oasis Travel Center will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Christmas Day and until 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve. The food court there will remain open until 6 p.m. Christmas Eve, but closed Christmas Day. Most fast food outlets will be closed as well.

Banks, businesses and government offices will be closed for the holiday, and will be opening again Monday morning. For those wanting to shop late on Christmas Eve, it might be wise to check on when shopping hours end on Thursday.

The Colby Sanitation Department will have the day off Thursday and Friday. Thursday's trash route was to be picked up Wednesday, said Public Works Manager

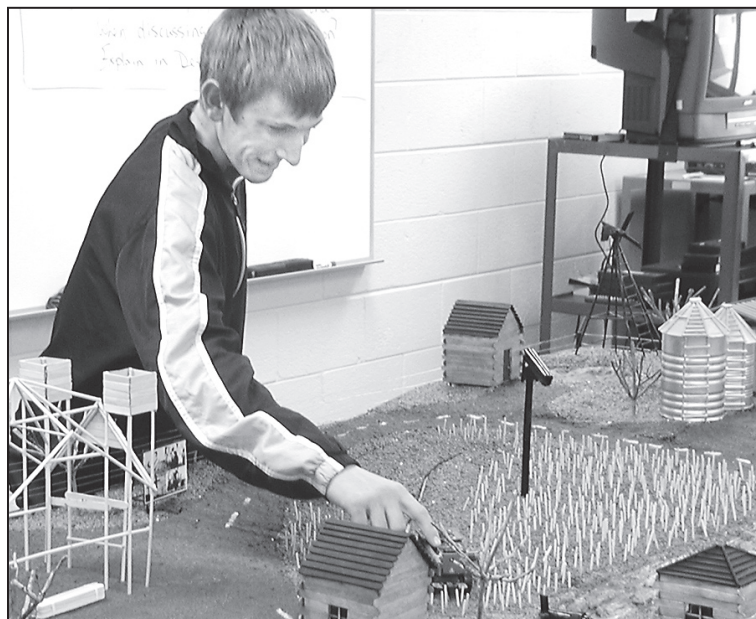
Chris Bieker, and Friday's route will be picked up Saturday. People on these routes should have their trash on the curb by 8 a.m.

The Thomas County courthouse, office complex and landfill will be closed Thursday and Friday, as will city offices. The transportation van was not running Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. The county treasurer's office will also be closed Thursday, Dec. 31, also.

If you need food for holiday meals, Dillon's plans to close at 6 p.m. Thursday and will be closed all day on Friday. Walmart will close at 8 p.m. Thursday and will remain closed Friday. The store will reopen at 6 a.m. Saturday.

Farmers and Merchants Bank will close at noon Thursday at both branches. First National Bank, Bankwest and Sunflower Bank will all close at noon. People's Bank will be closed all day Thursday and Friday.

State and Federal offices will be closed for the holiday, as will nearly everything else. The post office will be open regular hours Thursday but closed Friday. Mail service will resume Saturday.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Students in Rick Williams' sophomore world history classes at Colby High School created models of their own city-states for a unit on government. Justin Schrader put lots of detail into his this farm society, which has many working parts.

Colby High students create own countries

 By Andy Heintz
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Colby High history teacher Rick Williams has given his students power normally reserved to kings, emperors and presidents: He has allowed them to create their own city-states.

Williams assigned his students to design a model of their city-state and present it to the class. He said the project is a comprehensive final that covers all the material they have learned so far.

"It forces them to apply what they've learned in class," said Williams, "It's a higher level of

thinking."

Williams' world history class is a required course for sophomores. He said his students learn about different civilizations and cultures, including the Sumerian Period, the ancient Greeks and the Roman Republic. They have also learned about different types of government, including monarchies, oligarchies, aristocracies and democracies, said Williams.

He said his classes also talked about the role of women, the economies and the religions of past civilizations and their governments. Williams said every-

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

A Toyota 4-Runner went out of control in I-70 Tuesday night, crossed the median and was hit by a tanker truck, killing an Arkansas couple in the Toyota. Both the sport-utility and the cab of the truck caught fire and burned. The accident required traffic to be rerouted along Horton Avenue between the two Colby exits.

Slick roads cause fatal truck accident

 By Kevin Bottrell
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A fiery accident on the south edge of Colby killed two Arkansas residents Tuesday night after their four-wheel-drive sport-utility spun out of control because of ice on Interstate 70, crossed the median and crashed into a semi-trailer rig in the opposite lane.

About an hour later, and just a little under a mile to the east, a similar accident sent four members of a Texas family and the driver of a vehicle in the opposite lane, a Denver woman, to the hospital.

Trooper Cody Honas of the Kansas Highway Patrol reported that the first wreck oc-

curred about 8:45 p.m. Keely Trusell, 23, and Brandon Trusell, 25, of Fort Smith, Ark., were traveling east on I-70 in a Toyota 4-Runner when the car spun out of control on the slick road. Keely was driving.

The Toyota crossed the median just west of the Country Club Drive exit and was hit on the passenger side by a westbound Peterbilt tractor hauling a tank trailer.

The truck cab and the 4-Runner both caught fire, said Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore, likely from the impact. Firemen responded with two tanker trucks, the rescue truck, two engines and a hazardous materials rig. City police, troopers and sheriff's officers arrived to direct traffic.

The first firemen to arrive reported the truck

and the smaller vehicle as "fully involved" in flames, the couple apparently trapped inside. Trucks started arriving at 8:56, just 10 minutes after the call, and firemen reported the flames under control about 10 minutes later.

"The whole thing is engulfed," one responder reported.

Fire trucks reported difficulty getting around cars blocked by the wreck, and workers on the scene asked for the road to be shut down, "or we'll have a pileup."

It was not snowing yet, but freezing fog slowly turned to ice, creating a nasty surface.

At first, crews worried about the contents

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Sheriff details summons process

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Thomas County Sheriff Rod Taylor says he thinks people need to understand that records sent for publication in the *On the Beat* section on criminal summonses do not differentiate between varying degrees of criminal activity.

This especially applies to bad-check cases, he said. When a summons is issued for an insufficient-funds check, state law only

separates civil from criminal. An insufficient check, whether it is written for \$11 or \$11,000, falls under the same provisions on the criminal side of the ledger.

"There are people who make mistakes on a check book," Taylor said, "and writing an \$11 check when funds aren't there to cover it doesn't make that person a criminal."

"It's unfortunate that the wording in the statute can't be different, because when the summons is issued, the word criminal does not

even appear on the papers. When people have to live from paycheck to paycheck, these things happen."

Taylor said he has had a few complaints from people who's names appeared in the paper and wanted to explain what it means, because in a small community, there can be a stigma attached to the words "criminal summons."

He said when a summons is served, after a person is booked and sees the judge, they are released until it's time to appear in

court. He said law enforcement is a lot more concerned with the habitual bad check writer than they are with a one-time incident, but they have to pursue all bad-check cases.

To comply with the law, when businesses bring insufficient funds checks to the sheriff, a summons has to be served, Taylor said.

To help clear up any confusion, the sheriff added, he's asked the dispatch office to start listing

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Kansas guardsmen slated for Africa duty

TOPEKA (AP) — More than 560 Kansas Army National Guard soldiers have been assigned to security duty next year in the Horn of Africa, a spokeswoman said Tuesday.

The soldiers, more than 10 percent of the state's National Guard troops, are scheduled to deploy after April, said spokeswoman Sharon Watson. Following training, they'll spend about nine months in the small nation of Djibouti, returning in April 2011.

Watson described the Kansas unit's deployment as "a peacekeeping mission" and said a small contingent of Kansas soldiers had been there in the past.

Djibouti is near Somalia and Ethiopia, across the Gulf of Aden from the nation of

Yemen. The soldiers going there are members of a combined infantry and armored battalion based in Kansas City, Kansas.

"This is a very large deployment," she said. "We have done a deployment of this size before to Iraq, but not to Africa."

The U.S., European Union members and other nations are fighting piracy off the eastern coast of Africa. The U.S. and its allies also worry that al-Qaida is turning Somalia into a staging area for operations in the region.

Also, the United States is part of an international effort to stabilize Somalia's government, which faces a rebellion by Islamic militants. The nation has been without a

functioning government and army for nearly two decades.

About 600 of the Kansas Army Guard's 5,400 soldiers are now deployed overseas, the majority of them in Egypt. About 20 are currently in Iraq. But about 300 soldiers are expected to go to Iraq late in 2010 and an additional 300 in 2011, Watson said.

Late in 2004, the Guard had about 1,700 soldiers deployed, its largest number overseas, mostly in Iraq.

The Kansas Air National Guard has about 2,200 members, and about 100 are on duty in Afghanistan.

Briefly

County offering H1N1 flu shots

The Thomas County Health Department will offer H1N1 flu shots to everyone at a clinic from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 4:30 p.m. next Wednesday, Dec. 30, 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.

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.

Fatherhood program to start soon

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.

For latest flu info, call 460-4599

A hot line for questions on seasonal influenza and the H1N1 flu strain will be available throughout the flu season at (785) 460-4599. The Thomas County Health Department posts information about the status and availability of vaccines, priority groups and the like at this number.

Hospital auxiliary needs help

The Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary is looking for volunteers to greet visitors, operate the gift shop and help patients and their families, among other

things. If you'd like to get involved, call Tama Unger at (785) 460-1214 or Mary Smith at (785) 462-3387.

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 at 460-4570 for information or to set up an appointment. The fee is \$10.



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