



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Sirens need repair work, replacement

By Vera Sloan
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It's hard to believe tornado season is upon us, but Thomas County commissioners heard Tuesday, the end of February is actually considered the beginning of tornado season for this part of the country — and the county isn't quite ready. Susan McMahan, county emergency preparedness director, told commissioners that out of the six warning sirens in Colby, only three worked when they were tested at the beginning of the month. Two required minor repairs and the one behind the law enforcement building was worked on by Prairie States from Imperial, Neb., yesterday. The siren in Menlo has a burned-out motor, with an estimated repair cost in the neighborhood of \$1,000.

Menlo, Mingo, Levant and Rexford each have one siren, she said, Gem and Brewster each have two and Colby six.

She said testing the sirens at 40 degrees or less is not a good idea, and because of cold morning temperatures, for the time being, they will be tested at noon. Apparently, she said, cold temperatures cause the little wires in the siren itself to break. The fact that the sirens are between 30 and 40 years old could be part of the reason they are sub-

ject to cold-weather problems. "New sirens are costing \$20,000," she said, "and to replace them all would be \$260,000. It's not in the budget, but you need to be thinking about sirens when you prepare next year's budget. "New sirens would cover a bigger area, so four would be adequate if new ones were to be purchased, but for right now, we can keep the ones we have going for a while."

McMahan said a statewide tornado drill is planned for that at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9, and she asked the commissioners to order county employees to have a "for real" practice.

Sheriff Rod Taylor presented the commissioners with the resignation of one of his deputies, Brent Merriman, effective Monday. The commissioners accepted the resignation with the stipulation that compensation be paid to Merriman through that day, in lieu of any other amount accrued by him, including vacation, and that he is not entitled to any severance.

Sheriff Taylor said he had not been successful in getting the bill lowered for the new stainless-steel toilet in the jail. The commissioners moved to approve the \$5,101 bill from Larry Heier Plumbing to go out with the rest of the checks at the end of the month.

Sacred Heart shows patriotism at Friday concert

Sacred Heart preschooler Taden Fikan (above photo, left) made his personal Declaration of Independence to preschool teacher Sharon Shirley at the Patriotic Pals Program on Friday. Shirley asked each preschooler what he or she can do independently. Brandon Johnson (center) and his fifth-grade class helped the younger kids learn the program and joined in for the finale, "God Bless the USA." Preschoolers Amanda Jaeger (left photo, from left), Isaiah Rosales and Cai Lanning sang "Yankee Doodle" at the program. Shirley said the preschoolers were learning about patriotism in class and the school wanted to put on a program for Presidents Day.



Candidate wants politics out of job

By Andy Heintz
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Ralph De Zago says he's seeking the Republican nomination for Kansas attorney general because he doesn't think the position should be used as a stepping stone to bigger jobs.

The 61-year-old Herington lawyer, during a tour of northwest Kansas Monday, also said he doesn't like it when attorneys general use the position to push their own political and social agendas. De Zago said the attorney general has a responsibility to enforce laws, not create them. He cited Vern Miller, who served in the 1970s, as someone who enforced the state's laws, even if he personally didn't agree with them.

He said while Miller was attorney general, he argued that state law banned airlines from distributing alcohol when they were flying

over Kansas. De Zago said Miller enforced this law, even though it brought him ridicule, because it was the law. If the people no longer wanted the law, they could vote against it.

De Zago said the attorneys general shouldn't get involved in county cases unless they are invited by the county attorney or the governor.

He said he believes there are two kinds of political offices: philosophical offices and executive offices. Philosophical offices include governors and senators, he said, and their job is to push policies they favor. De Zago said executive offices should be run by people who have experience and who are willing to enforce existing laws instead of pushing their own political agenda.

De Zago will be running against Derek Schmidt, majority leader of the state Senate from Independence, in the primary. Schmidt



Ralph De Zago

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Tenth alumni reunion coming in June

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After five years of planning, meeting and brainstorming, the Colby High Alumni Association's 2010 reunion committee has come up with a schedule to make the 10th all-school reunion a memorable one.

Jada Tubbs, a 1998 graduate and a reunion committee member, said the three-day event, Thursday to Saturday, June 17, 18 and 19, will be filled with activities including tours; a picnic; horse shoe, basketball and volleyball competition; golf tournaments and bicycle events.

This year will be the first for the Eagle Tour, or "Tour de Thomas County," by bicycle.

The bicycle "fun ride," at 8 to 10 mph, is being planned for Saturday morning. Riders will assemble by 7:45 a.m. and start by 8 a.m. The ride will go east, with Gem as a destination, via U.S. 24 and County Road 27, unless the weather wrong. If the ride goes west, the destination will be Levant via U.S. 24.

A faster-paced race, averaging 15 to 18 mph, and covering 40 miles, will take place at the same time. If the riders go east, the destination will either be Menlo via U.S. 24 and County Road 36, or Cumberland via U.S. 24 and County Road 27. If the race heads west, the destination will be Brewster via U.S. 24 and old U.S. 24 west of Levant and County Road Q.

Bikers must be at least 15, have their own bicycle, a filled water bottle attached to the bike and a spare inner tube. A bicycle helmet is required and eye protection (sunglasses) is recommended.

Ride leaders will carry tire irons, patches, pumps, basic wrenches and cell phones, but riders can carry phones. Leaders will also have a couple of "sag wagons" on call in case there is a breakdown that can't be fixed. They will provide sport drink mix, energy bars, and fruit at the start and at the destinations.

Registration is due by April 15 if the rider

wants T-shirt. Cost is \$15. Race organizers are the Hansen brothers, David, class of 1979; Mark, class of 1977; and Ron, class of 1982.

For questions or to volunteer, contact dlhmic@cox.net; jhansen@uchicago.edu or rontraci@cox.net.

Meadow Lake Golf Club will have two tournaments for alumni. A shotgun-start nine-hole tourney will start at 8 a.m. The four-person scramble will have a limit of 18 foursomes.

An 18-hole tournament begins at 1 p.m. It's also a four-person scramble with a limit of 36 foursomes.

Both tournaments are first come, first served, and early entry is encouraged. Cost is \$35 for the nine-hole tournament and \$50 for the 18-hole event.

For questions, call Tracy Rogers, class of 1979, at (785) 460-3128, or e-mail tr7979@hotmail.com.

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Briefly

Food for Thought coming up

"Notable Events and People in Northwest Kansas" will be the topic for the next *Food for Thought* program at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. Evelyn Hoyt Ward, a Brewster native who retired to northwest Kansas, will talk at noon Thursday, Feb. 18. The program is free, including a light lunch. For questions, call the museum at 460-4590.

Brown Bag talks start next week

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will sponsor the *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* program at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent. The theme is *The Prodigal Son*. Speakers will be Feb. 24, Carol Rahn, First Presbyterian Church; March 3, Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ; March 10, Steve Todd, College Drive Assembly of God; March 17, W.G. Romine, Redeeming Love Ministries; March

24, Larry Booth; March 31, Spencer. Com to the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 545 W. Fourth St. Bring your own lunch; beverage and dessert will be provided. Call 462-6342 for information.

Sacred Heart carnival Feb. 28

Sacred Heart Catholic School's annual carnival will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, featuring food, games and a raffle drawing at 3. Sacred Heart students are out selling raffle tickets right now, and the top sellers in each grade get prizes. For information, call the school at 460-2813.

Orchestra to play next weekend

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will hold a "Jeans and T-shirts" concert at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, in the Frahm Theater at Colby Communi-

ty College. The orchestra will perform a variety of music from "Symphony in G Minor" to selections from "Star Wars." Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children. For information, call Carol McGuire at (785) 672-2380.

Youth soccer looking for players

Signups for the American Youth Soccer Organization's spring season are open until Friday, Feb. 26. The cost is \$40; kids must be around 6 to participate. The organization is also looking for parents to coach or referee. For information or to sign up, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.

Barbershop event set for March

The Colby Tumbleweed Barbershop Chorus will perform two shows at 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 27, in the Frahm Theater at Colby Commu-

nity College. The show will include the Acoustic quartet and the Prairie Rose Harmony ladies' chorus. For information, call Tom McNutt at 462-2936.

Schools to explain budget cuts

The Colby School District plans a community meeting on budget issues at 5:30 p.m. next Wednesday in the Colby High School commons. District administrators will discuss past and future budget cuts. A list of the possible upcoming cuts is posted at www.colbyeagles.org. For information, call the district office at 460-5000.



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