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Health care company asks city for loan

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

Embark Healthcare, the end-of-life services company now operating in Colby, is nearly out of money, and asking the city for help to make it through the next few months.

Embark Chief Executive Officer Michael Brothurs asked the Colby City Council on Tuesday to consider a loan to get the company through the next few

months until it has enough cash flow to be self-sufficient.

"I came to you two years ago with a dream to change health care for the better," he said. "You all agreed to help. Now I'm here to ask for continued help."

Brothurs said he couldn't give firm figures, but estimated the company needs \$1 million to \$1.5 million. He asked that the city consider contributing \$250,000.

"We're not going out of business immediately," he said, "but we do need the money."

The city has already contributed more than \$400,000 to help the company renovate the former Inlow Interiors building downtown. Brothurs said the company had an open house last week and invited the council and investors to take a tour.

"You saw that we've not squandered the money," he said.

Brothurs said that during the startup process, the company has run out of money seven times and he has always found new investors.

"I'll find them again," he said.

Many of the current investors, some of whom are from Colby, have only kicked in \$25,000 to 75,000, he said, but this time he is looking for larger contributions.

Help from the city would give him better leverage in negotiations with venture capitalists, Brothurs said. Getting money from them would require the company to give up something, he said, and the more desperately they need the money, the more they will have to give up.

"What's at stake is who has the leverage," he said.

Brothurs said if he's not in a good negotiating position, he might have to give up control of the company. Venture capitalists are the likely source for this much money, Brothurs said, but he is also talking to more small investors.

Mayor Ken Bieber, who also sits on the Economic Development Alliance board, said the business might have to give up something to the city as well.

"I would love for the city to own a por-

See "LOAN," Page 3

Stuffing reunion packets



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

If you want something done in a hurry, call the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Volunteers needed only one day last week to stuff three filler sheets into more than 5,000 Colby High School reunion information packets in the activity room of

the Senior Progress Center. Laura Withington, director of the volunteers, said they started at 8:30 a.m. and expected to finish at 5:30 p.m. The packets went into the mail on time thanks to the seniors' help.

Census forms going out now

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkansan.com

The 2010 Census is coming, just like it has every 10 years for more than 20 decades, according to the U.S. Constitution.

Forms were being mailed or delivered to area homes starting Monday, and officials say it's not only the law that everyone must fill them out — it's important to us all.

Most people probably aren't aware that federal dollars coming back to this area depend on the number of people who fill out the Census forms and put them back in the mail.

Federal tax dollars coming back into the community equate to around \$1,254 per person, or over \$3,300 per household, every year. Many programs depend on Census counts to divide the pie.

This year's census is a 10 question, 10 minute form. If anyone needs help in filling out the 10 questions, there will be someone at the Pioneer Memorial Library to help.

All kinds of information comes out of the results of a census, such as predictions as to how many carpenters, plumbers of teachers are going to be needed to serve the population, along with such perti-

nent information as to how likely the success of a golf course will be in a certain area.

It is illegal for Census workers to give out any information from your forms, the agency says, so people don't need to worry about their privacy.

People who fill them out and send them in will be the winners in the long run, as their communities get federal dollars back into western Kansas.

Thomas County may be lagging behind as far as having enough census workers. The county returned 72 percent of the forms in the 1990 census compared to the 78 percent in Johnson County. The higher the return rate, the better chance for federal dollars, officials say.

Workers are in short supply also. As of Tuesday, another 14 people are needed to work the census here. The bureau needs part time and temporary full time people to get the 2010 census completed.

The first step to become a Census worker is to call (866) 861-2010. The system will walk the caller through the steps and direct them to where they can take a proficiency test, which is given in the area. Step two is to contact the local census office and complete

See "CENSUS," Page 3

Public awareness program teaches pipeline safety here

By Aubrey Spencer

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansan.com

A pipeline emergency response and prevention program last week at the Comfort Inn in Colby, sponsored by the Kansas Pipeline Association and Paradigm Liaison Service, drew more than 50 people.

The main message was simple: Most accidents are caused by digging. Before digging, the law requires everyone to call the national notification number, 811, and have underground lines marked and flagged. Only then is it safe to dig.

Most of those attending were emergency responders, including law enforcement officers, fire fighters and emergency dispatchers.

"What would you do if you were to respond to a pipeline emergency?" presenter Troy Nicholson of Paradigm asked.

The answer, as Nicholson presented over the course of the meeting, is to look carefully at markers in the ground, get rid of any ignition sources, turn off all equipment, evacuate the area and call 911 — and 811.

Nicholson said the seminar's purpose was to ensure good communication between emergency responders and pipeline companies and to help with damage prevention.

The U.S. has 2.4 million miles of pipeline, which move 65 percent of our nation's energy, he said. Products transported in these pipelines include petroleum, natural gas, and propane. He said 20 million barrels (42 gallons equal one barrel) of liquid product are used daily and 21 trillion cubic feet of natural gas are used each year.

"Pipelines are a critical part of our national infrastructure," he said.

Statistics show the leading cause of pipeline accidents come from digging and related activities. Nicholson said to avoid injury, contractors and homeowners alike need to call the national one-call number, 811, before doing any digging. You don't have to be a contractor with heavy equipment to cause a problem, he said; a homeowner or farmer can also cause a pipeline emergency.

Because this is an agricultural area, Nicholson

See "SAFETY," Page 3

Take a look at the MAC



JARROD SPENCER/MAC Board

Posters, diagrams and computer presentations greeted guests at the "Meet The MAC" event Wednesday at Meadow Lake Golf Course. The event served as a kick-off for the Multi-purpose Activity Center board's fund raising drive. Dr. Darren Matchell and the Thomas County Wellness Committee made ceremonial first donations. Matchell said he was happy to contribute to something he and his kids would get a lot of use out of.

Briefly

Head Start taking applications

Thomas County Head Start preschool is accepting applications for 3- and 4-year-old children. The program takes applications all year, but children must be 3 by Sept. 1 to start class in the fall. Tuition is free. To apply, call 460-6067.

World Day of Prayer is Friday

Colby churches plan a World Day of Prayer service at noon Friday at the United Methodist Church. Lunch will begin at noon and a worship service will follow. Women from the Christian, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist churches will lead the service. For information, call Millie Horlacher at 462-3104.

In Brewster, the churches will hold a service at 10 a.m. at the Community Church, 511 Third St. A fellowship time will start at 9:30 a.m., with the service

at 10. For questions, call Nadine Kemmer, (785) 694-2456.

Gem Lions soup day Saturday

Winter days are good for homemade soup, corn bread and crackers, and that's what's on the menu from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday at the Gem Community Building. Donations will be accepted, with proceeds going for community projects.

Road department to close

The Thomas County Highway Department office will be closed Monday for computer training. For information, call Dianna Gatz at 460-4562.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed,

divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. The building is accessible by an elevator near the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

Professor to speak here

Dr. Ron Green, a professor of religion at Dartmouth University, will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College as part of the Max Pickerill Lecture Series. For information, call Linda Davis-Stephens at (785) 460-5528.

No couples dance until May

There will not be a singles and couples dance in March or April. The next dance will be a free dance from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, May 1, at the Colby

American Legion Hall. For information, call Lue Duffey, (785) 855-2341.

'Brown Bag' series continues

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will sponsor the *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* program at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent with the theme, "The Prodigal Son." Speakers will be Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ, on Wednesday; Steve Todd, College Drive Assembly of God, March 10; Come 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.



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