



Alliance recommends Embark loan

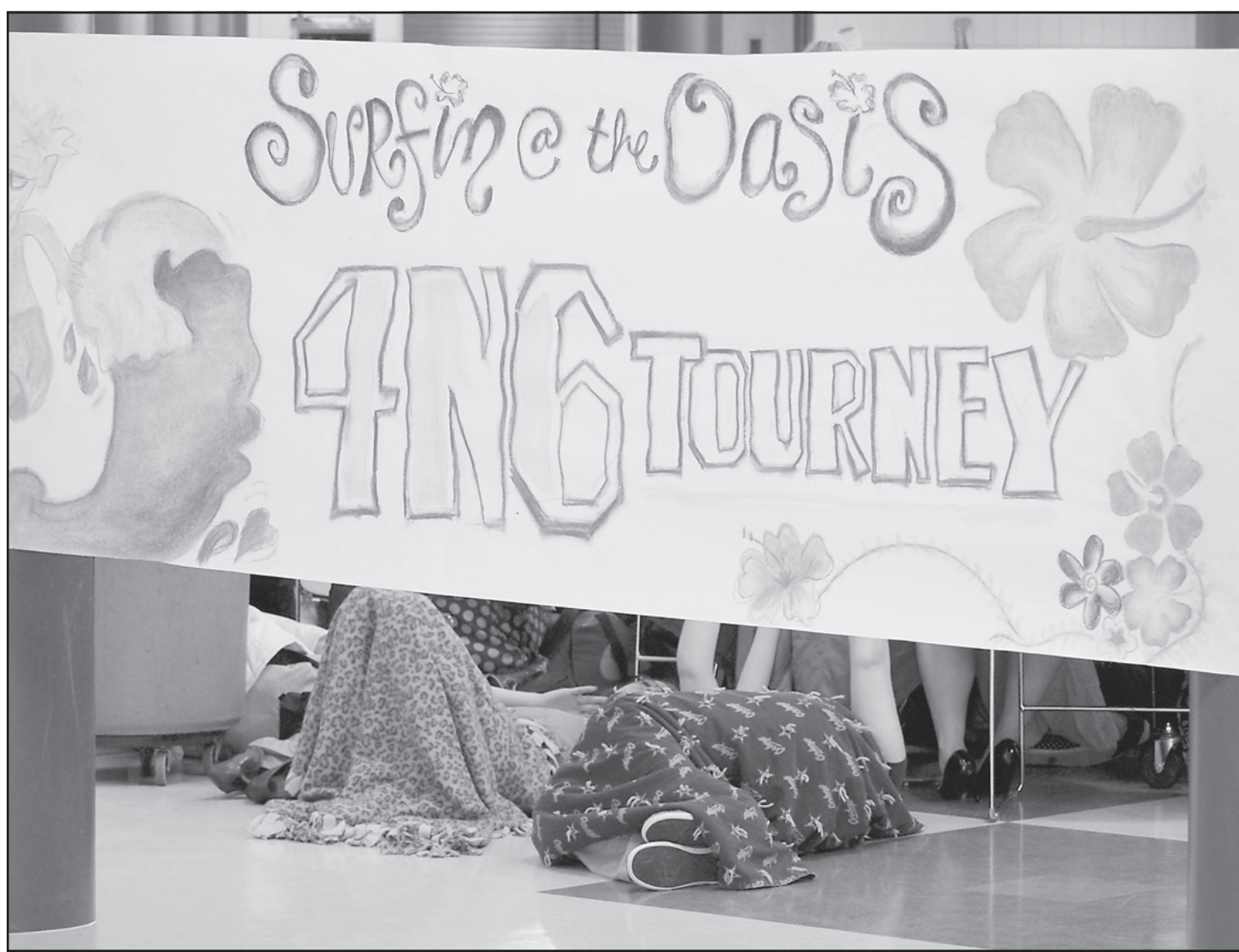
By Kevin Bottrell
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Embark Health, which has opened a call center in Colby with city and state help, is one step closer toward getting the operating money it needs to survive. The Thomas County Economic Development Alliance board is recommending that Colby City Council loan the health care company \$100,000 from the sales tax fund, used for economic development. The board held a special meeting Thursday to discuss the issue.

The board passed the motion 3-1. Director Rick Patrick said

motions before the board only need three yes votes to pass. Now that they have a recommendation, the council will decide the exact terms of the loan and vote on final approval when it meets at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday. The council asked for a recommendation from Economic Development at its last meeting, when Embark Chief Executive Officer Michael Brouthers had asked the city to consider a loan. Brouthers said the company needs anywhere from \$1 million to \$1.5 million in operating cash to keep going until it becomes self-sufficient. He asked for a \$250,000 loan from

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Two students got some much-needed rest under the welcome sign for the Colby Invitational forensics tournament Thursday. The three-round tournament took all afternoon and the visit-

ing teams from schools including Goodland and Golden Plains were given the run of Colby High's commons area while they waited.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Quilter Kim Benson showed off one of the pillowcases she made for a nationwide charity campaign. She and her quilting group have made 80 pillowcases so far.

Area quilters sew for charity

By Vera Sloan
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It's amazing what you run across when you're a quilter browsing the Internet for ideas. That's what Kim Benson of Colby, who describes herself as a "dyed-in-the-wool quilter," was doing when she ran across the "Make a pillowcase, make a difference" site. The web page is a call for all quilters, sewers and crafters to join an effort to "make a pillowcase to make a difference." The group wants to make a million pillowcases that would provide com-

fort to a cancer patient, hope for a foster child, encouragement for a battered woman or beauty for a nursing-home resident. Benson said she made phone calls to some fellow quilters, and they all agreed to meet at the Lutheran church. Twelve women brought fabric already cut out and started sewing at 9 a.m. After time out for an informal potluck lunch, they finished sewing at 3 p.m. and had 60 pillowcases ready to help make a difference. She said the marketing and promotional information began with American Patchwork and Quilt-

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Bulldog students qualify for state

By Judy Rogers
Golden Plains High School

Students from around northwest Kansas crowded into the Colby High School commons area for the annual forensics invitational Thursday. The Colby team hosted the event and did not compete. Duet partners and twin brothers from Golden Plains High School, Jonathan and Isaac Broeckelman, placed second in Round 1 and first in Round 2. This qualified them for the finals, where they placed second. This qualified them for the Class 1A State Championship in at Salina Central High School on May 1. "It feels good to qualify for state so early in the season," Jonathan said. "It takes the pressure off so we can use the remaining meets to continue to improve." For a duet, students have 10 minutes to act out a memorized scene from a published work. Props and costumes are not allowed, and the scene may be dramatic or funny. The Broeckelmans did "The History of Television, Condensed." Also competing from Golden Plains was Brandy Gilbert, who did a poem entitled "The Most Beautiful Flower." Poetry competitors



Students took the opportunity between rounds to get in some last-minute practice. Many events involve reciting memorized material while some involve improvisation with only a short time to prepare.

have seven minutes to read a published work. She placed first in Round 1 and fourth in Round 2 but did not qualify for finals. Both the Golden Plains and Colby forensics teams have a meet coming up on March

Barbershop group to perform in Colby

Members of the Tumbleweed Chorus are selling tickets for their annual show, "Malt Shop Barbershop," at 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 27, at the Frahm Theatre of the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College. The chorus will be assisted by Prairie Rose Harmony, a local women's chorus singing a cappella four-part harmony, in putting on this show. Highlighting the event will be Acoustix, a quartet that won the world championship in 1990 in its first attempt. The group has traveled in Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada and

47 states in the U.S. Acoustix's program includes traditional barbershop, sacred, gospel, jazz and doo-wop music, sponsors said. Two of the singers are making their second appearance in Colby. They were members of a quartet known as the Class of the '80s that appeared in 1990, a few months before forming Acoustix. Singers Todd Wilson, Jason January, Rick Middaugh and Joel T. Rutherford have a combined 100 plus years of stage and studio vocal experience. Their emphasis on entertainment has helped create a loyal following.

The foursome has been entertaining audiences around the world for 20 years. Acoustix has appeared on CNN, NBC's "Today Show," TNN's "The Statler Brothers Show" and two PBS specials. At the turn of the 21st century, Acoustix performed for a global audience of 175 million on "ABC 2000," hosted by Peter Jennings. Tickets for Malt Shop Barbershop, \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door, may be purchased from Goodland Tumbleweed Chorus members Ken Corke (890-2293), Scott Briney (821-1145) or John Collett (821-1178).

Briefly

Series highlights Lent season

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will sponsor another Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles program at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent with the theme, "The Prodigal Son." Speakers will be W.G. Romine, Redeeming Love Ministries, on Wednesday; Larry Booth, March 24; and Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ, March 31. 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.

Smoky Hills board coming here

The board of Smoky Hills Public Television will meet at 1 p.m. Thursday at the Thomas County office complex, 250 S. Range. The board travels around the western part of the state to make it easier for mem-

bers to attend. The public is invited to sit in. For information, call (785) 483-6990.

Low-income tax help at library

The American Association of Retired Persons is offering offer a tax-help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday until April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The seminar is designed for low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those 60 or older. For information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

Grant deadline March 31

The Thomas County Community Foundation is taking grant applications for the first quarter. Public Relations Coordinator Christina Schmid said proposals can be for any type of project, as long as it is not to benefit an individual, political activity or

operating expenses. Nonprofit organizations, public agencies and religious institutions may apply. The deadline is Wednesday, March 31. For information or applications, call (785) 460-9152.

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.

Start growing for contest now

The Thomas County 125th committee is holding a "beard and bonnet" contest through Oct. 9. For men, there will be prizes for the longest beard and mustache and for the most unique beard and mustache. For information, call Bob Renner at (785) 462-5279.

For women, there will be prizes for the prettiest, most unique and craziest hats and bonnets. For information, call Kathy Calliham, 462-2081.

County to test sirens

Thomas County will test the tornado sirens at noon on the first Monday of each month, said Emergency Management Director Susan McMahan. The tests will continue all year as weather permits. For information, call McMahan at 460-4516.

