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School board cuts \$78,000 from budget

By Kevin Bottrell

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The Colby School Board has approved three more budget cuts that will save the district an estimated \$78,000.

Four cuts were recommended by the district administration at Monday's board meeting, three were unanimously approved and one was tabled for the next meeting.

• The district will close Colby Grade School's kitchen. Students in grades kindergarten, first and second grades who had been eating in that cafeteria will eat in the middle school cafeteria. Superintendent Terrell Harrison said this will save the district \$40,000, mostly in utilities and appliances.

"It costs quite a bit for a kitchen," she said.

The board asked Harrison if any staff would be affected. None of the staff will

be let go, she said, but the district wouldn't hire for any positions that go vacant.

Colby Middle School Principal Rob Ross said the lunch schedules wouldn't have to be changed, but in some cases the kitchens will have two serving lines. The cafeteria is large enough to hold the increased number of students.

"I think we should have done this four years ago," said board member Stan Molstad.

Harrison said the grade school will be

using the empty cafeteria for things like indoor recess in bad weather and class projects.

• Students will get out of class on May 21, three days earlier than the approved calendar for 2009-2010. Harrison said the district will have the number of state-required hours completed by May 19, and this would save the district \$12,600 to \$14,000. Faculty and staff will continue working after the students get out to fulfill their contracts.

Ross said some activities planned for those three days will have to be rescheduled, but he didn't see a problem with the change.

At the last meeting, the board approved a calendar for the 2009-2010 school year, which Harrison said would save the district \$40,000 to \$50,000 by having fewer, but longer, school days.

• The district will no longer help re-

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A little spring cleaning



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Paul Stephens and Dustin Rumbek got a jump on the city's spring cleanup Tuesday when they finished clearing out the lot behind Butch Cox's body shop. The steel body parts and other scrap materials will be hauled to the Rocky Mountain Re-

cycling Center in Denver. Stephens has been doing recycling for the past few months but will call a halt to it April 1, when he says it's time to get his combines in shape for this year's wheat harvest.

Coalition to hold town hall meeting

By Aubrey Spencer

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Do you know the consequences associated with underage drinking? How about the damage alcohol does to a young person's brain? The Thomas County Coalition hopes their Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking, scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, March 29, at Colby Community College's Frahm Theater will bring such information to youth, parents and the entire community.

Melany Wilks, director of the Pioneer Memorial Library and coalition town hall committee member, said the goal of the meeting is to encourage adults and youth alike to think of the consequences related to underage drinking. Various professionals will share their views and prizes will be drawn, she said.

Dr. W.G. Romine II, pastor of Redeeming Love Ministries and coalition member, will be the master of ceremonies for the event. He said the five-person panel of professionals will include Dr. Slavens, Sheriff Rod Taylor, Chief of Police Randy Jones or one of his officers, parole officer Brenda Platt, and a young recovering alcoholic who will share his experience with underage drinking and his victory over it.

The committee hopes to draw a large crowd by advertising in the schools, the newspaper, on the Thomas County Coalition com-

munity sign, television and radio. Wilks said they hope college students will take an interest as well. "I really hope people will come and learn some of the reasons that underage drinking can be a problem before it's too late, before some tragedy happens in their life," she said.

Before the panel begins, there will be a 20-minute video showing brain scans and the effect alcohol has on the young person's brain, said Romine. There will also be information displayed showing insurance cost for youth ages 16-25 and the financial repercussions of getting cited for driving under the influence. The end of the evening will be reserved for a 20-minute question and answer time, he said.

According to Romine and Melissa Augustine, public school psychologist's assistant, Students Against Destructive Decisions sponsor and coalition member, the committee sees the town hall meeting as a different way to get this information out to the whole community. They hope teenagers will gain an understanding of the laws and effects of alcohol at a young age and parents will understand the importance of not distributing to minors, they said.

"I hope to see families come together and listen to the presentation," Augustine said.

Every year for the past 11 years, students in grades six, eight, 10

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State health care rejection fails

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — A proposed change in the Kansas Constitution aimed at blocking the state from implementing new federal health insurance mandates failed Tuesday in the state House, the same day President Barack Obama signed sweeping federal legislation into law.

The vote on the "Health Care Freedom Amendment" was 75-47. But supporters needed a two-thirds majority, or 84 of 125 votes, for passage of what many of them view as the strongest possible statement against the new federal law.

The measure would add a new section to the state constitution to prohibit Kansas from requiring

any individual or business to buy health insurance or from imposing fines if they don't. If the measure succeeded, Kansas would be in conflict with the new federal law's mandate for most Americans to purchase coverage, starting in 2014.

Supporters argued that amending the constitution would bolster Kansas' position for a legal challenge to the new federal law. They also said it would be the best way to make a statement because an amendment would have to be adopted by a majority of voters.

Some states already have challenged the new law. Attorneys general from 13 other states sued the federal government Tuesday moments after the president signed the bill, claiming it is unconstitutional because it is an un-

funded mandate and exceeds federal powers.

Republicans who pushed the proposal had strong backing from the tea party movement, which argues the new federal law attacks individual liberties. Chris Tawney, a Manhattan nurse and a member of the Flint Hills Tea Party, said she and other Kansans will make House members' votes an issue in their re-election campaigns.

"It will follow them," she said after the vote. "They represent us, but they're not listening."

Rep. Jim Ward, a Wichita Democrat who voted against the proposed amendment, suggested Kansans will start to like the federal law as they learn about its contents. He said his constituents

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Smoky Hills television board holds regular meeting here

By Aubrey Spencer

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The board of Smoky Hills Public Television met in Colby on Thursday with General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Lynn Meredith.

The television station operates out of Bunker Hill near Russell, but the board meetings are regularly held around the state to make it easier for far-flung board members to attend.

Those present thanked Sheila Frahm, board member from Colby, for setting up the meeting and providing lunch. Frahm welcomed everyone saying she hoped they would enjoy their time in Colby.

"All I ask is that you fill up your tanks and maybe do a little shopping before you leave town,"

Frahm said.

As the meeting got underway, the members shared local news from their specific towns. Frahm began by mentioning Thomas County's 125th Celebration coming up in October. Others shared items of interest including new businesses, farming, a new newspaper editor in Syracuse, the closing of Goodland's fifth and sixth grade school and strong growth in the oil business.

The board looked at February's financial statements, noting that things are looking good this year; the station showed a net increase of \$46,508 over the same time last year.

Committee reports were next on the agenda. The governance committee is looking for new board members and will review their active mem-

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Briefly

County offices close for lunch

Because employees will be training for a yearlong conversion to new computer software, the Thomas County treasurer, clerk and road and bridge offices will close for the noon hour this week. County Clerk Shelly Harms said these departments will continue to do business during normal business hours. For information, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Drivers meeting Friday

Thomas County Treasurer Donita Applebury, along with treasurers from Sherman, Cheyenne and Wallace Counties and the Kansas Corporation Commission, will hold a meeting for heavy truck drivers at 3 p.m. (Central time) Friday at the 4-H building at the Sherman County Fairgrounds in Goodland. The meeting is a question and answer session on having correct tags and weights for heavy trucks. For information, call Applebury at 460-4520.

Food delivery Saturday

Prairie Land Food delivery will be at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 W. Sixth St. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Barbershop event Saturday

The Colby Tumbleweed Barbershop Chorus will perform two shows at 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College. The show will include the Acoustix quartet and the Prairie Rose Harmony ladies' chorus. For information, call Tom McNutt at 462-2936.

Enroll at Puddle Duck April 1

Puddle Duck Preschool will hold an enrollment open house for the 2010-2011 school year from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, April 1, at the school, 520 W. Fifth St. Children ages 3 to 5 from all denominations

are welcome. For information, call Amy Jennings at 460-2603.

Childbirth classes start soon

Citizens Medical Center will hold a four-week series of childbirth education classes, from 7 to 10 p.m. beginning Thursday, April 1 at the hospital and continuing on April 8, 15 and 22. Expectant mothers in their last trimester or who are due to deliver before August, 2010, are encouraged to attend. The labor support partner is also encouraged to attend classes. For information, call Jeanene Brown in the hospital's education department at (785) 460-4850.

Scholarship deadline extended

The Thomas County Community Foundation has extended the scholarship application deadline to Monday, April 5. The foundation has numerous scholarships available for area high school and col-

lege students. For information, go to www.thomas-countycommunityfoundation.com or call Executive Director Melinda Olson at 460-9152.

Swim Club plans April meeting

The Colby Swim Club will hold a parent meeting and fun swim at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 11, in room 809 of the Health Science Building at Colby Community College. The fun swim will follow at the college pool. For information, call Sondra Finley at 460-2955.



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