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Court workers ordered to take furloughs soon

By Vera Sloan
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In an attempt to meet the challenges caused by severe economic problems in the State of Kansas, the Kansas Supreme Court has issued an order calling for involuntary unpaid leave for court staff throughout the state's judicial districts.

The furlough time is not as extensive as first anticipated, when the courts were looking at two days a week for all of April, May and the first Thursday and Friday in June. The furloughs affect all judicial staff except judges and justices.

"In the very beginning of the talks of furlough time, the state was considering closing the courts for a week at a time, and now it has come down to Fridays," said Glenn Schiffner, chief judge of the 15th Judicial District.

The different number of days is a result of other budget cuts the judicial branch has made and more money coming in from other sources. The judiciary has a hiring freeze, which began in December of 2008, resulting in 100 vacan-

cies, and has eliminated temporary hours of 193 employees who were performing necessary services. It has also restricted travel and received about \$800,000 in federal stimulus funds through a grant program.

The new order, handed down by the court, dated March 12 and signed by Justice Lawton R. Nuss, details the days of involuntary unpaid days as April 9, 16, 23 and May 7 unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Supreme Court. Nuss said that while forced leave was unavoidable, the judiciary tried to minimize the lost income for their employees.

"In Thomas County, seven people from the district court office will be affected by the order," Schiffner said, "with 23 or 24 court employees being affected throughout the district."

The 15th Judicial District is made up of seven counties, Thomas, Sheridan, Logan, Wallace, Cheyenne, Rawlins and Sherman.

"We will continue to hear critical functions cases with no clerical help," he continued.

Critical needs include criminal
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Planting the future on Range



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

It couldn't have been a better day for planting trees Thursday and lots of volunteers didn't mind taking advantage of the warm day to help with the South Range Tree Project. By the end of the day they had 70 trees in the ground with 15 left to

plant today. Here, Steve Ostmeier took his turn at the shovel, while Mike Woofter cut the banding on a tree, and Jim Tubbs, George Tubbs and Shawn Siruta stood by, ready to put the tree in the hole.

College criminal justice department to hold drills

By Kevin Bottrell
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Criminal justice students at Colby Community College will get some real life experience for three days in early April, but

the crimes they investigate won't be real. The department will hold practice drills for the students on April 6, 7 and 8 starting at 9 a.m. in the Bedker Building and nearby parking lot. Colby law enforcement officers will be helping in the drills to make them as real as possible.

Linda Davis-Stephens, instructor of criminal justice at the college, said the public is welcome to observe the drills, and she wanted to warn people beforehand so no one will think it's a real crime scene.

Davis-Stephens said the drills would

cover critical incidents. She said she couldn't give away what kinds of incidents would be simulated this year since the students have to come in with no knowledge of the scenario, but they will be different from last year. Last year in late March, the students investigated a

mock shooting, first looking at a simulated crime scene set up at the college, talking to witnesses and collecting evidence, then following the clues to a suspect. The scenario culminated in the arrest of a suspect by the students.

Too shy to donate



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Earning three badges in one night was no easy task for these Daisy Scouts. They started off Wednesday at Villa High Park by donating coloring books they had made at an event in Oberlin to Cassandra Britt of Citizens Medical Center. The books will go to sick kids recovering at the hospital. The girls then built pine cone bird feeders and had an Easter egg hunt.

Colby forensics team qualifies four for nationals

With four competitions still to go this year, the Colby High School Forensics team has qualified four students for nationals.

Senior Gray Henry qualified in dramatic performance. Dramatic performers have to perform a memorized, 15- to 30-minute scene. Costumes and props are allowed, but emphasis is placed on judging acting ability.

Sophomore Christina Ostmeier qualified in oral interpretation. Students have seven minutes to interpret a piece of prepared writing - a selection from a book, article or other published work.

Sophomore Michael Tubbs qualified in extemporaneous speaking. Students have to give a spontaneous speech about a subject, usually current events. Students prepare themselves on three topics and the judge picks from those three. They are not allowed any note cards.

Junior Bailey Koerperich qualified as an alternate in original oratory. Students have to give a

memorized, 10-minute persuasive speech that they write themselves. Students have to memorize the speech and are not allowed any visual aids.

The remaining tournaments this year are: March 29, Northwest Kansas League in Oakley; April 6 in Phillipsburg; April 10 in Scott City; April 17 in Quinter; and the State Championship Tournament, May 1 in Topeka.

Season team and individual scores:

Oberlin - Jan. 30 Second Place

Prose: Gray Henry, third; Seth Bredemeier, fifth.

Poetry: Gabby Brown, first; Sunee Creighton, sixth.

Oration: Rachel Lamm, third.

Extemp: Rachel Lamm, first; Gunner Gawith, third; Jared Nally, fourth; Jake Rose, fifth.

Inform: Jared Nally, third.

SSA: Cameron McLaughlin, first.

Duet: Madi Gawith and Brady Rose, third.

IDA: Karly Kriss and Chace McNinch, fourth.

HSA: Gray Henry, first.

Dighton - Feb. 3 Second Place

Prose: Gray Henry, third; Amanda Barnum, fifth.

Poetry: Hannah Matchell, second; Sunee Creighton, fourth.

Serious Solo Acting: Cami McLaughlin, third.

Humorous Solo Acting: Gray Henry, first; Tomi Miller, fourth.

Informative Speaking: Chace McNinch, second; Jared Nally, fifth.

Original Oratory: Rachel Lamm, third; Kate Ostmeier, fourth.

Extemporaneous Speaking: Rachel Lamm, second; Jake Rose, third; Gunner Gawith, fourth.

Duet Acting: Gunner Gawith and Jake Rose, sixth.

Hill City - Feb. 6 Second Place

Poetry: Christina Ostmeier, second; Gabby Brown, third.

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Briefly

Kiwanis egg hunt Saturday

The Colby Kiwanis Club will hold their annual Easter egg hunt at 10 a.m. Saturday at Fike Park. Kids three and under will start at 10 a.m.; 4-6 years old, 10:10 a.m.; and 7-9 years old, 10:20 a.m. For information, call Scott Haas at 460-3922.

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 at college

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.

Series highlights Lent season

Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ, will be the final speaker for the Thomas County Ministerial Association's *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* on Wednesday. Come to the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 545 W. Fourth St. Call 462-6342 for information.

Grant deadline Wednesday

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.

Enroll at Puddle Duck Thursday

Puddle Duck Preschool will hold an enrollment open house for the 2010-2011 school year from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday 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.

School meeting Thursday

The Colby School District will hold a community meeting on at 6 p.m. Thursday, in the Colby High School Commons. Superintendent Terrell Harrison said the purpose of this meeting is to write letters to state legislators regarding school funding. Several staff members will be available to assist with writ-

ing letters. They will have current information from the Legislature and sample letters for reference. For information, call Harrison at 460-5000.

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 at the hospital. 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.

