



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## County told gas prices will stay low

By Vera Sloan

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The good news for the Thomas County commissioners on Wednesday was that natural gas prices are still low, and as far as his company could see, there seemed to be no immediate reasons for the county to lock in a price for gas service for the year.

Eric Heath, a representative of the gas supply firm Oneok, told commissioners 2009 had the lowest price index for gas in recent years and that prices this year remain "in a bearish market." Gas in storage is about 8 percent over where it was this time last year, he said, and the supply looks strong.

"If we see any disruption of supply," he said, "it can affect the pricing, and I will let you know if we see any changes."

Economic Development Director Rick Patrick presented a change in the organizations bylaws to the commissioners for their approval.

The changes came about, he said, after the board realized its bylaws were not clear on giving notice to members and the public about board meetings. The group felt the notice requirement should be spelled out in the bylaws, he said, but before the change can take effect, it must be approved by the commissioners, the City Council and the state attorney general. The commissioners moved to approve the changes.

The new rule requires the board to give the public notice of all meetings as well as board members. Board members can waive a three-day notice for an emergency meeting.

A letter from Dan Bourquin, owner of Bourquin's Old Depot Campground, questioned whether the county was in competition with private business when it rents camper parking spaces at the fairground.

Bourquin noted that the camper

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

These young women weren't caged; they were just having a bunch of fun in the inflatable jumping game, one of many that students from Thomas County middle and high schools got to experience at the Colby Community Building on Wednesday.

## Missionary group teaches good choices

By Vera Sloan

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This was a busy week for middle school and high school students in Rexford, Brewster and Colby, when all of the schools had programs by members of the 7 Project, a missionary group that is an arm of the Assemblies of God.

The project offers assemblies to schools with a program directed at helping teens make "good choices" in life, said Hans Krohn, youth pastor at Colby's College Drive Assembly of God.

Each school chooses six topics for its assembly, including bullying, integrity, alcohol, drugs, abstinence, peer pressure and other choices students face today.

Schools and students are told when they sign up for the 7 Project that the end of the project, an evening session, will have a re-



It takes a lot of pizza and soda to fill up 270 teenagers and enough adults to ride herd on them. Here, Steve Todd, pastor of the College Drive Assembly of God, helped replenish the ever-dwindling supply of soda.

ligious content, Krohn said, and that is where the seventh choice comes in: accepting salvation through Jesus Christ.

The program in Kansas, said Melissa Krohn of the Colby

church, is directed by Travis DuMont from Wichita, a former youth pastor who serves as a missionary to youth. He travels with a team of six and tries to reach eight schools throughout the state each year. The program was in Thomas County schools five years ago.

About 270 students gathered in the Colby Community Building on Wednesday night for games, pizza, prizes that included three flat-screen televisions, and ended with the message of salvation.

"It was a great success," said Hans Krohn. "We were thrilled to have so many young people take part in coming together, wanting to know how to make good choices. It would not all have been possible without the cooperation of the businesses and churches who were so generous with their support and their prayers for the success of the event."

## Native opera star to perform here

International opera star and Colby native Sam Ramey is coming to town Sunday, April 11, for a Western Plains Art Association performance at 3 p.m. at the Colby Community Building.

Ramey, accompanied by pianist Warren Jones, will sing selections from Aaron Copland, Cole Porter, George Gershwin and other composers.

Association ticket holders will be seated first, and if there is room, general admission tickets will be available 10 minutes before the performance.

There will be a public reception

with refreshments downstairs after the show.

Ramey is a 1960 graduate of Colby High School who studied music at Kansas State and Wichita State universities. He began his singing career at the Santa Fe Opera before finding success with the New York City Opera in 1973. Since then he has performed all over the world in hundreds of productions, including "Carmen," "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Faust."

When not on the road, he lives in Chicago and teaches at Roosevelt University.

## Candidate brings 'Mann Plan' to Colby in campaign visit

By Kevin Bottrell

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Tracey Mann, a Salina real estate salesman and candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, stopped briefly in Colby on Thursday to promote a plan he says will put the country "back on track."

Mann said he is in the middle of a 22-county tour, hitting cities from Council Grove to Lyons, Hoisington and Lakin, as well as Colby. The tour is serving as a way to unveil his "Mann Plan," which he said presents some specific things he would do or support if elected.

Mann, a Republican, said he will release the plan in written form next week, but gave a few examples:

Health care issues, especially the health-care bill recently signed by President Barack Obama, form a large part of the plan, he said. Mann proposes repealing the Obama bill, saying that while it does expand coverage, it does nothing to reduce cost. Costs and coverage are the two biggest issues in health care, Mann said, and he would like to see a plan that improves both.

Mann said he opposes cuts to Medicare included in the bill, since a large percentage of patients in the 1st District are on Medicare.

"To take money out of that program is to put a lot of pressure on rural hospitals," he said.

Mann said "tort reform," making it harder to sue doctors, should be a part of any health-care package. Many hospital administrators he has spoken with have told him they spend as much as 30 percent of their budgets on "defensive" medicine - extra tests designed to avoid the threat of a lawsuit - and malpractice insurance.

The plan also proposes letting insurance coverage cross state lines. The increased competition, he said, would reduce consumer costs.

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Tracey Mann was hard to miss Thursday as he passed through Colby in his brightly decorated sport utility vehicle. Mann, a candidate for Congress in the 1st District from Salina, came to town as part of a 22-county campaign tour.

## Briefly

### Landfill changes hours

The Thomas County Landfill has changed to summer hours. It will be open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, except for Easter, when it will be closed. For information, call 462-8139.

### Church to hold pancake feed

The Colby Berean Church will hold a pancake-and-sausage feed from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building. Donations will be accepted to help pay for an upcoming mission trip to India. For information, call Jim Myers at 462-9665.

### Church Easter egg hunt Sunday

The College Drive Assembly of God church will hold an Easter egg hunt for children 10 and under from 1 to 2:15 p.m. Sunday at the church, on the corner of College Drive and Franklin Avenue. Doors

will open for registration at 12:45 p.m. Children under 5 must be accompanied by an adult. For information, call the church office at 462-8234.

### Chronic disease classes offered

Citizens Medical Center is offering six weeks of free classes to help people with chronic diseases such as arthritis, diabetes or asthma optimize their lives for healthy living. Classes will be from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. beginning Monday in the board room at the hospital. For information or to reserve a seat, call Courtney McCarty or Jeanene Brown at (785) 460-4849.

### Visit kindergarten Tuesday

Colby Grade School will have visitation for incoming kindergarteners and parents at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Colby Grade School Auditorium. For information, call the school at 460-5100.

### Get prom dresses next week

There will be a spring formal dress sale from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday at the First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. Proceeds will go to Genesis Thomas County food bank and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. For information, call Sue Draper at 460-6332.

### Childbirth classes start Thursday

Citizens Medical Center's four-week series of childbirth education classes has been delayed a week. They will be from 7 to 10 p.m. beginning Thursday at the hospital for women who are due to deliver before August. There is a \$50 fee for materials. For information, call Jeanene Brown in the hospital's education department at (785) 460-4850.

### City Council meeting moved

Tuesday's meeting of the Colby City Council has

been moved to the Little Theater in the basement of the Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St., because the council is expecting high attendance for the Embark loan public hearing. The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. as usual. For information, call City Hall at 460-4400.

### Kindergarten program Thursday

The Colby Grade School kindergarten will present "A Day in the County" at 7 p.m. Thursday in the grade school auditorium. For information, call Jennifer Koel at 460-5100.



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