



10 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Thursday

April 22, 2010

Volume 121, Number 63

Serving Thomas County since 1888

Pool design unveiled for council

By Andy Heintz
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The Colby City Council got a glimpse of what the new pool complex will look like at its meeting Tuesday.

Kevin McElyea from Aquatic Design Consultants displayed a model of the pool on a computer projector during the meeting at City Hall. McElyea is one of the lead designers on the project.

The model featured a recreational complex with a "lazy river" float area, a speed slide, an inner-tube slide and an obstacle course. It will have a general-purpose pool for aerobics classes and swim meets.

The whole complex centers

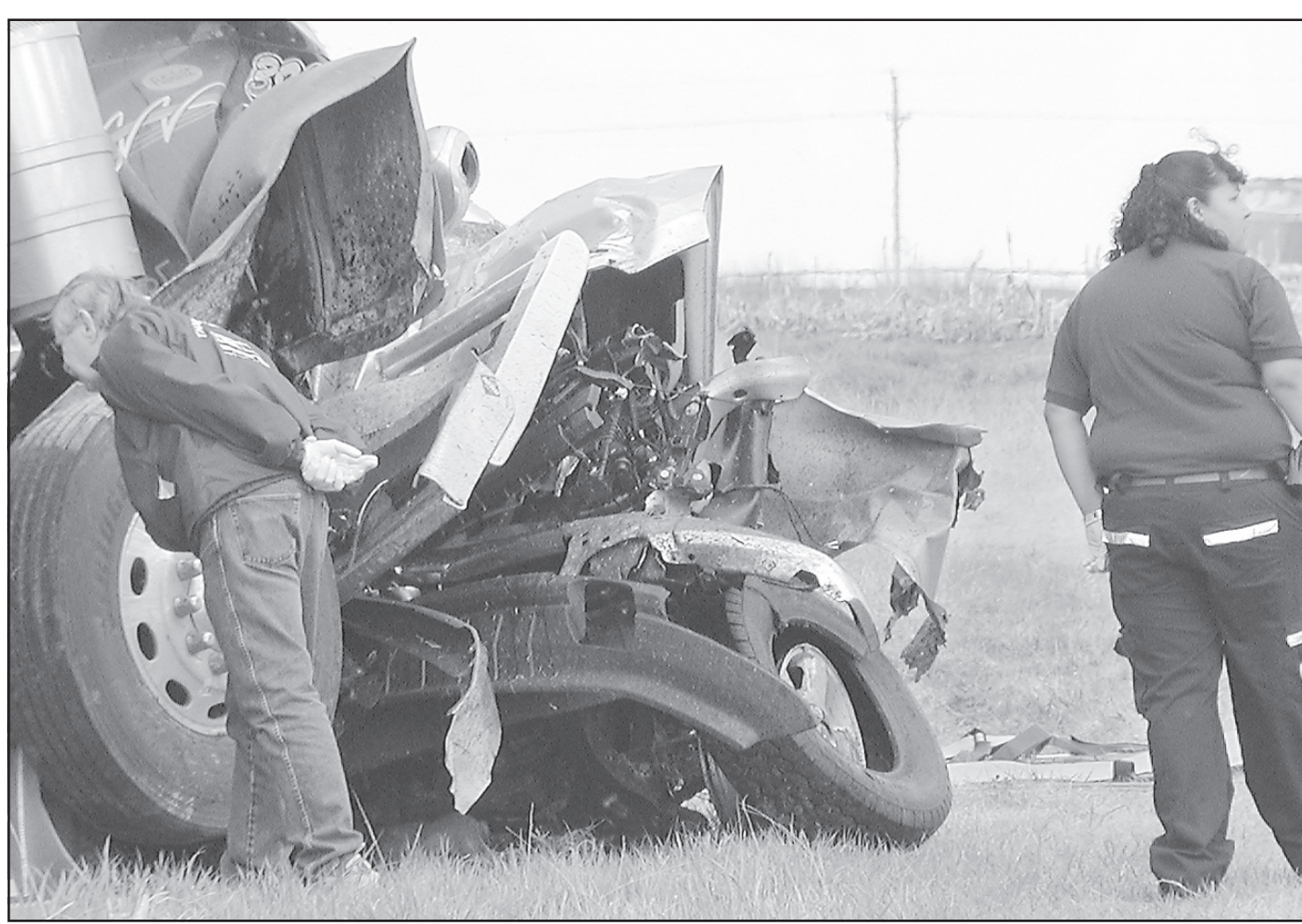
around an "oasis" theme, fitting in with Colby's slogan, "The Oasis on the Plains," McElyea said. The design features a fake monkey and lizard that spray water.

The landscaped areas have different types of grasses and artificial palm trees. There is a slide for toddlers designed like a toucan with an open mouth. The kid slide itself will look like the bird's tongue, McElyea said.

The shallow end of the "zero-depth entry" pool which is connected to the lazy river, has replica fish that spray water. Zero-Entry means people can just walk into the pool without having to use a ladder or stairs, McElyea said.

There are also some extras to

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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Officers investigated a fatal crash Wednesday afternoon just east of Gem on U.S. 83. A team from the Kansas Highway Patrol took measurements and collected evidence to recreate the accident.

Twenty-eight Colby musicians headed to state

By Joey Nichols
Colby High School

It has been a busy time for the Colby High School music department. With the changing of the seasons comes a plethora of activity for the students.

On Saturday, March 27, the high school took more than 50 students, comprising 36 solo and ensemble acts, to Decatur Community High School in Oberlin for the Regional Solo and Ensemble Music Festival. Students or groups who receive a I rating at this level move on to the state festival. Colby students got I

ratings in 12 events.

These 12 events involve 28 students, who will be heading to State Solo and Ensemble Festival in Andover on Friday and Saturday.

Colby High hosted the State Large Group Music Festival last Thursday. It was an all-day event at the school with 15 choirs and 12 bands, including St. Francis, Holcomb, Dighton and Northern Valley in Almena.

The high school band will have its spring concert at 7:30 p.m.

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Driver killed in accident east of Gem

A 58-year-old Mankato man was killed Wednesday when his truck ran under the front of a semi-trailer on U.S. 83 on the curve just east of Gem.

Trooper Jason Duffey of the Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Michial G. Grove died at 1:04 p.m. Wednesday at mile 173, about nine miles east and two miles north of Colby.

The first person to report the crash to the Colby dispatch office said it was at the Nine-Mile corner, the intersection of U.S. 83 and U.S. 24, but there was no accident there when officers and firemen arrived. They found the wreck north on U.S. 83 just past the Gem curve.

Duffey's report said Groves' 2010 Ford pickup was southbound on U.S. 83 when it sideswiped a 2001 Peterbilt truck. The pickup then

struck a 2010 Peterbilt truck head on, the report said. Both trucks and the pickup came to rest in the east ditch.

The 2010 truck was driven by Jeffrey J. Thompson, 46, from Minden, Neb. He was not injured. All the vehicles involved in the accident were towed to Butch's Body Shop.

Grove's body was taken to the Kersenbrock Funeral Home after inspection by the district coroner.

Duffey said it took several hours to clear the area because the patrol's Critical Highway Accident Response Team had to do a forensic map of the scene. Trooper Terry Kummer, who does collision reconstruction for the team, said the unit does a scale diagram to locate all the evidence and reconstruct a timeline of the accident, helping officers figure out exactly what happened.



Thomas County Sheriff Rod Taylor inspected one of the wrecked trucks at the curve east of Gem on Wednesday. The sheriff's office, along with the Highway Patrol and the Colby Fire Department, worked the accident.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

There was a good reason for this cottonmouth snake to be under glass when he went on display Wednesday at the Kids Conservation Roundup: it's very poisonous. Brian Bartels of the Sternberg Museum told kids to be aware of what species of snakes are in their area.

Kids learn about wildlife, conservation at area 'Roundup'

By Vera Sloan
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Over 300 fourth and fifth graders from eight area counties tramped into the Colby Community Building on Wednesday for the fourth annual Kids Conservation Roundup, clutching brown-bag lunches for a day long event.

Sponsored by the Northwest Kansas Conservation and Environmental Alliance, the hands-on workshops featured segments on wetlands, range land, reptiles, recycling, skins and skulls, "water jeopardy," forestry, a stream bank trailer, "CO2 tag-green house gases" and global warming, and weather.

Colby students walked from the grade school, offering a chance to

see some nature on the way. Most of the wildlife seemed to be on the sidewalks, though.

Twenty-minute sessions on each topic drew presenters from the Sternberg Museum at Fort Hays State University, Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development, the state Forest Service, the National Weather Service office in Goodland, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and county conservation workers from eight counties.

The reptile workshop, with Brian Bartels, education director at the Sternberg, was a popular place with his live snake specimens.

Bartels told the kids that they needed to be aware of what snakes live in their part of the state and have a healthy respect for them.

The definition of dumb, he said,

is to pick up a snake.

He told the group that snakes are good for the environment because of all the insects and rodents they eat, and it's best to just leave them alone if you see one.

Students got to pass around pelts of bobcats, badgers and other furry animals native to this part of the state in the Skins and Skulls workshop. Many were surprised to learn how many furbearers actually live here. They also learned how to identify species of deer by their antlers.

Matt Bain a state wildlife biologist, showed the kids a pelt from a cottontail rabbit. He told them there are many different kinds of rabbits, but the long-eared jack-rabbit common here is actually a

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Briefly

Community gardeners needed

A meeting for anyone who wants to help with a proposed community garden is scheduled for 5:30 to 6 p.m. Monday at Pioneer Memorial Library. For information, call Orvella Romine at 460-8177.

Offices to close for lunch

The Thomas County Clerk's office and the county road and bridge department will be closed during the noon hour for the rest of April because of software training. Both departments will conduct business from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Scouts looking for faded Glory

Bring your tattered, torn and faded Old Glory to the Pioneer Memorial Library through Friday, April 30. As part of its U.S. flag disposal drive, Colby Girl Scout Troop 165 reminds everyone that flags should

be disposed of if they are torn, dirty, no longer rectangular, faded or in general disrepair. For information, call Katherine Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer at 460-3298.

Baseball signup Sunday

Boys 12 and under can sign up for summer baseball at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Colby Recreation Fields. Kids must be under 12 before July 31. For information, call Shawn Curry at 443-0289 or Brian Quagliano at 443-0226.

Methodists to walk for hunger

To help fight world hunger, the Colby United Methodist Church is sponsoring a "Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty," or CROP Walk, at 2 p.m. Sunday at Fike Park. Participants will walk around the park for donations. For information, call the church office at 460-2761.

4-H to show dogs Sunday

The Thomas County 4-H Dog Obedience group will hold a spring dog show at 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the Heartland Christian School gym. For information, call the Thomas County Extension office at (785) 460-4582.

Trooper to teach self defense

Colby Community College is offering a self defense class at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Room 106 of the Student Union, taught by Trooper Tod Hileman of the Kansas Highway Patrol. The Thomas County Farm Bureau will provide refreshments and door prizes. For information, call Shanda Mattix at 460-5464.

Heartland program Thursday

Heartland Christian School will have its spring music program at 7 p.m. next Thursday in the school gym, featuring the school's bands and choirs. Pre-

concert music by Heartland students will begin at 6:30. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Brewster offers garden training

The Brewster Recreation Department and the K-State Extension Master Gardeners will offer landscape training sessions at 7 p.m. the next two Thursday at Hunter Hall in Brewster: this week, Kansas Healthy Yards and Communities by Extension agent Dana Belshe, and May 6, Trees for Northwest Kansas by Jim Strine, state forester. For information, call the Sherman County Extension office at (785) 890-4880.



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