



Two-year-old fine catches up to county

By Vera Sloan
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A goof-up two years ago on a sale of the chemical Rozol, prairie dog bait, has come back to bite the county in the ankle.

Clair Schrock, who heads up the road and the noxious weed departments, said that according to state law, a farmer must become licensed to buy and apply farm chemicals, and the county weed department must see proof of licensing before letting the materials out of their hands for sale to the applicator.

In past years, he said, the county weed director had followed what

seemed like a workable plan allowing a family member or neighbor to pick up the chemicals as a matter of convenience, if the person applying the chemical couldn't make it to the county weed department to pick it up himself.

The law states the person owning the license must pick up the chemical and the purchase, along with the license number, is recorded for verification.

Two years ago the county weed department was audited. When the auditor checked the sales against the licenses, he discovered an error showing that the applicator's license had been expired for about a month at the time of the sale which was made to the applica-

tor's brother.

The county at that time hadn't received the updated list of who had current licenses and who didn't, which arrived four days after the audit occurred. Also, the auditor for the Environmental Protection Agency didn't show proper credentials, but did return to the county several months later with credentials in hand to redo the audit so that the findings could go through the EPA.

The county didn't learn until recently that a \$7,150 fine had been imposed on the weed department for the error, plus fees and penalties for late payment.

See "FINE," Page 3

Legislature leaves issue on the table as session ends

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas legislators left the Statehouse this week having taken care of the state budget, taxes and a new transportation plan.

But one major issue was left unattended.

Lawmakers failed to appropriate the state's share of payments to local governments and utilities for the costs of previous natural disasters.

The money, estimated at more than \$25 million, represents the state match that is required under

federal law. A large portion is owed to rural electric cooperatives who experienced significant damage to their infrastructure by winter weather.

Legislators discussed the payments, but nothing was included in the 2011 budget.

Kansas could still make payments in \$10 million increments if approved by the state finance council later in the year.

2010 classes set to graduate

Graduation season is here. Golden Plains High School graduated 22 seniors Sunday. Eighth-grade graduation was Tuesday.

Valedictorians were twins Isaac and Jonathan Broeckelman and Shaun Gilbert. Michael Roehl was the salutatorian and speaker.

Colby Community College will hold its commencement ceremony at 2 p.m. Saturday in the Community Building.

Jessica Swank, winner of this year's Moser Award for outstanding students, will speak. The college will also recognize an outstanding faculty member, which will remain a surprise until Saturday.

The nurses' pinning ceremony will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Community Building.

Colby High School graduation ceremony will be at 3 p.m. Sunday in the Community Building. Baccalaureate will be at 1:30 p.m. at the same place.

Former sixth-grade science teacher Arnold Schrag will speak. Valedictorians are Gray Henry, Collin Rous, Anna Juene-mann, Kalen Rasmussen and Jacob Rose. Salutatorians are Keesa Wright and Jacob Huffles.

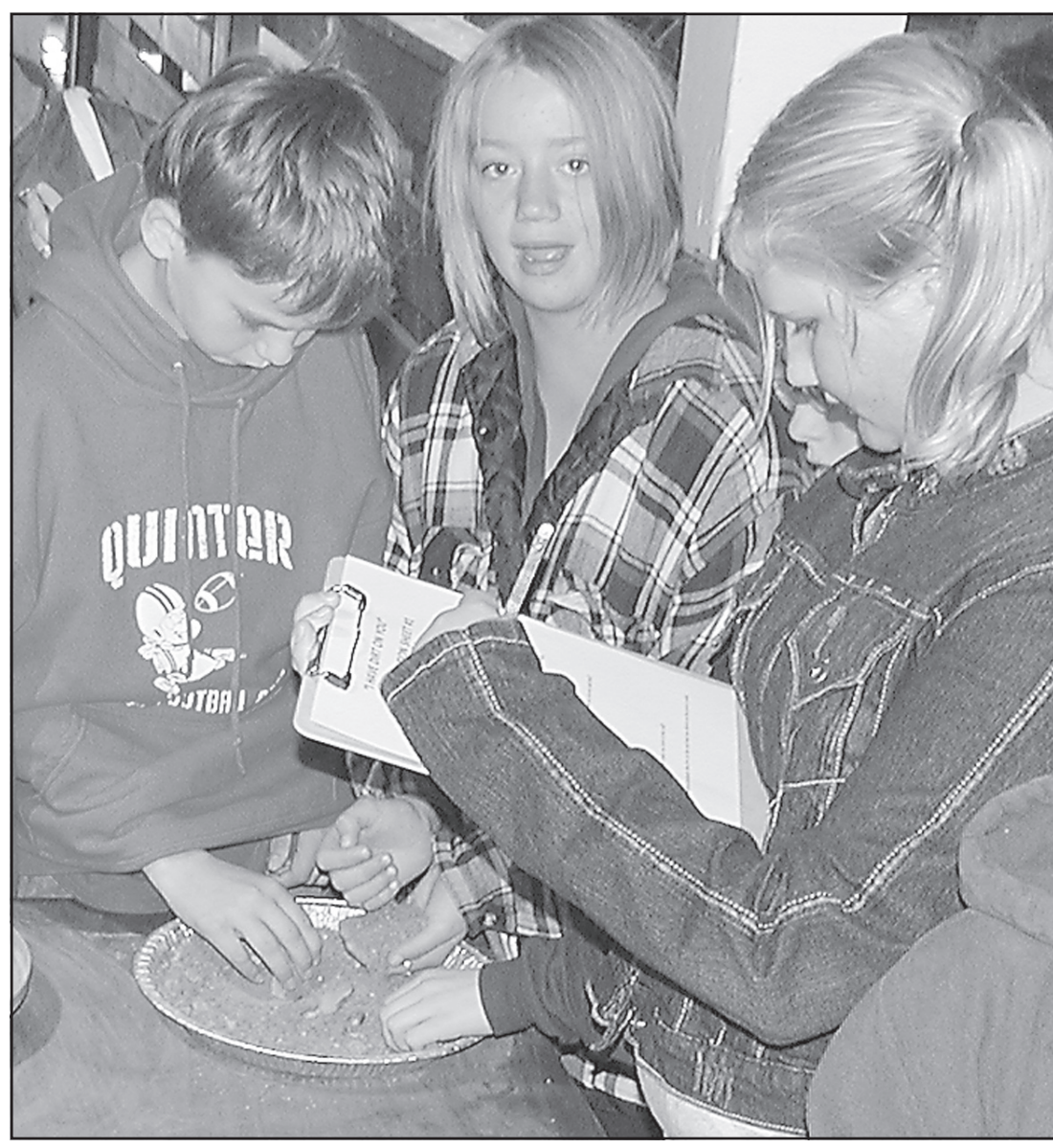
Heartland Christian School will graduate six seniors at 4 p.m. Saturday in the school gym. Pastor Gene Rothfuss of the Colby Wesleyan Church will speak. The valedictorian is his daughter, Mysti Rothfuss, and the salutatorian is Mary Beth Myers.

Brewster High Schools' seniors will graduate at 4 p.m.



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School
Michael Roehl received his diploma at the Golden Plains High School graduation Sunday. Michael, the son of Tammy and Larry Roehl of Rexford, delivered the salutatorian address at the ceremony.

Saturday in the school gym. Baccalaureate will be at 2 p.m. at the Our Savior Lutheran Church. Former superintendent Sherri Edmondson will speak. Eighth grade graduation will be at 4 p.m. Sunday in the Brewster School gym.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

These kids from Quinter were among the 350 students from six schools who got to experience first hand, the differences in soil and the desirable and undesirable textures that need good conservation practices. The kids got to put their hands in the dirt and learned to recognize the differences in poor and good soil. The Natural Resources Conservation Service hosts area schools each year to plant seeds of knowledge about conservation to young people.

Students get hands dirty

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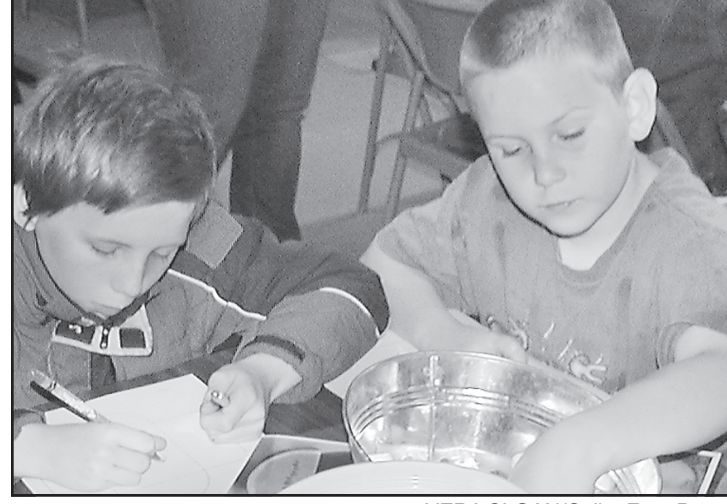
Students from Quinter, Atwood, St. Francis, Heartland, Colby and Rexford started their day on Friday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History and Colby Community College to learn how to take care of their planet by becoming aware of what makes the soils good, and how to keep it good.

Third, fourth, fifth, and a few sixth graders got to get their hands in the dirt and feel the textures, learn about organic matter, and see first hand how and why some soils hold water and why some soils don't.

They learned that one shovel of dirt can be full of life, with a variety of 14 living things that make their home in the soil, and that millions of microscopic single-celled organisms called nematodes eat bacteria in the soil. They were told that although we are surrounded by soil there is a lot about the soil that we don't know yet.

And that's just a sample of what students learned. They did hands-on demonstrations with different soil types and timed how long it took for water to filter through, and learned what helps keep plants alive when there is a shortage of rain.

"What they learn in the classroom in their curriculum, they will now be able to tie to something real, after they take part in these lessons today," said Duane Cheney, of the Western Prairie Regional Conservation and De-



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

These two young men look pretty intent on making seed packets. They got to fill the packets with vegetable seeds to plant. Students learned that healthy kids eat healthy foods that are grown in good soil.

velopment office, who was on hand to help kids with some of the hands-on projects.

Students were told that we sometimes take soil for granted, but that good soil is a treasure. They were handed a study sheet of fun facts and puzzles with statistics about the United States, where they learned the United States covers 2,250,000,000 acres of land, but only 41 percent of it is used for farmland, only 45,000,000 acres are ideally suited for growing crops, and the rest requires careful management and irrigation.

The kids were encouraged to always take care of the soil because erosion occurs through rain and wind, so keeping it covered with plants helps to conserve it. They learned that during one heavy rain an acre of

bare soil can lose 1,000 times as much soil as an acre that is covered with plants, and that plant cover increases organic matter.

Andy Burr, from the county soil conservation office took groups of students up on the berm surrounding the museum where they broadcast native grass seed, and the kids trampled it into the soil.

"It normally takes a couple of years for the grass to appear," Burr said, "but when it does, it will eventually choke out undesirable plants and weeds, and in the mean time, the museum staff will hit the area with some broad leaf herbicide and do a little weed management and control while waiting for the native grasses to come up."

See "DIRTY," Page 3

Briefly

Register for youth program now

Registration is still open students in fourth through eighth grades for the free Youth Chautauqua Camp June 1-5 at the Prairie Museum. The camp, presented by Drs. Joyce Thierer and Ann Birney of "Ride into History," will offer kids a chance to research and then portray Thomas County personalities from the 1930s under the tent on the Chautauqua stage. Call the museum at 460-4590 for information.

Methodists plan youth camp

The Colby United Methodist Church will have enrollment for its Summer Youth Program from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at the church. The program, for children age 3 through sixth grade, will run Monday to Wednesday each week from June 7 to July 7. For information, call the church at 460-2761.

Expert to talk about diabetes

Dr. Phillip Challans of Wichita will give a free diabetes update at 7:30 p.m. next Thursday at Citizens Medical Center. Challans is taking over for Dr. Richard Guthrie, who is unable to be here. For information, call Jeanene Brown, director of education, at 460-4850.

High school teams selling meals

The Colby High School forensics and debate teams are selling tickets for their Celebrity Servers fund raiser Saturday, May 22, at Montana Mike's. Tickets are \$15 for either a center-cut sirloin dinner or a grilled chicken dinner. Part of the ticket and all tips will go to the teams for their trip to the National Championships on May 28. For information, call coach Nancy Rundel at 460-5300.

Class will prepare for college

The Colby Community College adult education department is offering a free college preparation class, "Math Review and Other Stuff Too," Tuesdays and Thursdays in June. In addition to math, the class will include basic technology skills, writing, test-taking strategies, study techniques and problem solving. Director Nance Munderloh said the class will help both graduating high school students and adults going back to school. For information, call Munderloh at 460-4663.

Golf club plans tournament

A one-couple golf tournament to raise money for Meadow Lake Golf Club will begin at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, May 23, at the course, 1085 E. Golf Club Drive in Colby. Registration will be at 10 a.m., with tee-off at 10:30. Cost is \$60 per couple. Cart rental

is available, and lunch and snacks will be provided. Call the club at (785) 460-6443.

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.

