



COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Thursday

July 8, 2010
Volume 121, Number 105
Serving Thomas County since 1888

8 pages



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Gossen Harvesting parked their trucks, combines and trailers at the Thomas County Fairgrounds while waiting to get into the field this week. Roger Hale, of the Colby Harvest Office said the 22-man Gossen crew has the distinction of having the most equipment of any of the crews in town this year. One 20-combine crew split their operation before coming to Thomas County.

Rain keeps good wheat crop in the field

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwks.com

Between an inch and a half and two inches of rain Sunday night and early Monday morning brought an abrupt halt to harvest, but by late afternoon on Tuesday, some combines were rolling again.

Another shower of rain, cool temperatures and high humidity Wednesday morning put another stop to a harvest the farmers are anxious to see in the bin.

Test weights, moisture content and even protein are making the 2010 harvest one to remember, after damaging hail cut into over 77,000 acres of Thomas County's wheat crop last year. Although scattered fields have been completely harvested, the wheat harvest hasn't progressed far enough yet to say it is in full swing throughout the county.

The Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service is reporting about 84 percent of wheat across the state has been harvested.

Eric Sperber, manager for Corn-



Waiting for the wheat to dry down can be compared to watching paint dry when you're on a harvest crew. The Gossen Harvesters, from Corn, Okla., started harvesting in the Colby area in 1944.

nerstone Ag east of Colby, said the average test weight has been 61.4 with some loads coming

in testing as high as 64 pounds. "Even the moisture content has been fairly

good at the beginning of the harvest," Sperber said, "with the average being 12.4 percent. We

haven't gotten anything considered to be extremely dry, like in the low 10's, but most is coming in around 11 to 13 percent. The average dockage is a low .9 percent, which is good."

Dockage is from foreign matter in the wheat such as chaff, and jointed goat grass.

Protein levels aren't running as low as the industry had predicted, Sperber noted, and the need for higher protein has come down a little, which has brought up the price.

"We were glad to see a 20-cent raise in the cash market Tuesday, and now we're bumping up against \$4 for cash wheat," he said.

There's more rain in the forecast. The National Weather Service is predicting a 30 percent chance of rain showers this afternoon and evening after 1 p.m. Friday. Saturday will be mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of isolated thunderstorms Saturday night, Sunday and Monday.

With a little luck and a few warm days, harvest 2010 will soon be history.

County commissioners named in health firm foreclosure suit

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwks.com

The Thomas County Commissioners learned last Wednesday, that they have been named in a pending foreclosure suit by the City of Colby against Embark Health, Inc. Since the county collects property tax, the commissioners are automatically named in any pending action regarding real estate. The city is suing to collect on loans made to Embark regarding a downtown building as an office and call center for the firm, which planned to sell end-of-life services on the Internet.

Because the commissioners had not yet had a chance to read the legal papers Wednesday, concerning the City of Colby vs. Embark, a pending foreclosure over non payment of a loan, they were unable to discuss the matter.

When it's budget time for the county there are always requests from many agencies for tax money, and Monday's meeting was more of the same.

A Fair Board request for \$83,450 for the 2011 budget generated discussion that would not favor that kind of money for the new budget. The conversation was that since the fair board has money in a money market account, and the county is trying to keep the expenditures within reason, they discussed keeping the 2011 figure of \$35,000 the same as last year.

"The laws regarding alcohol tax money state that money from the tax can be used for public parks, and the fairgrounds qualify for being a public park, I believe," said Commissioner Paul Steele, "so I think we can give the Fair Board \$10,000 from that fund, and \$25,000 from the mill levy for their budget." No definite decisions were made until final budget figures are set the end of July.

The Thomas County Economic Development Alliance asked for \$55,556, the same as last year. The commissioners put it in the stack of requests, saying they will take it under consideration as they sort through the budget.

Kristi Mann, assistant deputy county clerk, presented a proposal for the commissioners for four to eight notebook computers for election time. The computers, with 90 percent paid for by the federal Helping America Vote Act, would allow the county to cut down on the numbers of poll workers and would add instant access to information, making it possible to scan a driver's license if there is a question on a voter's identity.

See "SUIT," Page 3

Candidate talks education, health care

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwks.com

Congressional candidate Tracey Mann stopped in Colby on Tuesday, June 29, and spoke to a few lunch stragglers at Smoffee's.

Mann, who has recently surged to second place in the polls, was on the beginning leg of his "Restoring the American Dream" tour. The tour, he said, is highlighting three things from Mann's eponymous "Mann Plan" that will help restore the American Dream.

First is health care. Mann said he is in favor of repealing the recent comprehensive health care legislation. Some of the provisions should be kept in place, he said, such as coverage for those with pre-existing conditions and allowing kids to stay on parents' insurance longer. However, Mann would like to see legislation to reduce legal costs, allow insurance plans to cross state lines and make it easier to recruit physicians.

Second is the national debt. Mann said the country needs to stop spending and decrease its debt to make sure that future gen-

**ELECTION
2010**

erations are not shortchanged.

Seniors are especially concerned about cuts to Medicare and social security, he said, and whether they will still be around for their children and grandchildren. Mann said he had talked to hospital administrators around the district, some of whom told him that 80-90 percent of their patients are on Medicare.

Third is education. Mann said he would like to repeal the No Child Left Behind Act and move the emphasis away from standardized testing.

"I don't think it makes our students any better," he said.

Beyond those three areas, Mann said he would like to see fewer regulations in general to help businesses grow.

Mann said it is too early to have a reaction to the Gulf oil spill, and people should wait for the results

of the investigation before assigning blame.

"This is not the time to be reactionary," he said.

Mann said that while his campaign is doing television and direct mail ads, he also wanted to spread the word in person. He said he and his volunteers had knocked on 13,000 doors in three weeks.

Mann said it isn't too difficult for him to knock on strangers' doors. "If you can do five, you can do 105," he said. "It's also a great way to listen, to hear from people who wouldn't necessarily come out for a political event."

What he hears from people all around the 1st District, he said, is that people are fed up and tired with politicians in Washington. Mann said he would favor term limits for all elected positions.

"If they (term limits) are good enough for the presidency they should be good enough for everybody else," he said.

He said he wants people to stop re-electing career politicians and start electing people with business experience.

Briefly

Picnic, music Wednesday

Colby's Picnic in the Park lunch-and-concert series continues at noon Wednesday at Fike Park with entertainment by Sappa Strings. For information, call the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 460-3401 or the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643.

Volunteers needed for carnival

The Thomas County Amusement Association is looking for volunteers for the carnival at the Thomas County Free Fair from Tuesday, July 27 to Saturday, July 31. Shifts will be from 6:45 to 9 p.m. and from 9 to 11 p.m. Volunteers are needed for the prize booth, ring toss, baseball throw and ball of chance. For information or to volunteer, call Holly Whitaker at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 460-3401 or Angie Gaede at 443-3853.

State office to close for lunch

The Social and Rehabilitation Services office, 1135 S. County Club Dr., will close for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on weekdays until further notice. The office has previously been open during the lunch hour. For information, call the office at 462-6760.

Red Cross taking blood today

The Northwest Kansas Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from until 6 p.m. today at the Colby Community Building. To make an appointment, call (800) 733-2767. Walk-ins are welcome.

Street sealing postponed

The City of Colby Street Department street sealing project on Lue Drive, Brookside Drive, Eighth Street and Lynn Drive, all east of Thompson Avenue,

has been delayed by rain until Tuesday. Have your vehicles off the streets by 8 a.m. that day. For information, call Public Works Director Chris Bieker at (785) 460-4420.

Sign up for food by Monday

Prairie Land Food sign up is open until Monday at the State Farm Insurance office, 905 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be Saturday, July 24, at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 W. Sixth St. For information, call 460-3579.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Merle Wolfe's home, 880 E. Eighth St. Bring a dish to share. Table service and

beverage will be provided. For information, call the First Presbyterian Church at 462-6342 or Wolf at 460-3879.

Sign up for soccer this month

The American Youth Soccer Organization fall season will start in September. The organization will have early registration from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 15, and Thursday, July 22, at Pioneer Memorial Library. Registration is \$45 until Saturday, July 31, and \$50 after that. For information or to set up an alternate time to register, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3