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Advance voting open now

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
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Advance voting by mail is now open for the 2010 Primary Election.

County Clerk Shelly Harms said to call the county clerk's office at 460-4500 to request an application for an advance ballot.

Voters can also download an application in PDF, or portable document, format from the website

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votes.org. The application requires information such as name, address, ward or township and the voter's political party if affiliated.

For first-time voters, the application requires a driver's license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number. This is also required of first-time voters at the polls on Election Day.

Harms said Monday is the last day to register to vote before the primary. Register at the county courthouse or online at votes.org.

Advance voters have two weeks to request a ballot. All requests have to be into the clerk's office by Friday, July 30. The advance ballots need to be into the clerk's office by 7 p.m. Aug. 3.

Voters can also cast their ballots in person at the courthouse from 8 to 5 p.m. starting Tuesday. Harms said advance voting will close on Monday, Aug. 2, so her staff can go set up the polling place at the Colby Community Building.

The Kansas Democratic Party this year is opening up its primary to unaffiliated voters. A June release cited a decision by a Colorado federal court that allowed open primaries, where before they were limited to party members and those independents who said they would change affiliation. The Republican primary is still closed to all but party voters.

"There's no excuse not to vote in Kansas," said Secretary of State Chris Biggs on Wednesday.



Brandon McLemore (center) and Brock Wagoner helped kick off Pickin' on the Plains with a jam session Thursday evening at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. The potluck meal and jam session drew about 100 people to the fairgrounds.

Pickin' on the Plains kicks off

The Pickin' on the Plains bluegrass festival began Thursday night with a potluck dinner and jam session at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

About 100 people showed up at the 4-H building, bringing watermelon, lasagna, pie and more before moving outside to hear the musicians jam.

The performances will start in earnest at 6 p.m. tonight with local favorites The McLemores, Larry Booth, Sappa Strings and the New Old Timers. Tonight's music will be capped by Cody Schuler and Pine Mountain Railroad, a bluegrass and gospel quintet.

Saturday will start with open stage time and workshops in the morning.

Mark Johnson, a banjo player from El Dorado, will teach a workshop on band performance and stage presence from 10 to 10:55 a.m. and one for banjo

Bands, workshops scheduled for weekend

Today
6-6:30 p.m. - The McLemores.
6:35-7 p.m. - Larry Booth.
7:15-7:45 p.m. - Sappa Strings.
7:55-8:25 - The New Old Timers.
8:35-9:20 - The Millers.
9:30-10:25 - Cody Schuler and Pine Mountain Railroad.
Saturday
9:30-11:40 a.m. - Open Stage.
10 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Workshops
11:45 a.m. to 12:25 p.m. - Larry Booth.

12:35-1:15 p.m. - High Atmosphere.
1:25-2:15 p.m. - Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper.
2:25-3:05 p.m. - The Martins.
3:15-3:55 p.m. - The New Old Timers.
4:05-4:55 p.m. - Cody Schuler and Pine Mountain Railroad.
5:10-5:50 p.m. - The Millers.
5:50-6:10 p.m. - Supper Break.
6:10-6:50p.m. - High Atmosphere.
7-7:40 p.m. - The Martins.
7:50-8:30 p.m. - The Millers.
8:40-9:30 p.m. - Cody Schuler

and Pine Mountain Railroad.
9:40-10:30 p.m. - Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper.
10:40-11:15 p.m. - The McLemores.

Sunday
9:30-11 a.m. - Cowboy Church and Gospel Sing-a-long.
11:10-11:55 a.m. - The Martins.
12:05-12:50 p.m. - Sappa Strings.
1-1:45 p.m. - High Atmosphere.
1:55-2:25 p.m. - McLemore Family.

players from noon to 12:55 p.m. Jenny Vaughn of Ozark Alliance will teach a mandolin workshop from 10 to 10:55 a.m. and one on fiddling from 11 to 11:55 a.m. Dale Martin of the Martins

will teach guitar also from 11 to 11:55 a.m. The workshops are included in the cost to enter the festival.

The music will continue Saturday afternoon with High At-

mosphere, a band from Colorado Springs making its fifth appearance at Pickin' on the Plains, followed by Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper. Cleveland, an award-winning fiddle player,

says he brought together some of the best musicians he could find for his band.

The Martins, a family band from Jefferson City, Mo., will take the stage after Cleveland's band. The Martins also performed at last year's festival. The Millers, another family band, will round out the evening. Music will continue after a supper break until 11:15 p.m.

A "cowboy church" service and gospel sing-a-long will start things off Sunday, with more music in the afternoon.

All of the bands perform several times throughout the weekend.

There's more than just music. Judy Kleinsorge and Pat Wolf will have a "make-and-take" craft project for kids from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday. The Colby Community College Art Department will be doing face painting

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Landfill suggests million-dollar idea

By Vera Sloan
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Landfill supervisor Larry Jumper had been asked by the Thomas County commissioners to study the cost of acquiring a trash burner, and he came back with a glowing report.

Just one catch: The kind he likes costs more than \$1 million.

"On this type of investment," Jumper told the commissioners, "you don't look at what it costs; you look at what it saves."

He said that the latest technology burns so hot, it sterilizes all ash, and is so efficient, it burns its own smoke, so there are no emissions. He said that anything that comes to the landfill could be totally disintegrated, including construction waste and concrete.

Tires and shingles are the exception, he said; these can't be burned, and tire still have to be sent to a company for shredding.

"The trash pit would last for generations, with no risk to the environment," he said, "but you'd want some kind of a guarantee for at least 20 years, or a lease to where if it broke down, you'd quit paying."

He noted that an incinerator at Norton County landfill has just been sitting there for quite some time and is of no use to the county because it is worn out. He said the cost of this latest technology would be only about \$10 a ton over a period of years, and that the processing cost of burying trash at the county landfill two years ago was \$60 a ton.

The commissioners thanked Jumper for his information, but said with the cost being over a million dollars, they thought they would pass on it.

Audit says schools can save

By John Milburn
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA - Auditors on Thursday presented the last in a series of reviews of Kansas school districts to lawmakers, suggesting there may be ways to make public education more efficient and less costly.

Three more audits were outlined for members of the Legislative Post Audit Committee, bringing the total to seven districts reviewed. Several areas surfaced in each of the audits that legislators say may help save state and local education dollars.

Among them are changes in how districts buy supplies, ar-

range their schedules and provide cell phones to teachers and staff.

What the audits didn't find was widespread misuse of state money or significant policy issues, said Sen. Terry Bruce, a Hutchinson Republican who's chairman of the committee.

"I think one thing it might be able to do, on a student-funding-formula basis, is help the Legislature when it has to make a decision on what is a necessary expense and what the local district ought to pick up," Bruce said.

Programs up for consideration might include all-day kindergarten or breakfast for students before school, he said.

"We're seeing some trends," he

added.

Bruce said it was coincidental that the audits were launched at the same time districts have seen their budgets cut by as much as 5 percent over the past two years as state revenues slumped.

"It's really for their benefit," he said. "It's not only going to help these school districts, but help others to see what they need to be looking for in savings."

The three audits were for the Concordia, Riley County and Clifton-Clyde districts. Their superintendents said the districts volunteered for the reviews to get an outside perspective on their fi-

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Briefly

Volunteers needed for carnival

The Thomas County Amusement Association is looking for volunteers for the home-owned carnival at the Thomas County Free Fair from Tuesday to Saturday, July 27 to 31. Shifts are from 6:45 to 9 p.m. and 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.

Family to talk about Africa trips

The First Presbyterian Church in Colby plans a potluck reception and presentation by Tim, Rebekah, Andrew and Lydia Peterson about their trip to Tanzania at 4 p.m. Sunday at the church. The Petersons also will talk about the history of Christian missions in Tanzania. For information, call the Rev. George T.

Rahn at (785) 443-2632.

Commodities available Monday

U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities will be distributed from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program office in the Senior Progress Center. Anyone who's eligible may come and get food first-come, first-served. Commodities include instant milk, apricots, beans, apple juice, potato flakes, beef stew, cream of mushroom soup and carrots. For information, call the volunteer program office at 462-6744.

Hospital plan diabetes class

Citizens Medical Center will hold a free "Journey for Control" class for people with diabetes from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the hospital. The class will use a "conversation map" to encourage people to be en-

gaged in managing diabetes. Class size is limited, so register now. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown in the education department at (785) 460-4850.

Picnic, music again Wednesday

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

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 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. Registration is \$45

until Saturday, July 31, and \$50 after. For information or to set up an alternate time to register, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.

Leadership group class open

Applications are available for the Leadership Thomas County program, set for four Wednesdays in September and October. Participants will learn 21st century leadership skills and an increased awareness of the county and state, with an opportunity to attend the Kansas Leadership Center in Wichita. The application deadline is next Friday. For information or an application, stop by the Colby Chamber of Commerce office or call Leilani Thomas at 460-7643.

