



10 pages

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## Morrison holds onto seat in primary

By Andy Heintz

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Jim Morrison

State Rep. Jim Morrison of Colby, who has held the 121st District House seat since 1992, said he feels blessed to be able to serve for two more years.

The veteran representative defeated challenger Brenda McCants of Goodland in the Republican primary on Tuesday, and goes into the

general election unopposed. The unofficial results gave Morrison 2,382 votes, or 63 percent of the overall total, to McCants' 1,396, or 37 percent.

In Thomas County, he had 996 votes and McCants 428; in McCants' home Sherman County, Morrison nearly won, with 584 to McCants' 601. The district also includes Sheridan and Graham counties.

The veteran representative said he had

mixed emotions about the race. He said McCants is "a good friend." He said she had congratulated him this morning, adding that she was one of the only opponents who had ever bothered to do this.

"She's a very gracious person," McCants said. "We both ran a clean campaign."

Morrison has said this will be his last race. One of the main things he wants to do in his final two years in office is to make sure the cable companies and telephone carriers make good on their prom-

ise to bring high speed Internet to the four counties.

McCants said she was disappointed with the results, but she complimented her supporters for running an excellent campaign. She went out of her way to thank Sue Evans from Colby, campaign treasurer; Ron Vignery, a Goodland lawyer who was campaign chairman; and Tiffini Overstreet, a volunteer.

She said she had met some of the most wonderful people while campaigning in the four counties. McCants said it is going

to take all of us to move things forward for the betterment of northwest Kansas.

In Thomas County, Commissioner Byron Sowers, who was running unopposed in Commissioner District 1, got 400 votes. Lora Volk, who was unopposed for register of deeds, garnered 1,142.

Dee Olson edged out Marshall Rhea in the Republican primary for Summers Township clerk by just two votes, 27 to 25. Four other township clerk races were

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## Fowler senator gets solid win in House race

By Kevin Bottrell

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The smoke has cleared from the Republican primary in the 1st Congressional District, and state Sen. Tim Huelskamp of Fowler is the one left standing.

The hotly contested and often downright nasty race for the U.S. House of Representatives ended up with the candidates much farther apart than pre-election polls indicated. Unofficial results from the secretary of state's office say that Huelskamp, from Fowler, won by 10 percent, or 9,487 votes, over his nearest rival, fellow Sen. Jim Barnett. Last week's polls showed the two in a dead heat with Salina businessman Tracey Mann, who ended up nearly 4,000 votes down.

Barnett mainly carried the eastern part of the district around his hometown of Emporia. Mann carried several northcentral counties,

along with Gove, Sheridan, Trego and Saline. Sue Boldra, a professor at Fort Hays State University, carried Ellis and Graham.

Huelskamp won Thomas County by a comfortable margin, 567 votes to Barnett's 274 and Mann's 380.

Huelskamp will face Salina Democrat Alan Jilka, who ran unopposed. Huelskamp said in a statement Wednesday that he looked forward to a spirited debate with Jilka.

"The voters will have a clear choice in November," he said, "between a candidate who supports bigger government and

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## Rexford mayor asks for help on siren cost

By Vera Sloan

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Thomas County commissioners heard Friday that Rexford needs a tornado siren, but while they talked about giving the city some money, the mayor left without a promise or a check.

Susan McMahan, county emergency preparedness director, said the city of Menlo, only about 7 1/2 miles south of Rexford, could get a federal Rural Development grant to replace its siren, but Rexford didn't qualify because the median income was too high.

Rexford Mayor Dennis Allison told commissioners the city had no money for a siren. He said the city now depends on a noon whistle at the post office, but the postmistress lives 12 miles out of town. When there's a severe storm approaching and she is away, the whistle is not a great way to warn people.

McMahan said she had checked state laws and found that counties aren't required to furnish storm sirens. She said Brewster maintains its own, and that that only a handful of Kansas counties buy sirens for their towns.

She said the county will have to come up with about \$4,500 of the \$16,000 plus for the Menlo siren, even with the grant.

Commissioner Paul Steele suggested the county give the same amount to Rexford it will be giving to Menlo. He asked Mayor Allison to talk to Rexford citizens about making sure they get counted in the census, because money coming back to the area depends a lot on median income through figured through the federal head count.

No decision was made on the Rexford siren.

McMahan told the commissioners that at a recent meeting concerning communications equip-

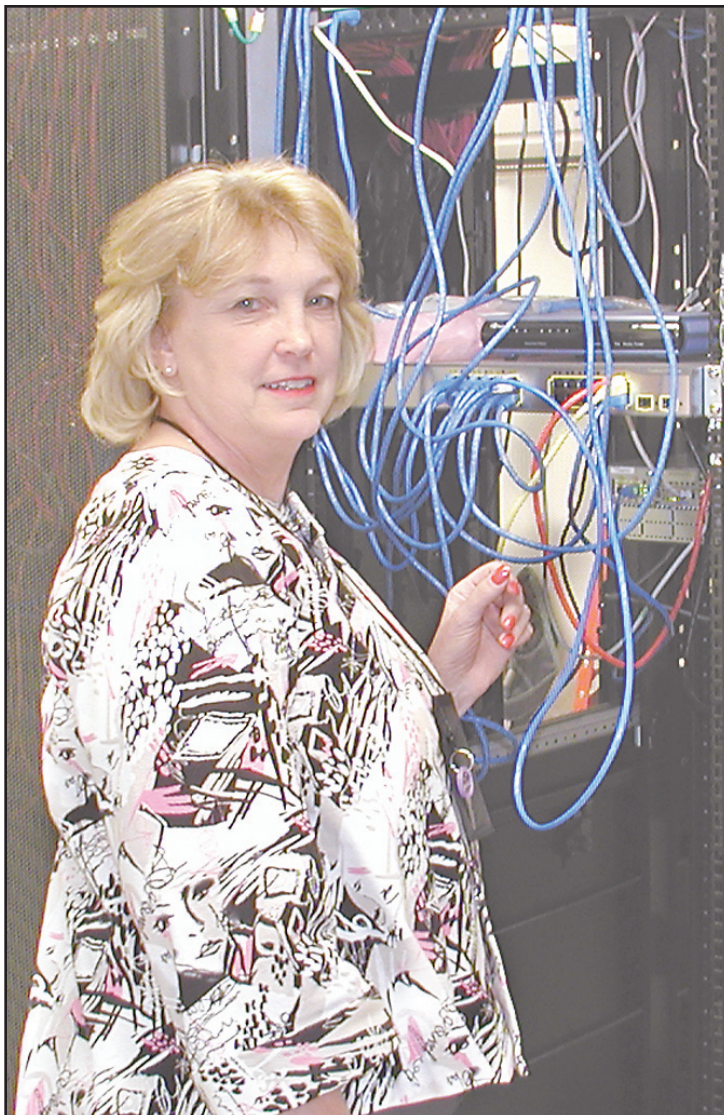
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## Embarked

### Firm shuts down as cash flow dies

By Andy Heintz

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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Junelle Hills, Embark Health supervisor in Colby and owner of the Quilt Cabin, showed off the company's data system during an open house in February. Hills had been president of the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance board when Embark proposed its project here.

Michael Brouters, chief executive officer of Embark Health, the end-of-life services company which briefly had a call center in Colby, said the company is dormant and its 13 employees here have been let go.

He said the crew would be welcomed back if the company is able to get started up again, but that seems far from certain. The Colby City Council voted on June 15 to begin legal measures to collect on \$966,815 owed to the city on three loans, saying Embark is not making its payments.

The firm will need to raise \$1 million to \$2 million from investors to get the operation open and keep it going until cash starts to flow in, Brouters said. He said the company needs the money for continuing costs, debt payment and wages.

He said some people want to invest in the company, but they don't have their funds set up yet. He said other investors have wanted too much control or they didn't want to take on the company's debt. Brouters said Embark already owes \$1 million in loans to the city and the state. Some investors don't want to start with that kind of debt right out of the gate, he said.

The company received a \$485,000 loan from a Community Block Development Grant

from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing. That loan went through the city to the company. As of June 1, according to a lawsuit filed by the city on June 21, the firm owed the state \$476,709, plus interest and penalties, court and lawyer's fees.

Embark also got a mortgage loan and a second mortgage loan from the city for a combined total of \$481,815. The city initially gave Embark a \$400,000 loan to renovate the old Inlow Interiors building. It later provided the company with an extra \$81,815 to finish the roof.

Brouters, Kevin Kriss, the contractor for Embark, and architect Glenn Strait, owner of Strait Associates, made the initial estimate on the costs of renovating the Inlow building, Kriss said. He said their estimate didn't take into account hidden structural problems they found after they began tearing out the ceiling panels in the building.

Strait said 38 structural and steel columns and supplemental beams had to be added to stabilize the structure.

The money for all three city loans came from a 1/4-cent city sales tax for economic development passed April 1, 2005.

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## Fired advisor says ideas still valued

Gregory Olinyk, a former business advisor for Embark Health and managing partner for Point-of-Reference, a venture management firm based in New Canaan, Conn., claimed Chief Executive Michael Brouters made a mistake when he failed to secure the source code, or the original program, from the vendor hired to design the company's call and data system.

The vendor, Michael Ponce De Leon, was eventually let go because it would have taken him two years or more to finish the data system and Embark needed it in five months.

Olinyk said he thought Brouters should have immediately told his shareholders that he had not secured access to the source code.

Brouters said he signed a contract with Ponce De Leon in January 2008. The firm was hired to develop a system to handle sale and recording of "advanced directives" from Embark customers with a product Ponce De Leon owned as the core of the data system, he said. Brouters said Ponce De Leon's system was to have been customized for Embark's Advance Directive Solution.

Brouters said he wasn't pleased with the progress being made in setting up the data system and wanted to get out of the contract. In an e-mail Ponce De Leon sent to Brouters on Dec. 21, 2008, the vendor said, "under normal circumstances doing all of these projects would take conservatively two years. We are trying to do this in five months."

Brouters said he terminated Embark's relationship with Ponce De Leon in January

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## Briefly

### Farm Service to explain reserve

The U.S. Farm Service Agency will have an information meeting on the Conservation Reserve Program at 1 p.m. Thursday in room 2 of the Colby Community Building. The meeting will cover the program's sign-up period, open through Friday, Aug. 27, and who is eligible. For information, call Phyllis Tholen at 462-7671.

### Dance Saturday at golf club

A dance is planned at the Meadow Lake Golf Club, 1085 E. Golf Club Dr., from 6:30-10:30 Saturday, with music by Jim Christensen. For questions, call Lue Duffey in Rexford at (785) 269-7057.

### Commodities here on 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 commodities first-come, first-served. For information, call the volunteer office at 462-6744.

### Catholic youth ordering fruit

The Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Organization is taking orders for peaches, pears and apples until Monday, Aug. 23. Pickup will be Wednesday, Sept. 1, at the 4-H Building. To order, call Megan Augustine at the rectory, 462-2179. Some fruit may be available for those who do not order ahead of time.

### 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 the First Presbyterian

Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage provided. For information, call 462-6342.

### Football meeting is Tuesday

A meeting for Colby Middle School football parents and equipment checkout will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Middle School cafeteria.

### Volunteers needed for Relay

Relay for Life, an annual fund raiser for the American Cancer Society, needs teams and team captains for the relay, which is on for 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 27, at Fike Park. For information or to sign up, call Denise Stupka at 462-2122. The event is still on.

### Museum plans '125' quilt show

A special quilt show celebrating Thomas County's 125th Birthday will be held at the Prairie Museum

of History and Art from Oct. 7 to 31. Quilts of any size, pattern or age with a Thomas County connection should be entered at the museum from Sept. 1 to 24. Call (785) 460-4590 for information.

### Chronic disease focus of class

Citizens Medical Center will offer a six-week chronic-disease support class Mondays from Sept. 13 to Oct. 18 for people with arthritis, diabetes, heart or lung disease, asthma or the effects of a stroke. The free program was developed by Stanford University. For questions, call dietitian Courtney McCarty (785) 460-4849. Refreshments will be served.



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