



## School board votes for capital outlay tax

By Kevin Bottrell  
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The Colby School Board approved a five-year plan for maintenance projects and equipment purchases last Monday that the district administration has been working on for months and agreed to raise property taxes starting next year to pay for it.

The board unanimously approved a Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan, which sets

out what the district will need to buy, repair or replace each year. The district has a special capital outlay fund that covers routine maintenance and equipment purchases, some of which – like buses – the state requires districts to upgrade.

Board Vice President Tracy Rogers said he thought the board had taken all the necessary steps to have a good five-year plan.

“All that’s left is to fund it,” he said.

There’s not enough money in the fund to cover more than one year of the plan,

Harrison said, and the district will not be able to save up enough to cover 2012 and beyond. The district has not had a tax levy for capital outlay since the 1990s, and the only way to put money in the fund is by transferring some general-fund money at the end of the year.

The board approved a resolution authorizing the district to raise a property tax levy up to five mills for capital outlay over the next five years. Business Manager Jo DeYoung said that with the recent increase in property valuation in

the county, one mill will bring in about \$63,151.

Harrison said in 2013, the bonds for Colby High School will be paid in full and the seven mills that go to pay them will be removed from the tax rolls, so after that year taxes will be reduced, even if the board levies the full five mills for capital outlay.

“We don’t want to raise taxes,” she said.

The first year of the plan includes expenses such as repairing a chiller at the

high school (\$25,000), a new activity bus (\$150,000) and a wireless computer network for the high school (\$15,000), for a total cost of \$305,900.

Superintendent Terrel Harrison said the district can handle that with the money it already has in the fund, but subsequent years become more difficult to pay for. With cuts in state school money, the district has less left over in the general fund to transfer.

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## Firemen called twice Wednesday

Colby firefighters had two fires to contend with Wednesday evening.

The first was a tractor fire northwest of town. Firefighter Ross Carney said a farmer had been driving his tractor in a hauled-out field about five miles northeast of town when debris caught in the engine started a fire.

Carney said the department sent three trucks to the scene about 7:31 p.m. The tractor was completely on fire when they got there, he said, and it was a total loss. However, the fire did not spread to any vegetation on the ground.

Later that evening, a mobile home on Walker Avenue caught fire. Carney said the call went out just after midnight and the trailer was completely involved when firefighters arrived.

The department sent three engines and 18 firefighters to the scene. Carney said they had the fire out by 2 a.m. No one was in the trailer at the time of the fire and there were no injuries, he said.

Assistant Fire Chief Sean Hankin and an investigator from the state fire marshal’s office surveyed the scene Thursday morning but have not determined a cause.

## Police issue reminder to lock cars, homes

After a couple of thefts last week, Colby police are reminding citizens to lock up their property.

Colby Police officer John Dixon said there have been at least two instances of items such as a compact disc player being taken from unlocked cars in town.

Dixon said this time of year, when the college is just back in

session, is one of the department’s busiest times. The college brings a lot of new, unknown people to town, he said.

Dixon said that so far the thieves are only getting into unlocked cars. The easiest way to protect valuables, he said, is to make sure that doors are locked and windows are closed or rolled up.

### Getting ready for the first day



RACHEL BOMBA/Colby Free Press

Colby Grade School kindergarten teacher Kim Wolf set up a bulletin board outside her classroom last week in preparation for the first day of school on Thursday. Brewster schools

and Colby Community College have already started. Golden Plains will begin classes Wednesday, while Heartland Christian School and Sacred Heart School will begin Thursday.

### More storage needed



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Elevators and farmers are scrambling to make sure there’s enough storage for this year’s corn crop, which from all appearances will be a record setter. Many bins are still full of wheat, and corn harvest isn’t that far off. After a semi load of re-bar and 350 yards of concrete, it’s still a scramble for this 250,000-bushel bin by the Red River sunflower plant to be done in time for dryland corn harvest, which could begin as soon as 30 days from now.

## Committee wants people to display heritage with badges

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How long has your family been in Thomas County?

That’s the question the 125th Anniversary Committee would like people to answer with its Heritage Badge project. Committee member Sheila Frahm said the free badges allow people to list their name, their family’s name and when that family arrived in

the county. For each family name, a new badge is glued onto the first one.

Frahm said her own badge is a good example. She said she researched her family tree and found about eight different families, including Sloans, Griggses and Robinsons, who lived in Thomas County.

Not everyone’s family has been here forever, however, and she said, the committee wants to encourage newer arrivals to get and

wear heritage badges, even if they only have one family name to put there.

“We want to recognize people who have made a choice to come settle here,” she said.

Frahm said in committee is focusing on family names this time rather than generations within families like the pins used in the 1985 centennial. Those pins listed the person’s generation number.

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## Surveyors to start work on highways

The Kansas Department of Transportation will be doing pavement evaluation tests this week on parts of U.S. 83 and U.S. 24 in Thomas and Sheridan counties, using flagmen and a pilot car to control traffic.

These annual engineering surveys, called falling weight deflectometer tests, measure the quality of pavement. Department technicians will work on four-mile segments at a time. The public should expect delays of up to 15 minutes.

The tests are the beginning of a planned resurfacing of several parts of the two highways including K-24 east from Colby to the intersection with U.S. 83 and then northeast from the intersection to the Sheridan County border.

For questions, contact Kristen Brands, district public affairs manager, at (785) 877-3315 or kristenb@ksdot.org.

## Briefly

### Red Cross coming to get blood

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2, at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. Donors must be at least 17, or 16 with a parental consent form. To reserve a time to donate, call (800) 733-2767. Walk-ins are welcome.

### Claim prizes from county fair

Prize checks for 4-H and Open Class exhibit winners from the 2010 Thomas County Fair are ready to be picked up at the county Extension office, in the county office complex, 350 S. Range Ave., from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information, call the office at 460-4582.

### Church plans carnival, picnic

The Colby Wesleyan Church will hold a free Kids’ Carnival and Family Picnic with games, prizes and

free supper from 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday at the church, 320 W. Pine. Everyone is invited. Free school supplies will be available for elementary and middle-school students of families in financial need. Registration will begin at 5:45 p.m. For information, call the church office at 462-8391.

### Volunteers needed for Relay

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

### Church plans rally Sunday

Trinity Lutheran Church is planning a rally at 9:30 a.m. Sunday in Fike Park. There will be Bible games for all ages and a pot luck lunch at 11:30 a.m. Bring a favorite dish, lawn chairs and bug spray. In case

of bad weather, all the activities will be held at the church. For information, call the church office at 462-3497.

### Outdoor skills day next month

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department and Colby Community College will hold the Northwest Kansas Youth Outdoor Skills Day and Outdoor Expo from 9 to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 10 and 11 at the college and the Colby Trap Club. Activities include shotgunning, archery, compass and map reading, fishing and more. Register at Colby Lumber by Friday, Sept. 8. For information, call Wildlife Specialist Matt Bain at 462-3367.

### Wildlife Dept. offering hunter ed

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department will hold a field day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11, at the Colby Trap Club to accompany a new

online hunter education course. Registration is required. Online instruction and quizzes are available now, with classroom instruction and the test from 5:30 to 10 p.m. Friday, Sept. 8, at Colby Community College. For information or to register, call Wildlife Specialist Matt Bain at 462-7993 or 462-3367.

### Food Delivery coming Saturday

Prairie Land Food delivery will be 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28, at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 W. Sixth. For information, call Gene Griffin at (785) 460-3579.

