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Out for a Sunday stroll



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

With Thanksgiving behind them, a flock of wild turkeys felt brave enough this week to wander around north Colby, visiting Fike Park, Cornerstone Ag and the archery range on North Franklin.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Most everyone likes a frog that doesn't croak and jump and scare you to death. They're just interesting little creatures, and Linda Taylor of Colby has found a reason to replicate these strange but lovable animals. Her bean-stuffed version is affordable to nearly everyone.

Lovable frogs help patients

By Vera Sloan
Colby Free Press
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A small frog with bulging eyes, stuffed with pinto beans or black-eyed peas, may not seem like much, but proceeds from the sale of the "Hope Frog" are what makes it a big deal.

Proceeds from the sale of the stuffed frog, made by Linda Taylor of Colby, go to the Northwest Kansas Foundation for Hope to help cancer patients with expenses not covered by insurance.

Taylor said she was lying awake one night thinking

See "FROGS," Page 3

County sets aside building money

By Vera Sloan
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With the thoughts, but only thoughts, of improvements to the Law Enforcement Center dancing in their heads, Thomas County commissioners Monday moved to transfer \$150,000 from county departments to the special project fund for possible future improvements to the center.

Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers said their intent was to save unused money from various department budgets in the general fund that could be a start toward improving the building that houses both the city police and county sheriff's offices and the county jail.

"If the sheriff is willing to com-

mit forfeiture money, and we have a little money left over in the county general fund, we can put it together," said Commissioner Steele. "However, we want it understood that the project is in the very earliest discussion stages, and if the project falls through, the money the county has contributed will be transferred back into the county's general fund."

County records show that the center was built in 1975. The departments moved into the building at the beginning of 1976. As need has grown, space has become tight, and the mechanical equipment and plumbing are wearing out. Jail space is limited, with no areas where juveniles can be separated from adult prisoners as required by law.

Steele said that as 2011 unfolds,

he would like the commissioners to visit with an architect, and then give plans for concrete and footings to the Road and Bridge department to look at. He said the department had been successful in doing this kind of construction job at a building on the fairgrounds, and he would like to see the county crew used if the project gets going.

Talks around the commission table was that an addition to the south side of the building would save having to put up one outside wall.

The commissioners emphasized that they do not want to have to go to taxpayers for money to do improvements, and they want to save on costs wherever they can.

See "COUNTY," Page 3

Distemper cases spread to Wyoming pet shops

OBERLIN (AP) — An estimated 1,200 dogs at a Kansas kennel were euthanized after an outbreak in Wyoming of the highly contagious disease distemper was linked to the large-scale breeding operation.

Kansas Livestock Commissioner Bill Brown said the state started investigating the Beaver Creek Kennels near Oberlin in September after being contacted by Wyoming's state veterinarian about distemper cases at a pet store in Cheyenne.

Brown said Wednesday that the Kansas Animal Health Department quarantined the kennel twice after investigators confirmed several cases of distemper in puppies that were being sold out of state. When breeder Jeff Fortin couldn't sell dogs because of the quaran-

ties, he ran out of money to pay staff members and take care of the animals.

"It became an economic situation, and consequently became a health, safety and welfare issue for the puppies," Brown said. "The owner couldn't feed his dogs, his help left, and health, safety and welfare became an even bigger issue."

Distemper, which is usually lethal, can be spread through contact with wildlife, as well as through other infected dogs.

Brown said no shelters would take the dogs because of the outbreak, so the decision was made to euthanize them.

"The Animal Health Department humanely euthanized those animals through intravenous injection," he said. "It was an ago-

nizing decision on everyone's part. But when it came down to it, it was a unanimous agreement by all parties that this was the best step."

The dogs were buried on farmland in Decatur County after the Kansas Department of Health and Environment allowed Fortin to dispose of the bodies without a permit.

Fortin couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday because he didn't answer his phone and his voicemail box was full. Messages left with the owner of the Wyoming pet store where the distemper outbreak was first reported did not return calls seeking comment.

Donal O'Toole, a professor and pathologist with the University of

See "DISEASE," Page 3

Briefly

Boosters plan potato bar

The Colby Sports Booster Club will have a potato bar from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday during the high school boys basketball game against Hugoton at the Colby Community Building. The club also will have a soup supper at the Scott City game on Tuesday, Jan. 11. Proceeds will go to help build a new locker room for visiting teams at Dennen Field. For information, call Gary Adrian at 460-2931.

Donations needed to buy gifts

The Adopt a Grandparent program needs donations to help buy gifts for seniors. The program, created by Ronda Faber and others, buys Christmas presents for residents at Colby Care Center and Prairie Senior Living Complex. Gifts will be delivered on Monday. For information or to donate, call Faber at 460-6548.

Sacred Heart has holiday show

Sacred Heart Catholic School will put on a program of Christmas music at 7 p.m. Monday in the school gym, featuring second through fifth graders. For information, call the school at 460-2813.

Trash crews to take 'eves' off

The Colby Sanitation Department will not pick up residential trash on Christmas Eve, Friday, Dec. 24, and New Year's Eve, Friday, Dec. 31. Routes will be picked up the day before both weeks. Have your tipper cans to the curb by 8 a.m. The department will not pick up commercial trash Friday and Saturday, Dec. 24 and 25, and Friday and Saturday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. For information, call 460-4420.

Courthouse elevator needs work

The elevator at the Thomas County Courthouse

will be out of service Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 28 and 29, so a new motor starter can be installed. For information, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at 460-4500.

Hill City artist's work at museum

Works by Hill City artist and teacher David Chalfant are on exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art and History through the end of December. His sculptures and paintings have been shown in regional and national shows. For information, contact the museum at 460-4590 or museumed@st-tel.net.

Youth league to meet Jan 5

A parent-player meeting for Youth League Basketball will begin at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 5, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Coach Matt Ludwick said the cost is \$20 per player, and games will

start the following weekend. For information, call the church at 462-2761.

College pool open weekdays

The Colby Community College indoor swimming pool is open for lap swimming from 5 to 7 a.m. Monday to Friday and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; from 5 to 9 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday; and from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday and Friday. Open swim is from 4 to 7 p.m. Monday and Thursday; 4 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; and 1 to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. General admission is \$3, but monthly and yearly passes are available. Call 460-5476.



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