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Revenue decline worries college officials

By Andy Heintz

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Colby Community College revenues will fall up to \$400,000 short of the \$12.76 million budget for the current school year, the college's top financial officer told trustees Tuesday, and that could mean some tough cuts, including lower pay for many employees.

No decisions were made at the meeting Monday at Thomas Hall.

Alan Waites, vice president of busi-

ness affairs, told the board that the shortfall stems from a 7.5 percent decline in credit hours taken last year and having 50 fewer students living in the dorms than expected.

The decrease in credit hours created a \$260,000 gap in revenue, Waites said, and low dorm numbers added \$125,000 plus.

He said nothing of consequence had been done to bring the budget into line so far. Waites said based on current figures, the college will likely run "in the red" some \$300,000 to \$400,000, which will

further deplete cash reserves.

That could create a bigger crisis in the 2011-2012 school year. He said cash reserves should be enough to cover three months of operating costs — \$3 million for the college — but Colby will probably only finish with \$600,000 to \$800,000 by June 30.

Waites said the 2011-2012 budget should be based on \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million less revenue than this year. He said the college will not be able to cut a million from the budget without affecting "people costs," which account for about

85 percent of discretionary expenditures.

Ideas the board considered included a 4-mill increase in property tax; an increase in tuition (\$4 a credit hour in state, \$8 border state, \$12 all others); developing strategies to fill residence halls (50 additional students at a \$2,800 average per student rent); seeking grants to replace spending and program cuts; and encouraging all employees to take a 3-credit-hour course. Waites said the property-tax increase should raise \$340,000; the tuition hike, \$160,000; increased residence hall occupancy, \$140,000; grants, to be

determined; and employee class fees, \$20,000.

The lower revenue estimate is based on the \$400,000 shortfall this year and the combination of an expected smaller state grant next year. Waites said virtually no one he had talked to believed the state operating grant would equal this year's.

He said enrollment statistics from the Kansas Board of Regents show that statewide community college enrollment is up about 3 percent while its down here.

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Middle school scholars bowl kicks off Monday

By Kevin Bottrell

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Which planet just completed its first full orbit around the sun since its 1846 discovery?

The answer is Neptune, and that's the kind of question that the scholars bowl teams at Colby Public Schools have to answer in 10 seconds or less.

Teresa Morgan, who coaches the Colby High team, said the program includes seventh-grade, eighth-grade and high-school teams. Donna Lamm coaches the middle school kids. Morgan said there are 16 on the eighth-grade

team and six students on the seventh-grade squad, some of whom are sixth graders.

The middle-school teams will kick off their season Monday with the Colby Invitational tournament at the school. Teams from 10 schools will be joining the Eagles, including Oakley, Goodland, Burlington, Colo., Wheatland/Grinnell, Hays Felton, Hays Kennedy, Rawlins County, Brewster, Quinter and Dodge City. Competition rounds begin at 4 p.m.

The 15-member high-school team began its season in November. Morgan said it has been do-

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Budget woes grow as court looks to cut

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Kansas officials learned Wednesday that the state's projected budget shortfall for the coming year has grown to \$550 million, as the state Supreme Court announced that it has appointed a commission to hunt for ways to make the judicial branch more efficient.

The timing of the two events was a coincidence, but they underscored the state's ongoing financial struggles. The projected budget gap grew because the state's revenues in December fell

short of expectations, while the new commission is largely a response to budget problems that forced court offices to close four days last year.

The projected shortfall represents the gap between projected revenues and current spending commitments for the fiscal year that begins July 1. It now represents about 9 percent of those commitments. Gov.-elect Sam Brownback and the Legislature will have to eliminate the gap once he takes office and lawmakers open their annual session on Monday. Before

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Governor-elect begins run-up to Monday's inauguration

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Several days of events for Kansas Gov.-elect Sam Brownback's inauguration kicked off Wednesday ahead of his swearing-in ceremony Monday, with Brownback himself in Washington and his team developing a backup plan in case winter threatens the big event.

Brownback and other officials are scheduled to take their oaths of office Monday on the south steps of the Statehouse, where thousands of people would view the ceremony. But the National Weather Service was forecasting a significant chance of snow Sunday night and

Monday in Topeka, with temperatures in the 20s.

Organizers said that if the weather gets too bad, the ceremony will be moved into the historic Dillon House, just west of the Statehouse. The home would accommodate only a fraction of the spectators, but Brownback spokeswoman Sherriene Jones-Sontag said, "it's the closest place that would allow for a quick change to an indoor location that can accommodate the people who have to be there."

Events leading up to the Republican's inauguration began Wednesday with a seven-hour blood drive at the Red Cross offices in Hays. It's part of Brownback's effort to promote community service.

Brownback's wife Mary was there to donate blood, but the governor-elect was in Washington for the swearing in of U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, who took the seat Brownback gave up to become governor.

"It's traditional for the outgoing senator to be there to pass on his desk," Jones-Sontag said.

But Jones-Sontag said Brownback planned to be back in Kansas for work Thursday, repackaging medical supplies at the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas in Pittsburg. He also planned to go Friday to Wichita for another inaugural event, stuffing backpacks with food for needy children at the Kansas Food Bank.

The decision whether to move the swearing-in ceremony won't happen until late Sunday or early Monday, based on whether there's snow or sleet and time to clear it on the Statehouse grounds, Jones-Sontag said.

"If it's just going to be cold," she said, "bundle up."

State officials haven't been forced to move the inaugural ceremony indoors since 1979. The Statehouse isn't available because it's still undergoing a massive renovation and parts of it are closed off, including the rotunda.

The state has owned the Dillon House since 1997, when it swapped a parking lot for the building with an adjacent Pres-

byterian church. The state has used the home, named for one of its former owners, for receptions and meetings.

But if the weather forces the move indoors, most of the reporters and photographers planning to cover the swearing in will be out in the cold. Jones-Sontag said there will be room for only one print reporter, one broadcast reporter, one still photographer and one videographer, all probably drawn by lot.

Senate President Steve Morris, a Hugoton Republican, said planning to move the ceremony for snow or sleet is prudent. But residents shouldn't be surprised by

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Jason Timmerman, manager and co-owner of Timmerman Thomas County Feeders facility last summer; Timmerman said Feeding Corp. at Halford, with his dog Scotch on Tuesday in they have increased the number of cattle on feed from 2,800 front of a pen of feeder cattle. The firm purchased the former head in mid-July to 16,500 today.

Feedlot adds thousands under new owner

By Vera Sloan

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With 16,500 head of cattle in its yards at Halford, east of Colby, Timmerman Feeding Corp. is calling the 18,000-head facility full for winter occupancy.

The corporation, a family and employee-owned operation took over the former Thomas County Feeders in mid-July. The location is one of 10 yards in three states owned by the corporation, which does custom feeding

along with feeding their own stock. The yard is managed by a co-owner, Jason Timmerman.

"There were 2,800 head when we started in July," he said, adding that the family has a long history in the cattle business, going back 60 years. They have cow-calf operations in Nebraska, Colorado and South Dakota and do yearling backgrounding all the way to California.

He said plans at the Halford location include renewing the Certified Angus Beef status of the former owners. He noted that about

50 percent of the cattle coming into the lot are age-source verified for the Japanese market. This requires animals coming into the yard to be under 20 months of age.

The requirement came about after a scare over an infection known as "mad cow disease" several years ago, he said.

"Once you have electronic records, it's not hard to keep up," he said. "Birth records of the animal are traceable clear up to the super market. When they arrive at the feed yard,

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Briefly

Helpers needed for kids tourney

The Colby Wrestling Club needs volunteers to help with its annual kids tournament all day Saturday at the Colby Community Building. More than 500 kids will wrestle, and helpers are needed work tables at matside and concession stands. This is the club's only fund raiser, and all proceeds go to benefit Colby Middle School, high school and college wrestling programs. For information, call Blake Amberger at 462-0464 or Holly Lynn at 443-0603.

Free-throw contest open to kids

The Colby Knights of Columbus will hold its annual free-throw contest at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Colby Grade School gym. The contest is open to boys and girls 10 to 14. There is no charge, but proof of age is required. Winners advance to the district contest. For information, call Dewey Augustine at 443-1548 or 460-2924.

Food sign up ends on Monday

Prairie Land Food sign up is open now until Monday at State Farm Insurance, 905 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Sacred Heart School gym. For information, call 460-3579.

Hospital offers blood-sugar class

Citizens Medical Center will offer Journey for Control, a class about monitoring blood sugar for diabetics, at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the hospital. Class size is limited, but there is no charge. For information or to register, call dietitian Courtney McCarty at (785) 460-4849 or education co-ordinator Jeanene Brown at (785) 460-4850.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, wid-

owed, 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 will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

College pool closed for the week

The Colby Community College indoor swimming pool will be closed until Tuesday due to a lack of life guards. Director Kip Nelson suggested checking the website www.colbycc.edu to see if the schedule has changed, or calling (785) 460-5476.

Soup benefit to help heart patient

A benefit soup supper for Alex Rosales will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, in the Sacred Heart Church basement. Rosales had quadruple bypass surgery Nov. 26 and since has had two heart

attacks. Money raised will help him pay medical and transport expenses. For information, call the church at 460-7167.

Chronic disease topic of series

Citizens Medical Center will hold the next sessions of the Kansans Optimizing Health Program, a six-week chronic disease support workshop, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. on Mondays, Jan. 17 to Feb. 21, in the hospital's conference room. The class meets for 2 1/2 hours once a week. There is no cost, but the hospital encourages a \$30 donation to cover materials. Enrollment is limited. To register, call dietitian Courtney McCarty at (785) 460-4849.



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