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Two firms interested in wind farm

By Vera Sloan
Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkansas.com

The Thomas County commissioners ended the year with what they hope is a bit of good news from the dormant Solomon Forks wind farm project, which may be attracting interest from at least two power suppliers.

At an October meeting, project Development Director Peter K. Kennon and Development Manager Tiff Thompson told commissioners bids for power from the project were slow. However, the two representatives said the outlook was positive that the project would be picked up by a power company.

In an e-mail dated Dec. 21, Thompson wrote: "I am writing with one piece of good news and one favor to ask. The good news is, the Solomon Forks project got

shortlisted by Sunflower (Electric Power Corp. of Hays), which essentially means we are in the top few proposals being considered.

"The favor is, I was wondering if you could send the same letter you attached for me to another power purchaser, Kansas City Power and Light. Hopefully it will not take any more work than changing the address on the document and having the commissioners sign another letter."

The commissioners agreed to send a letter of support to the Kansas City firm.

The project has been on hold through the recession, waiting for a buyer for the power it would produce.

Solomon Forks is being developed by Acciona Energy, a subsidiary of a Spanish firm. Sunflower is a co-operative power supplier.

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Buzzer at the ready



BLAKE MCNINCH/Colby High School

Colby High School Scholars Bowl team members (left to right) Trek Keck, Sara Martin and Madison Gawith reacted to a moderator's explanation of a tricky question at the team's home

meet in December. The high school team will have another home meet Monday, Jan. 17.



TOM BETZ/Goodland Star-News

Rep.-elect Rick Billinger (right) spoke with Goodland residents at a reception before his last City Commission meeting Monday. Billinger will be sworn in Monday in Topeka.

New lawmaker given send-off

By Tom Betz
Goodland Star-News
nt.betz@nwkansas.com

A reception Monday afternoon honored Goodland City Commissioner Rick Billinger, who will be leaving the commission to become the state representative for the 121st District.

Billinger, 59, will be sworn in on Monday, when the state House of Representatives opens its session. At the reception, Billinger said he has found an apartment within a few blocks of the Capitol and anticipates being at the inaugural ceremony on Monday for Gov. Sam Brownback.

People who came to the City Administration Building for the reception thanked Billinger for his 20 years of service to the city and wish him good luck in Topeka.

Some of those who attended asked Billinger what he expects when he gets to the Statehouse and others wanted a chance to give the new representative some suggestions about how to change things.

Billinger's wife Rita and daughter Kaylee were at the reception. Kaylee said she lives about 45 minutes from the capital and is looking forward to driving

to see her father. Rita said her husband plans to spend the weekdays in Topeka and come back to Goodland on the weekends.

Billinger said he had been appointed to the Commerce and Economic Development, Education Funding, Insurance and Local Government committees.

The Kansas House combined two committees dealing with labor, tourism and other economic issues into a single Commerce and Economic Development Committee, he said. Previously, the two were Commerce and Labor Committee and Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

Billinger said he was surprised to be appointed to the Education Funding committee. He said Rep.-elect Ward Cassidy of St. Francis (District 120), another new Republican member, also had been appointed to that committee.

"It will be good to have two from the northwest on the committee," Billinger said. "I know education funding is going to be a busy committee."

He said he was glad to be on the Commerce and Economic Development committee and hopes he can find ways to help bring business to the state. He

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Harlem team to play ball, speak to kids next week

By Andy Heintz
Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

The Harlem Ambassadors Professional Show basketball team is coming to town next week to take on a town team, the Thomas County Chamber Challengers.

The game, which starts at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Community Building, is a fund raiser for the Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce.

Tickets, which cost \$6 for adults or \$4 students, are available at the Chamber office and at the door before the game. The show is free for kids 4 and under.

The Chambers team is made up of people from the area:

- Andy Heintz, sports editor of the Colby Free Press.
- Brian Williams, night manager

and officer at the B-Hive.

• Cory Swartz, financial manager for Cornerstone Ag.

• Jason Siruta, a service technician at Colby Ag Center.

• Jay Sanderson, KLOE-KKCI sports broadcaster.

• Leslie Focke, a nurse and coding manager at Family Center for Health.

• Mary Beth Flanagan, secretary at Colby Grade School.

• Melinda Cheney, part owner of Uptown Style.

• Mike Wiens, part owner of Someplace Special and an employee at Bankwest.

• Preston Mackley, physical therapy assistant at Tina Harris' Physical Therapy.

• Rusty Grafel, Colby College assistant men's basketball coach, and a former player for the Fort Hays State University Tigers.

• Sage Hemmert, Colby Police officer.

• Scott Focke, clinic administrator at the Family Center for Health Care.

• Stacy Lee, Colby recreation director.

• Ted Hart, who works for Monsanto.

• Tess Smith, Colby assistant recreation director.

The Ambassadors describe themselves as a "Harlem-style" co-ed basketball team that does comedy routines, high-flying slam dunks and ball-handling tricks. The team, established in 1998, promote the values of setting goals, avoiding drugs and alcohol, education, not bullying, avoiding peer pressure and making positive decisions, said Andria Simons, di-

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Federal bailouts for states unlikely

By Kevin Freking
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Cut spending, raise taxes and fees and accept billions of dollars from Congress. That's been the formula for states trying to survive the worst economy since the 1930s.

As Republicans prepare to take control of the House and exert more influence in the Senate, though, it's clear that option No. 3 will soon wither. States will continue to face substantial deficits over the next few years, but they will have to get by. Stimulus spending is ending and there'll be less financial help from the federal government. In recent interviews, top GOP lawmakers made clear it will be much less.

Sen. Jerry Moran, speaking in Hoxie last week, said he would not vote to use taxpayer money to bail out states. Moran said state residents and state

governments should be responsible for the financial well-being of their state.

"We've got to put our fiscal house in order in Washington, D.C.," said Rep. Mike Pence of Indiana. "It's going to be essential that leaders at the state level roll their sleeves up, make the hard choices and put their fiscal health in order, as well."

Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, the new House majority whip, said GOP lawmakers will try to provide states with relief by cutting their expenses, not by giving them more money. For example, he advocates repeal of the national health care bills enacted last year.

"More importantly, what the states can really hope for is that we turn the economy around so revenues will pick up," he said, "but Washington is in very bad

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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 matside and at concession stands. This is the club's only fund raiser; all proceeds go to benefit Colby wrestling programs. For information, call Blake Armerger 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 Kansas 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 free class will meet for 2 1/2 hours once a week. 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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