



10 pages

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Legislators talk budget, consolidation

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansans.com

Rick Billinger, the 121st District's new representative, said he missed a training session held for legislators elected last fall and has had to learn on the fly.

"It's coming a little fast," he said, "but it's going well."

Billinger, a long-time city commissioner and former mayor of Goodland, was elected by the district Republican Party in December to succeed veteran Rep. Jim Morrison. His first legislative session began Jan. 10. The 90-day session will continue until the last week of March, with a veto session in May.

Billinger said school finance is

on everyone's mind, even though they haven't dug into specifics yet.

The new legislator said he was trying to speak to school administrators around the four-county district to get their take on the governor's proposals.

"Hopefully, we won't have to cut teachers," he said.

Billinger said he had estimates of how much some districts are going to lose with Gov. Sam Brownback's proposed cuts to base state aid. Colby, he said, could lose \$105,000 this year and \$220,000 next year; Golden Plains, \$33,400 and \$69,900; and Hoxie, \$39,052 and \$81,750.

"The bad thing is the governor

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District looking to buy new bus

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansans.com

The Colby School District is looking for a new activity bus, and Technology Director Alan Wade has his eye on a few different models.

The board authorized Wade to seek bids for an activity bus at its meeting Monday.

One of the district's two current activity busses had mechanical problems coming back from a wrestling tournament in Newton last week, Wade told the board. The bus was able to do 75 mph on the trip down but only 40 mph

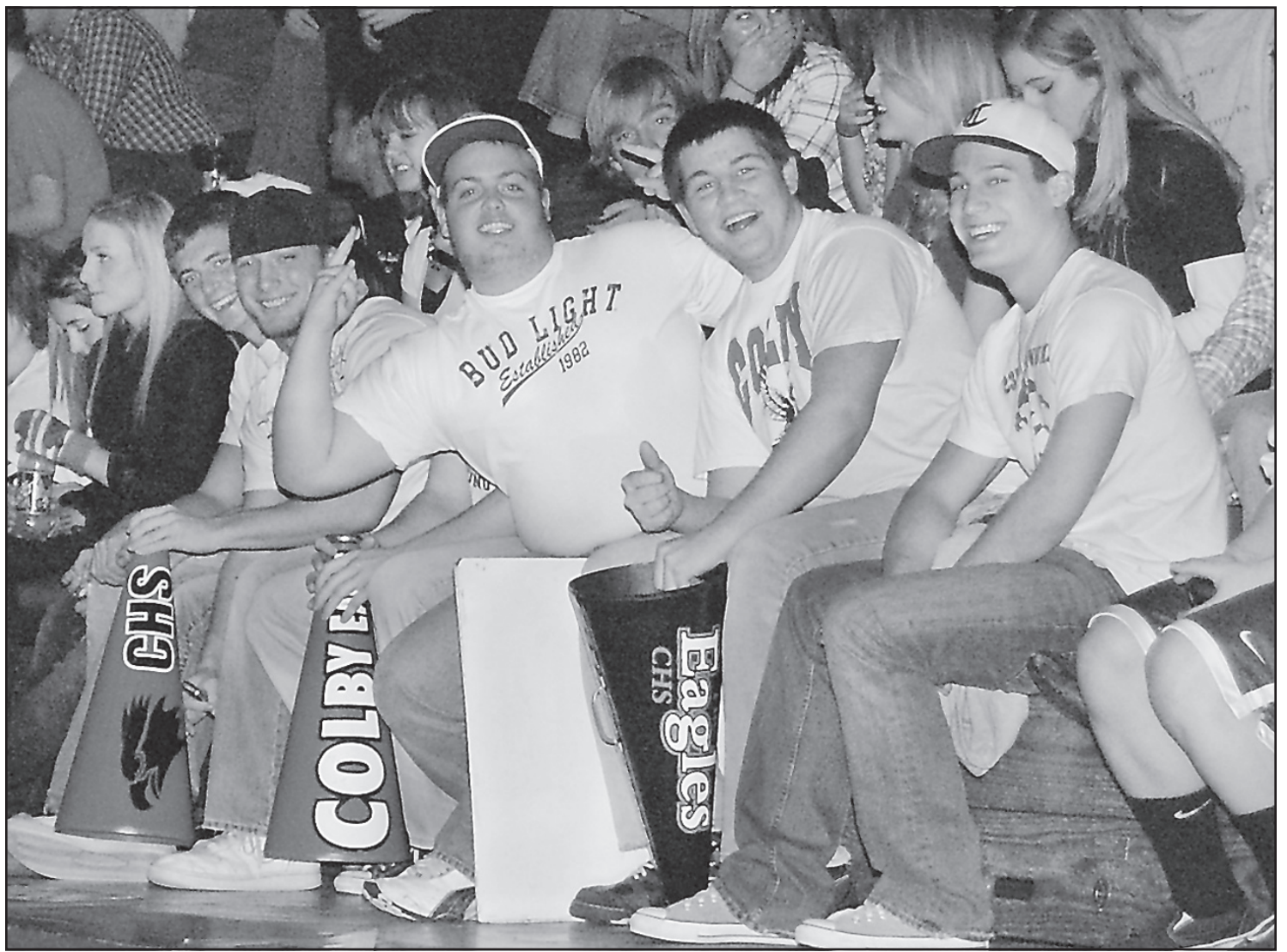
on the way back. The team finally got back to town around 4 a.m. Wade said he'd been working on the bus.

"I got up to 75 after changing the fuel filter, but I don't think that's the problem," he said.

Wade said he was looking at three brands that would meet the specifications the district wants: BCI, Blue Bird and Thomas.

Wade said he is impressed with the BCI Falcon, a coach-style bus, and could probably get a 2007 model with 130,000 miles for about \$150,000 or a 2008 model with similar mileage for \$160,000.

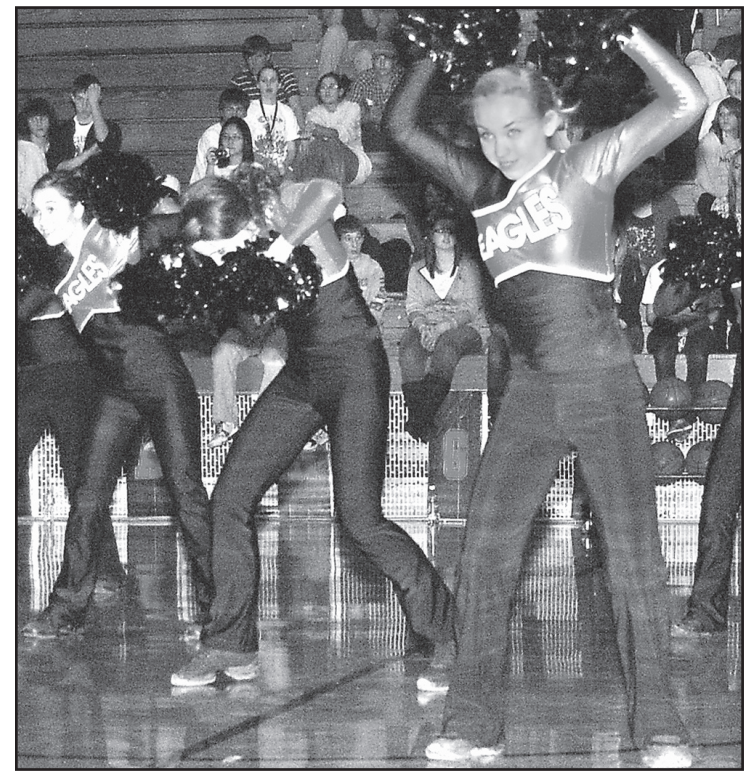
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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Basketball fans flock to Orange and Black

The front row of Eagles fans (above) took their attention away from the Colby girls' game Thursday to wave at the camera. Senior Tera Raymond (right) and the Colby Dance Team performed at half time at the boys' game. High School Principal Larry Gabel said the first night of the tournament went had gone, with good games and good attendance. Gabel estimated the tournament usually brings 1,000 to 1,200 people to town. Closer teams like Scott City, Holcomb and Hays often bring big groups of parents and fans, he said, but it varies from year to year. See Page 10 for more Orange and Black coverage. The tournament continues tonight and Saturday at the Community Building and the high school gym.



Lawmaker revives attempt to block new health-care law

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — A Kansas House member promised Thursday that she'll revive a proposed amendment to the state Constitution aimed at blocking parts of last year's federal health care law from taking effect in Kansas, an idea likely to appeal to a big class of Republican freshmen.

Health and Human Services Committee Chairwoman Brenda Landwehr, a Wichita Republican, said she'll push a "Health Care Freedom Amendment" even though a majority of states, including Kansas, are pursuing legal challenges to the new federal law. She said she'll introduce a new version by early February.

She expects it to mirror proposals with the same name from last year, which would prohibit the state from requiring individuals or businesses to buy health insurance. Such a provision in the state Constitution would conflict with the federal law's mandate that most Americans buy coverage starting in 2014.

Last year's proposals failed to clear either the

House or the Senate, preventing either one from getting on the ballot for voters to consider. But this year, Landwehr has new potential allies among 33 freshman Republicans in the House, many of whose campaigns were boosted by voter frustration with President Barack Obama and Democrats in Congress.

A health care amendment has been a project of the tea party movement, which, like many Republicans, objects to the insurance mandate. Detractors say the federal law will hurt the economy without seriously addressing rising health-care costs.

But Rep. Geraldine Flaherty, a Wichita Democrat, said the law is starting to work and she supports it even though "it's not perfect."

She also said a state can't block implementation of a federal law, particularly when the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate interstate commerce. Some Republican legislators hold the same view.

"It's a futile effort," said Sen. John Vratil, a Leawood Republican, who's a lawyer. "States cannot counteract federal law by amending their constitutions."

College radio program sees dramatic increase in students

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansans.com

Joe Vyzourek, radio instructor at Colby Community College, told the college board at a meeting Monday that he will have 16 students from his broadcast program, four of them part-time, doing shifts each week at the college radio station KTCC 91.9.

The program had only four students last year. Vyzourek, in his third year at the college, said, however, that the program was never at risk of shutting down because he had a list of possible students for the next school year.

Vyzourek said five students did play-by-play for most of the Trojans' nonconference basketball games this winter and they will be covering all of the conference games.

Vyzourek said students cov-



Joe Vyzourek

Internet service, cover all those.

The instructor told the board how the addition of a computer site has made things more convenient for the broadcast program. Vyzourek said the "ftp" site is a computer server where he can send items to the broadcast station from anywhere in the world using the Internet. For example, Vyzourek said, he recorded the forecast for northwest Kansas while he was in Topeka.

Vyzourek told the board that six broadcast students and others had recorded a presentation of "A Christmas Carol" on Christmas Eve. He said he was going to send the recording to the Kansas Association of Broadcasters to see if it would win any awards.

He said he is having all his students sell their own ads and he is teaching an advanced sales and

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Briefly

Commodities available Monday

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will distribute commodities from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office at the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Commodities are given out first come, first served according to income guidelines. Don't arrive before 12:30 p.m. Items include canned pork, peanut butter, rice cereal, mixed vegetables, corn, juice, rotini, milk and fig pieces. For information, call the program office at 462-6744.

Conservation group to meet

The Local Work Group, experts who provide guidance to Kansas Technical Committee of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, will meet at 10 a.m. Thursday at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center, 915 W. Walnut St. For information, call Debbie Potter at the Thomas County Conservation District at 462-7482.

Heartland plans annual barbecue

Heartland Christian School will hold its annual barbecue from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 30, at the school. The meal will include barbecue pork, corn, salad, baked potatoes and dessert. Donations will be accepted. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Exercise class will help arthritics

An Arthritis Foundation exercise classes will be offered from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday evenings from Feb. 1 to March 10 at the Sacred Heart School gym. There is no sign-up deadline; members can start anytime. For information, call Brenda Mazanec at 443-4010.

Scrapbook day Feb. 5 at school

Heartland Christian School will hold a scrapbook party on from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at

the school. The cost is \$30 for adults and \$15 for students for a full day, and \$15 for adults and \$8 for students for half a day. Meals are included. To make a reservation, call Lucy Wood at (785) 460 2721 or the school at 460-6419. To preorder supplies, please call Sally Runnalls in the evenings at (785) 672 4910.

Senior group offering tax help

The American Association of Retired Persons will offer tax preparation help for low and middle income taxpayers — with preference to those 60 or older — by appointment from early February to April 15. For information or to set up an appointment, call Earle Rice at 462-2990.

Hospital offers blood-sugar class

Because of the snow Jan. 11, Citizens Medical Center has postponed Journey for Control, a free class on monitoring blood sugar for diabetics until

Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the hospital. For information or to register, call dietitian Courtney McCarty at (785) 460-4849 or education co-ordinator Jeanene Brown at (785) 460-4850.

Wesleyan plans regular study

Colby Wesleyan Church will hold a weekly ladies Bible study, "Discerning the Voice of God," by Priscilla Shirer, each Wednesday beginning Feb. 9. Two sessions are available, 9 to 11 a.m. at the church, 320 W. Pine, and 6:45 to 8:15 p.m. at the Pioneer Memorial Library. For information or to register, call Joy Rothfuss at 462-8391 or e-mail at wesleyan@st-tel.net.



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