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Paramedics not getting kicked out after all

By Vera Sloan
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The threat of having to find a new home for the Thomas County Ambulance service turned out to be “much ado about nothing” after Citizens Medical Center Chief Executive Officer Kevan Trenkle appeared at the commissioners meeting Monday.

Commissioner Paul Steele had told the other commissioners at their Jan. 31 meeting that the hospital wanted the ambulance service out of the building on the

hospital grounds. Steele then went to the Colby City Council to see if the city could house the service. No action was taken at either meeting, but the city had set up a committee to look for some possible locations.

Trenkle told the commissioners there were three things he would like to address: One, he said, was that it was pretty upsetting to see that the hospital wanted the ambulance service to move from its present location when that is not the case. He told the commissioners if that had been so, they would have received a letter requesting them to move. No. 2 was that

the hospital and county have no current lease on the building that houses the ambulances.

“We are still operating on the same lease terms that began in 1982,” he said with a chuckle.

The amount of the lease, \$7,800 a year, hasn’t changed since 1982, and Trenkle said he would research the fair market value on lease space and get the information to the commissioners.

His third item was that the ambulance service doesn’t seem to have enough people to transfer patients to other towns.

“This problem has existed for the 17

years I’ve been here,” he said, “and we need to improve services for Thomas County.”

Many people just aren’t wanting to sign up for emergency medical service anymore, Ambulance Director Ken Gatlin said, unless they are interested in a medical career. He added that pay could be one of the reasons, but generally money isn’t an issue if there are plenty of volunteers. He said he has one person studying for paramedic credentials.

It was back to the drawing board again on salaries for the road and bridge department. Commissioner Steele moved

to bring the employees at the low end of hourly pay up to \$11.50 an hour as a starting wage. He said he thought it was reasonable because crew is called on to do work other than just road and bridge.

“I think it’s reasonable and I could vote for it,” he said.

Commissioner Byron Sowers said he was tired of having someone come in every month asking for a pay raise.

“If they do it at the first of the year, and we give a 3 percent raise to everyone,” he said, “then that should be enough until it’s

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Critics call fraud law too strict

By John Hanna
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA – Critics of Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach’s election fraud bill told state legislators Wednesday that they should require him to find lesser administrative remedies for problems before approving big policy changes such as requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls.

But Kobach told the Associated Press that his office is taking some administrative actions already, adding, “We have to do both.”

The House Elections Committee wrapped up hearings on Kobach’s proposed Secure and Fair Elections Act with testimony from groups that believe it will suppress voter turnout, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The committee plans to vote on the bill Friday and is expected to endorse most or all of its provisions.

The bill also would require people who register to vote for the first time in Kansas to provide proof that they’re citizens, such as a birth certificate or passport. It increases the penalties for election crimes and gives the secretary of state the authority to file and prosecute election-fraud cases in state courts.

Kobach, a Republican, has said he wants to give Kansas the toughest laws against voter fraud in the nation,

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Piano students Alex Juenemann (from left), Jaydon Bixenman, Abby Freisen, Rachel Juenemann and Amanda Barnum prepared for the state piano contest on Wednesday at Colby High School. The state contest will be Saturday, Feb. 19, at Tabor College in Hillsboro.

Five Colby piano students heading to state

Five piano students from Colby qualified for the state piano competition at regionals in Hays on Saturday.

Freshman Abby Freisen, sophomores Alex Juenemann and Jaydon Bixenman, junior Rachel Juenemann and senior Amanda Barnum all qualified for the state competition at Tabor College in Hillsboro on Saturday, Feb. 19.

The students each had to memorize a piece and perform it for judges, who gave them ratings of I, II or III. All five students got I’s.

This will be Barnum’s fourth time qualifying for state. At regionals, she performed the first movement of “Sonatina” by Aram Khachaturian, a 20th century Armenian composer.

Rachel Juenemann has been to the state competition twice before. She performed “Dr. Gradus ad Parnassum” by Claude Debussy.

Alex Juenemann competed at state last year. At regionals, he performed the first movement of “Sonatina,” Opus 13, No. 1 by Kabalevsky.

Bixenman and Freisen are going to

their first state competition. Bixenman played the first movement of Beethoven’s “Moonlight” sonata. Freisen played “Le Petit Negre” by Debussy.

All five are students of Pat Ziegelmeier

Scout plans project at Ferguson park

By Andy Heintz
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The city council agreed to allow Colby High junior Karlton Leiker to build two picnic tables and paint and clean around the flagpole at Ferguson Park for his Eagle Scout project.

He proposed the undertaking to the council at a meeting Feb. 1. He said the Scout project must benefit the school, community or a religious group other than the Boy Scouts. Finishing a project is one of things required in order

to win the Eagle Scout rank, the highest in Boy Scouts.

Leiker said he had been on several campouts at the park and he thought tables were needed there. He said he is about to start figuring out where he can buy the materials for the project and how much they cost.

He said the project is new to him, but he has taken some woods classes at the high school. Leiker said he hopes to have the work done by the summer. A member of Scout Troop 140, Leiker is the son of Arlen and Joni Leiker of Colby.



Boy Scout Karlton Leiker appeared at last week’s Colby City Council meeting to get permission for his Eagle Project.

Foundation urges random kindness starting on Monday

Starting Monday, the Thomas County Community Foundation is urging everyone to perform a random act of kindness.

Director Melinda Olson said the foundation sponsors Random Act of Kindness Week each year around Valentine’s Day.

“It’s a time to set aside and do a little something nice for somebody you know, or for somebody you don’t know,” she said.

While the foundation doesn’t have any events scheduled, Olson said she is encouraging people,

business and organizations to perform small acts of kindness like having a customer appreciation day, sending treats to a school or daycare center or just paying for someone else’s cup of coffee.

Olson said anyone on the receiving end of a kind act should call the foundation at 460-9152, and she will list it put on the foundation’s website or Facebook page.

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation sponsors the national week, which coincides with Thomas County’s.

Briefly

Enroll early for preschool

Early enrollment for the Little Angels preschool and prekindergarten at Sacred Heart Catholic School will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday at the school. Come to the preschool classroom by the east school doors. For information, call Sharon Shirley at 460-2813.

Apply now for foundation grant

The Thomas County Community Foundation is accepting applications for the “Kids Can Do!” The grants provide \$200 for nonprofit organizations or classrooms. Applications are due by March 1. For information, go to www.thomascountycommunityfoundation.com or call 460-9152.

Orchestra plans concert Sunday

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra, made up of mu-

sicians from the tri-state area, will perform at 3:30 p.m. Sunday in the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. Jan Wolf will conduct. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3 for children and seniors. Punch and cookies will be served at intermission. For information, call President Mary Shoaff at 462-2159 or e-mail comments@prairieorchestra.com.

Conference focuses on marriage

The Mingo Bible Church and Heartland Christian School will hold a “New Love and Respect” video marriage conference from 8:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday at the school, open to singles, dating couples and married couples. Cost is \$20 per person. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Chamber banquet coming up

The Oakley Area Chamber of Commerce will hold

its annual banquet and meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Logan County 4-H Building, Second Street and Kahler Avenue. Former National Football League player and CBS color commentator Steve Tasker will speak. Tickets are \$15 in advance. For information, call Jodie Wright at (785) 672-4862.

Program to detail Kansas forts

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will offer a program on “Kansas Military Forts” as part of its monthly Food for Thought series at noon next Thursday. Leo E Olivia, a retired Fort Hays State professor, will lead the discussion. A light lunch will be served. Call the museum at (785) 460-4590 for details.

Genesis to meet on Feb. 17

The annual meeting of Genesis-Thomas County Inc. will begin at 6:30 p.m. next Thursday at the

Thomas County Office Complex conference room, 350 S. Range Ave. Anyone interested in attending is invited. For information, call President Wynn Duffey, 462-6342.

Storm spotter class here March 7

The National Weather Service will offer its annual Storm Spotter Class at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 7, downstairs at the Community Building. For information, call the Goodland weather office at (785) 899-7119.

