



## School board buys new activity bus

By Kevin Bottrell  
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The Colby School Board agreed to buy a new activity bus at a meeting Monday, but one board member said he was disappointed the district had not bought a nicer bus.

District Transporter Director Alan Wade brought three bids to the board for Thomas and Blue Bird buses, but none

for an over-the-road coach-style bus, which would be larger, seat more students and have more-comfortable seats for long rides. The board talked about the larger buses at its Jan. 17 meeting, and board member Kevan Taylor asked Wade why he didn't get bids on one.

At the January meeting, Wade said he was impressed with Bus and Coach International, or BCI, a company that sold coach-style buses. However, Wade said Monday that he had done some more

checking into the company and found they no longer operate in the United States and parts have to be ordered from China.

BCI once had its headquarters in the old school building at Jennings, in southern Decatur County near Oberlin, with plans to market a Chinese-manufactured bus and restore trade-ins there. The office and plant have since closed after the firm moved to a Florida location. The firm's website says it no longer has anything to do with the Chinese firm.

The BCI models Wade looked at were used buses, but priced similar to the Thomas and Bluebird bids. Models from other brands, he said, would be more expensive. Wade said the Hays School District has budgeted \$250,000 for a new coach-type bus.

Taylor said he was disappointed that no other coach buses were bid and felt the more comfortable models would be better for students making long trips.

The board voted 5-1 to accept a bid

from Midwest Bus Sales in Bonner Springs. Taylor voted against the motion and board member Stan Molstad was absent. The bid is for a Thomas bus at \$149,357. That bus, a 46-passenger 2012 model, is already built and can be delivered in about 30 days. Wade said it had only 1,000 miles on it, the distance from the factory in North Carolina to the lot in Bonner Springs where it sits now.

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## Bio authority criticized for high-pay execs

TOPEKA (AP) — A state agency that works to encourage bioscience investments in Kansas is being criticized for its spending on salaries and bonuses, after records showed more than half of the agency's employees make more than \$100,000 a year.

Members of the Senate Commerce Committee on Tuesday blasted the Kansas Bioscience Authority, calling the compensation for the agency's executives and staff "shocking" and "exorbitant." The committee asked that the agency be audited and also sent a bill to the full Senate that

would require the secretaries of commerce and revenue to serve as the chair and treasurer of the authority's board.

The \$265,000 salary and \$100,000 bonus paid to Chief Executive Officer Tom Thornton drew particular attention from committee members. Twelve of the agency's 21 employees have salaries of more than \$100,000, and a total of \$106,000 was paid in bonuses to 12 employees other than Thornton, The Wichita Eagle reported.

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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

## Yummy start for FFA day

Colby High juniors (above, from left) Kristen Mehl and Keagan Strange and freshman Callie Mehl, Kristen's sister, served pancakes during the annual FFA breakfast this morning. School Superintendent Terrel Harrison (right) and her husband Tom topped off full plates during the breakfast at the high school commons.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Susan McMahan, Thomas County emergency management director, is a candidate for a seat on the board of Colby Community College.

## Candidate thinks new leader is key

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Colby Community College board candidate Susan McMahan says that with a new president, the college is poised to move forward.

McMahan, the Thomas County emergency management

coordinator, has a long history with the college as a student and as a parent. She, along with her brother, husband and daughter, attended the school. She, her brother and her daughter graduated and her husband is finishing a degree in animal science.

McMahan said several peo-

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## Briefly

### Soccer signup open next week

The American Youth Soccer Organization is enrolling players for the spring season through Friday, March 4. Anyone age 5 to 19 is welcome. For information or to sign up, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.

### Prom dresses on sale at church

Gently used, like-new prom dresses will be on sale from 6 to 8 p.m. from Monday to Friday, March 4, in the basement of the First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. in Colby. New styles, great colors and sizes, \$20 each. All proceeds go to Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank. For information, call Sue Draper at (785) 460-6322 or Shanda Matix at (785) 460-5464.

### Lost pet staying at shelter

Colby Animal Clinic has a stray 7-month-old neu-

tered male lhasa apso looking for its owner. Lost or strayed animals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and adoption costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

### Legion serving biscuits, gravy

The Colby American Legion Post will serve biscuits and gravy on from 7 to 11 a.m. Saturday at the post hall, 1850 W. Fourth St. Donations will be accepted for building improvements. For information, call 462-3809.

### Get wellness check at cafe

Thomas County emergency medical technician students will be performing wellness checks from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday at Smoffee's coffee shop downtown, including blood pressure and blood sugar. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

### Church video concert Sunday

The Colby Berean Church will have a Gaither Homecoming video concert at 6 p.m. Sunday. This new concert, featuring Majesty, is free and open to the public. For information, call the church at 460-2763.

### Apply now for foundation grant

The Thomas County Community Foundation is accepting applications for "Kids Can Do!" grants, which provide \$200 for nonprofit organizations or classrooms. Applications are due by Tuesday. For information, go to www.thomascountycommunity-foundation.com or call 460-9152.

### Learn to save a life in March

Thomas County Emergency Medical Service will have a cardiopulmonary resuscitation information

### meeting for the public from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wednesday at Smoffee's coffee shop. It costs \$20 to be certified in the technique, but anyone can attend the meeting. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

### World Day of Prayer is coming

Church Women United will sponsor a World Day of Prayer luncheon and service at noon Friday, March 4, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Women from Colby churches will present a program by the women of Chile called "How Many Loaves Have You?" Donations will be accepted. For information, call Millie Horlacher at 462-3104.

