



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

March 23, 2011
Volume 122, Number 46
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Fire marshal pulls back on citations

By Steve Haynes

Colby Free Press
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

An agreement between the state fire marshal and legislators means Kansas school districts won't have to replace classroom doors and make other repairs designed to keep smoke from a hallway out of classrooms for up to an hour – at least not right away.

The work should never have been ordered because state law exempts older buildings from having to meet updated fire codes, said Acting Fire Marshal Doug Jorgensen. Revised citations already have been sent to about 54 Kansas schools in more than 30 districts, he said.

State Rep. Ward Cassidy of St. Francis, who had introduced a bill to exempt school districts from the repairs until the state school budget comes back to normal, said the reversal by the marshal's office is fine, but he wants to see the law changed to protect schools and businesses from this kind of inspection.

"We're in the process of reworking it to try to protect (schools) in the future," said the freshman legislator, a Republican elected last fall.

He had nothing but praise for Jorgensen, whom he said had agreed to go back 18 months to

check citations issued by his office.

"He was very nice to work with," the representative, a former high school principal in St. Francis, said.

In Colby, Superintendent Terrel Harrison said that while the district hasn't had a state inspection recently, it has yearly inspections by the Colby Fire Department. Harrison said the district keeps up with fire codes and has been replacing any doors that don't meet the code.

In Oberlin, Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said he wasn't even sure how much the change would save the school district. So many citations were issued in western Kansas, he said, that the district hasn't been able to get anyone out to look at its two schools.

A revised citation arrived Friday, he said, eliminating the demand that doors with windows or louvers in corridors be replaced. The district has about 60 of the doors in its two schools, he said.

From Topeka, Jorgensen said he'd ordered the review after finding that a section of state law says buildings should be inspected under the codes in effect when they were built, with some exceptions. The acting fire marshal, a retired Kansas Bureau of Investigation

See "MARSHAL," Page 3

Lopping off the top



A work crew took advantage of the nice weather Monday to cut down a tree in front of Sunflower Bank. The men cut off each layer of branches going up and then the cut trunk in sections going back down.

KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Author says city needs to stay the course

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Gary Adrian, a Colby native and retired medical lab technologist, is already a cheerleader for the city and says he would continue in that tradition if he's elected mayor.

Adrian, one of three mayoral candidates in the April 5 city election, is best known around town for his 2010 book, "Flight of the Eagles," chronicling the history of Colby High School sports. Adrian said researching his book, he spent a lot of time reading old newspapers and was struck by stories of the struggles the town went through in its early days. Issues like naming streets, platting the land, installing water and sewer lines and hiring police officers were a challenge in Colby's first years, he said.

"It gave me a whole new appre-



Gary Adrian

ciation for how the city works," he said.

Today citizens take some of those things for granted, Adrian said, and the city faces many new issues. However, Adrian said he thinks the town is doing well and

wants to keep it that way.

"If it's not broken," he said, "don't fix it."

However, the city does need to grow, he said. Colby is becoming a regional trade center and the city needs to encourage this by getting more businesses to relocate to town. Adrian said it's important to have a mayor who has time to help the Economic Development Alliance and the Chamber of Commerce promote the town.

Quality of life in Colby has stayed consistently good through the recession, he said. Taxes and utility rates have stayed fairly low compared to surrounding towns.

"The recession didn't hurt us too badly," he said. "We don't have big industry, so we fluctuate with agriculture."

Adrian said he spent his last several years in the Army as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the hematology section at Madigan

Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash. Being in charge taught him how to manage both people and money, he said, as well as how to plan ahead. As mayor, he said, he would work with the city manager and staff to plan for maintenance and equipment replacement.

Adrian said the city can help maintain civic pride by supporting community projects like the it has in the past, including the Denmen Field update or the new playground equipment at Fike Park.

"The city's always been willing to get things started," he said.

While citizens donated most of the money for those projects, he said, the city was there alongside businesses to donate materials and labor to get them done.

Adrian said friends and other people around town encouraged him to run. He said he's been go-

See "AUTHOR," Page 3

Candidate touts council experience

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Colby City Councilman Dave Voss, a candidate for mayor, said the city has good schools, health care and infrastructure, but it is going to have to plan well since less money will be coming in from the state.

"We need to do a better job of what we're already doing a good job of," he said.

Voss said he has been on the council for two years and on the city's airport board for 13. He said he thinks that experience makes him the best candidate. City business, especially finances, is complicated, he said, and it takes a while to get up to speed.

Electing a councilman as mayor means less of a learning curve, he said. Being in public service has also taught him the limits of what government can do and taught him to compromise well, Voss added.

"We're about to roll into budgeting in a couple months," he



Dave Voss

said. "It's very complex."

Voss has a master's degree in public administration and works for Wellpoint Inc., a health plan firm, as a provider representative. Voss said he does training, billing and troubleshooting for health care providers on the state's HealthWave program.

He also is a partner in a storage rental business with his brother Todd. The pair used to

See "CANDIDATE," Page 3

Hear what they have to say Thursday at the library

Mayoral candidates Dave Voss, Gary Adrian and Ed Collins (whose interview appeared in the *Colby Free Press* on Friday, March 11) will gather for a public forum at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Pioneer Memorial Library.

The candidates will answer questions submitted by citizens and the *Free Press*. Sandy Wilks will serve as moderator. Each candidate will be allowed two minutes for answers.

The candidates will have a small written

statement that will be handed out at the forum, and the public will also have the chance to speak to the candidates briefly afterward. The forum will last about an hour and light refreshments will be served.

Briefly

Chickenpox shots available

The Thomas County Health Department will be offering chickenpox vaccinations for \$14 until the end of June for anyone 1 and older. The department says anyone who did not have chickenpox after age 1 should get two doses. For information or to make an appointment, call 460-4596.

High school plans book fair

Colby High School will hold a Scholastic Book Fair from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Friday at the school library. The fair will include books for all ages along with refreshments. For information, call Camille Giersch at 460-5300.

Carnival is Friday at Rexford

The annual Junior Class Carnival at Golden Plains High School in Rexford will be from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday, with games including Plinko, the spinning

wheel, a fish pond, cake walk, duck pond, jail, basketball, football throw, marriage booth, bingo and many more, plus a concession stand in the commons. For information, call class president Kalyn Weber at (785) 687-3265.

School to hold open house

Heartland Christian School will have a preschool and kindergarten open house from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Friday. All parents of children who will be kindergartners next year – or age 3 or 4 and ready for preschool – are invited, along with their children. Hands-on activities in the classroom will be followed by a parent information meeting in the Heartland library. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Church offers sausage, pancakes

The Colby Berean Church will hold a pancake and sausage feed from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at the

Veterans of Foreign Wars hall. Donations will be accepted to help the church youth group pay for a mission trip to Peru. For information, call 443-1994 or 462-9665.

Group plans candidate forum

The Colby Community College Faculty Alliance will hold a candidate forum for Board of Trustees candidates at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 29, in the Cultural Arts Center on campus. Questions for the candidates may be e-mailed to bob.selby@colbycc.edu or deb.bickner@colbycc.edu.

Preschool enrollment March 29

Puddle Duck Preschool will have an enrollment open house for the 2011-2012 school year from 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 29, at the school, 520 W. Fifth St. The school is open to all children 3 to 5. For information, call Amy Jennings at 460-2603.

Seniors planning potato bar

The Senior Progress Center will have a potato bar, bake sale and coin raffle fund raiser from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31. For information, call Kaila DeBoer at 460-2901.

Supper, auction to help man

Help raise money for John Morgan at a benefit supper and silent auction from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Saturday, April 2, in the Colby High School commons. The proceeds will help with medical bills from his motorcycle accident Feb. 16. For information, or to donate, call Mandy Focke at 462-2120.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3