



COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Monday

March 28, 2011

Volume 122, Number 49

Serving Thomas County since 1888

8 pages



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Dishes, spas on display at home show

Marshall Alexander (above) of Healthy Gourmet Cookware showed off his pots and pans Saturday at the Colby Home and Better Living Show. The show included vendors from Colby and the surrounding area, as well as from around northwest Kansas. One vendor was LA Projects Spas (right), which was showing a home spa unit. Visitors to the show could also register to win a black Angus bull from Crooked Creek Angus. Some bulls and a calf were on hand (below) outside the old pool building for people to look at. The drawing will be held May 14.



Post office could lose sorting center

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
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Colby's mail may soon go to Salina before heading on to its destination, though the service says letters should not be delayed.

The U.S. Postal Service is considering merging Colby's mail processing center, along with one in Hays, with the one in Salina.

Colby Postmaster Kenton Krehbiel said the Colby center serves any zip code that starts with 677, which includes most of northwest Kansas. Krehbiel said mail from those zip codes comes to Colby from about 25 post offices. The center sorts mail for those offices, and then sends that mail to each office to be sorted to individual mail carriers.

The Colby center processes about 8,500 pieces of mail a day, said Postal Service spokesman Brian Sperry. The post office employs 25 people, with eight in the

processing center.

Central Plains Marketing Manager Dan Loukota said the Hays sectional center also is being looked at, along with Independence, Hutchinson and about 100 others around the county.

In a letter sent out to business that do a lot of mail, Loukota says the economic downturn and the Internet have led to a 20 percent decline in mail volume over the past five years, more than 43 billion pieces of mail.

"Stamped single-piece, first-class mail - that's the kind of letter that people send to grandma or to pay their bills - has declined by 50 percent in the last decade," Sperry said.

Consequently, the Postal Service is not able to keep up with the cost of processing and delivery. Krehbiel said the Colby post office has also seen the decline.

Loukota said the service has

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Advance voting to start Tuesday

Advance voting for the Tuesday, April 5, school and municipal election will begin Tuesday.

Registered voters can cast a ballot in person at the Thomas County clerk's office in the courthouse from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon next Monday, said Clerk Shelly Harms.

The clerk's office will close at noon next Monday so the staff can run final voting rosters and set up equipment at the Community Building, she said. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. next

Tuesday.

The election includes Colby's mayor and four seats on the Colby City Council, one in each ward. Four seats are up on the Colby School Board and three on the Colby Community College board.

In Brewster, four seats are up on the school board, as well as mayor and council seats. The Rexford mayor is up for election, along with seats on the council. Four seats are up for election on the Golden Plains School Board, which includes parts of Rawlins, Sheridan and Decatur counties.

Legislators far apart on pension funding

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas legislators agree that the state pension system's long-term funding gap is a serious problem that must be tackled this year, but the dramatically different approaches being taken by the House and Senate could complicate efforts to settle on some solutions.

Both chambers have plans that would require the state to increase its annual contribution to the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System to support the future benefits of teachers, judges, police, firefighters and other government workers. Both ask public employees to make some sacrifices.

But the Senate's plan is in line

with what has long been the conventional wisdom among most officials - that Kansas law and past court decisions prevent the concessions imposed on teachers and state workers from being overly one-sided. The House plan appears to go against that conventional wisdom, and some critics believe its passage would land the state in court.

The plans also differ in how quickly they want to move Kansas toward 401(k)-style plans for public employees. The House plan starts such a plan and makes it mandatory for teachers and government workers hired on or after July 1, 2013. The Senate proposal doesn't rule out such a move but

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Briefly

Class to teach improved health

A six-week class on self management of chronic disease will be offered Mondays from 2 to 4:30 p.m. beginning April 4 at Fairview Estates, 1630 Sewell Ave. Sessions will address healthful behavior and improving health status. The workshop is limited to the first 20 people who register. Call Jeanene Brown in the Citizens Medical Center education department at (785) 460-4850.

Men's Golf meeting Wednesday

The Colby Men's Golf Association will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Meadow Lake Golf Course clubhouse. For information, call Darvin Strutt at 462-6779.

College candidate forum Tuesday

The Colby Community College Faculty Alliance will hold a candidate forum for Board of Trustees

candidates at 7 p.m. Tuesday 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 coming up

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

Churches offer Lenten series

Soup and Scripture, sponsored by the Thomas County Ministerial Alliance, will be at noon each Wednesday through Easter at Smoffee's in downtown Colby. Speaker for this week on "Who is This Jesus?" will be Steve Todd, pastor of the College Drive Assembly in Colby. Cost for lunch is \$5. For

information, call Jarrod Spencer at (785) 443-2403 or your pastor.

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. 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 in the Colby High School commons. The proceeds will help with medical bills from a motorcycle accident Feb. 16. For information, or to donate, call Mandy Focke at 462-2120.

School plans scrapbooking day

Heartland Christian School is planning a free

scrapbooking day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday in the school commons. Supplies won't be available, so buy them ahead of time. For information, or to reserve a table, call Lucy Wood at 460-2721.

Museum exhibits rural photos

Come meet photographer Roxie Yonkey of Goodland at an informal reception from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 16, at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. She is exhibiting a selection of her work through April, touching on both rural and urban themes. For information, call the museum at 460-4590.



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