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KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

The City of Colby held a ribbon-cutting ceremony this morning to open Friday. It was paid for by a quarter-penny sales tax increase passed two years ago and includes a lazy river, shallow pools for kids, several types of slides and a separate standard pool for lap swimming.

New aquatic center to open Friday

By Tomi Miller

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On Friday the long-awaited opening of the Colby Aquatic Center will arrive.

"I'm excited for the opening, I just hope the weather cooperates!" said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

Mark Clayton of Prosser Wilbert, the general contractor for the new pool, said it has been a great project for the company.

"We really enjoyed working in Colby, and we think the public will really enjoy this new center," he said.

The idea for the new facility came about when a group of young mothers got together and decided that the old Colby pool didn't offer enough recreation and they wanted something with more options closer to home. The group then came to a city council meet-



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Some of the lifeguards at the new pool demonstrated the slides and the lazy river at the ribbon-cutting ceremony this morning.

ing to propose a tax increase to passed in November, 2009, and pay for the new pool. The increase the center was mapped out.

The construction of the Aquatic Center has been an ongoing pro-

cess that started in the first part of July. During that time, there was at least one person from 21 different trades working on the project, Clayton said.

Armstrong said the total cost for the construction of the pool was a little bit under \$4.6 million, all raised by the quarter of a penny sales tax increase. This tax raise was also put into place to help pay off the construction of the new fire station on South Country Club Drive.

The new pool includes a separate lap pool with diving boards for more traditional swimming, a leisure pool connected to a lazy river that is targeted for younger kids, a floating play area that resemble lily pads, locker rooms, bathhouses, concessions and a life guard house. Along with these planned features, an additional two lanes were added to the lap pool, Clayton said. Originally, the base bid for the lap pool only called for

six lanes, but the city chose to add an extra two lanes.

"We wanted to make it a facility that everyone can enjoy," Armstrong said. "It should be a place that has something for everybody, adults and kids."

The facility will have times for adults to swim as well as family swim.

For Friday, the pool will be open from 1 to 6 p.m. for general swim, 6 to 7 p.m. for adults and 7 to 9 for families. On Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the pool will be open from 1 to 6 p.m. for general swim.

Its regular hours will be 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday with adult lap swim from 9 to 10 a.m.; lessons from 10 a.m. to noon; general swim from 1 to 5 p.m., exercise programs and lap swimming from 6 to 7 p.m. and family swim from 7 to 9 p.m.

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State to help upgrade airport

By Kevin Bottrell

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The Kansas Department of Transportation announced 30 aviation projects that will receive state money next year, including one in Colby.

The department will spend \$3.54 million in aviation projects next year.

"Last year we released a study that showed Kansas airports support more than 47,000 jobs, generate \$2.3 billion in payroll and produce \$10.4 billion in

on-airport economic activity," said Ed Young, the department's director of aviation. "With that kind of impact, it's not only important to maintain our aviation infrastructure, but to ensure that our investments match the needs of our system plan."

Colby's project will be an upgrade of the automated weather observation system. The system automatically records wind speed, dew point, cloud ceiling, visibility and other data vital to pilots.

"Just about everything you'd ever want to know,"

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Governor signs 20 new laws this week

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Kansas is launching an initiative to train more engineers, restrict private health insurance coverage for abortion, declare opposition to last year's federal health care overhaul and strengthen laws against drunken driving.

Gov. Sam Brownback signed 20 bills Wednesday, many of the measures sent to him as the Legislature's annual session ended earlier this month. He has until Monday to act on the rest, including a \$13.8 billion budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

Two bills outlined a 10-year, \$170 million initiative to boost engineering graduates over the next decade by more than 50 percent, from fewer than 900 a year to 1,365 a year.

"It is critical for us to do economic growth in the state of Kansas, and to me, you do that by targeting what you are best at and what you need to grow the economy," Brownback said. "I hear, constantly, employers talking about the need for more engineers."

One bill sets aside \$10.5 million in gambling revenues annually for 10 years, starting in 2012, to beef up engineering programs at the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and Wichita State University. Each school must match its \$3.5 million annual share.

Another bill authorizes \$65 million in bonds to expand facilities for the University of Kansas engineering school.

Senate leaders aggressively pushed the engineer-

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Down the serving line



TOMI MILLER/Colby Free Press

Colby High School FFA members served up steaming hot mountain oysters at their barbecue on Friday. The barbecue served as a fund raiser for the club.

Briefly

Enroll now in preschool

Heartland Christian School is taking enrollment applications for the 2011-2012 preschool class. The 3-year-old class will meet Tuesday and Thursday and the 4-year-old class will meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Red Cross wants your blood

The American Red Cross will have blood drives from 7:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. today at the Colby Community Building. Go to redcrossblood.org or call (800) 733-2767, to make an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome. Donors will be entered to win one of 12 sets of tickets to the Country Stampede on Sunday, June 26, and will be entered in the national drawing to win two passes and backstage tours to the Grand Ole Opry. For questions or to volunteer as a helper, call (785) 462-3861.

Trash collectors off for holiday

The City of Colby Public Works Department will be closed Monday for Memorial Day. The Monday residential sanitation route will be picked up on Tuesday, May 31. Have your grass and trash to the curb by 8 a.m. For information, call Public Works at (785) 460-4420.

Landfill to close this weekend

The Thomas County Landfill will close at noon Saturday for the holiday weekend. It will reopen at 9 a.m. Tuesday. For information, call 462-8139.

Baseball team to hold day camp

The Colby High School baseball team is holding a youth camp fund raiser from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 4, at the Colby Recreation Fields. The camp will teach hitting, pitching, base running and defense. The cost is \$25 before Satur-

day and \$30 after, with proceeds going to the baseball team. For information, call 462-8342.

Bible school to visit 'Big Apple'

The Colby Berean Church will hold a Vacation Bible School for kids age 4 to seventh grade from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Sunday to Thursday, June 5 to 9, at the church. This year's theme will be "Big Apple Adventure." For information, call 460-2862.

Lutherans plan Bible school

Trinity Lutheran Church will hold a Vacation Bible School from 9:15 a.m. to noon June 7 to 10 at the church. The school is open to kids age 3 to fifth grade. This year's theme is "Big Jungle Adventure: a Faith Journey With Jesus." For information, call the church at 462-3497.

RC Flyers to have fun fly

The Colby RC Flyers will have a remote con-

trol plane fun fly from daylight to dusk on Saturday and Sunday, June 11 and 12, at the club's field seven miles north of Colby on K-25 and 1/8th mile east. Admission is free for the public. For information, call Nick Nichols at (785) 460-6357 or Marvin Farmer at (785) 443-3593.

Swedish Singers to perform here

The Young Swedish Singers will hold a free concert at 7 p.m. Monday, June 20, at the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. The 34-member gospel singing group from Sweden performs gospel, hymns and Swedish folk music, though most of their program is in English. For information, contact the Trinity Lutheran Church at 462-3497.



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