



Treasurer helps locals find money

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press
Kansas Treasurer Ron Estes (right) helped a Thomas County resident look up unclaimed property on Wednesday at the Office Complex. Estes and staff members Travis Coture-Lovelady (from left) and Jim Beale. Set up laptops at the complex so they could search the unclaimed property database by name for any local citizens who showed up.

Kansas Treasurer Ron Estes and his staff spent an hour and a half helping local citizens find unclaimed property on Wednesday at the Thomas County Office Complex.

Estes said he has been traveling the state to talk about unclaimed property, which is money his office holds that belongs to citizens. The money could come from utility deposits, a last paycheck that was never picked up, inheritance, insurance and many other sources.

"By law, businesses have to turn that over to us after a certain number of years," he said.

The state has about \$230 million in unclaimed property, Estes said.

Estes had two staff members with laptops along with him, who were looking up names for people in the unclaimed property database. Estes said anyone can search the database on the internet at www.kansascash.com.

Estes said the amounts people find vary widely. Earlier this spring, he said, one person found they had \$516,000 in unclaimed property from life insurance and several other sources.

Once unclaimed property is found, he said, his office has a

claim packet to fill out so that the person's identity can be confirmed. It can get complicated if someone has moved or has changed names in the time since the property record was filed, Estes said. However, he said, a new law in effect this year allows the treasurer's office to send social security numbers to the Kansas Department of Revenue, which sends back updated addresses.

Estes said about one third of all claims have a social security number attached, and the new law makes it easier to confirm identities.

Estes and his staff have been all around northwest Kansas this week. He said he often gets better turnouts in small communities.

"Some folks come in knowing they have something," he said. "Some just want the peace of mind knowing they don't have any unclaimed property."



Train derails near Benkelman

BENKELMAN, Neb. (AP) — Amtrak says a small number of passengers have been taken to hospitals after a train carrying about 175 people between California and Chicago derailed in Nebraska.

Amtrak says the California Zephyr train ran into some equipment on the tracks and derailed

around 8 a.m. near Benkelman, not far from the state's borders with Kansas and Colorado.

Two locomotives and the first three of 10 passenger cars derailed. The locomotives tipped onto their sides but Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari says there was no fire.

Magliari says he can't confirm the exact number of injuries but

says none are believed to be life-threatening.

Dundy County Hospital spokeswoman Sandy Noffsinger says seven patients are being treated there. She confirms none of those injuries are considered to be life-threatening.

U.S. Senator to stop here for Monday town hall meeting

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran will be at Citizens Medical Center, 100 E. College Drive, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Monday as part of his statewide "listening tour."

Moran is traveling to each of Kansas' 105 coun-

ties to talk with area residents about their hopes and concerns. The issues Sen. Moran focuses on and the work he does in Washington, D.C., is largely based on the conversations he has with Kansans during these town hall meetings.

Colby High senior attends Girls Nation in Washington D.C.

By Christina Beringer
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Christina Ostmeyer of Colby was one of only 98 young women selected to attend the 65th American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation in Washington, D.C. Ostmeyer left July 23 for the week-long learning experience.

"Five girls were nominated at Girls State for a chance to be selected for the Girls Nation program," Ostmeyer said. "I got one of the



C. Ostmeyer

five nominations, out of about 300 girls. We then had to answer questions based on our opinions of various political issues and the girl with the most votes got to go."

Ostmeyer won, along with another Kansan from Manhattan.

"At the airport, I met a girl from Missouri named Lucy and we got to ride on the plane together," she said. "We became partners at Girls Nation and we had to make up a real resolution that was debated and had to follow parliamentary procedure.

"It was a long process because all of the

girls were really passionate about politics, but our resolution to extend, maintain and make pell grants more accessible got passed."

The leadership conference was designed to provide practical insight into the workings of government and to instill a sense of pride and loyalty in America.

A key component of the program involved mock senate sessions, complete with caucusing and debating of bills ranging in topic from personal to political interests.

Campaigns were held to elect party officials, a vice president and Girls Nation President. The Girls Nation President is

honored with an invitation to attend and speak at the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention later in the summer.

In addition to their legislative forums, participants got the opportunity to hear guest speakers and visit the Pentagon, Arlington National Cemetery, the White House and other memorials in the Washington D.C. area. Their visit to Capitol Hill included meetings with their respective Senators and Representatives and the opportunity to meet the President of the United States.

"Lucy and I got the opportunity to meet President Obama and we even found our way to Senator John McCain's office,"

said Ostmeyer.

To the girls' dismay, they were unable to meet their political idol, but were impressed to see so many interns and young people working at Capitol Hill.

"It was eye-opening to see jobs on the hill not so far out of reach," she explained enthusiastically. "It was like learning that your dream job is actually a real, achievable career."

"The ALA Girls Nation experience is a once in a lifetime opportunity for young ladies across our nation," said Vickie Koutz, American Legion Auxiliary Girls

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LYNN CAMERON/Colby Community College

College teaches outdoor skills

Colby Community College held its Youth Outdoor Skills Day last weekend. More than 60 youths attended. The event included archery (above) and muzzle-loading rifles (right). The day-long event is put on every year by the college and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.



Witnesses: crop insurance critical in new U.S. Farm Bill negotiations

By Roxana Hegeman
The Associated Press

WICHITA — Kansas farmers and rural leaders told the U.S. Senate committee drafting the new Farm Bill that the federal crop insurance program is critical to Kansas agriculture.

Their testimony came Thursday during a field hearing in Wichita by the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry as it grapples with recommendations for budget cuts amid a devastating drought across much of the nation's Midwest.

Farmers in western Kansas are struggling with extreme drought, while farmers in eastern Kansas are trying to cope with flooding.

"Without a safety net my operation and many others would no longer exist," said David Schemm, a wheat grower from Sharon Springs in western Kansas.

Schemm said that the crop insurance program has been vital to his operation, noting that when he goes in to see the banker for an operating loan the bank

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Kansas Dems want tax break extension

TOPEKA (AP) — The chairwoman of the Kansas Democratic Party urged the state's Republican congressional delegation Thursday to support extending a reduction in the Social Security payroll tax.

Allowing the reduction to expire this fall would amount to a \$1 billion tax increase for some 1.6 million Kansas workers, Joan Wagon told reporters during a conference call. She called on Kansas' four U.S. House members to vote to extend the cut.

If allowed to expire, the payroll deduction for Social Security

would increase from 4.2 percent to 6.2 percent for most workers. Republicans have said they wouldn't support increasing any taxes to fund the federal government, Wagon said, encouraging them to stand firm with President Barack Obama and Democrats in Congress to extend the cut.

"I just want them to look at the bottom line on hard-working families," Wagon said. "If our delegation has been so strong on no tax increases, this is one they want to stand on."

Rep. Lynn Jenkins, whose 2nd District covers most of eastern

Kansas, would support any tax policy that would stimulate the economy and create jobs, Jenkins' spokesman Sean Fitzpatrick told the Topeka Capital-Journal. But he said the payroll tax reduction was creating long-term funding problems for Social Security that could lead to the program's bankruptcy.

Rep. Tim Huelskamp, whose 1st

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