



Church groups plan walk to end hunger

By Christina Beringer

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Trinity Lutheran Church is partnering with Church World Service and other churches in the area to help stop hunger with a CROP Hunger Walk. The walk will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday at the church, 855 E. Fifth Street in Colby.

The walking route will make its way to churches around town, with water breaks at the First Presbyterian Church and the

Colby United Methodist Church. Walkers can walk as much or as little of the route as they want. There is no fee or age restrictions to participate, says Linda Pabst of Trinity Lutheran Church.

"We hope that participants will want to collect donations for the cause, but we are not charging for people to join in the walk," Pabst said. "There also is no deadline to register and walkers can just show up the day of the event, but I do hope they'll call ahead of time so we can be better prepared. I also have a packet of

information to give for those who want to help collect donations."

Donations can be gathered before or after the walk and are due at the church by Tuesday.

"The packet has donor sheets with important information," Pabst said. "Those collecting donations can pick from a list of approved agencies that they want to raise money for."

The church is hoping to get at least 50 walkers and has a goal of raising \$5,000 to benefit various hunger agencies around

the world. Twenty-five percent will be given to Genesis-Thomas County.

The walk has previously been sponsored by other churches in town. Most recently, the Methodist church did the planning; the Presbyterian church has also been involved in years past, Pabst said.

This year, some 2,000 cities and towns nationwide are holding interfaith community walks with the theme "Ending hunger one step at a time."

Haiti is one part of the world where the walks are making a big difference. Church

World Service was there with much-needed emergency assistance. With recovery efforts in full swing, the service is helping families and communities rebuild homes, food supplies and livelihoods.

The walk also played a role in the U.S. helping communities ravaged by floods and tornadoes, said the service.

Contact Pabst at the church to register, (785) 462-3497. Visit www.churchworldservice.org for information.

Area license offices get new technology

The Oakley, Goodland and Sharon Springs driver's license offices began using new technology Tuesday that will simplify the process of getting driver's licenses and help ensure people receiving Kansas licenses are who they say they are.

On Tuesday the Kansas Department of Revenue, Division of Vehicles installed new equipment and software and trained workers at the driver's license offices in the courthouses in Sherman, Logan and Wallace counties. Offices in Decatur and Sheridan counties were upgraded on Monday. Cheyenne, Rawlins and Gove counties are scheduled for today. The Colby driver's license station was upgraded on Sept. 23.

The upgraded technology, which is already used at the department's driver's license office in the Docking State Office Building in Topeka, will scan and capture the documents people bring in as proof of their identity. While documents are already visually inspected at all driver's license offices when someone applies for a driver's license, the new technology will help verify the documents'

Corn harvest progressing



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

The Thomas County corn harvest is well under way as the crop continues to dry down. So far the wet corn has produced some yields in the 50-60 bushel-per-acre range in some areas, far below the normal 100 bushels per acre.

The loss in yield is partially due to a dryer-than-average growing season and several August hail storms that damaged some crops and destroyed others in fields from Levant to Rexford.

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Foundation runs contest to come up with new fund

By Christina Beringer

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A deadline for youth is soon approaching to get involved in a unique opportunity being offered by the Thomas County Community Foundation.

The foundation is having a contest for youth in the area to give input for a new endowed fund. The deadline to propose

ideas is Saturday, and \$500 will be given as start-up money to get the new fund endowed at the foundation.

"Youth are our future and we want them to know that their ideas and concerns are valued," said executive director Melinda Olson. "We are giving young people the opportunity to identify a need. We'll contribute the first \$500 to benefit the idea and then we'll need the community to get behind the project in order to fully endow

the fund."

Olson said a fully endowed fund must have at least \$2,500 before it can generate enough interest to benefit the community. As soon as it reaches that amount, it will be a permanent fund that will benefit the community forever.

The winning idea will be announced at the foundation's annual meeting, which will be Monday.

"In years past, we have always awarded

\$500 as a surprise grant to a non-profit organization at the annual meeting, but this year we wanted to do something a little different," said Olson. "This is a fun way to get youth involved and let them know that they can make a difference."

Olson said there are many funds currently in existence at the foundation and encourages interested participants to check out their website before proposing an idea to ensure there isn't any duplica-

tion of ideas.

She said ideas can be e-mailed directly to her at tcfc@st-tel.net. Information needed when submitting an idea is: the name of the individual or group submitting the idea, a detailed description of the fund you would like to see established at the foundation and a proposed name for the new fund.

For information, visit www.ThomasCountyCommunityFoundation.com.

Grant recipients recognized with ribbons

By Christina Beringer

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The Thomas County Community Foundation is using green ribbons to show the community how big of an impact they have had on Thomas County since their inception in 2001.

"In celebration of TCCF's 10-year anniversary, we want to give recognition to the many non-profit organizations, churches, schools and government offices in the county who have worked so hard to bring beneficial programs to the area using funds from the foundation," said Melinda Olson, executive director of the foundation.

"We also want to show how we've touched the many lives in the county, by asking those who have received a grant from the foundation to display a green ribbon in a prominent place of their establishment."

Olson said foundation board members and volunteers will be distributing ribbons throughout the week and hope to get them



CHRISTINA BERINGER/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Health Department Director Kasiyah Rothchild (left) and Thomas County Community Foundation Director Melinda Olson (right) tied a green ribbon to their Breastfeeding Boutique sign to show they received a grant from the foundation.

all delivered by Friday. "We have about 70 ribbons that will be delivered all over

Thomas County, though we've given many more grants to many more organizations," said Olson.

"Some of the groups are unfortu-

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Study finds benefits have little influence on marriage decision

By John Milburn

The Associated Press

TOPEKA — Conservative Republican legislators were critical Tuesday of an audit of Kansas benefit programs that looked for but found few disincentives that might keep people from getting married.

Republicans raised questions during a Legislative Post Audit Committee hearing in Topeka about the report, which concluded that eligibility requirements and regulations had little, if any, effect on clients' decisions to get married.

"Our analysis yielded mixed results across programs, and frequently mixed results within a program," Joe Lawhon said. "In some situations marriage mattered. In other situations it did not."

The report looked at eligibility requirements for 36 state benefit programs, including temporary

assistance and veteran programs. It found that 29 areas did have income criteria that had the potential to discourage marriage.

However, during questioning of program staff and clients, auditors learned there was little information as to whether eligibility for services actually caused people to avoid getting married.

The audit is the first legislative report to look at marriage since Republican Gov. Sam Brownback took office in January. As part of his administration's focus on stimulating the economy, the conservative former U.S. senator has put an emphasis on encouraging more marriages in Kansas and fewer divorces and cohabitations.

Supporters argue that creating

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