



County may lose grant over mapping

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Issues dealing with a geographical mapping company may hinder a grant received by Thomas County Emergency Management...

During Monday morning's commissioner meeting, Thomas County Appraiser Mary Cech said that Sanborn, a company who has provided a quality product in the past, has gone through restructuring...

"Our file sat on someone's desk for months," Cech said, "and we've never had problems like that before."

Emergency management director Susan McMahan said she received a large grant, over \$100,000, and \$72,000 of which was designated to get orthophotography photos - digitally en-

hanced aerial photos - taken of Thomas County by Sanborn. Another \$4,000 in 911 landline funds have also been earmarked for the project bringing it's total expense to \$76,000.

The aerial photos provide a precise, digital representation of the ground. Coupled with geospatial qualities of a map, it can be used in search and rescue missions, property assessments, right-of-way mapping, pollution prevention and more.

"Sanborn was supposed to fly in March and we should have got the photos in July," said McMahan on Thursday morning after the meeting. "The final straw was when they were supposed to be on my desk on Monday afternoon; I still have not seen them."

McMahan explained that the grant has to be spent by the end of this year, but without seeing the final product, payment is being held off.

"We don't even know if the photos are good quality, and at \$76,000 we have to be careful," McMahan said. "If they don't

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Turn clocks back at 2 a.m. Sunday

It's time once again to fall back as Daylight Saving Time ends this weekend.

The time change will officially occur at 2 a.m. Sunday, when clocks should be set back one hour.

Daylight Saving Time was first instituted during the World Wars as a way to save energy by taking advantage of the later hours of daylight. Between the wars, states

and cities could choose whether they wanted to follow the change or not. With the passage of the Uniform Time Act, the length of Daylight Saving Time was standardized. In 2007, it was lengthened by four weeks.

Today, Arizona, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa do not participate in Daylight Saving Time.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

'See Dubs' win library trivia night

Six teams competed Thursday night in the Pioneer Memorial Library Trivia Night. The winning team was the "See Dubs," which included several members of the Colby Wesleyan Church. One team was made up of out-of-towners who are here doing mineral exploration. Wynn Duffey (right) asked the questions while Debbie Tittle and Katie Orr spun the category wheel and Sandy Wilks kept score. Library Director Melany Wilks gave out prizes like green water bottle for random questions.



The parts are on order



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Police had to direct traffic for several hours at the intersection of Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue on Thursday after snow blew into the wiring and caused a short, which in turn caused the street lights to stop working. Public Works Director Chris Bieker said the department cannibalized wiring from other lights and has replacements on order now.

Company to renovate old Colby hospital

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The old St. Thomas Hospital on Range Avenue, which has sat empty for seven years, may soon see some new activity.

Cohen-Esrey Affordable Partners has purchased the building from Dr. Victor Hildyard and are planning to remodel it into low-income apartments for the elderly. The Colby City Council approved a resolution at its meeting Tuesday night, supporting the companies application for Housing Tax Credits. The company plans to sell the tax credits to raise money to remodel the building.

The building had been used as the school administration building until the new building at Third Street and Grant Avenue was completed in 2004. Since then, it has stood empty.

"It will be nice to have that cleaned up and turned into something useful," said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

In other business, the council:
• Approved a resolution of in-



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

A Kansas City-based company has purchased the old St. Thomas Hospital on Range Avenue and plans to remodel the building into low-income apartments for the elderly.

tent to issue Health Facilities Revenue Bonds for about \$8 million for the hospital. Joe Norton of Gilmore and Bell, the city's bond agency, said this is a refinance of the hospital's bonds to take advantage of favorable interest rates and

to finance several additions to the building. Norton said these bonds were issued in 1998, which was a refinance of earlier bonds.

Norton said the hospital is responsible for debt service on the bonds and the city has no financial

obligation.

• Heard councilman Tim Hutfles say he had spoken to Thomas County Road Supervisor Clair Schrock, who said the county is looking at ways to control the drainage at the fairgrounds. Because of erosion and loose soil at the arena, mud has been flowing onto the road and into surrounding neighborhoods after rain storms. Hutfles said the county may try to pave some of the pit area or plant buffalo grass. Councilman Omar Weber said buffalo grass, if properly maintained, would solve some of the erosion problem.

"Someone would have to make a concerted effort to water it," he said.

• Revised hours for the Colby Aquatic Center next year. Armstrong said she and several council members met with pool staff in October and while everyone was pleased with how the pool's first year went, they had some recommendations on hours.

From May 26 to June 30, pool will open from 1 to 6 p.m. Mon-

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State board to get briefed on finance proposal

TOPEKA - Gov. Sam Brownback, who wants to change the way Kansas distributes about \$3 billion in state aid to school districts, will send a top aide to brief the State Board of Education next week on the administration's proposal for handing out the funds.

Brownback policy director Landon Fulmer will speak to the 10-member board during its monthly meeting Nov. 8.

The administration's proposal includes setting a new baseline for state aid, giving districts block grants and letting counties vote on a special sales tax for education. Brownback is expected to present the plan to legislators when they return in January for the 2012 session.

While the details haven't been released, a top state education official said Wednesday that a jump in enrollment and more students qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunches will cost Kansas more in the current school year.

The Hutchinson News (http://bit.ly/rUFvUm) reported Thursday that Deputy Education Commissioner Dale Dennis said the increases will require an additional \$24.7 million to prevent further cuts in state aid to schools.

Districts are receiving a base of \$3,780 per student in 2011-12, down \$232 from the previous year. If the additional revenue isn't approved by legislators when they return in January, districts will have to make do or tap reserve accounts to cover the expenses.

Dennis said the base state amount would drop about \$36 per student if state funds have to be redistributed.

In previous years, governors have recommended that legislators pay the increased education and social services expenses that are incurred during the middle of a state fiscal year. Typically those increases have ranged between \$50 million and \$100 million.

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