



Bank robber indicted by grand jury

The elderly homeless man who robbed Farmers and Merchants Bank on Oct. 28 has been indicted by a grand jury in Wichita on one count of bank robbery.

Timothy David Seifert, 67, of Bethlehem, Pa., allegedly walked into Farmers and Merchants Bank and passed the teller a note saying he had a weapon under his jacket and asking for money. The teller gave Seifert money and he left. Officers took him into custody within a few minutes and found

that he had not been carrying any weapons.

Seifert was taken into custody and then handed over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation

The U.S. District Attorney's Office in Wichita announced the indictment on Nov. 9. If convicted, Seifert could face up to 25 years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Lanny Welch is prosecuting the case.

Car rolls into oncoming traffic

An 18-year-old Wichita man was seriously injured when his car rolled into oncoming traffic on I-70 near Oakley Tuesday night.

According to the Kansas Highway Patrol, Thiet Phan was traveling west on I-70 at 8:55 p.m. when his 2009 Toyota Scion went into the median and rolled across the eastbound lanes, striking a semi-tractor rig head on. The wreck happened about a mile east of Oakley

licopter to Via Christi-St. Francis Hospital in Wichita.

The semi-tractor rig was driven by Wayne Rockensock, 65, of Fountain, Colo. Neither he nor his passenger, Kevin Calvert, 43, of Longmont, Colo., were injured.

The Highway Patrol report said Phan and Rockensock were wearing seatbelts, while Calvert was asleep in the truck's sleeping compartment.

Both vehicles were towed to Oakley.

City council gets the ball rolling on oil and gas lease agreement

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press kbottrell@nwkansas.com

The Colby City Council approved a letter of intent Tuesday to allow a New York energy company to lease oil and gas rights on city land.

The letter is the first step in letting Manhattan Energy One lease city land for \$45 an acre for horizontal drilling. JoAnn Miltner, a land agent for Manhattan Energy, was at the Tuesday meeting to negotiate the final agreement. She, City Manager Carolyn Armstrong and City At-

torney John Gatz had been working on the agreement for several weeks.

The agreement covers 754 acres of city land, but it will only go into effect for acres where the company finds the city actually owns the mineral rights. The letter of intent will be sent to the company. Miltner said it will take two to three weeks for the company to research rights ownership and prepare the lease agreement, which will then be brought to the city.

In other business, the council:

- Presented lineman certificates to Larry Horinek and Rick Carter. They have completed the four-year Kansas Regis-

tered Apprenticeship Program through the Department of Commerce.

• Approved a land swap with the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. The city will be trading the 2 1/2 acres west of the current cemetery for four acres the church will purchase east of the ballfields. Armstrong said the city set aside the land west of the cemetery for the church to expand the cemetery into.

Currently, the American Youth Soccer Organization uses the land as a soccer field. Armstrong said the organization may partner with the Multipurpose Activity Center in the future, but team may still

be able to use the field until the church has need of it.

Armstrong said she had an estimate done on how much it will cost to extend water and sewer lines and move the organization's building to the new area east of the ballfields. Sewer lines will cost \$4,800; water, \$6,287; and to move the building, \$2,000 to \$3,000.

• Approved raising the lease fees for airport hangers by 3 percent. Armstrong said the airport board made the decision to raise the fees gradually over several years rather than all at once. Council President Dave Voss said the price is still

cheap compared to some other airports.

• Approved a change order on the Willow Drive improvement. The \$30,000-change to the contract includes the new cold plastic lane markings and an adjustment to the actual amounts of materials used. Armstrong said this is still within the amount budgeted for the project.

• Heard Armstrong say that Colby Police Officer Sage Hemmert is close to completing his master's degree in criminal justice. Help with continuing education is available to all city employees, she said, after they have been with the city for a year.

Hey there, Little Red Riding Hood



MICHELE WERTH/Brewster School District

Aaron Luckert (left) played the big bad wolf to Amber Barrie's Little Red Riding Hood in the Brewster High School play on Sunday. In this scene, Little Red Riding Hood unknowingly gave the wolf directions to her grandmother's house.

Bands join forces for parade



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

The Colby Middle School and High School bands, directed by Jill Nickols, combined to march in the Veterans Day parade Friday. The bands also played several patriotic songs and the national anthem at the courthouse following the parade.

Farmland value continues to increase

By Josh Funk

AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. — The average value of farmland in several Midwestern and Western states grew 25 percent over the past year in the biggest one-year jump in at least three decades.

The increase reported Tuesday by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Mo., reflects current low interest rates and a healthy farm economy. But the higher land values will make farming more expensive.

"It makes it difficult for early farmers or farmers who want to expand their operation," Nebraska Farm Bureau President Keith Olsen said. "The other big concern is that as ag values go up, property taxes are going up."

Land values increased despite widespread flooding and drought that many farmers in the region struggled with this year. Several hundred thousand acres of farmland along the Missouri River spent much of the summer under water because of flooding, and southern Plains states have been battling severe drought.

But as long as the weather in their area cooperated, farmers did well. Corn prices hit a record high of \$7.99 a bushel in June because thin supplies prompted fears of a shortage. Wheat prices also have been high, and some farmers have used the extra income to buy

land. "If you had the moisture to raise a crop, it's going to be a good year," said Ron Meyer, who farms near Superior, Neb.

But Meyer said the higher land prices will definitely make it harder for young people to get into farming.

The increase in land values is the biggest since the bank began issuing its quarterly report in 1980. The third-quarter report is based on a survey of 243 banks in Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Colorado, northern New Mexico and western Missouri.

Nebraska led the region with a roughly 41 percent increase in the value of its farmland in the past year. The gains were smallest in drought-stricken Oklahoma, where the value of non-irrigated farmland grew about 11 percent. Oklahoma ranchland values grew about 5 percent.

Jason Henderson, the Federal Reserve economist in Omaha who oversees the survey, said land values in Oklahoma are being driven more by energy markets than by farm income because of the oil and other minerals being mined there.

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