



Is the college safe? Student survey says yes

By Kayla Cornett Colby Free Press kcornett@nwkansas.com

The Colby Community College board of trustees heard from the Violence Prevention Committee about how safe students, faculty and staff think the college campus is at its monthly meeting in Thomas Hall last Monday.

The committee is comprised of Crystal Pounds, Danielle Silsbee, Doug Johnson, and Sean Lydon, and it was put together by Dr. Keegan Nichols, vice president of student affairs and marketing, to look at violence prevention on campus. The committee sent out a survey and told the

board the results and suggestions they have according to their findings.

Pounds said they found that 100 percent of the students think the campus is safe, but they found several areas where faculty, staff and students agree the college could improve. The committee wants to address three things during its first year of operation.

The first is a lack of lighting in parking lots and several other locations on campus. The second is needing to trim bushes because there were comments made that people could be hiding in them.

The third is increasing the opportunities for physical activity. The committee members said the best way to increase

that is by improving the fitness center. The committee members also said they think having an on-campus counselor would be beneficial, but decided they should focus on the three factors that are attainable for this year.

Pounds said they also tried to fix the lock problems in the residence halls, but they were denied because it was a fire hazard. However, Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs and facilities management, said he received an e-mail from the state fire marshal saying they could install the locks the committee wanted to after all.

"We realize that we can't just make this happen, we have to have some money to make it happen," Pounds said. "So we

have some suggestions to raise money or find the money."

The committee suggested that faculty and staff, who do not currently pay for a parking permits, begin paying \$10 year to park on campus, that students pay \$25, which is a \$10 increase from what they pay now, and residence hall students would pay for a permit as well since they currently do not pay.

"Those parking fees have not gone up since I think 1995," Johnson said. "The slight increase is still very, very below what other institutions are charging, especially at the university level."

Pounds said they realize that these changes would require a different method

for parking permits, so that is something they would have to look into.

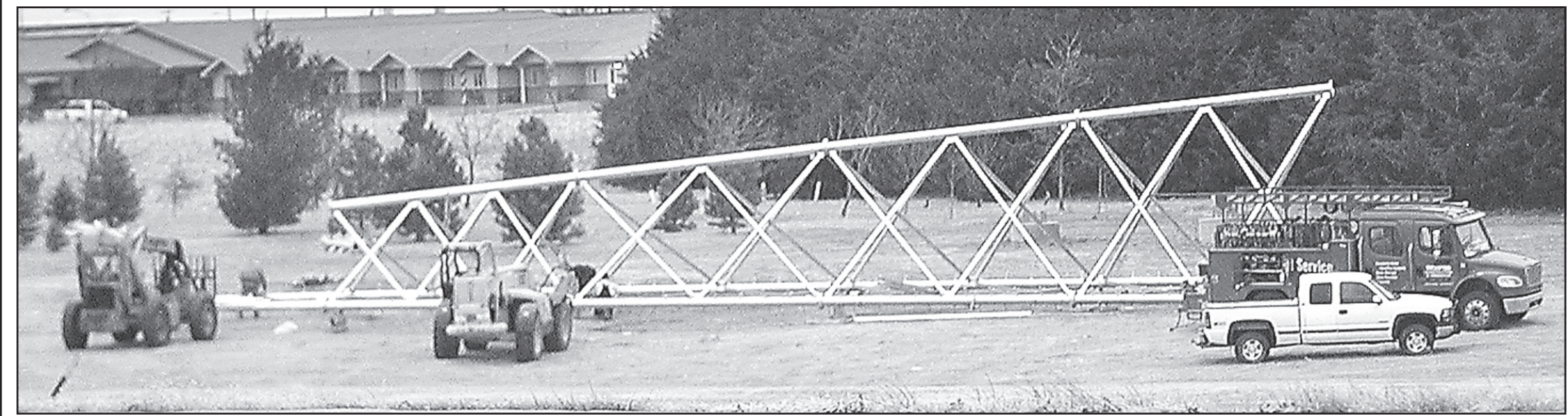
"But after the lighting was changed and we had reached our goals, then the money could go towards improving the parking lots, snow removal, things like that," Pounds said.

Another idea the committee has to raise money for its project is increasing laundry fees. Right now, it is 50 cents to wash and 50 cents to dry, so Pounds said they recommend increasing each by a quarter.

To end the presentation, Pounds talked about other things the committee has done to promote violence prevention on

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Laying out the tower



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Construction began last week on Colby Community College's new wind turbine. The turbine will provide power to the new dorm as part of a multi-million dollar deal with Honeywell to make energy efficiency improvements at the college. These improvements also include installing solar panels on several campus buildings.



JUDY ROGERS/Selden Public Library

Children lined up to see Santa Claus at the Selden Winterfest on Friday at the Selden Community Building.

Santa visits Selden for Winterfest

By Judy Rogers Selden Public Library

Food, fireworks and a visit from Santa marked the fourth annual Winterfest Celebration in Selden on Friday.

Businesses up and down Main Street were open late and provided a variety of treats for visitors. Each business also had a registration for the Selden Greenbucks that were to be given away.

Volunteers from the community and the Selden Girl Scouts served hot dogs and chili dogs provided by the Selden Community Foundation in the Community Building. Steve Brewer shot off fireworks just before 7 p.m. as Santa arrived in the Selden fire truck to the excitement of eager children anxious to share with him their Christmas wishes. Each child received a bag of treats from Santa that were provided by the Selden Senior



Cash Schiltz shared his Christmas wishes with Santa.

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Blustery winds Saturday cause only minor damage

By Kevin Bottrell Colby Free Press kbottrell@nwkansas.com

High winds shook trees and rattled windows Saturday, but only caused minor damage throughout northwest Kansas.

An area of high pressure to the east and an area of low pressure over the Front Range formed a pressure gradient in between, which caused the high winds. The winds blew from the high pressure zone to the low pressure zone. The National Weather Service in Goodland recorded wind gusts up to 57 mph in

Cheyenne Wells, Colo., and Wallace County, 56 in Cheyenne County and 55 in Gove County.

The day-long wind storm only caused minor damage, however. The Colby Police were called about a broken window Saturday morning. Two officers investigated and found it had been broken by the wind. Several decorations at the nativity scene in Fike Park were blown over. The weather service did not receive any reports of damage.

The service is predicting winds from 10 to 20 mph tonight, with possible gusts as high as 30 mph. No other high winds are expected for northwest Kansas, but the area could see snow on Thursday.

Former resident and fiancé go on mission trip to Greece

By Vera Sloan Colby Free Press sl604@st-tel.net

A former Colbyite and her fiancé aren't having trouble finding things to be thankful for this holiday season.

Kari Ross, Colby High School grad and daughter of Rob and Julie Ross of Colby, and Dennis Wilkie recently returned from a missions trip to Greece, and are especially thankful for life in America — something far too many of us take for granted. The two live and work in Omaha.

The mission trip was focused on helping to make a difference by making young people in Greece aware of the human trafficking

going on in their country. It was sponsored by the couple's church in Omaha, and they received donations from people in Colby.

"Most everyone who goes to Greece, goes to Athens and the Greek Isles where the scenery is beautiful," Wilkie said. "Our destination was Thessaloniki, a city of over a million people, where we were to interact with college-age individuals who are totally unaware of the trafficking."

Ross said it's a socialist government, and people there, especially students, have little hope for their future.

"There are over a hundred thousand students in two universities in the country," she said, "but only nine majors are offered. Out

of the 100,000-plus students, only 100 will find jobs. Unemployment is between 18 and 19 percent, and it isn't financially viable for students to travel to another country after completing college in Greece, so they have the attitude that it is easier to just do nothing. People seem willing to compromise on everything, and to simply be Greek makes it all OK."

The couple said the colleges were shut down when they were there because the students had gone on strike. The reason for the strike was that the government had announced that students would have to pay for books and meals.

"So the students said, 'lets just

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Teenager won't apologize to Gov. Sam Brownback for disparaging tweet

By Heather Hollingsworth Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Kansas teenager who wrote a disparaging tweet about Gov. Sam Brownback said Sunday that she is rejecting her high school principal's demand for a written apology.

Emma Sullivan, 18, of the Kansas City suburb of Fairway, said she isn't sorry and doesn't think such a letter would be sincere.

The Shawnee Mission East senior was taking part in a Youth in Government program last week in Topeka, when she sent

out a tweet from the back of a crowd of students listening to Brownback's greeting. From her cellphone, she thumbed: "Just made mean comments at gov. brownback and told him he sucked, in person (hash)heblowsalot."

She actually made no such comment and said she was "just joking with friends." But Brownback's office, which monitors social media for postings containing the governor's name, saw her post and contacted Youth in Government.

Sullivan received a scolding at school and was ordered to send Brownback an apology letter. She said Principal Karl

R. Krawitz even suggested talking points for the letter she was supposed to turn in Monday.

The situation exploded after Sullivan's older sister contacted the media. Since then, Sullivan's following on Twitter has grown to about 3,000 people, up from about 65 before the tweet. She said she thinks the tweet has helped "open up dialogue" about free speech in social media.

"I would do it again," she said. Sullivan has received e-mails from attorneys but is waiting to see what happens when she refuses to hand in a letter.

She hasn't heard from Brownback or

his staff. She said she wouldn't mind sitting down and talking to the governor.

Sullivan said she disagrees with Brownback politically, particularly his decision to veto the Kansas Arts Commission's entire budget, making Kansas the only state in the nation to eliminate arts funding. Brownback has argued arts programs can flourish with private dollars and that state funds should go to core government functions, such as education and social services.

Sullivan's mother, Julie, said she isn't angry with her daughter, even though she thinks she "could have chosen different

words."

"She wasn't speaking to the 3,000 followers she has now," Julie Sullivan said. "She was talking to 65 friends. And also it's the speech they use today. It's more attention grabbing. I raised my kids to be independent, to be strong, to be free thinkers. If she wants to tweet her opinion about Gov. Brownback, I say for her to go for it and I stand totally behind her."

