



Colby mail processing could move... again

Postal Service plans meeting to talk Denver consolidation

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

In what is becoming a familiar sight around northwest Kansas, U.S. Postal Service representatives will come to Colby in two weeks to talk about where they might send mail to be sorted.

The service has been conducting a study on moving Colby's mail processing to Denver. The Colby study was one of a slew of new studies looking at mail processing across Kansas. The service is looking to consolidate Salina, Hutchinson, Hays and Dodge City into Wichita; Liberal into Amarillo, Texas; and Topeka into Kansas City, Mo.

U.S. Postal Service representatives will meet with the public to answer ques-

tions and take comments at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12, in room 108 of the student union at Colby Community College. The service is required by law to hold public meetings like this to share study findings and record public comments.

The service announced this latest study in September, just days before moving all of Colby's mail processing to Salina. If the Salina processing facility is closed, Colby's mail would need somewhere else to go. Salina's public meeting is scheduled for today.

The service ended its fiscal year with a \$5.1 billion loss. In a Nov. 15 press release, the service reported a decline

in mail volume by 3 billion pieces from 2010. Revenue from First-Class mail, the service's most profitable product, fell by \$2 billion.

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe said if the service is to make a profit again, it has to reduce its costs by \$20 billion in the next four years.

Preliminary study results say moving processing to Denver would save \$28,426 per year, with another \$323 of maintenance savings. The transportation costs, however, would be \$14,337, making for a net savings of \$14,412. The facility would lose one job. Employee reassignments have to be made according to the col-

lective bargaining agreements the service has with its employee unions.

If implemented, the consolidation would mean two to three day service for First Class mail. In contrast, the Postal Service promoted the move to Salina as overnight service, as long as the mail made it onto that day's truck.

Like the last consolidation, the service has said that retail services at the Colby Post Office will not change. However, it may alter truck departure times for Colby and the outlying post offices that send mail here before it goes on to Salina.

See "MAIL," Page 2

College board votes to sell land

By Kayla Cornett
Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansas.com

The Colby Community College board approved the sale of 4.62 acres of property on the south edge of the campus, east of the Quilt Cabin, at its meeting last Monday.

The sale will go through today at 5 p.m. and the buyer proposed closing on Wednesday, Dec. 21. It is the board's understanding that the property will be used to build a set of apartments for senior citizens.

Realtor Rock Bedore of Homeland Realty and Auction presented the terms of the sale to the board, which includes a firm cash offer of \$55,000 per acre or \$254,000 total. Bedore went through the figures of the estimated closing costs, including his commission, and said the total expenses will be approximately \$21,029, giving the college \$232,971 in profit.

"Personally, I think it's an incredible offer on the property," Bedore said. "As I shared with Dr. Vacik, to go out and market that openly I think would be tough to get that kind of money, but we have a gentleman with a specific need. And once in a while they come along and that's when you can make a sale like this."

John Gatz, legal counsel for the college, said he had just one concern with the contract: a contingency that says the contract depends on if city utilities are avail-

able for the property.

However, it was determined through discussion that this contingency just means that if the buyer cannot get city utilities for the property, there will be no sale. A motion was made to sell the property and it passed in a 2-1 vote.

In other business, the board:

- Heard a financial report from Alan Waites, vice president of business affairs. He said the October year-to-date expenditures are on track, there were \$167,500 of encumbrances on Oct. 31, and budget reports indicate about \$8.7 million remaining. Waites also mentioned that the updated budgetary forecast has increased from \$12.660 million to \$13.120 million because it now includes expected funding from the vet tech and beef program grants. He said after annualizing full-year costs incurred, there is 67.4 percent remaining overall.

In the cash flow summary, the college began the month with \$800,000, brought in \$1.005 million and spent \$1.558 million throughout the month, leaving the cash balance at \$250,000 on Oct. 31. Waites said \$476,000 of the money spent during October came from student refunds since the board rescinded the anti-stacking scholarship policy last month.

In other items, Waites said audit field work will be completed before the end of the month, the Oc-

See "BOARD," Page 2

Dictionary delivery



Colby Mayor and Rotary Club member Gary Adrian presented Scholastic Children's Dictionaries. The Rotary Club donates dictionaries to Thomas County students each year.

MICHELE WERTH/Brewster School District

Working around the wheat



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

A county road crew graded a section of Country Club Drive south of town Tuesday, working near a wheat field. The Kansas Department of Agriculture said Monday that 97 percent of Kansas wheat has emerged from the ground. The crop is looking good so far, with 5 percent rated excellent, 40 percent good, 40 percent fair and 13 percent poor.

K-State women's group plans open house food drive Tuesday

By Donna Lamm

The Women of K-State will hold a come and go open house to support Genesis-Thomas County from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Stock Realty and Auction.

The open house will feature merchandise from Sally's Unique Boutique. Owner Sally Jones will donate proceeds from sales during the open house to Genesis. Products include purses, overnight bags, hair accessories, jewelry and more. Some of the items may be viewed on Facebook by searching for Sally's Unique Boutique or check out the window display at the Stock Realty and Auction on the corner of 4th and Franklin.

The organization will also be accepting donations and there will be a drop box at the open house for nonperishable food items.

In conjunction with this event, a Food 4 Kids tree will be available to benefit the Food 4 Kids Backpack program at Colby Grade and Middle Schools. Those interested select one of several backpack ornaments from the tree and deliver the food items written on the ornament to the Northwest Research-Extension Center, 105 Experiment Farm Road, during regular business hours until Friday, Dec. 16, or bring items to the open house.

The Food 4 Kids Backpack program provides food for grade school and middle school students who otherwise might not have food to eat on weekends. The Colby schools became involved in the Backpack program about two years ago when officials from the program wanted to expand and include other parts of the state along with Wichita.

The majority of the food is provided by the Kansas Food Bank of Wichita, and Genesis contributes to the local schools. The idea behind the program is to provide enough food so that a child would have six meals over a weekend: two breakfasts, two lunches,

and two suppers. The food sent home with the students is ready to eat and does not have to be prepared or refrigerated.

Items that are included are crackers, peanut butter, packaged milk, individual fruit cups, granola bars, individual pudding cups, jerky, and foods with protein. The program currently serves about 50 students and all information is kept confidential.

"It has been a great program," said Robb Ross, Colby Middle School principal.

For information, call Kyle Shively or Ross at the school, 460-5200, or go to the program's website, www.kansasfoodbank.org/programs/food-4-kids.

This program is not available during school breaks, so the school district attempts to augment the program through donations from Genesis and a grant from the Thomas County Community Foundation. The Women of K-State are providing the Food 4 Kids Backpack tree so community members have an opportunity to support the program as well.

Wynn Duffey, president of the Genesis-Thomas County board, said there has been an increase in the number of people needing assistance.

Genesis also takes monetary donations, checks should be made payable to Genesis-Thomas County Inc., and mail to Box 214, Colby, Kan., 67701, or take items food items to the food bank, on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m., or at Leroy's Printing or the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, Wesleyan, First Baptist and Mingo Bible Churches.

For information on the Women of K-State, call the Research and Extension Center at 462-6281 or Vicki Brown at 460-6101 after 5 p.m.

