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Early arrival nets 1st baby 'full ride' here

An early entrance for Gavin Ray Sprague, who arrived at 5 a.m. Tuesday at Citizens Medical Center in Colby, resulted in some welcome news for his parents, Elise and Joshua Sprague of Atwood.

Gavin was the first baby of the year for Citizens. Colby Community College President Stephen Vacik visited him and his parents later in the day to offer him a scholarship when he's ready.

"We are pleased to provide Gavin with a full scholarship, to include tuition, fees and books for two years when he is ready to begin college," said Vacik. "This worthwhile concept began with our previous administration, and we look forward to continuing it for years to come."

"At CCC, we are committed to learning which begins at the cradle and lasts for a lifetime. This scholarship is a small but important demonstration of our commitment to future educational opportunities at the college for all the citizens of



DEBBIE SCHWANKE
Colby Community College
Elise Sprague held baby Gavin on Tuesday. He was the first baby of 2012 at the hospital.

northwest Kansas."

Gavin, who wasn't expected until Jan. 9, weighed 7 pounds, 8 ounces and measured 19 1/2 inches.

His grandparents are Connie Dale, Norton, Don Sprague, Lennox, S.D., and Marvin and Kathy Green, Atwood.

County donors top state's list for organ giving

By Christina Beringer

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The Thomas County office of the state Division of Motor Vehicles and county residents have been recognized by the Midwest Transplant Network for achieving a 51 percent donor registry enrollment.

Slightly more than half of the drivers over age 18 are registered as organ or tissue donors, says Erin Gregory, a media relations specialist for the group.

In November, the group says, Thomas County had the second highest percentage in the state, trailing behind Lane County, which had 53.03 percent of its drivers registered. Lane County is about 100 miles southeast of Thomas County; Dighton is the county seat.

The only other county that has

over 50 percent registered is Nemaha, in northeast Kansas, with 51.26 percent, the agency says.

"I am so proud of how the employees at the Thomas County office offer their customers the opportunity to join the Kansas Organ and Tissue Donor Registry when they obtain or renew their licenses," says Sarah Jane Dolezal, donor designation coordinator at the network. "These employees are truly making a difference in saving lives through organ and tissue donation by simply providing the donor designation opportunity."

By offering brochures about donation and promoting the options with posters, she said, the office has inspired residents to say "yes" when asked, "Would you like to become an organ donor?"

"If we didn't ask this question to every one of our customers, then

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College will open new nursing center

Colby Community College has arranged to expand its practical nursing and associate degree in nursing programs to WaKeeney in June 2012.

The college also offers the program in Colby and in Norton, where it plans to expand the classes to take in more students beginning in June, as well.

Associate students can qualify to be registered nurses after graduation and passing state tests. Practical nursing students can take the test to become licensed practical nurses.

Classes will be held in a former medical clinic at 323 Russell Ave. in WaKeeney. Ten associate students and 10 practical nursing students will be accepted into evening programs. Another 10 associate students will be enrolled in a daytime program.

"The evening program is intended to provide a longer course of study, allowing the student to attain the practical nursing certificate while continuing full-time employment or meeting other obligations," said Ruth Wolfram, director of the college's nursing program. "The course will begin in June 2012 for both programs."

The college has also announced expansion of the nursing program in Norton. The state Board of Nursing recently approved adding 12 additional practical nursing students and 20 registered nursing students there, Mrs. Wolfram said.

The college will offer a new two-year evening program for practical nursing and associate-degree students. Ten students will be accepted into each. In addition, two practical nursing students will be added to the daytime program at Norton, bringing the total of prac-

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Trout!

State delivers tasty treats

Fish dive under pond ice

By Steve Haynes

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State biologists and a Nebraska fish farmer released more than 400 wiggling, jumping rainbow trout, including two or three beefy 3-to-4 pounders, into Colby's Villa High pond Wednesday.

A small audience, including one girl clad in shorts, gathered in balmy, 62-degree weather as Bill Murray from the Cedar Springs Trout Farm in Broadwater, Neb., arrived with the fish about 4 p.m.

District fisheries biologist Dave Spalsbury from Cedar Bluff said it was the first time the Department of Parks, Wildlife and Tourism has stocked trout in the northwest corner of the state.

"I basically decided to do it because this is the population center out here," Spalsbury said, "and we get a lot of use out of this pond."

He said the City of Colby would get the bill for the fish, but the state will reimburse the Recreation Department for the cost from money collected for state trout permits.

"So the people who fish for them ultimately will pay the bill," the biologist added.

He said anglers 16 to 64 must have one of the permits, along with a fishing license, to catch trout. The limit is five a day.

Youths 15 and younger may keep two trout without a permit, Spalsbury added. Senior citizens need a permit, but no license, and get a full limit.

Most of the fish were 10 to 12 inches, with a few small ones thrown in along with the three monsters. Spalsbury said Murray tries to average out the size, making up for the small fry with a few bigger fish.

Unless the ice clears off, the biologist noted, people may have a tough time finding open water to fish in right away. He had to use a pole to enlarge a hole for the fish Wednesday, but with the spring-like weather, the ice was far too soft to support a fisherman.



STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

Biologist Dave Spalsbury (above) released a net full of rainbow trout Wednesday at the Villa High pond. The fish (below) wiggled and jumped as they headed for deeper water, though a couple tried to swim up on the shore first. Nebraska grower Bill Murray (on truck at right, below) handed another catch to Spalsbury. A gaggle of onlookers, including biologist Matt Bain of Colby (right in bottom photo), watched.

"Hopefully, people will use good sense and won't push it (on the ice)," he said.

Fishermen can take trout all year, he said, but the cold-water fish won't survive the summer in the tiny pond. After April 15, trout permits are not required.

Not to worry if you can't get to the pond this weekend, by the way.

More rainbows are on the way.

"We'll do another stocking here at the end of February when the weather warms up some," Spalsbury said.

He added that he and area biologist Matt Bain would monitor the fishing and adjust the schedule as needed. This week could be just the beginning for trout fishing in Colby.



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