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The Colby Community College wind turbine was finally turning on Friday after a month of delays due to a missing part. The tur-

bine has already produced 4,267 kilowatt hours of electricity as of 4:18 p.m. Wednesday.

KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

Wind turbine in full gear after a month

The Colby Community College wind turbine began turning about 12:45 p.m. Friday, producing power to help run the campus.

As of 4:18 p.m. Wednesday, the turbine had produced 4,267 kilowatt hours of electricity, said Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs.

“The average home uses 900 to 1,000 kilowatt hours per month,” Kaaz said, “so it’s generated enough electricity to basically run about four houses for a month.”

The wind turbine was hoisted onto the tower on Dec. 9, but it wasn’t ready to be used until Dec. 20. That is when the college encountered a problem with it turning.

The subcontractor for this part of the Honeywell project recognized that something was wrong with the transformer, so they had to order a new transformer and wait. It finally arrived on Friday morning and was delivered di-

rectly to campus. It was installed right away and the turbine was up and running.

Kaaz said for the turbine to turn, the wind must be blowing at least 7 to 7 1/2 mph. To prevent damage, it will stop turning when the wind hits 55 to 56 mph. He said the turbine stopped for a few hours Sunday afternoon when gusts got up to 70.

The wind speed is measured through a device called an anemometer, installed on the turbine. Kaaz said the college turbine is rated at 50 watts because the average wind speed is at 25 mph. The output will be higher or lower depending on the wind.

The turbine is tied into the three-story residence hall, Living Center Northeast.

“Theoretically, it’s supposed to produce about 50 percent of the electricity required to run the building,” Kaaz said.

Spelling bee open to kids in Thomas County

By Marian Ballard

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The Thomas County Spelling Bee, for kids in third through eighth grades, is coming up Wednesday, Feb. 8, at Sacred Heart School in Colby. It’s open to winners of school spelling bees and home-schooled students from around the county.

Coordinator Rae Stewart, English teacher for fifth through eighth grades at the Brewster School, says each school in the county

has its own spelling bee and sends three spellers to the county competition. Schools include Golden Plains, Sacred Heart, Colby Public Schools, Heartland Christian School and Brewster.

She said children who are home schooled in Thomas County are eligible if they register.

“We want home schooled kids to participate,” said Stewart, “but we often have trouble getting in touch with them.”

The bee, which starts at 9:30 a.m., will have medals for first through fifth place, along with cer-

tificates for everyone who participates. The top speller is eligible for the regional Scripps competition in Great Bend. Home schooled kids are eligible but would need to pay a late registration fee. The Scripps winner for Thomas County and an alternate also receive medals and certificates at the county level.

Parents of home schoolers who want to participate need to call Stewart at (785) 694-2236 or 694-3464 by Tuesday, Feb. 7.

Everyone is invited to come watch the bee, she said.

Oldest federal judge dies Monday at age 104

By Roxana Hegeman

The Associated Press

WICHITA — As the nation’s oldest sitting federal judge in history, U.S. District Judge Wesley Brown allowed himself few concessions to his advancing age as he insisted on presiding over significant and often complex cases right up until his death at 104.

Brown died Monday night at the Wichita assisted living center where he lived, his law clerk, Nanette Turner Kalcik, said Tuesday.

During his long tenure, the senior judge in Wichita repeatedly tried to explain why he had not yet fully retired from the federal bench.

“As a federal judge, I was ap-

pointed for life or good behavior, whichever I lose first,” Brown quipped in a 2011 interview with The Associated Press. How did he plan to leave the post? “Feet first,” Brown said.

He came to work at the federal courthouse every day until about a month ago when his health deteriorated, U.S. District Judge J. Thomas Marten said. Undeterred, the ailing Brown then had his law clerks bring work to the hospital and later to the assisted living center while he recuperated. His law clerks were with him virtually non-stop, taking turns to be there except at night during the past few weeks.

Brown was appointed as a federal district judge in 1962 by then-

President John F. Kennedy.

“When Judge Brown spoke, we listened because — while nobody has seen it all — he certainly came closer to it than anybody I have ever known,” Marten said. “And his message was always the same: remember who you are and what your job is.”

In 1979, Brown officially took senior status, a type of semiretirement that allows federal judges to work with a full or reduced case level. He continued to carry a full workload for decades.

“I do it to be a public service,” Brown said in the AP interview. “You got to have a reason to live. As long as you perform a public

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Hospital adds on



ROSALIE ROSS/Square Deal

Pat Prochazka (left) and Michelle Stevens voiced their appreciation of the inviting new rooms in the new patient wing at Rawlins County Health Center. They were among the 200-plus visitors Jan. 17 who toured the spacious modern accommodations. The wing, which has 15 patient beds in 10 rooms, is now in use. The addition includes a new nurse’s station and a state-of-the-art emergency room that will be up and running next week. Future reconstruction will include a medical clinic that may be accessed through the hospital entrance.

City council approves permit for environment-friendly business

By Kayla Cornett

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The Colby City Council approved a request by Tuffy and Linda Taylor for a special-use permit to operate a mixing/blending/repackaging business on land zoned for a neighborhood commercial district on Country Club Drive.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said she and Charles Schwanke, chairman of the city planning commission, agreed that the permit request was reasonable. The Taylors want to use the building at 1235 S. Country Club, which used to be CK Lumber and Supply Co., to sell envi-

ronmentally-friendly products, nontoxic biodegradable chemicals, she said.

Armstrong said after the meeting that manufacturing is not allowed in the existing C-2 zone, so the couple needed a special permit for their new business. With this permit, she said, they have to sell their product out of the front of store and store chemicals inside or behind a screen and make sure they are covered.

“It’s not going to hurt the area,” Armstrong said. “We just want to maintain that appearance of businesses on the main route coming into town.”

She said the permit applies only to the Taylors and does not extend to any future owners.

Councilman Tim Hueftles asked if there were any objections from surrounding businesses and Armstrong said there had been none.

Councilman Mark Beringer asked if the permit was a one-time thing and Armstrong said it is renewed every year.

In other business, the council:

- Approved the contract with Penco Engineering for design and construction engineering on overflow parking at the Colby Aquatic Park. Armstrong recommended approval for \$6,000 for the completion of the plans and \$15,000 for construction engineering.
- Approved an ordinance rezoning a tract in Block 1 of the Davis Family

Legacy Subdivision from single-family dwelling to a multiple-family dwelling. Armstrong said this land is across from the Fairview Retirement Estates and that Wes Bainter wants to put in an apartment complex for retirees, with two-bedroom, two-bath apartments and an attached garage. She said the planning commission already approved the change.

- Approved a resolution adopting a purchasing authority and procurement policy and an amended code of ethics. Armstrong said the resolution had been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency as a way to “beef up” the city’s procurement policy.
- Authorized the city manager to accept

assignment of contracts related to the Thomas County 911 system. Armstrong said the county commissioners had already signed off on this item.

- Approved a change order on a water line project being done by APAC-Kansas, a firm out of Hays. Armstrong said this item was just to approve changes added to the project. Beringer asked why APAC-Kansas was adding on extra fees. Armstrong said the city was the one to add on the extra items.

