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Random Acts of Kindness Week begins

The Thomas County Community Foundation is challenging everyone in Thomas County – residents, businesses and non-profit organizations – to take time to do something nice during Random Acts of Kindness Week this week.

The foundation is asking everyone to report those they catch doing nice things by calling 460-9152 or e-mailing tcfc@st-tel.net.

And one kind thing everyone could do is stop by a special pulled-pork dinner the foundation is sponsoring during Pink Zone Night and Senior Night on Friday at

the Community Building.

You can become a Friend of the Foundation for just \$20 or leave a donation for the fund raiser. All money raised will go to foundation programs.

Melinda Olson, executive director of the foundation, said the week is an international celebration dedicated to reminding everyone of the positive benefits and effects of kindness.

"Kindness is good for both the giver and the recipient," she said. "Giving a compliment, offering to help or doing a favor make each person feel special.

"When someone does a generous deed for another, it sets a series of kind acts in motion and kindness is shared across the community."

One goal of what she called an international grassroots movement is deepening our connections with others through the practice of simple, day-to-day kindness, said Olson.

"We are assisted by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, a Colorado-based nonprofit that encourages kindness in communities, schools, workplaces and individuals worldwide," she said.

Olson said this is the fifth year Thomas County has participated.

"We have heard reports (of people) anonymously buying meals for others, businesses providing goodies to patrons, school children doing kind deeds and employees getting extra perks from their employers," she said.

"Whether it be an organized activity or an anonymous act of kindness, we are aiming for 100 percent participation in Thomas County."

The pulled-pork dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m. Friday during the high school

basketball games at the Community Building.

"We are hoping for an awesome turnout," she said. "We will share some of the acts of kindness that have occurred throughout the week.

"And, for one night only, we will offer Friends of the Foundation memberships at a discounted rate of \$20 per year instead of \$25."

For kindness ideas, go to www.randomactsofkindness.org.

National Guard soldiers ready for deployment

By Kevin Bottrell

The Goodland Star-News
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Former Goodland resident Capt. Scott Weber says he's excited to be commanding the Kansas Army National Guard's 170th Maintenance Company as it prepares for deployment to southwest Asia.

The 170th has headquarters at the armory in Norton and includes the armory in Colby. The Goodland armory was a part of the unit before it was closed in March 2010.

The unit includes people from all over northwest Kansas, including two current Goodland residents, he said. Weber was born and raised here, he added, but moved in 2006 after becoming a full-time Guardsman.

The 170th is about half veteran soldiers who have been deployed before, Weber said, and half younger members. Some were around when the unit was last deployed 20 years ago in Operation Desert Storm.

"The troops are extremely motivated," he said. "That makes it easier from a command perspective."

Weber said 170th had been set for deployment several years ago, but did not end up going overseas. When it was deployed in February

1991, the unit acted in support and maintenance roles for Army units during the fighting in Kuwait and helped with repair, cleanup and inspection afterward.

This will be Weber's first deployment, something he describes as an exciting prospect.

"It's my turn," he said.

Weber said the 170th has been training for six to seven months, and it will finish up this week.

"The training was good," he said. "We've been on the ranges all weekend (Feb. 4 and 5). It did get a little cold out there."

The 170th finished weapons qualification early last week, then had classroom instruction and field training, which included battle, navigation and radio training. Weber said the last three days of the week were running field exercises, which bring together all the various training areas into one combined exercise.

After a departure ceremony on Sunday, the unit was to go to Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, Miss., for additional training before being sent overseas. The 170th will spend about nine months in-country. Weber said they will be set up as an Area Reaction Force, which conducts patrols and guards against threats to American forces.



The Kansas Army National Guard's 170th Maintenance Company was honored at a departure ceremony Sunday in Salina as it prepares for deployment to southwest Asia. The company

will head to Hattiesburg, Miss., for more training before being deployed.

KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD

Retired Colby doctor talks about mission

By Sharon Friedlander

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Overcrowded wards, with beds shoved close together, patients dying because they can't afford food or medicine, children in seizures from high fever, are all part of Dr. LaDonna Regier's life as a medical missionary in West Africa.

Dr. Regier talked about her work to a full sanctuary, more than 100 people, Thursday evening at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Colby.

Regier, who retired from her long-time medical practice here to become a missionary, returned to the States for a vacation. She said she wanted to share her experiences at the Suntreso Hospital, a government facility in Kumasi, Ghana.

She told that she had to jump through a lot hoops to even begin to practice medicine at Suntreso. In addition to immigration, she had to be certified in tropical medicine and pass licensing exams before she could begin to treat patients.

Dr. Regier said her days at the hospital begin with rounds in the three wards, for men and boys, women and children and pregnant women.

The wards are crowded, with beds that often touch, she said. For a patient to receive prescribed

medications, the family must buy the drugs from the pharmacy and keep them at bedside, often on the bed or on the floor underneath.

If the family has state health insurance, she said, the medications are free, but still must be kept at bedside. If a family cannot afford drugs, the patient has to do without. Often, Dr. Regier added, nurses will take the money out of their own pockets to pay for drugs for sick children.

There is no food service at the hospital, she said. Families must provide their own and feed the patient. Many go hungry while being treated. Some patients, she added, die from lack of food or medicine.

After rounds, Dr. Regier said, she goes to her office in the hospital clinic, where she will see as many as 50 patients a day. When she arrives, patients are lined up in the halls, waiting on benches. Her office has three chairs and a desk.

Parents begin to flood in with children suffering from malaria. Many have high fevers (105 to 106 degrees) and seizures or are unable to move their arms and legs. The doctors refer to these children as the "rag-doll babies."

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People listened intently to Dr. LaDonna Regier Thursday at Trinity Lutheran Church as she shared her experiences as a mission-

ary at the Suntreso Hospital, a government facility in Kumasi, Ghana, West Africa.

SHARON FRIEDLANDER/Colby Free Press

