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County asks city for loan to build a jail

By Kayla Cornett
Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansan.com

The Colby City Council heard a presentation from Thomas County Commissioner Paul Steele on Tuesday about the possibility of borrowing money from the law-enforcement trust to help build a new county jail.

Steele said the commissioners met with people interested in the project last month to look at the problem of overcrowding at the jail. They estimated that a new jail would cost a little more than \$2 million.

The commissioners discussed the idea of a bond issue, but thought that it wouldn't succeed, Steele said, so he came up with the idea of sort of a lease-purchase arrangement where the county would pay \$150,000 a year over 10 years back into the law trust fund.

"The sheriff had made a commitment of about \$400,000 out of this drug forfeiture money," Steele said, "and we have \$300,000 now and probably another \$150,000 out of this year's budget, and if we could persuade the city to loan us \$1.5 million, you can see that would give us \$2.35 million...."

Steele said the county has not

asked for bids and hasn't prepared detailed specifications, but they have done preliminary work on the jail plan. He said what he had for the council that night was an idea for adding on to the existing Law Enforcement Center on the south.

Steele said they are thinking about using a "pod" system using welded steel. He said it is so hard to find capable masonry people that they've planned on using a metal building. However, the way the floor plan is designed, he said, the inmates would not have access to the outer walls.

"It's designed so that the jailer can view all the pods, all the cells," Steele said, "and the services, sanitary, water, electrical, whatever, would be on the outside between the backs of the pods and the metal building walls."

He said that these ideas are not unique; several jurisdictions have used them in an effort to keep costs down.

A councilman asked if he was asking for an interest-free loan and Steele said no, he figured the interest at 2 percent.

Councilman Mark Beringer asked why the city didn't just bor-

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Man hit by pickup hits head, then dies

A 44-year-old Goodland man died Saturday after hitting his head on pavement when he was struck by a pickup backing out of a parking stall in Brewster.

A Kansas Highway Patrol report said Val Gallentine, a salesman at Herl Chevrolet, had been walking in Brewster late Saturday when he was hit by a Dodge Ram driven by James House, 44, of Brewster. House told officers he had been pulling out of a parking stall and bumped Gallentine, who fell and hit his head on the pavement.

Gallentine was taken to Citizens Medical Center in Colby, where he was pronounced dead Sunday morning.

Services will be at 4 p.m. (Central Time) Thursday at the Bateman Funeral Home in Goodland.

Memorials may be sent to the home at Box 278, Goodland, Kan., 67735.

Mr. Gallentine was born June 23, 1967, to Jay Gallentine and Viola Gallentine-Fan Der Wege in Denver. He graduated from Norton High School and studied auto mechanics at Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland.

He had worked for Herl for 22 years. He enjoyed watching University of Kansas sports, the Denver Broncos and Nascar racing, pheasant hunting and four-wheeling in his Jeep.

Preceding him in death was his father.

Survivors include his mother of Norton; a brother Randy Gallentine; and a sister, Connie Lewis of Olathe.



Fran Smith of Colby took her turn at the ballot box on Saturday as Thomas County Republicans held their presidential caucus at Colby Community College. One hundred seventy-

eight registered voters had differing views of who would do best against President Barack Obama, but a big majority of caucus votes went to former Sen. Rick Santorum.

VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Santorum big favorite of GOP

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

One hundred seventy eight voters cast ballots in Saturday's Republican Party presidential caucus for Thomas County, with Rick Santorum beating frontrunner Mitt Romney by a 4-1 margin and Newt Gingrich by 3-1.

The caucus was held at the Cultural Arts Center at Colby

Community College. Josh Faber, GOP county chairman, said Santorum, a former U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, was declared the winner with 96 votes, with Gingrich coming in second with 31. Romney garnered 23, Rep. Ron Paul 11 and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman 1. There were two uncommitted votes and 10 provisional ballots, and four were either blank or invalid, Faber said. The provisional ballots are to be

ruled on and counted next week.

Faber opened the day's event by explaining the rules of the caucus set out by the Kansas Republican Committee.

Although candidates or their representatives were invited, none was present. According to the rules, readers were appointed to read candidate statements. The order was determined by a drawing by the state committee. Three candidate statements were

received, from Gingrich, Santorum and Romney.

Sandy Wilks read the statement from Gingrich, a former speaker of the House and Georgia congressman, first. Although relatively short, it was by far the longest. He said his campaign is offering big ideas and a bold vision for Republicans to win in November. He said he had out-

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Ex-senator takes 33 of 40 state delegates

By John Hanna
The Associated Press

TOPEKA — Rick Santorum overwhelmingly won the Kansas Republican presidential caucuses on Saturday, bolstering his claim that front-runner Mitt Romney hasn't locked up the GOP nomination.

The state GOP projected that Santorum will pick up 33 of the state's 40 delegates after receiving more than 50 percent of

the vote. Romney, who didn't campaign in Kansas, hovered just above the 20 percent threshold needed to capture delegates and was projected to pick up the other seven.

"We've had a very, very good day in our neighboring state of Kansas," Santorum told several hundred people at a rally in Springfield, Mo. He called the win "comfortable" and said he was looking forward to claiming "the vast majority of delegates."

Santorum enjoyed support from some

small-government conservatives in Kansas and, more importantly, many abortion opponents who make up a core constituency of the state GOP, including leaders of Kansans for Life. He portrayed himself as the non-establishment candidate, telling locals that their caucuses were crucial ahead of other post-Super Tuesday contests in the South.

"If there's anybody who's really conser-

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Examining the wares



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Customers at the Antique, Gun and Coin Show this weekend at the Community Building had lots of merchandise to examine on vendors' tables. Many rare items, including miniature cannons, coins and weaponry, were available in addition to guns, knives and weapons.

Group declares dental 'crisis'

WICHITA (AP) — Alice Hart of Wichita has no dental insurance.

When one of her teeth started crumbling, her dentist wanted to do a root canal and then put a crown on the tooth, for \$2,000. Hart would have to pay all of it, which she couldn't do.

A friend told her about the Advanced Education in General Dentistry program at Wichita State University. It offers advanced training for dental-school graduates and reduced-cost services to patients.

Hart decided to have her tooth pulled there. It cost her about \$200 for cleaning, X-rays and the extraction.

"I didn't realize how sick this tooth was making me," Hart said. "Once I had it pulled, I felt better."

Hart's experience is just one example of how dental problems affect more than one's smile. And it's a message the Kansas Health Foundation wants to get

out in a new public-health campaign to address what it calls a crisis in oral health in Kansas.

"It impacts the health" of the whole person, Christopher Power, vice president for communication for the health foundation, said.

In a campaign called "Truth About Teeth," the foundation will use words such as "decay" and "gross" plastered across mouths on billboards and in other ads to get people's attention and give them some fact about the state's dental condition.

For example, "58 percent of Kansas third-graders have experienced tooth decay," the billboard will read.

"Truth About Teeth" follows in the footsteps of two previous public-awareness campaigns by the foundation — "Let's Take It Outside" in 1997, to fight

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Fire kills mom, three kids in Scott

SCOTT CITY (AP) — A house fire Saturday in this western Kansas town killed a mother and her three children.

Scott City Police Sgt. Andy Newland says the fire started Saturday morning near a radiator heater in the laundry room of a two-bedroom house. The cause

was still under investigation.

The 28-year-old mother called to report the fire, he said, but she was disabled and couldn't get herself out of the home. The mother, a 4-year-old boy and two girls, 6 and 8, were overcome by smoke.

One child died at the scene, while the mother and two children

were flown to a Wichita hospital where they died Saturday afternoon. Newland said he would not release the names.

Scott City is about 70 miles south of Colby on U.S. 83.

