



County discusses employee complaint

By Christina Beringer

Colby Free Press
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At Monday's commissioner meeting, a complaint made against a landowner for allegedly threatening a Road and Bridge employee was discussed.

Chairman Ken Christiansen said that while he was out of town, he got a message to call landowner John Schroeder in Rovohl Township, who was upset about a Road and Bridge employee tearing out bromegrass that he planted on the shoulder of a road.

Christiansen explained that the employee was just conducting routine road maintenance, and that it is standard practice to use a motor grader to pull up the shoulders of country roads.

After he talked with Schroeder, Christiansen said, according to road and bridge supervisor Clair Schrock, "all heck broke loose." The employee said Schroeder allegedly came up and opened the door to the grader and he felt threatened. The employee called the sheriff about the incident.

No action was taken at the meeting, but commissioners agreed that if something

like this happens again, a commissioner and the supervisor should be notified immediately.

A Morgan Township resident, Dean Schielke, asked commissioners to assume responsibility for a four-mile stretch of County Road O, running east and west between K-25 and County Road 15.

Schielke said the road is supposed to be maintained by the township but is in terrible condition.

"They've come out and graded twice, but have not finished the road out," he said. "There is a lot of semi traffic on it and they're breaking springs on the

trucks. And we're careful not to overload 'em."

Commissioners took note of the complaint and said they would check on the legalities of assuming maintenance responsibility from a township. They invite anyone else who has an interest to attend follow-up discussions tentatively set for 10 a.m. Monday in the commissioner's board room.

In other business:
• Commissioners discussed the need to re-gravel County Road Y north of Rexford where a school bus carrying 16 students slid off the muddy road and rolled onto its

side April 3. They said they've had many reports across the county of people sliding off the road, and that maybe people just aren't used to driving after it rains or on wet roads.

• High Plains Mental Health representatives Ken Loos and local coordinator Larry Struckmeyer presented information from their annual report. Loos said Thomas County is in a good financial position, and the agency could use more support. He said they definitely don't want to lose any.

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Fitness center offers kids class

By Christina Beringer

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Movement Connection, a new fitness facility at 430 N. Franklin in downtown Colby, offers services and activities for children as well as adults.

For children, owner Brenda Mazanec provides an opportunity to get active while parents who are members of her facility work out.

She offers the Wee Wiggle class from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesday and Thursdays and from 7 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, combining nutrition and exercise activities for young children.

Mazanec said that she'll offer the class for free to nonmembers

later in April, which gives people a chance to learn about her services and programs.

"We will celebrate Week of the Young Child with special Wee Wiggle movement enrichment activities that I developed for kids while their parents work out," she said. "From 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 25, I'll offer the class for free."

She said the class is limited to 10 participants. She said parents may attend if they want, and they must stay on the premises while their child is in class.

Call Mazanec at (785) 443-4010 to register.

Mazanec said the business also

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Reactions were mixed, from glee to hesitation, as (from left) Feyden Hileman, Israel Aguilar, Caelen Arendt, Tage Sullivan and

Abraham Aguilar looked over some of the worms (collected for the Kids Port) for the worm bed project on March 22.

Kansas grain elevator cited for violations

By Heather Hollingsworth

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The federal government cited a Missouri grain company Thursday for willful safety violations and proposed a hefty fine for an explosion that killed six workers last October at an Atchison grain elevator.

U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis said in a news release the deaths at the Bartlett Grain Co. elevator in Atchison "could have been prevented" if the operators

had addressed known hazards. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is seeking \$406,000 in penalties in addition to the 13 citations.

"Bartlett Grain's disregard for the law led to a catastrophic accident and heartbreaking tragedy for the workers who were injured or killed, their families and the agricultural community," Solis said.

Kansas investigators previously determined the Oct. 29 grain dust explosion was accidental.

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Kids Port creates worm bed for recycling

At Kids Port group childcare, recycling newspaper, plastic and cans is a regular practice. Taking recycling to a new level, the students have made a worm bed as another way to recycle kitchen waste.

What is a worm bed? It begins with shredded newspaper, a little bit of dirt, worms, kitchen scraps and water, and it uses earthworms and microorganisms to convert organic waste into black, earthy-smelling, nutrient-rich humus. The process is known as vermicomposting.

Children at the day care take turns "feeding" the worms and spraying the worm bed to keep it moist. They also have collected worms to add to the bed.

Kids Port hopes to make enough fertilizer for the tomato plants in the community garden. A display of the worm bed will be available at a Master Gardeners' workshop at 7 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H building. The topic is selecting vegetables.

Plans for the community garden, to be west

of Southwind Plaza this year, are well underway, said Denise Singer, community garden coordinator for the Thomas County Healthy Communities Coalition. The coalition is combining efforts this year with the Colby High School FFA, which has received a garden grant from Land O' Lakes.

For anyone interested in gardening, a sign-up sheet and forms will be available. For information, contact Singer at (785) 465-9103 or ssnwks@st-tel.net.

At the potato bar



Tim Micek (right) was served chili on his baked potato Thursday at the potato bar, bake sale and coin raffle fund raiser at

the Senior Progress Center. There were homemade cupcakes for the bake sale and more than 190 people attended.

President's tax return shows \$789K in earnings

By Anne Gearan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama and his family paid more than \$160,000 in federal taxes last year on earnings of \$789,674, the White House said Friday.

The president's 2011 federal income tax return shows that about half of the first family's income is the president's salary. The rest comes from sales of Obama's books.

Obama's effective tax rate is just above 20 percent — lower than many Americans who earn less.

He has made tax-rate fairness a campaign issue, arguing that millionaires and other very wealthy people should not pay a smaller share of their incomes in taxes than people who earn much less.

"He believes that people like him should be paying an effective tax rate that is no lower than the rate paid by hard-working, middle-class Americans," White House press secretary Jay Carney said Friday.

The White House did not say exactly what rate Obama thinks would have been fair for him in 2011, but using a calculator post-

ed on the White House web site, more than 56,000 millionaires would have paid taxes at a lower rate.

Obama's proposed "Buffett Rule" would not have applied to him last year, since he earned less than \$1 million.

The plan is named for Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor who has complained that rich people like him pay a smaller share of their income in federal taxes than middle-class taxpayers do.

Many wealthy taxpayers earn investment income, which is taxed at 15 percent. Obama has proposed that people earning at least \$1 million annually — whether in salary or from investments — should pay at least 30 percent of their incomes in taxes.

The push for the realignment draws renewed attention to the effective tax rate of presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney, a millionaire who is paying 15.4 percent in federal taxes for 2011 on income mostly derived from investments.

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