



10 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

May 9, 2013  
Volume 123, Number 73  
Serving Thomas County since 1888

## New center set to open in late fall

By Kayla Cornett  
Colby Free Press  
kcornett@nwkansas.com

A ground breaking for the Buffalo Bill Cultural Center was held Thursday at the Buffalo Bill sculpture site located in Oakley on U.S. 83 at Second Street, and construction is set to begin next week on the historical attraction.

Miller Construction of Goodland was awarded the bid for the center and Raelene Keller of the Wild West Historical Foundation said they are shooting for a Nov. 1 grand opening.

Keller said they might even wait to hold the opening in conjunction with the Kansas Governor's Ringneck Classic, a pheasant hunt which will be held in Oakley for the second time, on the third weekend in November.

The foundation received a \$500,000 grant for the project from a Transportation Enhancement Grant through the Kansas Department of Transportation. The grant is federally funded.

Keller said the original proposal for the grant was \$500,000 with a 75-25 match, meaning the grant would pay for 75 percent of the cost. However, after they were awarded grant, she said they increased the size of the building to include an event center.

The total cost of the center is now over \$900,000 and Keller said the rest of the money was raised through private phone calls and from many contributors.

"It adds validity to the whole cultural center that there isn't one large donor but several," Keller

See "CENTER," Page 2



Oakley Mayor Jerry Robben (left), Lewis Evins, Randy Swart and Raelene Keller, of the Wild West Historical Foundation, mingled after the ground breaking of the Buffalo Bill Cultural Center Thursday at the Buffalo Bill sculpture site in Oakley. Construction should begin next week and the center is set to open for visitors in November.

KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

## K-State Extension, county weigh district options

By Christina Beringer  
Colby Free Press  
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Representatives from K-State Research and Extension of Colby and the Commissioners of Thomas County weighed possible redistricting options on Monday morning.

The discussion came as a result of being approached by the extension office in Rawlins County, which is looking for a partnership.

After being contacted by Rawlins County, Bob Standage, Ben Hoeting, Clint Milliman and Diann Gerstner first presented the idea to commissioners on April 16. They explained that some offices throughout the state have merged into districts with surrounding counties to save on financial and human resources, or other reasons.

Thomas County is not part of any district and operates as a stand-alone office, explained Standage, the Extension Council's Chairman.

"We have been considering the idea of redistricting for awhile, maybe for the last eight or 10 years," explained Thomas County Extension agent Milliman after the meeting. "This isn't the first time we have been approached, but we thought that Rawlins County might contact the commissioners, and we didn't want them to get caught out of the blue without background information."

There are pros and cons either way, explained Standage. And, there are options for merging with Rawlins County, which

is not presently a part of any district; the Sunflower District to the west which consists of Cheyenne, Sherman and Wallace counties; partnering with Logan, Gove and Trego who make up the Golden Prairie District; with the Twin Creeks District of Sheridan, Decatur and Norton; or not merging at all.

"Diann and I have been discussing the pros and cons and we have mixed feelings on which way to go," said Milliman. "Right now, we feel that Thomas County is fortunate to have a successful program

on our own. But you never know what could happen in the future; we could lose funding or something like that and merging could lead to more financial stability and more specialized programs.

"It's important to keep all of the options open and right now we are just doing our research so that we can make an informed decision of whether or not merging is the best option for Thomas County."

"From what I've found, residents gen-

See "COUNTY," Page 2

### Time for fun



KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press



Several young women (above) took off after the starting gun went off Saturday during the 50-meter dash at the Special Olympics track meet at Dennen Field in Colby. One of the girls in the race was Nicole Griffin (above right) of the Colby Angels team. A few men (left) ran in the 50-meter dash Saturday as well. The event brought seven teams to town and coach Jane Mentlick said, "There were a lot of volunteers this year and we are so grateful for that."

## No suspects yet in Derby worker death

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Detectives have no suspects in the slaying of a track worker at Churchill Downs just hours after the Kentucky Derby, but investigators stressed today that the killing had no apparent connection to the iconic horse race.

Louisville Police Lt. Barry Wilkerson said investigators are asking witnesses to come forward with information in the slaying of 48-year-old Adan Fabian Perez. Perez's body was found Sunday morning in the back portion of Barn No. 8, just a few barns away from where Derby winner I'll Have Another was stabled.

There were several altercations in that area of Churchill Downs on Saturday night, and police are try-

ing to determine if Perez's death is connected to any of them, Wilkerson said.

Authorities were conducting an autopsy and planned to release the results this afternoon. Perez was a native of Guatemala and lived at the track's quarters for workers, according to Jo-Ann Farmer, chief deputy coroner for Jefferson County.

"Our investigation is ongoing as to why he would have specifically been at this location," said Alicia Smiley, spokeswoman for Louisville Metro Police.

Churchill Downs security called police at 4:50 a.m. (Eastern Time), Smiley said. The body was found in a barn used by Louisville trainer Angel Montano Sr.

## Kansas House passes \$14B budget measure

By John Milburn  
Associated Press

TOPEKA — The Kansas House approved its \$14 billion budget proposal late into Tuesday night, clicking off one more item on the to-do list as the time continued to run out on the 2012 legislative session.

With a 77-44 vote, the bill will be in the hands of six negotiators, three each from the House and Senate, to draft the final spending bill of the year.

Members made few substantial changes to the bill, which covers spending for the fiscal year starting July 1. Estimates were that legislators would be able to fund government programs and still

end up with an ending balance of about \$700 million on June 30, 2013. That figure is likely to be reduced pending the approval of a tax package that senators were scheduled to debate Wednesday.

It was the chamber's longest budget debate of the year — just a few days before Friday's 90-day session deadline. Members reconsidered issues that were debated in mid-March, using new revenue projections from April 13 showing the state on better financial footing than in recent years.

Most of the spending increases

See "BUDGET," Page 2



8 04879 113898 3