



Shift of Colby mail sorting delayed

By Steve Haynes
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Sorting of mail from the Colby area will be "consolidated" to North Platte, Neb., sometime after the first of the year, but for the time being, at least, letters mailed here will be delivered the next day. Only the postmark will change.

Not so, however, for those going elsewhere in Kansas. In fact, with the area's mail moving north to Nebraska to be "worked," mail to Colorado and Kansas might be delayed a day or two.

Saturday mail delivery to homes and businesses would end, assuming Congress allows that, but post offices counters that now are open would remain open and mail would be delivered to office box

customers.

The changes in the Postal Service's strategy for realigning its network shouldn't affect customers here too much, officials say, since area mail now is being sorted in Salina, not Colby, under a plan put into effect last year.

In an announcement last week, the service said it would resume consolidation of mail "plants," or sorting centers,

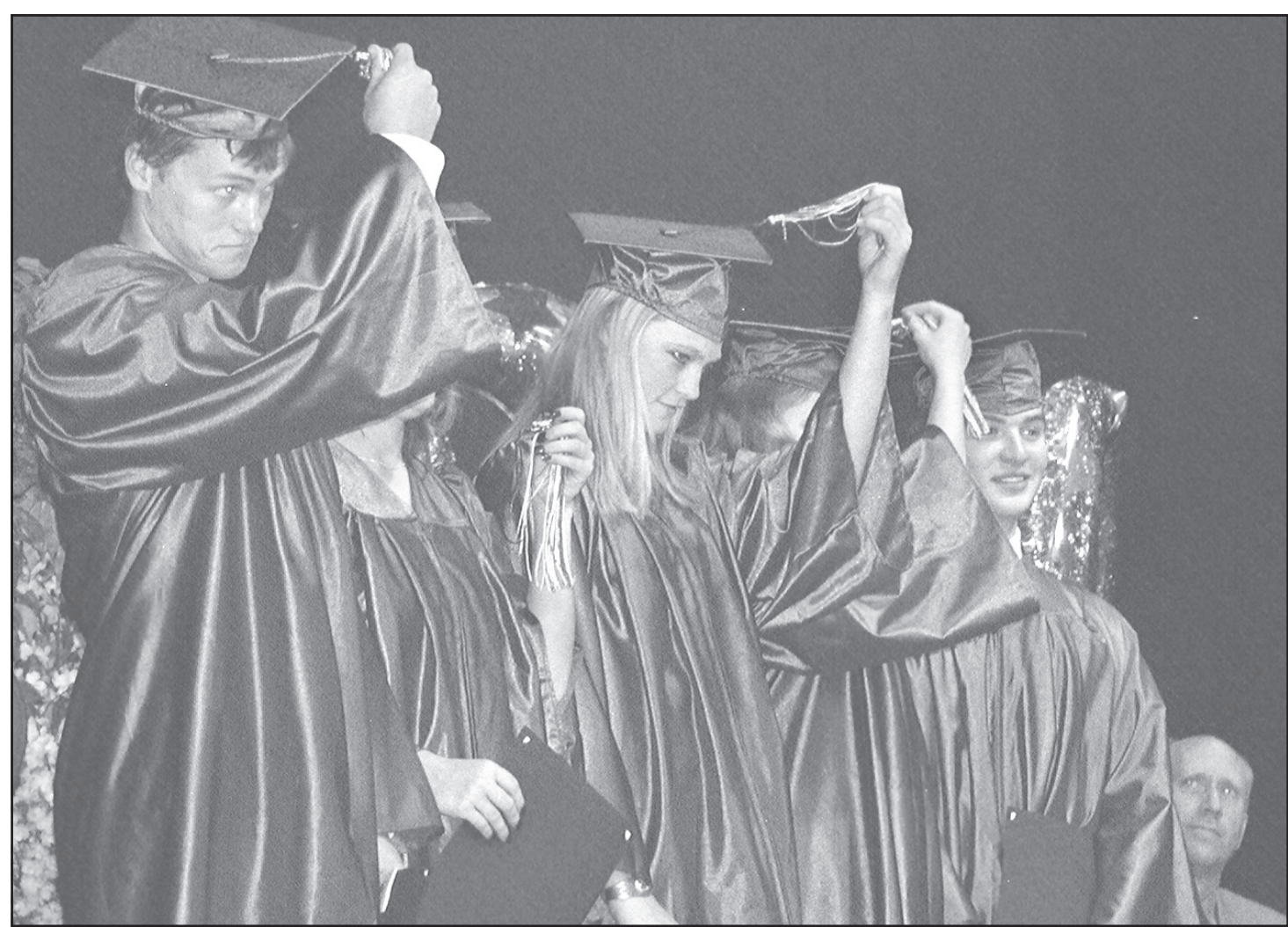
with 48 centers in July and August. With elections and the Christmas season coming up, no plants will be closed then until after the first of the year, when the rest of an initial round of 140 consolidations will be done.

Colby is in the group, said Brian Sperry, spokesman for the service's regional office in Denver. The shift from Salina to North Platte should be finished by the end

of February under current plans.

Under the new plan, mail to destinations within the 677 ZIP Code area, which now goes to Salina for sorting, will shift to North Platte. As is the case today, it'll come back overnight. However, mail to the Hays area and other parts of Kansas won't be included in the overnight zone any longer.

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KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

City weighs fund requests

By Kayla Cornett
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The Colby City Council heard requests from two advocacy groups Tuesday, the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center and Options, a domestic and sexual violence service based in Hays, for money in 2013.

Both are in the budget for \$850, but asked for more.

David Fyler of the child advocacy agency, said the center started in 2004 and its Colby office opened in 2005. It works with children who may have been victims of a crime or witnessed one.

He said workers have interviewed more than 1,000 children who had been victims of sexual or physical abuse or witnessed a vio-

lent crime since it opened.

Last year, Fyler said, the center interviewed 245 kids in western Kansas, an increase of more than 20 percent, and Colby came in second in the number of kids interviewed.

"That's not a bad thing," he added. "It just means your law enforcement (officers) are doing a good job and they're working these cases and taking it seriously."

"We came here and interviewed and were involved with 20 children in your community."

He said Goodland had 21 cases and Scott City, the site of the agency's main office, had 19.

Fyler said counselors are called in by law enforcement or social

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Joplin graduates cap off tragic year

By Alan Scher Zagier
The Associated Press

JOPLIN, Mo. (AP) - It was a label they sought both to embrace and avoid, a refrain overheard in whispers or uttered bluntly at soccer games, summer camps and national academic competitions: Here come the tornado kids from Joplin.

For the 428 members of Joplin High School's Class of 2012, tonight's graduation - featuring a commencement speech by Presi-

dent Barack Obama - caps a senior year marked by tragedy, turmoil and perseverance.

The president will visit southwest Missouri the day before the anniversary of the country's deadliest single tornado in six decades.

The May 22, 2011, twister killed 161 people, injured hundreds more and destroyed thousands of buildings, including Joplin High. Five other Joplin schools were also de-

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Eight more graduate

Heartland Christian graduates (from left, above) Caleb Carter, Masha Claassen, Jade Kruse, Natalie Morris and Andrew Wood moved their tassels to the left side Saturday after receiving their diplomas at the school's graduation ceremony. Kruse (left) shook Heartland Christian School board member Tim Morris' hand after he handed her a diploma. Wood was the valedictorian while Morris was salutatorian.

Graduates at the Thomas County Learning Center on Friday at the Community Building included (from left, below) Christina Jaeger, Della Rucher and Jerad Sullivan. Rucher hugged Site Director Melinda Fikan after receiving her diploma and each graduate got a rose as well. Rucher and Jaeger are mother and daughter; Fikan said it was a race to see if they could both finish this semester.



Kansas chief justice cancels court furloughs

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas courts will remain open through the rest of the fiscal year ending June 30 after legislators approved \$1.1 million in supplemental funding to cover operating expenses.

Chief Justice Lawton Nuss issued a statement today saying that the remaining four days of furloughs would be canceled after legislators approved the budget Sunday. The bill still must be signed by Gov. Sam

Brownback.

Nuss ordered five furlough days this spring after it was evident that the court system would be short because fewer fees were collected on civil court filings. The courts closed one day in April and were set to close Thursday and Friday and two days in June to conserve revenues.

The decision to keep the courts open affects about 1,590 judicial-branch employees.

Federal court plans hearing in remap suit

By John Hanna
AP Statehouse Correspondent

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach today objected to attempts by several people, including a state senator at the center of a contentious debate over redistricting, to jump into a federal lawsuit over the Legislature's failure to redraw the state's political boundaries.

Kobach filed his written objection only hours ahead of a hearing in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Kan., in which attorneys were expected to argue about re-

quests from at least nine people to intervene in the case. A panel of three judges already is scheduled to begin hearing the case May 29.

Those seeking to intervene include Senate Reapportionment Committee Chairman Tim Owens, a moderate Overland Park Republican. Kobach, a conservative Republican, is the defendant in the lawsuit, filed earlier this month by Robyn Renee Essex, a GOP pre-

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