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Kansas federal remap trial concludes

By John Milburn
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — The fate of Kansas' political boundaries is squarely in the hands of three federal judges after two days of testimony wrapped up Wednesday.

The judges gave no hint how they would draw the boundaries, but did suggest they would hold themselves to a high

standard for population deviation among the districts.

"We will take all of this under advisement," said presiding Judge Kathryn Vratil. "There's nothing on our docket that has higher attention."

Redistricting was handed to the federal court because Kansas lawmakers couldn't settle a feud among Republicans over the districts' boundaries, thus failing before the session ended on May 20 to approve

new maps for legislative, State Board of Education and U.S. House districts.

Evidence presented in the trial by attorneys for elected officials, business leaders and residents showed that courts have traditionally deviated from optimum district sizes by plus or minus 2 percent of the ideal population.

The judges said case law supported the practice of allowing legislator-approved maps to have a wider population deviation

between districts, but that higher courts have a narrower threshold. To draw the new boundaries, the judges will not only consider testimony, but also proposed maps submitted by attorneys and volumes of evidence filed over the past week.

"The effects you will bring on Kansas will last longer than I will be practicing law and you will be on the bench," said Topeka attorney John Frieden, who represented several interveners in the case.

Gov. Sam Brownback issued a statement Tuesday, saying none of the maps that legislators considered during the session was constitutional, and urged the federal judges to seek a solution that is held to a higher standard.

He said the new maps should uphold the principle of "one person, one vote" and have as little deviation as possible, an argument that was consistent with Wednesday's discussions.



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Seniors play ball

Charlie Hammit (above left), Jeri Schleicher, William Nondorf, Laura Murphy and Mary Franklin applauded on May 16 during a baseball game played by Prairie Senior Living Complex residents outside of the building. Diana Grooms (left) and Letha Bachman talked on the field during the game. The complex will be holding more games for the residents soon, including horseshoes this summer.

Committee creates new strategic plan

By Kayla Cornett
Colby Free Press
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The Colby Community College trustees heard the strategic plan draft on May 21 that will be used for the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation process, in which a committee came up with five-year goals for the college.

Vice President of Business Affairs and Chief Financial Officer Alan Waites has been chairing the committee for the college and went over the draft with the board, which took about four months to create.

Waites started by thanking the people on the committee that were involved in the process, saying they had a good cross-section of faculty and administration.

He said the strategic plan isn't a "to do" list; he said he really tried

to set the tone and focus on thinking strategically and holding off tactical operation plans until later.

He said it took two or three meetings to work through a detailed SWOT analysis, which stands for strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. Then the committee worked on setting the five-year goals for the college.

"We talked about a lot of things and really wanted to cull that down to six or eight that we thought were very important and were doable," Waites said. "...we really wanted to make sure that we had something we could sink our teeth into and adjust and work through."

He said eight goals made the cut.

The last thing the committee did, he said, was summarize the

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Obama applauds candidate on spot

By Kasie Hunt and Ken Thomas
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Wednesday congratulated Mitt Romney on securing the Republican presidential nomination, a gesture coupled with a new line of attack on the GOP challenger that portrays his economic record while governor of Massachusetts as a failure.

The president called Romney and told him "he looked forward to an important and healthy debate about America's future," Obama campaign spokesman Ben LaBolt

said. Romney's campaign said the call was "brief and cordial." Both men wished each other's families well during the upcoming race.

Romney's primary win in Texas on Tuesday pushed him past the 1,144-delegate threshold he needed to claim the nomination.

Obama took the formal step of congratulating his opponent even as his team looked to shift to the Massachusetts story under Romney. In a five-page memorandum from senior Obama campaign adviser David Axelrod, the Obama camp cast Romney as poor steward

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House to vote on abortion ban

By Jim Abrams
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Legislation coming up for a House vote would make it a federal crime to carry out an abortion based on the gender of the fetus. The measure takes aim at the aborting of female fetuses, a practice more common to countries such as India and China, where there is a strong preference for sons, but which is also thought to take place in this country.

The mainly Republican supporters of the bill characterized the vote as a sex-discrimination issue at a time when Democrats are accusing Republicans of waging a war on women. Abortion rights advocates argued that the bill exploits the problem of selective abortion to further limit a woman's right to choose.

The House Republican leadership brought the bill to the floor under a procedure requiring a two-thirds majority for passage,

and the outcome was uncertain. To help assure passage, the authors removed a contentious provision of the bill that would have also banned abortions based on the race of the fetus.

Even if it passes the House, the

measure faces a dim future in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

The legislation, sponsored by anti-abortion activist Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., would make it

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Filing deadline Friday

TOPEKA — As the chief elections officer in Kansas, Secretary of State Kris Kobach reminds those potential candidates for certain offices that their candidate filing deadline is noon Friday. This includes district attorney and elected judicial offices at the state level and local offices at the county, township and precinct levels. The petition requirements for elected judges and local candidates do not change.

The filing deadline is currently noon on Monday, June 11, for offices subject to redistricting: U.S. House of Representatives, Kansas House of Representatives, Kansas Senate and Kansas State Board of Education. Because the redistrict-

ing issue is in federal court, a ruling could move the deadline.

Candidate filing forms for county and township offices may be obtained at the Thomas County clerk's office, which is the county election office. Candidates for county and township offices and precinct committeemen and committeewomen file only at the county election office, not at the secretary of state office.

Questions about state offices may be directed to elections staff by calling (785) 296-4561, faxing (785) 291-3051 or emailing election@sos.ks.gov.

For questions about filing in Thomas County, contact the clerk's office at 460-4500.

Afternoon entertainment



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Kaley Cozza (right) and Lizzy Foster, dubbed The Ribbllets, were the entertainment Friday afternoon at Dillons. The store was holding its annual Rib Fest in front of the store where they handed out samples of their barbecue ribs while the girls sang.

