



Museum displays oil painting

By Christina Beringer

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"Autumn Symphony," an oil painting by Kansas artist Birger Sandzen depicting the Smoky Hill River near Lindsborg, is now on display among other works at the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby.

The painting, worth an estimated \$60,000 or more, was "unveiled" Thursday night during a "Young at Art" reception which drew about 70 people to support the arts programs at the Colby Public Schools.

The school board agreed earlier this year to give the painting, which has hung outside the superintendent's office, to the museum so more people could see it.

School officials also worried that they couldn't provide proper security or protection from humidity.

The painting was a gift from the Colby High School Class of 1946, which reportedly paid just \$100 for the work. Similar small paintings by the Lindsborg artist, a widely known professor at Bethany College, have sold for \$120,000 and more.

One Kansas school district sold several it no longer wanted.

Happily filled with hors d'oeuvres and champagne, supporters listened to a tale of how the painting finally came to its honored resting place at the museum from retired art teacher Cal Mahin.

"You could say I've lived with the painting for a long time," Mahin said, "and I'm pleased the school has chosen to share it with the museum for broader viewing."

He said the Colby High School class of 1946 donated the painting to the school, but the year "1950" is written on the back of the board, so no one knows when it actually was donated. For years, it hung in the library of the old high school.

"Hopefully, someone from that class will come forward and help us figure that out," he said.

At one time, Mahin said, after some remodeling at the high school, the painting was sent to the bus garage to be put in a yard sale.

He rescued it from the sale, he said, and it went on to hang in the art room of the old middle school

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Public enjoys art event

Pat Kriss (above) of Colby took notice of student art from around the county that was displayed at the Prairie Museum of Art and History during the Young at Art event Thursday. Kriss was one of about 70 supporters who showed up to see the unveiling of a Birger Sandzen oil painting that was given by the Colby Public Schools. Art supporters, from left, Yvonne Wingard, Janet Harper, Linda Murray and Holly Whitaker (right) enjoyed refreshments before a presentation was given about the oil painting the Colby Public Schools gave to the museum.

KATHRYN BALLARD
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City approves replacement of truck engine

By Kayla Cornett

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The Colby City Council approved the replacement of the engine for the fire department's rescue truck Tuesday after Fire Chief Bob McLemore said it failed on the way to an accident earlier this month.

McLemore said there were three options for fixing the 2004 Ford F-550 truck: replacing the engine with the same type of motor for \$16,200, replacing the engine with a different motor for about \$30,000 or buying a new chassis, or cab, engine and frame, for about \$41,000. He said he wanted to just replace the engine.

Councilman Dave Voss asked if that would be the exact same engine as before, and McLemore yes, except it will be a newer version with some updates.

Councilman Fred Taylor asked if they knew what caused the engine to fail, and McLemore said the only indicator was that the

computer said there was an over-boost of the turbo, but said that's a common problem.

"The No. 4 cylinder got too much fuel and caused it to over-heat," he said, "which could have been caused by an injector, could have been caused by water in the fuel, could have been caused by a computer issue. They don't know what caused it."

McLemore said the engine blew with 6,000 miles on it, but they've had the truck since early 2005. Interim City Manager Randy Jones said that isn't too bad.

Taylor asked if there would be a warranty on the new engine and McLemore said yes, it would be a two-year warranty. Councilman Stan Schmidt asked if they could extend the warranty, and McLemore said he asked Ford dealer Mike Tubbs to check on that.

The council then approved the replacement of the same type of engine for \$16,200.

In other business, the council:

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Roads in Brewster set for resurfacing

Crews will be repaving the state highway spurs leading from Interstate 70 to Brewster and Edison sometime this week, probably starting on Wednesday.

Kristen Brands, spokesman for the Kansas Department of Transportation in Norton, said K-184 into Brewster and K-253 into Edison both will be milled to remove rough spots, then get an overlay of new asphalt. The stretch into

Edson is less than a mile, while the spur to Brewster is about 1.5 miles.

Flaggers and a pilot car will guide one-lane traffic through both work zone projects during daylight hours, Brands said. Delays of up to 15 minutes can be expected.

Brands asked people to slow down, use caution, pay attention to the work-zone signs and watch out for workers. Weather permitting, the work should be done some time next week.

College to write off old bills

By Kayla Cornett

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The chief financial officer advised Colby Community College trustees last Monday that the college probably should write off about \$420,000 worth of old bills, many of them run up by students before 2005.

Alan Waites, vice president of business affairs, also gave an update on the operating budget for the coming year at the board's monthly meeting.

Waites gave a review of the college's \$1 million accounts receivable balance, money owed to the college, and told the board what he thought they should do to lower the total.

He said one of the points from the audit last year was that the accounts receivable balance is too large, but more than 40 percent of it is marked as uncollectible. He said \$420,000 in accounts are more than three years old.

"It's been fully reserved," he said. "It's uncollectible over the past several years. There's ab-

solutely no impact on our statement of revenues and expense if we write this amount off. On our profit and loss, there will be zero effect."

He added that nearly half of the \$420,000 stems from conversion to the college's current accounting system in 2005, meaning most of that money was from balances carried over from before that time.

Board Vice Chair and Treasurer Arlen Leiker asked how many people owed this money and Waites said hundreds.

Board Chair Kenton Krehbiel asked if it was just from bills the students didn't pay and Waites said yes.

Waites said that today, the college is doing a better job of going after those who haven't paid their bills.

Trustee Dale Herschberger asked what's the largest amount one person might owe and Waites said \$2,000 or \$3,000.

The board then gave Waites the authority to write off about \$420,000 from the accounts receivable balance.

Earlier in the meeting, Waites

presented the financial report for May.

He said the year-to-date expenses were on track overall, but select line items and departments were over budget. The college had \$100,000 worth of encumbrances, or bills not yet paid, as of May 31, he said, and the annual budget forecast of \$13.120 million was the same as last month.

Budget reports indicate there is \$1.2 million remaining to spend by June 30, and the cash balance as of May 31 was \$350,000.

Waites went through a cash flow analysis, which showed the cash balance at April 30 was \$1.04 million. In May, he said, the college received \$480,000 and used \$1.172 million, leaving the cash balance at \$350,000 at the end of the month.

He said \$527,000 of the money spent last month was for payroll and \$561,000 was used to pay bills.

Waites said the college received money from the county, \$1.28 million, on June 6, and said this

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Wildfires spread in Colorado

By Thomas Peipert

Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Flames forced thousands of Colorado residents from their homes over the weekend and disrupted vacation plans for countless visitors as smoke shrouded some of the state's top tourist destinations, including majestic Pike's Peak and tranquil Estes Park.

Colorado is having its worst wildfire season in a decade, with more than a half dozen forest fires burning across the state's parched terrain. Some hotels and campgrounds are emptying ahead of the busy Fourth of July holiday.

One of the newest fires, a

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