



County bans sale, use of fireworks

By Kayla Cornett
Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansas.com

The Thomas County commissioners voted today to extend their countywide burn ban and to ban the sale and discharge of fireworks for at least the next seven days.

One resolution, she said, had added wording suggested by County Attorney Kevin Berens and City Attorney John Gatz. It covers all outdoor burning of any kind, including the discharge of fireworks.

The other version, she said, had wording requested by the public. It would cover all outdoor burning of any kind, including the sale and discharge of fireworks.

"It's up to you, gentlemen," McMahan said. "If you want to continue the burn ban, I highly suggest to definitely include the discharge of fireworks because

our neighboring counties have already done it, and if we don't do it, then their people are going to come into our county and set off their fireworks.

"And with the fire danger that we have and how grave it is, how many firefighters have already been injured in our northern counties, it's an extreme taxation on our county and city resources to be fighting all these fires right now, and it's a health risk at the same time."

Commission Chairman Ken Christiansen said he has a list of people who had called to encour-

age the county to continue the burn ban and to ban fireworks.

Fire Chief Bob McLemore said he had asked the county to think about some sort of exemptions for the public Fourth of July fireworks display, but it has been postponed, so that's not a consideration anymore.

McMahan said the resolutions as drawn up would not allow for any exemptions.

McLemore noted that the city today issued a declaration of high fire danger, banning the use of fire-

See "COUNTY," Page 2



A fireworks tent was being set up Thursday near the Dillons parking lot on South Range Ave., but it may not be too busy now that the county has banned the sale and use of fireworks.

KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Retirement party for surgeon



Dr. Mekki Saba (left) talked with Susan Orr and Jim Stanley from Sunflower Bank during a retirement reception Wednesday at Citizens Medical Center. Dr. Saba, an orthopedic surgeon, has been with the hospital since 2006. The hospital will continue to have visiting orthopedic specialists at the specialty clinic after Dr. Saba leaves, officials said.

KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

City Council to interview four candidates

Mayor Gary Adrian and the Colby City Council plan to interview four candidates for city manager Tuesday and Wednesday, July 10 and 11, at the City Hall.

Whoever is hired will replace Carolyn Armstrong, who retired this month after 19 years. Adrian said the job attracted some great candidates. He said the council got the best eight resumes and arranged interview with the top four.

The mayor said he thought Colby's reputation helped pull in good candidates. Colby is doing better than many cities its size, he said.

He said all the candidates coming for interviews have solid experience in municipal management:

- Gary Bradley, former city administrator of Grain Valley, Mo.
• Bret Glendening, who now works for Kiewit Power Constructors but was city manager of Osawatomie.
• Dawn Jaeger, assistant city administrator of Great Bend.
• Lynne Ladner, city administrator in Hiawatha.

Bradley was city administrator of Grain Valley, in Jackson County, Mo., on the east edge of the Kansas City metropolitan area. Over 20 years in municipal management, his previous positions include assistant to the city administrator at Lee's Summit, Mo., and city manager of Brookfield, Mo. He served in the Army Reserves for 16 years.

He lists accomplishments that include successful strategies to improve the local economy, en-

hanced customer service and citizen involvement and accreditation for a municipal public works department. He has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Nebraska and completed the University of Kansas Academy for Local Government Executives.

Glendening has a 10-year career in public service in Kansas. He was Osawatomie city manager for five years, leaving for a job in business. Other previous positions include budget and finance officer for Riley County and program manager at the Kansas League of Municipalities.

His says his career has afforded him broad experience in public finance that extends to development of financial policies, capital budgeting, debt financing and risk management, as well as community infrastructure financing and replacement and economic development. He also has experience managing a municipal utility.

Jaeger, as assistant city administrator for Great Bend the past two years, has across-the-board experience in most aspects of municipal management in a smaller city, including performing in the top post in the administrator's absence. Previously, she was assistant to the town manager in Windsor, Colo., where her job focused on helping the community recover from a major tornado and involved

See "CITY," Page 2

Fight blocks state exchange

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas officials have made little progress toward enacting a key part of the federal health care overhaul, and Gov. Sam Brownback and fellow Republican critics of the law were instead hoping that the U.S. Supreme Court would strike it down, saving them the trouble.

If the nation's highest court had done that in its ruling, many Kansas officials might have celebrated. But now, the state could find itself

with a new health insurance exchange over which it has little control.

Republican hostility to the 2010 law championed by President Barack Obama prevented the state from establishing its own exchange, which would help consumers find health insurance starting in 2014. Last year, Brownback returned a \$31.5 million grant to help the state build a computer system for an exchange.

States now face a Nov. 16 deadline to sub-

mit plans to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The choices for Kansas would be seeking a partnership with the federal government or having the government run the exchange, said Linda Sheppard, the Insurance Department's project manager.

"I do not believe we'd be able to do a state-level exchange," said Sheppard, also director of the department's accident and health division.

College OKs economic study

By Kayla Cornett
Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansas.com

The Colby Community College trustees last week approved hiring Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. to perform an economic impact study to estimate the impact the college has on the Colby community and the rest of its service area.

President Stephen Vacik said the firm has done a study of Kansas community colleges as a whole, and the firm said it was willing to

do them for individual schools at a reduced rate.

He said the cost will drop from about \$11,000 to about \$5,000 to do the study for Colby.

"And even though \$5,000 is a good chunk of money," Dr. Vacik said, "I don't think it's necessarily a bad idea for us to have that done to see where we are today in terms of economic impact."

He said this offer was only good until the end of the month, so the trustees would need to decide on it that night. He said he hates to spend money, but he thinks it

would be a value to the college.

Trustee Cindy Black asked if they could use the Hansen funds or something similar to pay for it. Vacik said discretionary money from the Hansen fund is gone for this year, but since the study wouldn't be paid for until July, the college could budget it in for next year from that fund.

Board Vice Chair and Treasurer Arlen Leiker said he talked to representatives of most of the other colleges and most of them said

See "COLLEGE," Page 2

Water use drops; restrictions on hold

Colby water users dodged a bullet this morning because they used a little less water over the previous 24 hours than they had the two days before that.

City Public Works Director Omar Weber said the city used 3.75 million gallons of water on Thursday, below the 4-million mark which could have triggered a "water warning" with ration-

ing measures, including odd-even lawn-watering restrictions.

The city has been on a water watch, triggered by use of over 3.5 million gallons for three consecutive days. City officials asked everyone to conserve water, avoiding waste and any use that wasn't vital. Apparently they did, because the usage rate had been above 4 million Tuesday and Wednesday.

Weber said the city checks the water use each weekday morning when the rate is high. If it says

above 4 million for three straight days, the city can declare a water warning, which is stage 2 of the water conservation plan. The city would put on odd-even restrictions by address and ban watering in the heat of the day, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. It could hike charges for higher water use and ban waste.

The figure for Thursday may have been helped by the .17 of an inch of rain the city got last night, Weber noted, but people still need to watch their water use.

Trying to stay cool



It was another hot day Thursday. Traffic was at a minimum and even the animals, including these cattle at the corner of Veterans Memorial Drive and North Country Club Drive, tried to stay in the shade. The high temperature in Colby was 104 with a forecast of 106 for today. Thursday night's rain showers helped cool things off, but the area could stand a lot more moisture.

KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

