



# FREE PRESS

#### Thursday

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# **Trooper joins Highway Patrol**

#### By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press sdieter@nwkansas.com

Kansas Highway Patrol in Thomas County and will be a full-time officer by early September.

from the academy.

"I worked in Hays," he said. units. A new trooper has joined the "I wanted to move out west, and Colby is a nice town."

assigned to road duties in Thomas

that Colby had been his first choice cer Tod Hileman. A total of seven Kahle's class was the first in about a trooper. as an assignment after graduating troopers live in the county, and three years. The patrol had been on three are assigned to specialty

graduated from the patrol training He is now one of four troopers academy in Salina on June 9.

Trooper Benjamin Kahle said County, said public resource offi- the last few years, Hileman said, and all the other normal duties of

a hiring freeze during that time. Kahle said he will be working He was part of a class of 16 who in Thomas County for about 50

working days as a trainee. He will ride with a training offi-Because of tight state budgets cer while performing traffic stops

"I'm ready to be out in the field," he said. "I chose to be a trooper because of the name that it carries and the respect in the community.'



**Benjamin Kahle** 

# Candidate to compete against friend

#### By Kevin Bottrell

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Ward Cassidy of St. Francis never wanted to be running for the House of Representatives against his friend Rick Billinger of Goodland, but after being informed of the federal court's redistricting decision, he decided to keep runnıng

Like many state legislators, Cassidy was thrown together with a fellow incumbent, in this case Rep. Rick Billinger of Goodland. The district now includes Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Sherman and Wallace counties and the northwest third of Thomas County - including Colby.

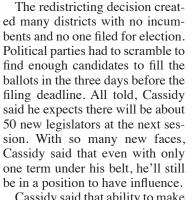
said. "I had been campaigning in chance of being chosen to chair my old district, then all of a sudden two of my counties are taken away."

The redistricting decision created many districts with no incumbents and no one filed for election. Political parties had to scramble to find enough candidates to fill the ballots in the three days before the filing deadline. All told, Cassidy said he expects there will be about 50 new legislators at the next session. With so many new faces, Cassidy said that even with only one term under his belt, he'll still

a difference is what drove him to continue his campaign. Cassidy served on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, which is in charge of the Legislature's budget, during the last session. "It's not a nice scenario," he He said he was told he has a good the Education Budget Committee

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# House rep runs for a second term



Cassidy said that ability to make



Last Picnic in the Park lunch of the summer

#### By Sam Dieter

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State Rep. Rick Billinger has a lot of unfinished business from his first and only term in the Kansas State Legislature.

The farmer and retired small businessman had been on the Goodland City Commission for about 20 years, when the seat in his district opened up.

"When Jim Morrison passed away," he said, "numerous people contacted me and encouraged me to fill my name in."

Billinger served one term before the federal court's redistricting plan put him in competition with fellow representative Ward Cassidy for the same house seat.

He and Cassidy will run against each other in the Republican primary on Aug. 7 in a district which See "HOUSE," Page 2

includes Cheyenne, Decatur, Rawlins, Sherman and Wallace counties, along with a portion of Thomas County that includes Colby

"He hates this as much as I do," Billinger said. "Ward and I have been friends for 30 or more years; on Aug. 8 when this is over, we're still going to be friends."

Still, Billinger said that he felt he was qualified for the job.

"I think I've got the background and the experience," Billinger said. "I ran a small business for 30 years. I understand what it takes to run a business, I understand what it takes to run a budget."

Billinger used his experience during his first term as a representative, when looking at the state budget.

"In my last five years on the

## Senate passes cuts for all but the richest

#### By Laurie Kellman

Associated Press

WASHINGTON – The Senate has debated, sniped and voted on the politically fraught issue of tax cuts, and next week it'll be the House's turn. Still, Americans won't know until after the November elections how much more of their paychecks will go to the government next year.

Turning both houses of Congress into a campaign stage on one of the defining issues of the presidential and congressional races, Republicans and Democrats are putting each other on record over which Americans, if any, should receive an extension of former President George W. Bush's income tax cuts.

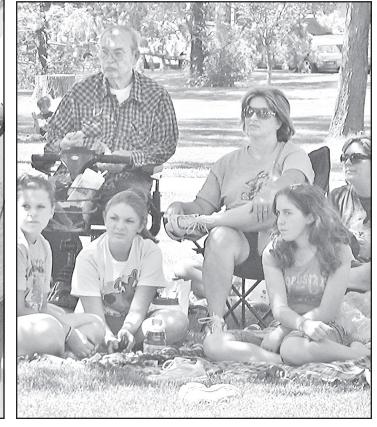
The Senate opened the drama See "SENATE," Page 2

Wednesday with surprise debates and passage of a Democratic bill fashioned on President Barack Obama's proposal to extend the income tax cuts to all but the wealthiest Americans through 2013. It passed even though the measure stands no chance of surviving the Republican-led House. Meanwhile, the Senate rejected a GOP amendment to extend the cuts to all taxpayers. House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, intends to bring up that measure in his chamber next week.

So the matter was a nearly certain stalemate even before Democratic leader Harry Reid and Republican leader Mitch McConnell abruptly agreed to vote on two measures, spent the day accusing

Lots of people enjoyed the final Picnic in the Park for the summer Wednesday at Fike Park. Shannon Myers (left) and her daughters, Amy and Rachel, were the entertainment for the lunch. Renee Schmeiser (below center) listened to the performance with friends.

KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press



### Coke, Pepsi companies racing for a new sweet spot

#### By Candice Choi

AP Food Industry Writer

NEW YORK - Coke and Pepsi are chasing after the sweet spot: a soda with no calories, no artificial sweeteners and no funny aftertaste.

The world's top soft drink companies hope that's the elusive trifecta that will silence health concerns about soda and reverse the decline in consumption of carbonated drinks. But such a formula could be years away.

That's because the ingredient but it's in the reasonable future,"

what packs on the pounds: highfructose corn syrup. Artificial sweeteners like aspartame that are used in diet drinks don't have any calories but are seen as processed and fake. Natural sweeteners that come from plants present the most promising alternative, but companies haven't yet figured out how to mask their metallic aftertaste.

Despite the complexities, soft drink makers push on in their search.

"I can't say when it will be here,

soda maker.

There's good reason that soft drink makers are so eager to tweak their formulas. Once a beloved American treat, sodas are now being blamed for the nation's bulging waistlines – two-thirds of the country's adults are overweight or obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That, coupled with the growing variety of flavored waters and sports drinks, has sent per capita

erage Digest, an industry tracker.

In New York City, a ban on the sale of sugary drinks bigger than 16 ounces in restaurants, theaters and stadiums could take effect as early as March. The mayor of Cambridge, Mass., proposed a similar ban last month. And in

#### See "SWEET," Page 2



that makes soda taste good is also said Al Carey, who heads the soda consumption down 17 perbeverage unit for the Americas at cent to about 1.3 cans a day since PepsiCo Inc., the world's No. 2 its peak in 1998, according to Bev-