



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

# 1944 steam train stops in Oakley

Union Pacific No. 844 (left) drew a large crowd as it rolled into Oakley, a little behind schedule but impressive none the less. No. 844 – finished in 1944 – is the last steam engine built by Union Pacific. The company brought out the 114-foot, 454-ton engine and tender for a three-state tour to commemorate Union Pacific's 150th Anniversary. At each stop in Kansas, Wyoming and Nebraska, the conductors got out to greet the public (above) and let everyone get a good look at the train. No. 844 was used to pull passenger trains in the 1940s and freight in the 1950s.

# Wednesday fire burned into Thomas County

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More details have emerged in what could be one of the biggest fires in Sherman County history – a fire so large the burn area extended into Thomas County. The fire burned some 15,000 acres in southern Sherman County and northern Wallace County. Sherman County Fire Chief Brian James said he has been told the fire – which was started by lightning – is one of the biggest in the history of the county. Though the exact location of the lightning strike is unknown at this time, based on wind speed and direction, James said the strike was likely somewhere around Sherman County

Roads 50 and 25, on the northwestern side of the burn area. The fire burned around seven sections of the T-Bar Ranch as well as sections owned by other landowners. James said the ground was mainly Conservation Reserve Program grasslands, with a few fields of crop stubble. The fire started around 5 p.m. Wednesday night and continued to burn through the night. It got far enough east to enter the southwestern corner of Thomas County and the northwest corner of Logan County. James said firefighting units and tankers were dispatched from Weskan, Logan County, Colby, Oakley, Cheyenne

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# Colby native wins education award

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A Colby native has been recognized as the assistant principal of the state for Kansas this year. "It was humbling," Tom Albers said. "To be recognized by your peers, it was the best recognition you can get." Albers, an assistant principal at Hays High School, was recognized as the assistant principal of the year by the Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals at its meeting the first week of June in Salina. A committee from

the association chooses honorees each year for categories such as assistant principal, high school principal and middle school level principal, based on peer nominations from around the state. In April of next year, Albers will get to attend a black-tie gala in Washington, D.C., with honorees from other states, where a national winner will be announced. "He's highly respected by his peers and he just does a good job," said Eugene Haydock, executive director for the association. "The assistant principal is kind of very important in terms of making sure that everything is done the right way."

Albers, the son of Joan and the late George Albers of Colby, graduated from Colby High School in 1984. From there, he went to Fort Hays State University, where he graduated in 1988 with a degree in mathematics. After that he worked as a math teacher and football, basketball and track coach for 14 years at Pratt High School. This coming year will be his 11th at Hays High School. He started there in 2002, having worked the previous year as an assistant principal at Phillipsburg High School, having heard about the job from a principal who

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# Emporia latest city to restrict water

EMPORIA (AP) – Emporia residents could be fined up to \$250 and have their water supply shut off if they do not comply with mandatory water restrictions. The Emporia City Council voted on Wednesday to impose the restrictions, beginning next week. The vote means restrictions that had previously been voluntary will be mandatory. The move was required after the Kansas Water Office issued a water warning for the Neosho

and Cottonwood River basin. City Manager Matt Zimmerman says the warning became necessary because of continued drops in the Council Grove Reservoir. The restrictions include no residential car washing and no watering of new sod or newly seeded lawns – although watering of lawns will be permitted on an odd/even schedule. The restrictions also apply to groups that buy water from Emporia.

# Preparing the greens



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Ellie Keen, (from left) Tatum Weinnan and Jeanie Strick sorted out basil grown in the Thomas County Coalition community garden to make pesto sauce for pizzas and tortillas at the Kid's A' Cookin' class Thursday morning. Ten kids and two grown-ups showed up at the 4-H building for the class.

# St. Francis county commissioner race decided by coin toss

By Karen Krien  
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When the votes were tallied at the primary election on Tuesday, Aug. 7, there was a tie between incumbent Andy Beikman and Dr. Brett Poling, who were running on the Republican ticket for Commissioner, District 3. To break the tie, a coin was tossed and Poling won the toss. On Monday, the commissioners met to canvass the ballots. The count still showed there was still a tie.

Terry Miller, election officer, said he was not allowed to count the ballots in a

tie so he had Cinda Dankenbring, election supervising judge, and Deb Lindsten, deputy clerk, count the votes. Lindsten read the names and Dankenbring and Dale Patton, commissioner chairman, tallying. The count was made several times and, in the end, the total was still the same. There were 359 ballots but one was blank, making 358 ballots. Beikman and Poling still each had 179 votes. The coin toss was set for 3 p.m. on Monday. Patton had gotten a gold coin from the bank, both sides were photographed to prove there was a heads and tails. Both Beikman and Poling were present for the

toss. Poling was given the choice of heads or tails, choosing heads. Patton did the flip and it was heads, making Poling the winner. Beikman said he will run as a write-in in the general election. "There is some unfinished important business and I would like to see it completed," he said. Miller reported that, following the primary election, there were people who thought they may have received the wrong ballot and would have voted for the commissioner candidates, if they had

only had the chance. "Kansas has a voters rights and responsibilities and within those, it states the voter is ultimately responsible for voting the correct ballot," Miller said. If you feel you were given the wrong ballot, please make sure to talk to the election workers. They can correct the situation before you vote your ballot." One voter, he said, thought that if a person was not sure he/she had the right ballot, they should be allowed to vote again. "Elections don't work that way," Miller said. Once you place your ballot in the ballot box, you are saying you have voted

a correct ballot." Identification was required for a person to vote. This federal law was to be strictly enforced at the election. One voter left to get their ID, Miller said, and never returned. The voter could still have voted a provisional ballot and brought their ID to the clerk's office before the canvass and the ballot would have counted.

