



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

New city manager takes over Monday

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkans.com

Police Chief Randy Jones was recognized for serving as interim city manager the past three months at a City Council meeting Tuesday, receiving a certificate of appreciation from the council. "I learned to appreciate the folks back there," he said, referring to city staff

members present for the meeting.

Jones took over when Carolyn Armstrong retired as the manager on June 15; he will continue until the new manager, Tyson McGreer, takes over Monday.

The council and mayor, with the help of a private consulting company, chose McGreer from six finalists after visits by each candidate and closed-door interviews.

In other business, the council:

- Awarded a bid for the 2012 manhole rehabilitation project to Mayer Specialty Services for \$35,532.

This was the same amount as a bid from Utility Maintenance Contractors, but Jones and Public Works Director Omar Weber both recommended that the bid be awarded to Mayer because it was the company that met a specification that the bidder use MS-2C Strong Seal to complete the project.

- Awarded a bid to repair the sprinkler system and landscaping for South Franklin Park to Earth Works, which had by far the lowest bid at \$41,785.

Jones explained that only \$36,250 has been budgeted for the project, so the \$5,535 balance will have to be budgeted next year.

- Tabled a request from Wayne Horlacher to add LED street lights to three cul-de-sacs at Eco Acres until the council

could figure out how many people might be interested in building houses in the mostly vacant subdivision. City streets, Poplar Street and Eco Acres Drive, run through the development. Gordon Gilbert, assistant public utilities director, said that the project would cost about \$850 for each pole.

- Approved a request to add "slow-

See "CITY," Page 2



Two vehicles crash in Colby

Police officers gathered around a red four-door 2005 Suzuki Forenza after a crash at about 8 a.m. this morning at the intersection of Garfield Avenue and Walnut Street. Benjamin Meadows, Colby, was driving the car west on Walnut when a black 2007 Ford F-150 pickup driven by Misty Griffin, 27, Colby, failed to yield to him and the vehicles collided. Police said that Meadows had a 4-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl with him and Griffin was driving with a 3-year-old child. Two people were injured and one was taken to the hospital with minor injuries, but information was not available on the identities of the injured.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

County asked to lower rent for health office

By Christina Beringer

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkans.com

Health Department Director Kasiah Rothchild asked Thomas County commissioners Monday to lower the department's rent at the county Office Complex on South Range Avenue, which she said may be twice as high as what other agencies pay.

The former nursing home is owned by the county, and Rothchild said no other county departments pay rent in the building, now used as office space by county-related and other agencies

that pay rent based on their square footage.

Rothchild said right now, for whatever reason, her rate is not based on square footage like the other offices. The health department pays \$2,000, she said, but if her rate was based on space, her rent would be \$943 a month.

"I don't think I should pay it," she said.

Commissioner Paul Steele noted that the health department is different than emergency management, a county service also located at the office complex which

See "COUNTY," Page 2

Hunger Walk coming to Colby

The Thomas County CROP Hunger Walk will begin at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 7, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 855 E. Fifth St.

Organizers have set a goal of 50 walkers and hopes to raise \$5,000 to help stop hunger and poverty in Thomas County, and around the world, through self-help initiatives. Twenty-five percent of the money raised locally will go to the Genesis-Thomas County food bank.

This year, said Linda Pabst at the church, the Colby area is one of 2,000 cities and towns nationwide to join in this interfaith effort with the theme "Ending hunger one step at a time."

Walkers receive materials when they sign up in order to find sponsors to support them through donations. Most Colby churches have the information to either sign up or make a contribution, or you

can contact Trinity Lutheran. Donations can be designated to other relief agencies if you prefer.

Many of the walkers will be wearing T-shirts proclaiming their support for the millions of people around the world who have to walk to live, and with the millions served by food pantries, food banks and meal sites here in the U.S.

Haiti is one part of the world where CROP Hunger Walks are making a big difference. In the aftermath of the killer earthquake, Church World Service was there with emergency assistance. With the recovery effort in full swing, the agency is helping families and communities to rebuild homes, food supplies and livelihoods.

For information, to sign up or to make a donation, call Pabst at Trinity Lutheran, 462-3497.

Commission looks for more architects

By Christina Beringer

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkans.com

Members of the Thomas County Public Building Commission agreed Monday to look for additional architects to plan a new law enforcement center or to add on to the existing structure, after discussing blueprints created by architect Larry White.

Commission members present were County Commissioners Ken Christiansen and Paul Steele, County Commissioner-elect Mike Baughn and Undersheriff Marc Finley. Economic Development Alliance Director Christy Rocca came to observe the public meeting.

The group has been debating on whether to build a new facility or add on to the existing jail, agreeing that new construction would

simplify building plans but be more expensive.

Goals include increased safety and room to house more prisoners, which would minimize operational costs and possibly increase revenue, since other counties might house prisoners here.

The members agreed it would cost too much to include a juvenile detention center to the plans.

Obstacles include meeting all of the county's needs with a \$2.7 million budget and without the need for more staff, minimal building space at the current location, needing close proximity to the court house and complying with Kansas Department of Corrections regulations

If they add on to the current building, members said, they would also have to deal with sewer and plumbing problems, problematic ventilation, difficulty keeping computers cool and leaky ceilings,



Just inside the main door separating the jail from the rest of the Law Enforcement Center, this corridor toward the north has doors on the left for a storage area containing a refrigerator used for prisoner meals, a detox cell where prisoners who are brought in under the influence of alcohol and drugs are held, along with anyone else requiring restrictions, the booking room and the visitation room. On the right side of the hallway is the entrance to the plumbing area.

MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Rainfall easing drought

ST. LOUIS (AP) — With hopes of a once-stellar corn crop dimmed by a summer of drought, Gerald Jenkins doesn't expect the unfolding harvest to burden his co-op's grain elevators, which are capable of storing 9 million bushels of the grain it buys from growers. Finding timely barges to ship it off may be another story.

The same drought that has punished the Midwest's corn and soybeans for months has lowered the Mississippi River that eases past the western Illinois co-op Jenkins oversees to levels unseen for nearly a quarter century. The shallower waterway — notably from Memphis south to New Orleans — has closed some por-

See "DROUGHT," Page 2



See "COMMISSION," Page 2