



State legislator predicts challenges

By Sam Dieter

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Almost certain to spend another two years as a state representative, Don Hineman predicts plenty of challenges during his next term.

The Republican is running unopposed for a third two-year term in the state House of Representatives. Elected in 2008

to represent the 118th District in western Kansas, he did not face another Republican challenger in the Aug. 7 primary.

He lives in Dighton with his wife Betsy, where he was born and raised, and operates a farm in partnership with his son, Andy. He also has a daughter, Sarah.

He said representing western Kansas is especially important because only 15 out of 125 representatives are from this part of the state.

"We're always going to be outnumbered," Hineman said. "That means that the representation that we send to Topeka needs to be effective."

One task for rural representatives is to protect small school districts as the state considers cuts to its education budget. Hineman said that rural districts pay extra costs because they use a higher proportion of teachers, transportation and other necessary resources to help a smaller

number of kids.

To offset this, the current formula for funding public education provides extra money for low-enrollment schools.

"That makes it very difficult for small rural school districts to survive," Hineman said.

Another development which interests him as a member of the Energy and Utilities Committee is the expansion of the oil and gas industry into western Kansas.

"There's been some activity and it's expanding," he said.

This industry takes advantage of technologies such as horizontal drilling and the so-called "fracking" method of breaking up oil-bearing rock by pumping water into the ground at high pressure.

"I've got to tell you that, personally, I feel very comfortable," about the process,

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Sean Hankin (right) of the Colby ambassadors presented a framed dollar bill to Crop Production Services employees Mark Fabrizio (left), J.J. Denny and Tim Kistler Thursday morning at

the ribbon cutting for a new fertilizer distribution terminal. The farming supplies retailer completed construction and started using the terminal Sept. 5.

Fertilizer plant celebrates at new location

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Colby's economy expanded Thursday when Crop Production Services officially opened a new fertilizer terminal.

"It is a big commitment to this area, but we're very confident in our people," said Bill Shields, area manager for Crop Production Services. "It's a very good addition to the northwest Kansas economy."

The ribbon was cut Thursday morning for the farm supplies retailer's new dry fertilizer terminal on College Drive east of Country Club.

Shields said that the terminal, which can hold 10,000 tons of fertilizer, is the first of its size in the western third of Kansas. The terminal went into operation Sept. 5.

"It's geographically centered to our locations," Shields said.

The terminal serves as a distribution hub for farmers as far away as Hays and Fort Morgan, Colo. Shields said his company started construction in mid-March, but had been planning to build the terminal for two years.

Colby's location near Interstate 70, U.S. 83 and the Union Pacific railroad helped make it the logical place to build the facility.

"We have good transportation to get it in by trucks and in the future, by rail," Shields said.

Shields said that additional expansion for Crop Production Services is planned in the next three to five years and might include a small railroad line leading to the terminal.

The terminal was built by Stuve Construction, based in Algona, Iowa, with oversight from Woofter Construction, Jim's Electric and other local companies.

Colby author to debut novel

By Christina Beringer

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Colby author Keith Coplin, who is most noted for his 2004 Pulitzer Prize-nominated novel, "Crofton's Fire," has a new novel ready to debut. Inspired by the people and streets of Colby, "Prescott's Law: The Adventures of a High Plains Sheriff" was written in a three-month tear in 2008 with help from Roger Hale, Deb Bickner, Carol Barnes and former Colby college student Brandon Gay.

Coplin said his intent is to use the book as a follow-up to another, "The Planter's Daughter," but is offering "Prescott" to online readers to generate interest here. A digital copy is available to download by sending Coplin your e-mail address and a check or money order for \$7.95 at Box 32, Colby, Kan., 67701.

The novel will be e-mailed as an attachment for use on any E-reader or computer.

"Colby people should like this book," said Coplin, "since much of it is straight Colby material: the viciousness of the Remeda gang, the millions of bucks found in the trunk of a routine traffic stop and most significantly, Max Pickerill."

"I've modeled a character in the book, Doc Stevens, on Max, capturing him, I hope, for time immemorial. Who could better lend himself to a fictional portrayal than Max Pickerill?"

A former chemistry professor at Colby college, Pickerill has been

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End of daylight time means new batteries

Colby residents will get another hour of sleep next week, thanks to the end of daylight saving time Sunday.

At 2 a.m., clocks will be set an hour back in most of the U.S., excluding Arizona, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and many overseas territories. Clocks will be set an hour forward again on March 10.

During this change, the Colby Fire Department is promoting fire safety by volunteering to change the batteries on peoples' smoke alarms.

"The campaign for years has been change your clock, change your batteries," said Fire Chief

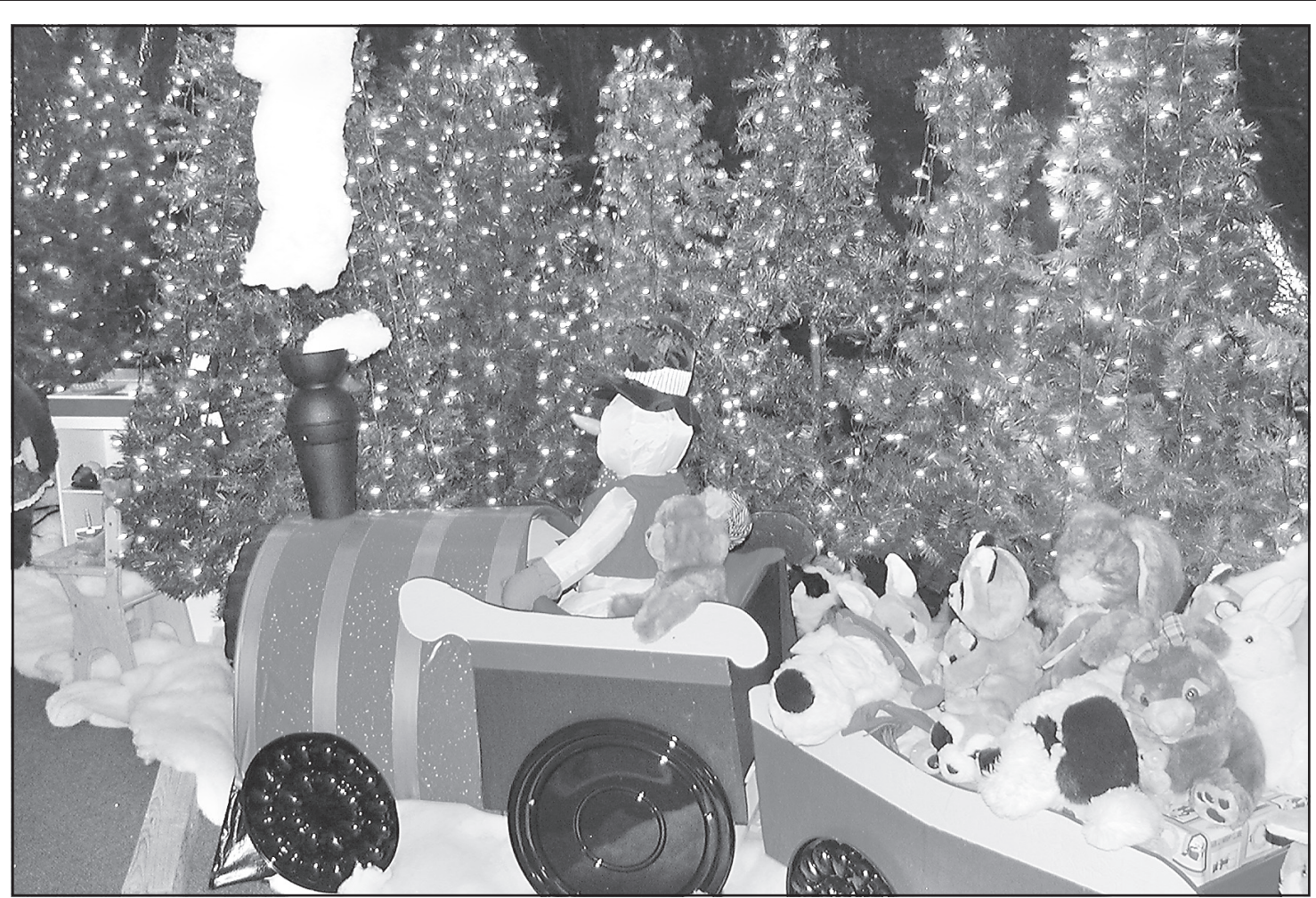
Bob McLemore.

The effort coincides with a fire safety campaign from the National Fire Protection Association during the change over from daylight saving time Sunday. McLemore said that department personnel have a list of about 80 people - generally seniors - for whom they change the batteries on their smoke alarms.

"Generally it's folks who shouldn't be getting on ladders," McLemore said. "We get lots of calls from the senior center and people who call in and need assistance."

The department will change the batteries on a smoke alarm for anyone who requests it.

To get your batteries changed, call 460-4454.



Volunteers set up Santa City this week

A snowman drove a trainful of friends (above) Thursday in a display set up at "Santa City," an exhibit inside the boy scout hut next to the Community Building. Lottie McLemore (left), administrative assistant for the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, wrapped up the decorating work for the Christmas-time exhibit.

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