



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Monday

November 5, 2012
Volume 123, Number 173
Serving Thomas County since 1888



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Dale Deaver of Levant (above), 87, took his combine out to the eastern part of the county Wednesday to help his friend Marvin Albers with the milo harvest. Deaver said he has gone from owning four combines to just one, which he uses

for work on both his and his friends' farms. The two men (below) were finishing up a section of land near Halford by afternoon.

Corn, other crops draw small yields

By Sam Dieter
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As the last fall crops are harvested, farmers are reporting low yields for everything, but especially corn. "It's dry like hell out here," said Dale Deaver of Levant as he helped a friend with the harvest. "Everything's been down; the yields have been down."

Area crop specialists report a wide range of yields for all crops this year, many of them well below average. Jeanne Falk, an Extension agronomist at the Northwest Kansas Research Extension Center, usually covers the Sunflower District, including Wallace, Sherman and Cheyenne counties, but has been filling in for Thomas County.

Thomas County Extension Agent Clint Milliman left his job for a position with Kansas Farm Management Association Oct. 13.

When talking to Thomas County farmers, Falk said, she's heard of yields for dryland corn from 40 bushels an acre to nothing at all.

Irrigated corn yields in Thomas County have been between 100 and 200 bushels and acre, she said.

"It's all over the board depending on what guys have been catching for weather," Falk said.

Julie Niehage, an agriculture agent for Logan, Gove and



Trego counties, said that dryland corn in her area yielded as much as 75 bushels and acre, but that some of it was also a total loss. Yields for dryland and irrigated corn are both down by about 30 bushels, compared to normal yields of about 100 bushels for dryland corn and about 200 bushels for irrigated corn.

Deaver was helping a friend cut milo Wednesday near Halford, east of Colby. The yield should have been 80 to 90 bushels an acre, he said, but as he harvested, the computer on his combine was showing about 50 bushels for the field.

"I don't see how it's making that much," he added, looking out at the thin stand.

Deaver, 87, said he made no money at all from 320 acres of dryland corn on his farm. When

an insurance adjuster told him the crop was a loss in mid-August, he said, he took out his policy on the land, plowed the corn under and planted next year's wheat.

"I know a lot of guys who didn't make any corn and didn't even bale it," he said.

Falk said that a lot of farmers

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Vote Tuesday!

Polls open 7 to 7

By Kayla Cornett
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At last. The general election will arrive Tuesday, and voters need to make sure they know what will be on the ballot when they show up to their polling place.

In the national races, the big-ticket item, of course, is for president and vice president. Democrats Barack Obama and Joe Biden will try to hold their jobs against Republicans Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, plus two minor-party candidates, Libertarians Gary Johnson and James P. Gray and the Reform Party's Chuck Baldwin and Joseph Martin.

Running for U.S. representative in the 1st District of Kansas is first-term Republican Congressman Tim Huelskamp of Fowler. He is unopposed.

Two incumbent state senators are fighting it out for the 40th District seat representing northwest Kansas. Republican Ralph Ostmeyer, Grinnell, and Democrat Allen Clark Schmidt, Hays, were thrown together in the district when federal judges drew up redistricting maps earlier this year.

In Thomas County races, there are two candidates for sheriff. Republican Rod Taylor, a former state trooper and veteran deputy, hopes to hold his office against Democrat David Anthony Rodriguez, a former deputy and city police officer. Both live in Colby.

Republican Paul M. Steele, Colby, is unopposed for re-election as county commissioner in District 2, while Republican Mike Baughn, Brewster, is unopposed in District 3. His is a former county sheriff and long-time mayor of Brewster.

The only candidate for county clerk is Republican Shelly A. Harms, Colby. Unopposed for county treasurer is Republican Layn Bruggeman, also of Colby. Register of Deeds Republican Lora L. Volk and County Attorney Kevin Berens, both Colby Republicans, also are unopposed for re-election.

For state representative in the 118th District, Republican Rep. Don Hineman, Dighton, is running unopposed for re-election. He will represent most of rural Thomas County expect the northwest; the area was added to his district this

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Diplomats invite women to luncheon

By Christina Beringer
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The Colby Diplomats are inviting all of the women of Thomas County to join them at their Annual Ladies Luncheon, a traditional event that they've updated a bit so more women will be able to attend.

Holly Whitaker, Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce manager, said the come-and-go luncheon will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 28, at the American Legion Hall, 1850 W. Fourth St.

Reservations are a must; they need to be submitted to the Chamber office by Wednesday, Nov. 14. Tickets, \$12 per person, will not be sold at the door. Checks should be made payable to the Colby Diplomats.

Whitaker said that in past years, the Diplomats had a formal sit-down meal and a program. This

year, though, they've extended the times and made it a casual affair so more women can have a chance to come.

Tables, featuring about 15 businesses throughout the county, will be set up to offer decorating inspiration for the Christmas season. Women will be able to see table arrangements, seasonal wreaths and decorated trees.

Women will be able to walk around and get ideas, network and visit with other women from around the county; and enjoy a selection of heavy hors d'oeuvres, desserts and wassail — a hot, mulled cider. Each woman who attends will receive a free cookbook that includes favorite holiday recipes from Colby Diplomats members.

Some of the businesses that will be showing off their design ideas are Someplace Special and Plum

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Florida remains tough sell for candidates

By Charles Babington
The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — To the last minute, Florida is proving to be an expensive and frustrating state for President Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney alike, seemingly resistant to arguments that play well in Ohio, Colorado and other states.

For all the talk of Florida leaning Republican, both nominees are making stops here in the campaign's final 40 hours, a testament to its uncertainty. Their campaigns and allies have poured \$130 million into Florida TV ads.

Florida is a tough sell for

Obama's national message of steady economic recovery, because its unemployment and foreclosure rates remain above the national average. The auto industry bailout ads airing in Ohio would make little sense here.

And Obama's standard remarks to Hispanics don't resonate so well in Florida because its two largest Hispanic groups, Cubans and Puerto Ricans, are exempt from immigration laws that Mexican-Americans and others intensely follow.

These factors played into Obama's decision to make his strongest battleground stand in Ohio, which has 18 electoral votes to Florida's 29. And they prompted Republicans to hope Romney would lock up Florida early.

But a well-organized Democratic ground game, and a population that's increasingly non-white, have given Obama hope of winning Florida narrowly and all but assuring his re-election.

"I think it's too close to call," said Jerrold Kronenfeld, 68, an Obama volunteer who attended Friday's rally by former President Bill Clinton in Palm Bay, Fla.

Kronenfeld wore a "Jews for Obama" button, and he said it was frustrating to see Romney pursue Jewish votes by portraying Obama as unfriendly to Israel.

The sometimes sharp exchanges over Israel are just one example of campaign bitterness that has spilled over in this sprawling state, the biggest of the toss-up prizes.

Republican Gov. Rick Scott and

the GOP-controlled legislature curtailed early voting this year and took other steps that Democrats say were designed to suppress voting in heavily Democratic areas.

After people waited for hours to vote in south Florida on Saturday, the last day of early voting, the state Democratic Party filed a federal lawsuit seeking more voting time Sunday. Local officials allowed it on a limited basis. But some would-be voters gave up when facing six-hour waits Saturday, poll watchers said, and similar problems could arise Tuesday.

A Florida judge extended early voting hours in one central Florida county on Sunday after Democrats sued to allow more time. An early

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Kansas parties make last push on races

TOPEKA (AP) — Republicans and Democrats are making their final push to woo voters in hot races for the Kansas Legislature.

Voters had until noon today to cast ballots in advance at county election offices, with polls set to open across the state at 7 a.m. Tuesday.

Secretary of State Kris Kobach predicts that 1.2 million people will vote, 68 percent of those registered.

The most closely watched

races are for state Senate seats, where GOP conservatives hope to gain a solid majority by ousting several Democratic incumbents. The Kansas Chamber of Commerce has sent mailings trying to tie Democrats to President Barack Obama and the federal health-care overhaul.

Meanwhile, Democrats have made GOP Gov. Sam Brownback and massive income tax cuts he championed their biggest issue.

