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Engineer discusses water goals

By Sam Dieter

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The state's top water engineer met with farmers and leaders of the area's Groundwater Management District last Wednesday to consider a new form of regulation where farmers and landowners get to decide how to use irrigation water while meeting conservation goals.

David Barfield, chief engineer with the Kansas Division of Water Resources, heard testimony about the creation of the state's first Local Enhanced Management Area at a meeting at the Sheridan County Courthouse in Hoxie. The management area would impose tougher restrictions on well water use in the 99 square miles of the "Sheridan 6" subarea in Sheridan and Thomas counties.

About 35 people, including farmers and board members of Colby-based Ground Water Management District No. 4, showed up. Some of them later asked questions and gave their own testimony, generally in support of the proposal. Barfield spent most of the meeting talking to Wayne Bossert, manager of the district,

which includes the experimental area. District four covers all of Thomas, Sheridan and Sherman counties and part of Decatur and several others in northwest Kansas.

The meeting was the last time Barfield is going to hear statements regarding creation of the management area, he said. Any additional testimony needs to be mailed to his office and postmarked no later than Tuesday. Wednesday's meeting came after it was decided at a session on Oct. 4 that a management area is necessary and should be considered.

Barfield has four choices now: he could approve the proposal the management area; he could reject the proposal because it violates state law; he could send the proposal back to the district with his own suggestions, to be brought up at another meeting; or he could send the proposal back with suggestions from Wednesday's meeting, at which point the district could approve the suggestions or give up on the whole proposal.

After the meeting, Bossert said he would add clarifications to the written proposal, partially to ex-

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Elevator debris cleared away

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Almost two weeks after part of a Frontier Ag elevator collapsed in Oakley, the company has cleared away all that was left of the three bins which were damaged in the initial collapse.

"What they've done is they have taken down the hanging concrete and the dangerous part," said Pappy Lies, emergency manager for Logan and Gove counties.

Lies said officials met last week with Frontier Ag, and the company said it would bring an inspection team in to see how much of the rest of the structure can be saved. He was not sure when that

would be.

Large parts of the two bins on the southeast side of the elevator had been hanging on to the structure after the lower walls on the south side gave out at about 2:30 p.m. Nov. 20. Workers have been kept away from the elevator by the danger of having more concrete fall.

No one was injured in the collapse, but the accident also destroyed the inside of a third bin. Corn and chunks of concrete buried a nearby Union Pacific Railroad line, forcing the company to build a detour track around the site. Several rail cars were pushed over by the corn, but contractors dragged them out of the way later on the day of the collapse.

Salvation Army needs volunteers

The Salvation Army's Thomas County program needs more help ringing its bells this holiday season. If you, your family or any organizations you are involved with are able to give a couple of hours of time, volunteers say, it would be greatly appreciated.

"The Salvation Army is a vital organization to our community," said Sue Draper, coordinator here for Army efforts. "Just so you are aware how the funds are distrib-

uted, when requests are received, Salvation Army does a bit of research on the situation and help as often as possible."

Money raised at the yearly kettle drive pays for Thomas County activities for the entire year, she said. Assistance is given for medical needs, utilities, rent, food, fuel for medical appointments out of town and other needs.

If you'd like to volunteer, call Draper at (785) 462-7511.

Gov. says fill revenue gap

OVERLAND PARK (AP) — Gov. Sam Brownback urged Kansas lawmakers to take another look at ways to pay for massive income tax cuts signed into law earlier this year, saying that restoring the tax rate to its previous level isn't an option.

In remarks to hundreds of people at a forum Tuesday in Overland

Park, the Republican governor acknowledged that the state is facing a "hard dip" in revenues because of the cuts that will go into effect in January. But the *Kansas City Star* (bit.ly/TG7nJW) reported Brownback suggested lawmakers reconsider what he calls "pay

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Tours given in Colby

Cindy Moses (above left) and her daughter, Shelby Bain, helped Jeanene Brown put the finishing touches on her dining-room table to show during the Holiday Homes Tours on Sunday. Brown said she was lucky to have friends and family help her decorate the main and upper floors of her house for the benefit. Guests got to stroll her outdoor gardens and a bridge that overlooks a fish pond on their way out.

Jane Bandy (left) thanked Evan Barnum for his participation in the tour, sponsored by the Colby United Methodist Church Women. Bandy said she had been hoping for years that someone would showcase ideas on how to decorate on a budget — the theme for Barnums' home. At their home, Dr. Stephen and Candace Vacik (below right) thanked Katie Melvin for joining the tour Sunday. Gloria Mattix, president of the Colby United Methodist Women, said 148 tickets had been sold this year. Proceeds will help support the church's missions in the United States and around the world, she said.

CHRISTINA BERINGER
Colby Free Press



Sacred Heart auction brings in \$86,000

The final numbers are in, and Auction Committee Chair Kim Brier says the 2012 Sacred Heart Parish Auction was a huge success.

She said cowboys, cowgirls, saloon girls, sheriffs and more "Wild, Wild West" themed characters helped raise more than \$86,000 the evening of Oct. 27 at the City Limits Convention Center in Colby.

"The auction was very successful," said Brier, "and in fact, will be one of our best ones. We are mindful, though, that our success depends upon people attending

our auction and bidding on items ... and I would like to thank everyone very much for attending and supporting this year's auction."

The evening began with people helping themselves to the wine fountain, beer from the kegs or a drink from the bar as they strolled through the silent auction tables, perusing items and placing bids.

Then, all were treated to a sit-down dinner featuring roast baron of beef in a red wine sauce, southwest potatoes, cream cheese corn, roll and salad. Desserts were donated and made by Linda Van-

Horn, Brier said.

A "trip raffle" was won by Florene Messamore, who opted for the cash prize of \$3,000 instead of choosing one of the trips.

Several other items went well at the auction, including a 32gb iPad for \$875, a week's stay at the Snider Cabin at Table Rock Lake for \$1,650, a \$500 gift certificate for travel and dining to Big Ed's Steakhouse in Bird City for 12 to 20 people for \$1,250, three swim baskets with family passes to the Colby Aquatic Park \$750 and two year-long family passes to the Colby Cinema and Arcade for

\$1,350.

"The auction committee is already looking ahead toward next year's auction," Brier said. "The date has been set for Saturday, Oct. 26, at City Limits Convention Center. The theme will be Winter Wonderland."

"You will be able to sparkle and shine with our dresser theme next year.... Be sure to mark your calendars now for an enchanted evening filled with glitter, snowflakes and winter romance."

