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Nativity to honor professor

By Christina Beringer
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Jane Johnson of Colby and family of the late Theron Johnson are inviting people to honor his memory with a living nativity scene, refreshments, fellowship and a donation for Genesis-Thomas County.

The five-day event will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday next week at the Tin Acres Quarter Horse Farm, seven miles north of Colby on K-25. The farm is past mile marker 203 on the left side of the highway, said Jane Johnson.

"We'll have Mary and Joseph, three wise men and a beautiful angel," Johnson said. "There will also be a shepherd boy, who I imagine will be played by me, since I'll have to take care of the animals.

"There will be donkeys and goats, and I've even got a horse who might let me dress it up in a camel costume. Everyone will be in gorgeous costumes, but while we are in character, we won't interact with the guests.

"People will be able to see and pet the animals, tour the farm and enjoy some hot cider, cookies and candies. It'll be very meditative, with Christmas music and, if it works out well, it'll turn into an annual event."

Johnson said donations will also be accepted for money and non-perishable food for Genesis, the county's food bank.

"I recently had to drive to Denver by myself, which gave me a lot of time to think," she said, "and, on the news, they talked about all of these public nativity scenes that are being taken down. I thought

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Playground by Aquatic Park almost finished

By Sam Dieter
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The playground next to the Colby Aquatic Park needs only a couple more work days before the nearly done project shuts down for the winter.

"We're getting close," said Brent Wiedeman, president of Farmers and Merchants Bank. "We probably have two full afternoons left."

Anyone driving along has probably noticed the playground is more or less done. Wiedeman said he and other volunteers, including Mike Woofter and employees at Woofter Construction, will probably be done working on the playground for the winter next week.

They are waiting on delivery of some climbing rocks – the largest two of which are 12 feet tall and 12 feet wide – at the end of this week. The rocks will be put in place along with a climbing web and two 20-foot-by-20-foot tarp canopies for nearby picnic tables. That project will be done by the end of the week if the weather is good, Wiedeman said.

It will take about two hours to install various nuts and bolts

needed to make the playground itself structurally sound, he said. The only other work that will be done for certain this winter will be little jobs such as placing caution signs,

"Hopefully, it will be open to the public early spring, mid-March," Wiedeman said.

Concrete pads will be poured by the picnic tables either this winter or early next spring, he said, depending on the availability of money. Rubber mulch will be laid down next year.

Wiedeman said about \$30,000 more is needed to pay for the rocks, concrete pads and mulch and complete the whole project.

About 20 volunteers have been working to build the park since November. They include employees from the bank and Woofter Construction, city and county employees, and others, with construction equipment from the city and Woofter being used. A total of \$55,000 was collected for the project from 10 individuals and businesses, Wiedeman said, to go with \$97,500 put up by the city.

To donate to the project, he said, call F&M Bank at 460-3321 or Woofter Construction at 462-7441.

Kansas Senate leader had big bankruptcy

TOPEKA (AP) – The Kansas Senate's new budget committee chairman filed for bankruptcy in 2010 and listed nearly \$885,000 in unsecured debts from problems at his former home-building business in a federal court filing.

Other incoming Senate leaders nonetheless defended Sen. Ty Masterson, an Andover Republican, following his selection Tuesday as Ways and Means Committee chair. *The Wichita Eagle* reported (bit.ly/SPTJD5) that Masterson said he's working to pay off his debts, though they were discharged this year.

As chairman of Ways and Means, Masterson is at the center of budget discussions. A GOP leadership panel picked him, and he and other incoming Senate leaders will begin their jobs when

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Donald Whelchel's house at 1240 W. Fifth took the second place slot for the residential category of the Colby Promotional Committee's annual Christmas lights contest.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Winners named in light contest



The judges gave People's State Bank second place in the business lights category.

Judging of the Colby Promotional Committee's annual Christmas light contest was complete Tuesday night by an anonymous team.

First place for residential lights went to Darrel and Valerie Wark at 580 Valley Drive. The Colby Aquatic Park won for lights at a business.

Donald Whelchel's home at 1240 W. Fifth St. took second place for residential, and second place for business went to People's State Bank on Range Avenue.

Honorable mentions for residential lights went to Shorty and Donna Kulhanek at 1210 Eighth St.; Brent and Connie Menges at 545 Cherokee Ave.; Leland and Sally Jones at 420 Valley Drive; Jim and Terry Cousins at 1114 Terrace Drive; Herman and Joan Schwarz at 260 W. Third St.; and the house at 450 Sterling.

The Pioneer Memorial Library, Donelan Jewelry and Earth Works got honorable mentions for business lights.



When the judges made their rounds Tuesday night for the Colby Promotional Committee's Christmas light contest, first place went to Darrel and Valerie Wark for residential lights (below) and the Colby Aquatic Park (above) for lights at a business.

