



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Pastor enjoys her party

Carol Rahn (center) spoke with Ron and Sue Evans at her retirement party Sunday in the fellowship hall of the First Presbyterian Church. Jarrod Spencer (right) also came to the party for Rahn, who is moving to Texas to live near her grandchildren after serving as pastor for the church. She has lived in Colby for 11 years.

EVAN BARNUM  
Colby Free Press



## County decides on new director

By Christina Beringer

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The search to find a new emergency management director in Thomas County is over, commissioners agreed Monday, after assistant director Autumn AraSmith accepted an offer to take the position permanently.

AraSmith has been with the department two years as a part-time assistant director. She was sworn in on Wednesday.

County Commission Chairman Ken Christiansen added that her salary will be contingent upon her completing two courses – one in February and the other in October – and becoming a Kansas certified emergency manager, a state requirement to hold the job.

Commissioners decided to not hire an assistant director to fill AraSmith's old job at this time. She replaces Susan McMahan, who moved to Topeka after her husband accepted a transfer with the state Highway Patrol.

In other business, commissioners:

- Approved a transfer of \$150,000 from the General Fund to the Special Reserve Equipment Fund to increase the money set aside for the jail project.

Commissioners said they've saved \$450,000 so far, plus an oral commitment from Sheriff Rod Taylor that he'll add about \$400,000 from the Drug Forfeiture Fund.

The county hopes to either build

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## Senator to head new committee

By Kevin Bottrell

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Sen. Ralph Ostmeier, fresh from a landslide victory over a fellow incumbent from Hays in November, will be heading up a committee when the Kansas Senate goes back into session on Monday, Jan. 14, but not the one he had planned on.

Ostmeier, a Grinnell Republican who represents the 40th District, had been in line to continue as chair of the Natural Resources Committee, but instead shifted to the vacant chairmanship of Federal and State Affairs.

"We couldn't find anyone to chair (that committee) except freshmen," he said. "There were not a lot of options."

There are 12 new senators out of 40 this year, and four have no legislative experience. Ostmeier, who served on Federal and State Affairs for years, said he agreed to take over as chairman.

The committee handles social policy, which can mean anything from liquor laws to immigration to inner-city housing, he said.

"It's interesting and controversial at times," Ostmeier said. "You name it; it can be talked about."

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## City approves repaving contract

By Sam Dieter

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The Colby City Council awarded a \$537,698 contract at an end-of-the-year meeting last Friday to McCormick Excavation and Paving to repave parts of Range Avenue and Fourth Street, with the city to pay 25 percent of the bill.

City Manager Tyson McGreer said Plainville-based Penco Engineering is doing the engineering for the project for \$48,000. He said the Kansas Department of Transportation will pay 75 percent of the total cost under the City

Connecting Links program, as it does for all cities with fewer than 10,000 people.

Penco does most street and highway engineering for the city, McGreer said, and provided an estimate for the project, but did not bid on it. He said the city decides on a case-by-case basis when to ask for bids for that kind of work.

McCormick, based in Stratton, Colo., will repave all asphalt surfaces on Range Avenue (K-25) from the south city limits to the north side of the Interstate 70 interchange and on Fourth Street

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## Group will seek broader liquor sales

TOPEKA (AP) – A group that wants Kansans to be able to buy liquor at grocery stores and convenience stores says it will try again to persuade state lawmakers to change state law.

Currently, Kansans can buy most liquor only in retail liquor stores, except for 3.2 beer and wine coolers.

Uncork Kansas, a coalition of convenience stores, grocery

stores, and chambers of commerce, says it plans to introduce a bill to change state law as early in the upcoming legislative session as possible.

The Wichita Eagle reports (bit.ly/10YZ3tH) the Kansas Chamber of Commerce announced earlier this week that it will support the effort.

But Spencer Duncan, executive director of a group called Keep Kansans in Business, said changing the law would hurt existing stores, especially in rural Kansas.

## Movie time at the library



Sisters, from left, Kathie, Cindy and Wendy Chavez dropped by the basement of the Pioneer Memorial Library last Friday

to watch "Snow Buddies," one of several movies the library showed to keep kids busy over Christmas break.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

