

Weather

Veteran commissioner chairs final meeting

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Scott Collett, East Hale.

Trustees sworn in were Kenneth Kammer, West Hale; Bert Stramel, Summers; Larry Heier, Morgan; Mason Mackley, Kingery; and Dale A.D. Deaver, East Hale.

District Court Judge Glenn D. Shiffner, District Magistrate Judge Richard J. Ress, Commissioners Steele and Baughn, County Attorney Kevin Berens, Register of Deeds Lora L. Volk, Sheriff Rod Taylor and Harms also were sworn in.

In other business, commissioners:

Approved Period 13 and January 2013 accounts payable warrant registers. Steele said he reviewed the bills Thursday and found nothing wrong.

Baughn added that he'd had a chance to view the bills and said they included some expenses

from the sheriff's office from a Law Enforcement Explorers program. He said he was interested to find out the office is encouraging youths to get involved.

Reviewed and approved annual membership and appropriations to the Northwest Kansas Regional Recycling Organization for \$13,539.

"Annual membership for 2013 is \$4 per capita (totaling \$7,539)," explained the organization's chairman in a letter to the commissioners. "This year, the (recycling organization) is requesting \$3 for the initial dues payment."

Part of the membership expense will help pay for a new vehicle, the letter said.

The remaining \$6,000 appropriation is given under a long-standing agreement between the organization and the county to help cover expenses to operate on Saturdays. Steele noted that the City of Colby helps pay employee wages.

Kansas, Missouri could be hit by House disaster aid fight

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when a proposal to cut spending to pay for some of the Sandy package failed. It was the latest, piecemeal effort to offset disaster spending with cuts elsewhere.

Area members of Congress say they aren't giving up.

Less than two weeks ago, Graves — and all four House members from Kansas — sided with a small minority voting against the initial installment of Sandy spending.

That would allot \$9.7 billion for the National Flood Insurance Program to pay hurricane claims. They said their opposition was based partly on the lack of offsetting cuts to other federal programs.

"We have to talk seriously about offsets," Rep. Tim Huelskamp, a Kansas Republican, said after the vote.

Those votes infuriated members of Congress from the Northeast, of both parties, and their constituents. They said spending cuts weren't required after Joplin's tornado or Hurricane Katrina, and shouldn't be needed for Sandy.

Indeed, records show Kansas and Missouri among the states that depend most on federal disaster relief. They could have much to lose if disaster spending came only after offsets with other budget cuts.

From 2004 to 2011, the Government Accountability Office found, Kansas took more than \$1.2 billion in relief for natural disasters. That's roughly as much as New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Delaware

combined. Connecticut alone has a larger population than Kansas.

Most of that cash went to local governments to defray the costs of cleanup and rebuilding that might ordinarily fall on local taxpayers. It includes \$40 million spent to help residents of Greensburg after a 2007 tornado destroyed most of the town.

On a per-person basis, the GAO said, Kansas ranked ninth nationally in federal disaster spending, ahead of hurricane-plagued Texas and far ahead of New York and California.

That's just for disasters like severe storms and snow.

Kansas also received roughly \$618 million over the same period for farm-related disasters such as drought- and storm-damaged crops, according to a database compiled by the Environmental Working Group. Some of that spending went to relatives of Huelskamp, the 1st District Republican who opposed the Sandy relief bill.

Since 1995, the Environmental Working Group says, farmers just in Huelskamp's sprawling district have taken nearly \$891 million in federal disaster payments. None of that federal spending was specifically offset by cuts to other parts of the budget.

Huelskamp did not respond to a request for an interview Tuesday.

In a statement Monday, the budget critic said he did not oppose all disaster relief.

"Disasters happen, and many times there is a role for Washington to respond," Huelskamp's statement said, "but that does not mean we put on the blind-

olds and pray that the money gets where it needs to go."

Less than a week ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture declared virtually every Kansas county a federal drought disaster area. That qualified residents for low-cost emergency loans and other federal relief.

Rep. Kevin Yoder of Kansas, who also voted against the Sandy bill in early January, did not respond to several requests for an explanation of his vote. A spokeswoman for Rep. Lynn Jenkins, a Kansas Republican, said the congresswoman voted no because of a need for flood insurance reform.

In an earlier statement, Jenkins said unneeded spending should be cut from the relief package and offset with other spending cuts.

Kansas Democrats criticized the early January votes.

Seven of Missouri's eight House members — Graves being the lone exception — voted for the \$9.7 billion Sandy flood bill in early January, including Rep. Billy Long, whose district includes Joplin, which was ravaged by a tornado in 2011 and received hundreds of millions in federal aid.

Records show Missouri received more than \$1 billion disaster relief from 2004 through 2011. Missouri ranked 19th in per-person disaster spending during that period.

The state also got \$240 million in those years for farm-related disasters, including roughly \$95 million in Graves' district.

Some landowners also got disaster help after the 2011 Missouri River flood, but "those were offset," Graves said.

Briefly

Museum will hold Food for Thought program

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will have a Food for Thought program at noon Thursday, featuring a light lunch and a presentation by Interim Director Rex Buchanan of the Kansas Geological Survey about the profound impact of water on the settlement of our state. His presentation is part of the Kansas Humanities Council's Speaker's Bureau. Admission is free. Call Ann Miner at 460-4590 for information.

Hospital holding childbirth classes Thursday

Citizens Medical Center will have the second of four weeks of childbirth classes from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursdays this week. Women due to deliver before May should attend with their labor support partner, since the next classes won't begin until April. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown at the hospital's Education Department, 460-4850.

Alaskan archaeology topic of presentation

Dr. Linda Davis-Stephens will give a presentation on Alaskan archaeology for the High Plains Chapter of the Kansas Anthropological Association at 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby. Updates on upcoming association events will be announced and a short business meeting will follow. The program is free and open to the public. For information, contact Ann Miner at 462-6399.

College auditioning acts for talent show

The Student Government Association at Colby Community College plans a community talent show at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31, at the Cultural Arts Center on campus as part of Homecoming Week. Auditions will be from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at the center. Entry forms are available at the college bookstore, the admissions office and the student affairs office. Prizes will be awarded to the winners; there is no charge to participate. For information or to schedule an audition, call Britney Squire at 460-5495 or Gunnar Hays at (785) 202-1218.

Rotary cooking soup at ball games Tuesday

The Colby Rotary Club plans a soup supper from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday during the Colby-Goodland basketball games at the Community Building. Cost is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 3 to 7, with children under 3 free. Come support the club and its many civic projects. For information, call Gary Adrian at 460-2931.

Legion Auxiliary making bierocks for Sunday

The Colby American Legion Auxiliary is taking orders through Friday for hamburger, cheese and jalapeno bierocks. They will be made Sunday at the post and can be picked up then. Cost is \$28 a dozen. Proceeds go to help veterans and their families. For information or to place an order, call Terina Schmidt at 443-3766.

Pets ready for adoption at Animal Clinic

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has two dogs available for adoption: a 7-month-old female purebred red heeler and a 4-year-old female blue heeler. Lost or strayed animals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Community Foundation to serve pulled pork

The Thomas County Community Foundation will be having a pulled-pork meal starting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29, at the Colby Community Building in conjunction with the Colby High-Ulysses basketball games. Donations will go to the foundation. For information, contact Melinda Olson at 460-9152.

Fifth graders to give musical at school

The Colby Grade School fifth graders will present a free musical, "Destination America," featuring songs from different American genres and "Give Us a Home," commissioned for the Colby Public Schools, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29, at the grade school auditorium. For information, call music teacher Jennifer Koel at 460-5100, ext. 1104.

Red Cross plans blood drive here this month

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29, and 7:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30, at the National Guard Armory, 470 S. Range Ave. Call (800) RED CROSS or go to www.redcrossblood.org to make an appointment, but walk-ins are welcome. All blood types are needed. Bring a blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification. Anyone who is 17, weighs at least 110 pounds and is in generally good health may be eligible to donate.

National Weather Service
Tonight: Clear, with a low around 22. Blustery, with a northwest wind 10 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.
Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 49. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south in the afternoon.
Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 22. South wind around 10 mph becoming west after midnight.
Friday: Sunny, with a high near 54. West wind around 10 mph.
Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 24.
Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 48.
Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 21.
Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 40.
Sunday Night: Scattered flurries. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 14.
Martin Luther King Day: Scattered flurries. Mostly sunny, with a high near 28.
Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 16.
Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 47.

LOCAL TV Listings
Sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Table with columns for time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, etc.) listing programs for Thursday evening, January 17, 2013.

American Profile: We Celebrate Hometown Life
Stories from hometowns just like yours. Look for us each week in this paper.
Table with columns for time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, etc.) listing programs for Friday evening, January 18, 2013.