



Board elections coming up for county

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College and school board elections are coming up in Thomas County, with a total of 23 seats open for elections set for Tuesday, April 2.

Candidates must file by noon Tuesday to get on the ballot for the elections. If too many candidates file in any district, a primary will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 26. The elections cover the Colby Communi-

ty College board and six school districts with land in Thomas County.

As of Thursday afternoon, only four candidates, all incumbents, had filed for the elections.

To file, a candidate must pay the county election officer – County Clerk Shelly Harms – \$5 or have a petition signed by 50 voters in their district. No filing can be withdrawn after the deadline.

The six school districts in this county are Colby Public Schools, Golden Plains,

Brewster, Triplains (Winona), Oakley and Grinnell.

Triplains and Golden Plains both have four school board positions open, while the other school districts and the college board all have three.

College board member Kenton Krehbiel has filed for the college election, board Vice President Tracy Rogers has filed for the Colby board, and board members Matt Cheney and Todd Schwarz has filed for Golden Plains.

Janice Frahm, president of the Colby School Board, said she plans to file, but board member Susan McLemore said she will not. Scott Maurath, president of the Oakley School Board, says he's retiring. Duane Vollbracht, a member of the Grinnell board, said he does not plan to file.

Other board members with expiring terms are: Terry Moss and Teri Brantley at Golden Plains; Stuart Schmidt, Ed Ackerman and Nicolas Schroeder at Brewster; Anita Gabel and Debbie Runnalls at Oak-

ley; Mark Hanson, board president, Molly Lamb, Shawn Plummer and Dathan Nichols at Triplains and Loren Stephens and Marcie Wolf at Grinnell.

Harms said that school board and college board members both have four-year terms.

For there to be a primary election for a board with three open positions, 10 or more candidates must file, Harms said. For a board with four open positions, there will be a primary if 13 or more file.

County fights ferret releases by state service

By Christina Beringer

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Thomas County commissioners expressed opposition to an agreement among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 12 western states and four other federal agencies on future releases of black-footed ferrets, an endangered species that feeds on prairie dogs.

In Washington on Thursday, Rep. Tim Huelskamp said the service had granted a one-month extension on the comment period for the agreement, with comments now due by Sunday, Feb. 17.

Commissioners drafted a letter stating their opposition during their meeting Monday, approved and signed it.

According to material sent by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the agreement would govern future releases of the ferrets, similar to two in Logan County a few years ago.

Landowners would get a promise that no additional restrictions would be placed on their property, it says.

One goal would be to increase the number of the animals in the wild from about 500 today to 3,000 over 10 years, allowing them to be removed from the endangered list and management to go from federal control back to the state wildlife agencies. Kansas is among the states in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which helped write the agreement.

Action came after Road and Bridge Supervisor Clair Schrock told commissioners of an e-mail he received regarding the release. Linda Sowers said she and her husband, Commissioner Byron Sowers, had received the same information. She has been attending meetings with Sowers since his

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Offices, banks close for holiday

Martin Luther King Jr. Day will be celebrated Monday, but about the only things that will shut down for the holiday will be state and federal offices and banks.

The K-State Research and Extension office will be closed Monday, as will the state driver's license office and Veterans Affairs Office.

Also closed that day will be all post offices and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service offices in Colby.

All of the banks in town will shut down except the Farmers and Merchants branch at Dillons. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. that day.

The main location, Bankwest, People's State Bank, Sunflower

Bank and The Bank will all be closed.

Most local government offices, however, will be open. City Hall will be open regular hours along with the Public Works office and the Thomas County Courthouse. The Thomas County landfill will be open and city trash trucks will run their regular routes.

The Thomas County Office Complex and Pioneer Memorial Library will also be open regular hours. The Senior Progress Center will remain open, too. However, the district court office in the courthouse, which is considered a state agency, will be closed.

Other businesses that are usually open on Mondays will remain open for the holiday. All schools and the community college will have classes.

Seminar will help people make changes

A seminar is being offered at Colby Community College next week to help people make better lifestyle choices.

The free seminar, "Lasting Health Behavior Changes for 2013," will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday in room 711 of the Bedker Memorial Complex.

"We wanted to offer it in January because of the whole new year's resolution thing," said Ryan Hale, an instructor at the college who organized the seminar.

Hale, who teaches sports psychology and works as a counselor, said the seminar is based on the "seven precursors to change" model used in counseling.

The idea is to help people make

health-based lifestyle choices like stopping smoking or losing weight, but could be used for any type of change in habits, he said.

There are seven areas, such as knowing that a change is needed, in which people may falter when trying to change habits, Hale said. "We just look at the different areas where people may be strong, people may be weak," he said, "there's usually something in these seven precursors, where, you know, they need help."

The seminar will last about an hour and 15 minutes, he said.



People weigh in for county challenge

Julie Barnes (above) had her blood pressure taken Tuesday at the "weigh in" for the Thomas County Wellness Challenge. People like Donna Henry (right) came to the Thomas County Health Department all day to get measurements of their height, blood pressure and waistline. The last measurement was weight, which Lori Weinman (below, left) learned with the help of Monique Cheatum, a nurse at the department.

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