



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Cancer fund raiser exceeds \$10,000

More than 450 people showed up to a benefit dinner and auction Saturday evening at the Colby Community Building to support Colby resident Ruby Brungardt (right). Her son, Dale Brungardt, who coordinated the event with girlfriend Laura Schmid and family friend John Schmidt, said they exceeded their \$10,000 goal with the help from people and businesses, including the Modern Woodmen of American, which matched the first \$2,500 raised.

Ruby Brungardt shed a few tears as her sons, Dale (above right) and Kevin, took the stage and allowed cosmetologist Stacie Giesenhagen (above) to shave their heads in honor of their mother. "We all know how much their long hair means to these Brungardt boys," said John Schmidt, a family friend. Before Giesenhagen could get very far, Bernie Myer of Murfin Drilling challenged people to open their wallets a little further. He matched donations dollar for dollar, raising another \$850.



Eye doctors will talk to kids about sight

By Sam Dieter
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Area doctors will be teaching people how to spot and help kids who may struggle with low vision and other learning problems next week at a clinic by the Lions Clubs' KanLovKids program.

Helping people with eyesight problems has long been a mission for the Lions, but the new program joins the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation, the state School for the Blind in Kansas City and the Kansas Optometric Association to cut the cost of vision screening from \$250 to just \$50.

"This is to help facilitate not only identifying those kids who have problems but also help them

to live a more normal life," said Sherly Brenn of Levant, district governor of the Lions Clubs in western Kansas.

The KanLovKids clinic will start with a public session at 7 p.m. Monday at the Colby Community College student union with a presentation by three experts, two of them Lions members.

They will explain the basics of looking for low vision problems in the meeting room used by the Colby High Plains Lions in the student union.

The second half of the program will be a clinic Tuesday morning at the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center in Oakley. Evaluations for area students will begin at 8 a.m., with a training session for doctors and other interested people at 11:15 a.m. with the same three presenters. Optometrists Kendall Krug of

Hays and Mark Wahlmeier of Vision Source Colby and Dr. Anne Nielsen, outreach director for the School for the Blind, will speak Monday night and at the teacher session Tuesday.

Krug will evaluate kids for low vision in Oakley.

"They'll give us a slide show," Brenn said, "give us some information."

The program, she said, was made possible two years ago when Lions International gave out grants to help screen kids for sight problems. The Kansas Lions got \$71,000 to train doctors to evaluate kids and buy them specialized equipment.

"The first grant that the U.S. got for those funds, that grant was to Kansas," Brenn said, adding that it was the second worldwide.

Sylvia Reinhardt, vice president of the Kansas Lions Sight Founda-

tion, said that Wahlmeier might help Krug on Tuesday. She said they are two of 11 people trained to provide these evaluations statewide.

Often when kids need an eye exam, Brenn said, "they had to go clear to Topeka or some place."

Such a trip could cost \$250, she added, even before fuel and travel costs. Reinhardt said the Lions, the doctors and the local school district will reimburse that cost.

The High Plains Lions were able to set up the program because of the late Dr. Jim Morrison, an optometrist, Lions member and long-time state representative, she said.

His son, Dr. Jeff Morrison, owns Vision Source where Wahlmeier works.

Wahlmeier and Jeff Morrison are not Lions, but Krug and Nielsen are.

City decides against trail routes

By Sam Dieter

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A proposal to add walking and biking routes through town using federal money died at Tuesday night's Colby City Council meeting after council members asked where the city's share of the cost, which hasn't been defined yet, would come from.

Sue Evans and Megan Carmichael, representatives of the Thomas County Healthy Communities Coalition, explained their plan to apply for money through the Transportation Enhancement Program at the meeting.

They also presented the plan, which would have been due on Friday, Feb. 15, at a community meeting Thursday and at the Dec. 18 council meeting, and Evans said a committee was being formed to help work on the

project. On Tuesday, though, it did not take long for the council to ask how the city would pay for the project.

"So what size of grant are you going to, if this group says yes, submit for?" Councilman Pat Mallory asked Evans.

The program is similar to a grant, except the city would have come up with its own plan for how much the project costs instead of getting a set amount of money. The Kansas Department of Transportation would reimburse the city for 80 percent of the costs, not including design and engineering.

City Manager Tyson McGreer, who had been active at the meeting Thursday, said the city has \$21,000 set aside in the budget for the "South Colby Sidewalk Project," to complete sidewalks in the south part of town.

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Postal Service plans meetings

By Kevin Bottrell

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The U.S. Postal Service is planning another round of public meetings, this time to discuss reducing the business hours at Thomas County's smaller post offices.

A meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at the Selden Community Center, 110 N. Kansas Ave.

Rexford and Brewster are also on the list of affected offices, but meeting dates have not been scheduled.

The Selden office is open 6 1/2 hours a day Monday through Friday and 30 minutes on Saturdays. The service's proposal would reduce this to six.

Brewster, now open eight hours, would be cut to six, while Rexford would go from eight to four.

The proposed cuts are the latest in a series of moves designed to combat the service's financial difficulties. First-class mail is down 60 percent over the last six years, costing the service about \$16 billion. Over the past several years, the agency has come up with several plans to try and reverse its fiscal slide, with the initial plan being to close more than 3,700 post offices nationwide.

Brian Sperry, regional spokesperson for the service in Denver, said the agency has been trying to listen to the public. When the service held community meetings,

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Horse grooming



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Heather Toal, a member of the Colby Community College equestrian team, groomed a horse Tuesday afternoon at a career fair for high school students at the National Guard Armory by the fairgrounds. Staff Sgt. Mark Reasoner said that between 250 and 300 students passed through the fair.

