



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Pay raises in future at schools

By Sam Dieter

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The Colby School Board voted to raise the salaries of its administrators and classified staff at its Monday meeting.

The board voted to give a four percent raise to its six administrators and all classified staff making more than \$12.50 an hour, and to give classified staff making less than that a raise of 50 cents per hour.

Superintendent Terrel Harrison pointed out that it is hard to keep classified staff, and licensed staff like teachers have already gotten a pay increase. District Business Manager Jo DeYoung gave the board members a table of the money budgeted for classified staff before they voted.

It showed that the district spent \$1,600,110 for these employees in the 2011-2012 budget year and will spend about \$1,655,897 this year. With the pay increase, the district will spend about

\$1,722,357 in the 2013-2014 budget year, about a \$66,236 increase.

Most district employees besides the licensed staff are classified staff including administrative support like bookkeepers and assistants, clerical staff, custodians, maintenance, food service, para-professionals and bus drivers.

DeYoung said the 50-cent raise has been given each year for some time, even before the district froze wage increases in the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 fiscal years.

The board discussed the increase in a 10 minute closed session with Harrison before voting on its decision pay the district's six administrators a four percent increase next year.

De Young said the administrators include Harrison, along with Curriculum Director Diana Wieland, Athletic Director Larry Gabel, Grade School Principal Lance Krannawitter, Middle School Principal Rob Ross and High School Principal Jeff Wallingford.

Grads, big and small



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School

Haydyn Best (above) hugged his grandparents, Jackie and Ray Johnson during the flower ceremony at the Golden Plains High School commencement Sunday. Haydyn was the only graduate this year who attended Golden Plains from kindergarten through high school. At the district's kindergarten graduation program last Thursday, Hayden Wark (below) received her kindergarten diploma from board member Teri Brantley.



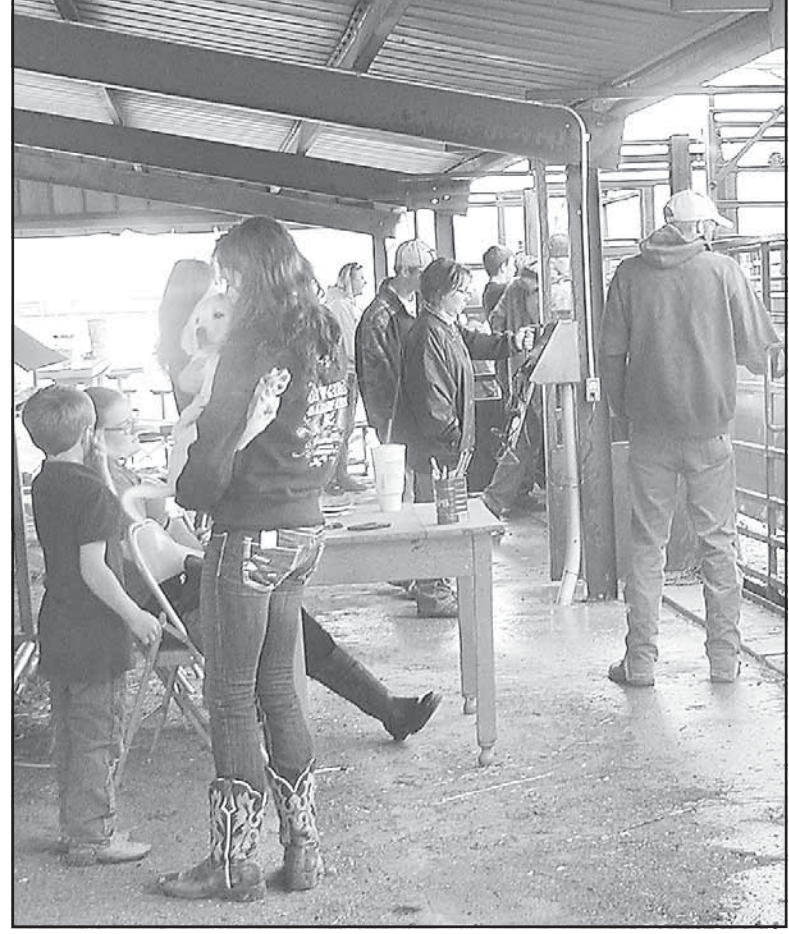
SANDRA GALVAN



Foul day brings fair crowd

It was a chilly, rainy day last Thursday when Thomas County 4-H'ers lined up with stock trailers (above) to weigh in their small animals at the small arena on the fairgrounds. Even so, it was better than the week before, when snow forced a postponement. Kids, leaders and parents gathered inside to watch (right) as Donita Comfort read off weights for lambs, goats, calves and pigs. This pair of goats (lower right) looked ready for their next adventure as they came out of the chute to be loaded up and returned home, though Travis Vaughn (below) had to use some persuasion on a pair of calves that balked.

MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press



County works on budget

By Heather Alwin

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County departments continued their budget proposals at the Thomas County Commissioners' meeting Monday.

Larry Jumper, the landfill director, proposed an increase of \$44,721, or 12.5 percent above his 2013 budget. The largest increase he proposed was for grounds maintenance, since the landfill needs to replace a roof on its oil tank and install portable wind fences. The landfill has not purchased new wind fences in several years, said Jumper.

Custodian Gayla Davis requested a 27 percent increase to \$11,450 for custodial services

at the courthouse. Her budget request did not include funds to repair loose tiles on the main floor that cause leaks in the basement when the floor is mopped. Commissioner Mike Baughn suggested Davis obtain bids to fix the tiles.

Joe Hickert, emergency medical services director, presented his department's proposed budget, including increased repair costs due to the age of the ambulance fleet. Hickert requested an overall increase of 9.78 percent to the department's 2013 budget of \$538,734.

Commissioner Paul Steele expressed discomfort with the department's proposed miscellaneous amount of \$15,715.

"I'd really rather not have a miscellaneous item that big," he said.

Baughn said the proposed fuel and educa-

tion amounts might be a bit too low.

Based on the commissioners' suggestions, Hickert promised to take his budget proposal back, adjust it and resubmit it.

Diann Gerstner presented the Thomas County Extension Council's budget request of \$144,198, representing about 60 percent of the extension's overall 2014 budget.

In other business, the commissioners

• Discussed relocating the County Attorney's Office to a site outside the courthouse to create space for a new court services officer. Attorney Kevin Berens suggested using a portion of his private office downtown, but the commissioners did not make a decision at this

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Republicans huddle on taxes

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Top Republicans in the Kansas Senate insisted Thursday they're not far from a deal with their House counterparts on income tax cuts, but negotiations were temporarily on hold to focus on budget issues.

Republicans in both GOP-dominated chambers held a joint meeting to discuss fiscal issues a day after House Republicans outlined a new compromise tax plan that would reduce personal income taxes but stabilize the budget by canceling part of a sales tax decrease scheduled for July.

The major disagreement has been over Republican Gov. Sam Brownback's proposal to keep the

sales tax at its current 6.3 percent rate while following up on massive personal income tax cuts enacted last year with additional rate reductions. The Senate approved Brownback's sales tax proposal, while the House initially approved a tax plan letting the sales tax drop to 5.7 percent as planned. The new House plan would set the sales tax at 6 percent.

Several Senate GOP leaders made a point of praising House Republicans for their work on budget and tax issues and extolled efforts to control spending and cut taxes. And, with the Legislature's annual session already stretching longer than originally planned, they emphasized they're eager to end it.

"We are almost there," said

Senate Vice President Jeff King, an Independence Republican. "We've made a great deal of progress."

House Republicans offered their compromise plan during a meeting Wednesday of three senators and three House members assigned to reconcile the two chambers' differences. The negotiators hadn't met for more than a month as top GOP leaders tried and failed to privately broker a deal.

Brownback declined to comment on the new tax proposal.

"I'm watching," he told The Associated Press. "It's moving along."

As Republicans try to settle their differences, Democrats have been largely sidelined. Their leaders have said they aren't likely

to vote for the compromise that emerges, anyway.

Democrats see last year's income tax cuts as reckless, and without follow-up legislation this year, the state faces a projected budget shortfall of \$230 million in July 2015. They also oppose the GOP's goal of shifting most of the burden of funding state government to the sales tax, because poor families tend to pay a higher percentage of incomes than wealthy ones.

GOP senators spent much of Thursday's meeting going over projections showing that the new

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