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Cleanup boosts landfill collection

By Heather Alwin
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The Thomas County Landfill collected nearly 7.5 tons of waste during the county's cleanup week May 6 to 10.

In addition to the cleanup waste accepted last week, the landfill conducted normal business like accepting construction debris and city waste, said Landfill Director Larry Jumper.

Inmate volunteers from the Thomas County Jail and representatives from the Thomas County Sheriff's Office collected almost a ton of debris from local roadways, including 28 tires, said Jumper.

So far this year, the landfill has collected 120 tons of municipal solid waste brought directly to the landfill and 1,800 tons collected by city trash collection services, said Jumper. The landfill has also collected hundreds of tons of other waste, including 52.5 tons of furniture, 430 tons of construction debris and 360 tons of concrete.

The landfill must keep the average daily level of municipal solid waste, or household waste, below 20 tons per day to keep its designation as a small

landfill.

The landfill sees a decrease in traffic in winter months, but usage increases in the spring as county residents clean up their yards and construction increases.

In Colby, yard waste is collected separately from other household waste and is recycled into compost. Though other cities may collect yard waste with their normal trash pickup, there is no charge for county residents who take their yard waste directly to the landfill.

Separating yard waste allows the landfill to recycle it into compost instead of putting it in with the rest of the municipal waste at a cost of \$38 per ton. Some cities also have their own yard waste sites.

"More recycling means the landfill will last longer," said Jumper. He encourages residents and businesses to recycle as much as possible. Local recycling services take many common items like cardboard that will not take up space in the landfill if they are recycled.

The landfill's section of thomascountyks.com contains a list of the items the landfill accepts and the charges for each type of waste.



Food drive makes haul

Ellie Hawkins (above) got a ride in the wagon when she went along to help her grandpa, Alan Focke, collect donations from area residents Saturday as part of the Stamp Out Hunger food drive. Ellie was just one of the "extra carriers" added, which included Hadlie Fock, Kash Hawkins and Reagan Geihlsler. Angie Harris' dog Millie (left) helped by pulling a wagon of donations. Colby's letter carriers collected 3,716 pounds of food this year, almost tripling last year's donations. Letter carrier Eileen Harris said she "really wanted to thank everybody" for their generosity during this busy time of year. All donations were given to Genesis, the local food bank.

KELSEY HAWKINS

Bluegrass emcee gives painting to the festival

By Heather Alwin
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Colby's annual bluegrass festival, Pickin' on the Plains, is offering chances to win a painting, "Winter Farm Ringnecks," depicting pheasants hunkered down by a tractor.

Allen Bailey, the painting's creator, said he donated the painting to fill the void left when Bill Summers died last year. Summers donated a guitar each year as a fund raiser for the festival.

Bailey has emceed Pickin' on the Plains for about 10 years and chose this painting because he felt it was "a theme folks in this part of the country can relate to."

Bailey has been painting most of his life and used to do magazine and catalog illustrations for outdoor sports catalogs and *Western Horseman* magazine. This painting, an 18- by 24-inch acrylic on stretched canvas, is featured in a You Tube video that shows Bailey painting it step-by-step.

Bailey has been Dodge City's official marshal since 2000 and hosts a radio show on High Plains Public Radio called *Western Swing and Other Things*.



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Lisa Wilson was on hand when "Winter Farm Ringnecks" was displayed May 9 at Business After 5, held at Farm Credit. The painting was donated in support of the Bluegrass Festival.

Winter Farm Ringnecks is on display at Farm Credit in Colby, and tickets are available at the Colby Convention and Visitor's

Bureau. It was previously displayed at the Art Walk and will be given away at the festival in July.

Budget negotiations halted

TOPEKA (AP) - Negotiations on the Kansas budget for the next two fiscal years have come to an abrupt halt after senators demanded a final offer from the House that could lead to ending the 2013 session.

The talks were scheduled to begin this morning, following three rounds of negotiations Thursday which saw legislators make steady progress.

Senate Ways and Means Chairman Ty Masterson asked his House counterpart to move the process fur-

ther along, seeking a final offer on higher education and a state employee salary cap that would pass the GOP-dominated House.

But House Appropriations Committee Chairman Marc Rhoades said the request couldn't be accommodated and canceled the meetings.

Rhoades says he hopes to meet with House leaders and resume talks with the Senate on Monday.

City approves adding new water line for company east of Country Club

By Sam Dieter
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The Colby City Council gave the OK to a new water line connecting a Crop Production Services facility with the city water system.

The council approved several items related to the \$90,000 water line at its May 7 meeting. The line will start east of Country Club Drive, extend south of Sunflower (the eastern end of College Drive), then stretch east to the company's fertilizer distribution terminal, in the Cooper First addition section of Colby on the east side of town.

The council voted in March to approve a petition from Crop Production Services for special assessments for the project. The initial estimate for the cost was just over \$83,000. The facility was completed and went into operation Sept. 5.

Along with a statement of final costs, the council approved means of paying for the improvements. This included a resolution authorizing the city to sell general obligation bonds to investors on the city's behalf, and

an ordinance for special assessments to pay for the bonds. City Manager Tyson McGreer said assessment will be levied on Crop Production Services' property for 20 years to pay for the project.

"The common public is not paying for this," he said, "the only one paying for this is CPS."

In other business, the council:

- Tabled a discussion on a new restroom to be built at South Franklin Park by the Aquatic Park and the new playground. The city had discussed having the building there, but the council members generally agreed they should let bids for it, since the plan would cost close to \$100,000 and the original discussion was for a \$30,000 to \$40,000 project.

"I think we'll find out really quickly through the summer how bad they're needed," McGreer said.

The city plans to open the aquatic park as a trial run, for city employees only, on Sunday. It will open to the public Saturday, May 25, and stay open until Monday, Sept. 2, opening

at 1 p.m. and closing from 6 to 8 p.m. over the summer.

- Approved a report from the city electric department.

- Approved an application for money from the Kansas Department of Transportation's Connecting Links program for the fiscal year 2016. The application is for a "geometric improvement" project to replace concrete pavement on the two middle lanes of Fourth (U.S. 24) from 300 feet west of Range to the city limits. The total amount of money the state would put forward comes to \$800,000, and the city will be asked to put forward \$211,962, which Finance Director Debbie Zerr said will come out of the special streets fund.

McGreer also reported that the connection link project for this year will start Monday, June 10. The asphalt parts of Fourth will be improved from near the intersection with Range to the east city limits, and Range will be improved from near the north side of the Interstate 70 intersection to the south city limits.

Million in jewels stolen

PARIS (AP) - Thieves ripped out a small safe from the wall of a hotel room near the Cannes Film Festival and made off with about \$1 million worth of jewelry inside, a French police official said today.

Cmdr. Bernard Mascarelli, a judicial police spokesman in the nearby city of Nice, said the robbery at the Novotel hotel overnight took place in the room of a representative of Swiss-based watch and jewelry maker Chopard.

The crime occurred just hours after the screening at Cannes of a film, based on a true story, about teens who broke into the homes of stars in Los Angeles to swipe designer bags, shoes and clothes from their homes.

The jewelry was "very probably" in the hotel in connection with the festival, Mascarelli said, though he didn't know who it might have been intended for. Chopard is a festival sponsor and has loaned jewelry to A-list stars who walk up the festival's famed red carpet under the rapid-fire flashes of photographers' cameras.

This year, model Carla DeVigne and actress Julianne Moore have walked the carpet in Chopard gems.

Mascarelli said he didn't know the exact type of jewels taken or their exact value.

"Numbers have been put forward that we're still trying to verify, but the figure of \$1 million ... we're in that range," he said.

Jean-Michel Caillau, the prosecutor in nearby Grasse who is leading an investigation, said early estimates were that the loot could have been worth as much as \$1.4 million. He also said the theft appeared to have taken place around 2:30 a.m.

A Paris-based spokeswoman for Chopard, who declined to identify herself, said the company would not comment. Melissa Levine, a spokeswoman for Accor, the French hospitality giant behind

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