



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Semi sideswipes hay trailer

Wednesday was a busy one for emergency crews on Interstate 70 west of town (top). Lt. Joe Greene with the Kansas Highway Patrol said a tractor-trailer rig hit a farm-type tractor on the shoulder of the road as it was heading east. The rig flipped over and went off the south side of the highway (above) shortly before 3 p.m. east of mile marker 29, two miles east of Edson in Sherman County. Sheriff's deputies and state troopers had to block off one of the eastbound lanes while the accident was cleaned up, including the tractor, which had been laying down hay and seed on the shoulder. Shortly afterward, Greene said, the wheel came off a sport-utility going around the big curve on the highway just east of Brewster. The vehicle (on tow truck at left below) rolled into the median and hit a westbound pickup (on tow rig at right).



Man sentenced for indecency

A Colby man was sentenced this morning to 61 months in state prison for aggravated indecent liberties with a child under 18, saying he had pleaded no contest to avoid spending his life in prison.

Shaun Guard plead to the charge, an "off-grid" felony, in Thomas County District Court this morning, after taking a plea-bargain deal without which County Attorney Kevin Berens said he could have been facing 25 years to life.

Guard broke down crying when he told District Judge Glenn Schiffner he was innocent.

"I could not set myself to spend the rest of my life in prison for a crime I know in my heart I didn't commit," he said.

Laurie Barber, who works for the Western Kansas Advocacy Center, read statements from the child and his family saying that he is in a facility in Dodge City taking medications

for anxiety, away from his family, while Guard has been at home with his family under house arrest.

Court records show a warrant was issued for Guard's arrest July 13, 2011, for the charge, and the case has dragged on since then. Schiffner allowed the almost two years of house arrest to count towards his prison time.

Businesses, offices to close for holiday

As people head to Memorial Day observances on Monday, employees of most at government offices, banks and other businesses will be taking the day off, but some stores and restaurants will stay open.

City offices will be closed all day and there will be no trash pickup. Monday trash routes will be picked up Tuesday, the Public Works Department said. County, state and federal offices also will be closed, and there will be no mail service.

Among those closed will be the Thomas County Extension office, the state Department of Motor Vehicles and all banks and financial institutions.

Montana Mike's and Gambino's plan to close, as do Palace Drug and the Dillons pharmacy.

The Pioneer Memorial Library will be closed Sunday and Monday, and summer hours will start Tuesday. The Thomas County Landfill will close at noon Saturday and stay closed through Tuesday morning, said supervisor Larry Jumper.

Restaurants that plan to be open include McDonald's, Subway, Arby's, Pizza Hut, Sonic, Taco John's, Village Inn, Starbucks, Oasis Travel Center and Pilot Travel Center.

Among convenience stores, Casey's General Store, Love's Country Store and 24/7 Travel Shoppe will be open. Both groceries, Walmart and Dillons, will be open, along with Dollar General and the Pioneer Museum of Art and History.



TERRY SCOTT/Sons of the American Legion

The Sons of the American Legion placed American flags along Range Avenue this week to create the Hometown Heroes Avenue of Flags. For \$50, donors can sponsor a flag in memory or in honor of a veteran. Donations can be made through the Fourth of July by contacting Tracey Galli at 462-0450.

Trustees raise levy for college

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
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Colby Community College trustees agreed at a special meeting May 9 to raise the college's property-tax levy by 6 mills to balance the budget.

Alan Waites, vice president of business affairs, said he needed to know the board's intentions before he makes a report to the Higher Learning Commission, a branch of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, an accreditation agency. The commission put the college under financial monitoring, Waites said, because the 2011 fiscal year ended poorly.

"That one year caused us some real heartache," he added.

Lisa Failla, executive assis-

tant at the college president's office, who took the minutes at the meeting, said the board will take a formal vote on the increase this summer, after Waites makes the report.

Waites gave the board an updated budget of \$14,320,000 for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The predicted revenue of \$13,840,000 for the next year falls \$480,000 short of balancing the budget, he said.

A tax increase was discussed as a way to balance the budget. Waites' report said that a 3 mill increase would bring in about \$610,000 more each year. He said the current tax levy is 39.641 mills. The county valuation for this year is up about \$7.6 million, Waites added.

College President Stephen

See "COLLEGE," Page 2

Plum Island hard to auction

By Frank Eitman

The Associated Press

MINEOLA, N.Y. (AP) — Selling an island where scientists have experimented with infectious animal diseases since the dawn of the Cold War was going to be difficult enough. But it now appears any prospective buyer won't be able to do much with Plum Island anyway.

As the federal government proceeds with plans to sell the island 100 miles east of New York City to defray the cost of moving animal disease research to a new billion-dollar laboratory in Kansas, Long Island officials are taking steps to prevent resorts or condos or any other development, even before the bidding begins.

The initiative has the support of environmentalists, who say the 843-acre island is a haven for several endangered bird species. But one prominent Hamptons real estate executive says not allowing development of Plum Island could affect the selling price by tens of millions of dollars.

"I know I would pay at least \$100 million for that property," says Alan Schnurman, who has

developed properties in Southampton and elsewhere on eastern Long Island. He predicted someone could build as many as 300 2-acre lots on Plum Island if it were open to development. The homes could sell for between \$1.5 million and \$2 million, he said.

"The value of that property is enormous, absolutely enormous," Schnurman said, noting many of the homes on the island would have spectacular waterfront views.

But some local officials doubt such claims.

"What is the marketability of an island that Hannibal Lecter turned down, anyway?" says Scott Russell, the supervisor of the town of Southold in a reference to the fictional character from the film "The Silence of the Lambs." Russell maintains Lecter had no interest in living at Plum Island and predicts developers will share that opinion. In fact, he says he has not heard of any developer expressing interest in the island.

The town, which will have jurisdiction over zoning once the property is sold, wants to create a

See "ISLAND," Page 2

Memorial services at Colby cemeteries

The Colby Veterans of Foreign Wars will take the lead during Memorial Day ceremonies this year.

Monte Lewis, commander of the Colby American Legion Post, said Boy Scouts will go to Beulah and Sacred Heart cemeteries at 6 a.m. with small American flags on dowel rods to put on graves with bronze emblems that mark the resting places of Veterans of Foreign Wars and Legion members.

"They put those flags everywhere in those cemeteries that have a bronze plaque," he added.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars will go to Beulah Cemetery, with full-size flags to be flown at half-staff between 8:30 a.m. and 9 a.m., Lewis said, and the Legionnaires will do the same at Sacred Heart.

At 10 a.m., VFW Commander Paul Ohlrogge, the master of ceremonies for the day's events, will

open the ceremony at Beulah. Members of his group will present the colors, and members both groups will read the names of their members who died in the last year.

The Ladies' Auxiliary of the VFW will also participate in the program. "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them," said Jeri McBride, state president of the auxiliary.

The ceremony will include a prayer, a 21-gun salute and taps. The Legion will put on a shorter ceremony at Sacred Heart and the flags will go up to full staff at the end of the ceremonies.

After the event, Lewis said, he expects about 150 people people to gather at the VFW post for doughnuts, coffee and tea. The flags at the cemeteries will be taken down that afternoon.



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