



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Getting cool at the pool



Jake Edmondson did his best backflip for the camera (above) Tuesday at the Colby Aquatic Park. Other kids put the diving board to good use, including Ashlyn Kaus (below left) and Chandler Flanders (below right). The pool will probably be looking like a good destination this weekend, with highs in the upper 90s, but it will be closed for a swim meet starting at 9 a.m. and ending in the afternoon Saturday.



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Colby farmer chosen for leadership class

A Colby farmer is one of 30 people statewide included in the 12th Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership class.

"I am excited for the opportunity," Tanner Brown said, "just to be able to develop my leadership skills and just the opportunity to meet other producers and area business people."

Brown, son of Mike and Jeane Brown of Colby, is a partner in the family's Solomon Creek Farm about five miles south of Levant. They live in Colby.

"We started the partnership about three years ago," he said, "but I've always worked on the farm."

Brown said he graduated from Colby High School in 2003, then an associate degree in criminal justice at Colby Community College and a bachelor's degree in political science from Kansas State University.

He said his sister, Cassie Anderson, was an intern for the rural leadership class program and he has several acquaintances who

have been in the program. He said they describe it as "one of these opportunity-of-a-lifetime things."

"Everybody that I've talked to about it has really enjoyed it," Brown added.

Al Davis, president of the organization, said Brown is one of 30 people in the class, narrowed down from over 200 applicants statewide, each of whom was nominated by someone who knows them.

"We weeded that down to about 65 and then we weeded it down to 45 and then we interviewed 45 throughout the state to get down to 30," Davis said.

He said the newest class represents both the small Kansas towns and urban viewpoints, adding that it is similar to many leadership programs offered in urban areas, but geared towards small towns. Many young people are coming back to rural areas to work in agriculture or related businesses, he said.

Brown said he was surprised to be nominated, adding that he

found the application process very difficult.

The program is a two-year educational experience offering study, training and travel for emerging leaders in agriculture and rural communities.

The class includes nine in-state seminars, said program Director Jack Lindquist. The first year focuses on economic literacy, communications, conflict management and the development of contacts at the local, state and national levels. The second includes sessions on biosecurity, energy, water conservation, food safety and trade balance issues and ends with a study tour to experience the culture, political system and agriculture of a foreign country, a competitor and trading partner.

Study tours include a national blue chip seminar, which is an executive review of a Fortune 500 corporation's strategic management processes; a tour to Washington to study decision making on the federal level; and an international study tour the second

year.

"The blue chip seminar will be hosted by Burlington Northern Santa Fe in Waco, Texas, while the international study tour will take the group to South Africa," Davis said. "South Africa is rapidly growing into a major competitor and partner in feeding the world."

"By learning about the world, as well as local and national issues, KARL graduates are prepared to take on today's critical challenges," he said.

Brown's classmates are: Scott "Bronc" Barrows, WaKeeney; Ryan Brady, Ingalls; Teresa Chrisler Reimer, Kalvesta; Wade Collins, Chanute; Sara Dawson, Cedar Point; Shane Michael Eck, McPherson; Riley Eilerman, Danville; Brett Esau, Manhattan; Sarah Farlee, Dodge City; Timothy Franklin, Goodland; Rebecca Frerking, Washington; Chelsea Good, Topeka; Grant Good, Moundridge; Heather Hartman,

Fairgrounds get facelift; costs high

By Sam Dieter

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Members of the Thomas County Fair Board discussed a new entrance that is almost done at the fair grounds during their monthly meeting last Thursday.

When Board Secretary Audrey Hines gave the financial report for the last month, she said the board started with \$52,636 on May 13, but ended a month later with \$22,523.

"It's for that front entrance we're working on," Hines said after the meeting. "That's why it was a big drop."

Even after the board got \$18,000 in donations, she said, it still had to pay \$25,000 more for the project.

In all for the month, the board

had \$33,327 in bills and \$3,124 in deposits, Hines reported. Last month, \$34,000 was transferred from a money market account to the checking account to cover bills.

Board President Austen Moser said the new entrance is done except for a sign, a gate and more brick to go around it. He said he was in Commercial Sign that week, and was told the sign is not here yet. Member Leland Jones said the gates are completed, but still in Garden City.

In other business, the board:

- Discussed a bill they heard is coming from Jeff and Kassie Carney, owners of the race track, for repairs to a motor grader the Carneys lease from the board. Board member Sam Bienhoff said the

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Jail rates raised due to inquiry

By Heather Alwin

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After discovering the rate was supposed to have been increased 14 years ago, the Thomas County sheriff's department began charging other counties \$40 per day for inmates housed at the Thomas County jail as of Monday.

Although the \$40 rate was set by a commissioners' resolution passed in 1998 and effective Jan. 1, 1999, the sheriff's department had been charging \$32.50 per day for some time. Undersheriff Marc Finley said he was not sure when the rate became \$32.50, but said he thought the department had been charging that amount before he started working there.

The county discovered the rate discrepancy when a reporter questioned the commissioners about it after their meeting Monday. Asked why Thomas County was charging \$32.50 to house other counties' prisoners while sending its own inmates elsewhere at higher charges, Commissioner Paul Steele suggested directing those questions to the sheriff's department to answer.

However, Commissioner Mike Baughn, a former sheriff, said he thought the rate was set by the commissioners, not the sheriff. Baughn and County Clerk Shelly Harms quickly researched the issue and discovered the 1998 resolution establishing the rate at \$40.

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Highway survey seeks citizen input

An engineering firm is taking suggestions about an overall proposal to improve major streets and highway in Colby over the next 20 years until next month.

Improvements to increase capacity and safety could include widening Country Club Drive south of College Ave. and College itself to three lanes with a middle turning lane, narrowing Fourth Street (U.S. 24) to three lanes with a turning lane and building roundabouts at College and Range and Country Club and Willow. Access to Range Avenue could be limited or changed and speed limits reduced, among other changes.

The idea for roundabouts drew fire from people who haul big farm equipment.

The firm Kirkham Michael introduced its plans — part of a study of Colby's streets undertaken by the city, the county and the Kansas Department of Transportation — at a public meeting this month. The purpose of the study is to improve traffic efficiency and safety in Colby. Suggested street improvements focused mainly on South Range, College Drive and Country Club Drive.

The firm agreed to make the plans available online and continue taking comments about them following questions raised during

the meeting about how many people had seen them. You can fill out a comment form and send it back for the firm to consider before it has a second meeting later this summer to present a final draft.

Go to the Transportation Department website at www.ksdot.org/PDF_Files/ColbyMeetingMaterials.pdf for information.

At this site is a copy of the information presented at the meeting, maps of the proposed improvements and a copy of the questionnaire given to those at the meeting. They are labeled "Colby ATP Public Information Meeting Presentation," "Colby ATP Concepts" and "Citizen Questionnaire."

To get a hard copy of this information, call Kristen Brands with the department at (785) 877-3315 or (785) 871-2137 (cell) or Jon Halbgewachs with Kirkham Michael at (785) 472-3163 or (785) 472-7199 (cell).

You can print out a copy of the questionnaire and mail it by Tuesday, July 9, to:

Kirkham Michael, Attn: Colby ATP Project Manager, 217 N. Douglas, Box 4, Ellsworth, Kan., 67439.

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