



# COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Don Shoemaker (above) bought lemonade at Annie Morris' stand Tuesday afternoon. Annie (below, left) ran the stand with help from Campbell Morrison and her twin Kennedy, both 7, and cousin Hadlie Focke, 10.

## Stand helps research

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press  
sdieter@nwkansan.com

Drop by Fotogirl Photography downtown this week to help raise money for cancer research.

Annie Morris, 6, daughter of Fotogirl owner Michelle Morris, is running her lemonade stand for the second year with help from her friends. On Tuesday, she and three of them kept busy dur-

ing the day, drawing on the sidewalk with chalk and getting the drivers of passing big rigs to honk.

The lemonade sells for whatever people want to pay for it, she said. Profits go to the Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. The charity was set up in memory of Alex Scott, who suffered from cancer. In 2000, she set up her own lemonade stand. Alex raised \$1 million for cancer research

See "STAND," Page 2



## Lawns added to county contract

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press  
colby.society@nwkansan.com

Yard maintenance for the Law Enforcement Center will be added to the county's existing contract with Earth Works for maintenance at the courthouse and county office complex, Thomas County commissioners decided at their Monday meeting.

The commissioners made this decision after a long discussion of how much money and effort should be put into the building's appearance. The center houses the jail, plus offices for the sheriff and Colby Police, but may be "repurposed" if the county builds a new jail as planned.

After the previous lawn maintenance provider retired, Undersheriff Marc Finley said, he

sought mowing bids from Earth Works and Aaron Schriener.

Earth Works planned to charge \$116 per mowing. Schriener's bid was about half that, but the commissioners chose to go with Earth Works since the company also provides weed spraying, overseeding and sprinkler-system services.

"If we do this," said Earth Works owner Rob Stithem, "there are some things that need to be taken care of over there."

Stithem recommended a new sprinkler system, spraying for weeds and overseeding.

Stithem said he thought the sprinkler system had been installed by inmates and, like the courthouse sprinkler system, needs extensive work or replacement.

The commissioners, Finley and

Stithem hesitated to commit the county to a new sprinkler system for either building, however.

"If you think you're not going to be here, why would you put the money into a new sprinkler?" Stithem asked.

Commissioner Mike Baughn agreed.

"I would be reluctant to spend a whole lot on that building at this point," he said.

The commissioners passed a motion to contract for Earth Works' mowing, spraying and overseeding services, holding off on sprinkler system replacement for now.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Signed a letter of support for the county's Health and Emer-

See "LAWNS," Page 2

## Selden to build trail

The Golden Plains School District in Selden has received a \$33,200 grant from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to build a half-mile community walking trail east of the elementary school at the south edge of town.

Elaine Koerperich, chairman of the Gold Acres Fitness Trail Committee in Selden, said the group applied for the grant last July.

"We wanted to put in a walking and biking trail that runs east of the school and south of Sixth Street into the butterfly garden and existing trees," she said. "The trail is a half mile and we will be putting in a 2,245-foot long, five-foot wide concrete pathway which will run through the garden."

Koerperich said the trail will be on city property. The city donated the trail to the school district and the schools have been using the trail as part of their outdoor learning project, she said.

"The first quarter mile is an easy walking trail," she said. "As walkers and bikers reach the ridge, the trail becomes more intense."

The program provides for an 80-20 match of approved expenses, which requires the school district to pay 20 percent of the project's expenses.

"We're thankful that the state was able to complete the grant," Koerperich said. "We still need to visit with the contractor, but we're hoping to start the project this fall."

## Road work starts today

An 11-mile project to resurface a section of K-25 in Thomas County is set to begin today from the north city limits of Colby to the Rawlins County line.

Kristen Brands, district public affairs manager for the Kansas Department of Transportation in Norton, said the work will include a two-inch "heater scarification" of the existing asphalt pavement, followed by a chip seal. The scarification operation will use truck-mounted heaters to soften the top

layer of pavement, which will be plowed up and mixed with a rejuvenating agent, then reapplied to the surface. The seal layer will follow.

During construction, flaggers and a pilot car will guide one-lane traffic through the work zone during the day with delays of 15 minutes or less. Brands urged drivers to pay attention to the signs and workers and slow down.

The \$1 million contract for the job went to Dustrol Inc. of Towan-

da. Subcontractors on the job are APAC Kansas Inc. of Emporia, chip seal, and Roadsafet Traffic Systems, El Dorado, traffic control.

Weather permitting, the work should be complete by mid-September.

For questions, contact Area Two Engineer Eric Oelschlager at (785) 626-3258 or erico@ksdot.org in Atwood, or Brands at (785) 877-3315 or kristenb@ksdot.org in Norton.



## Grader operator breaks new ground

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press  
sdieter@nwkansan.com

Meet the first woman to be a skilled motor grader operator for Thomas County.

Dawn Nichols qualified as a skilled operator around April, and she has been running a blade since 2002. She started working for the county Road and Bridge Department in 2000.

Becoming skilled at operating a motor grader, Nichols said, means one thing: spreading

asphalt.

"Everybody's definition is different, but for the county, that's what the definition is," she said.

Motor graders are relatively easy to run over dirt, she said, but grading asphalt requires the right technique.

"You can go back and fix the dirt," Nichols said, "whereas asphalt, it's packed in, it's there."

She added that the asphalt is graded in the summer when it's hot. Tuesday afternoon, for

instance, it was in the 70s, not hot enough to work with asphalt. She was about 10 miles southeast of town, grading a county road after some rains had washed it out.

Nichols had just finished her shift, grading alone out in the country and talking to her co-

See "GRADER," Page 2

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press  
Dawn Nichols (above) posed in her county motor grader after her shift out on the roads Tuesday evening. Nichols was smoothing out county roads in southern Thomas County after rains washed them out.

