



# Shutdown imminent; blame flies

By Andrew Taylor  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Compromise elusive, Republicans and Democrats engaged in finger-pointing today just hours before the first government shutdown in 17 years, driven by an intractable budget dispute over President Barack Obama's signature health care law.

House Republicans blamed Senate Democrats for taking the weekend off and resisting a House measure that would avert a shutdown — but only by delaying further implementation of the health care law for a year and eliminating a tax on medical devices.

"The Senate decided not to work yesterday," Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said shortly af-

ter the House began its session — and just hours before a threatened shutdown at midnight. "Well my goodness, if there's such an emergency, where are they?"

The Senate was to return shortly after 2 p.m. Eastern Time — just 10 hours before a threatened shutdown — and Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, and his Democrats have made it clear that they want the House to vote on their straightforward bill to keep the government open. Reid plans votes to reject GOP-crafted amendments to delay the three-year-old health care law and eliminate a tax on medical devices, and he has the numbers to prevail.

If no compromise can be reached by midnight, Americans would soon see the impact: Na-

See "SHUTDOWN," Page 2

# Councilman retires in Gem

Gem City Council member Larry Higerd was honored this summer for his 34 years of service to the northeast Thomas County town.

Higerd served an uninterrupted term on the council from 1979 to 2013, and his fellow members reminisced at the July meeting about all the people he served with and how many mayors he had been through. The group recalled at least seven or eight mayors he served with, and many more council members.

Higerd said he was born in Gem and moved back there to farm after he graduated from college. His two children were born and raised in the town, and his son and four grandchildren still live there.

Gem, founded over 125 years ago, has a population of around 80 people, said Higerd. The town's residents used to be related to each

other, but now tend to be commuters who live in Gem but work in Colby.

He said he got to hear all the latest gossip when he was on the council, but joked that he "also had to deal with it."

He added that he liked "being part of the solution" to the city's problems over the years.

One of the biggest issues, he said, was cleaning up junk that created an eyesore in public areas. The council passed an ordinance requiring cleanup after a certain

period of time, and Higerd said, most people were accommodating.

Higerd said his favorite thing about Gem is the residents' "concern for one another and working together to solve problems."

Luke Juenemann took Higerd's position on the council at the last election.



Larry Higerd



# Colby girl's goats pay off



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press  
Cassie Wells took care of her seven goats (top) at a friend's house north of Colby on Friday afternoon. She dragged Pedro and Jose down the road (above) so they could into shape by running home (right). The two goats came out winners in the Kansas Junior Livestock show and are bound for the American Royal show that starts Wednesday, Oct. 23, in Kansas City. The other goats will head to the National Western Stock Show Jan. 11 to 26 in Denver, Cassie's dad Nick Wells said, except for one who's bound to become chili in the near future.

A Colby girl took honors for her goats at the annual Kansas Junior Livestock Show last weekend in Wichita.

Cassie Wells, daughter of Nick and Janet Wells of Colby, took second place in class 13 and third in class 15 in the meat goat category. She competed in the goat and goat showmanship categories. The 81st junior livestock show ran from Sept. 20 to 23 in Wichita.

"I feel pretty good, because it's not very often you win something so high up, with so many people," said Wells, a eighth grader at Colby Middle School.

She was one of 716 youths from across the state who exhibited 1,457 animals among them. There were 13 entries in class 13 and 11 in class 15 of the meat category, which had 16 classes in all, divided by weight. Steers, heifers, barrows, gilts, market lambs, ewes, commercial ewes and doe kids also were exhibited.

Wells said two goats went to the show with her. Pedro won second place in class 13 category and Jose took third in class 15. Although it took only about 10 minutes to show each animal in the ring, she said spent all day at the show

See "GOATS," Page 2



# Magician delivers message along with kids' entertainment

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A Colorado magician stopped in Colby on Sunday to put on a show with a religious message.

Mel LaMar rearranged brightly colored handkerchiefs in his hand as he described what he and his audience were going to see during the show.

"But mostly we're going to talk about how God loves us, and that's the most beautiful part of all," he said as he pulled a plastic bouquet out of his hands, from between the handkerchiefs.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press  
Mel LaMar pressed a "magic" button on his vegetable cutter so that it sliced through two carrots, leaving his brave volunteer's hand intact.

LaMar stopped by the Colby Wesleyan Church at 6 p.m. Sunday on his way back to Greeley, Colo., from a show he did in Clay Center. About 80 people, many of them children, stopped to watch the show.

They saw tricks like the "acrobatic knot of New Caledonia," which jumped from a white rope to a red one, then became a strip of white on the red rope. At one point, LaMar juggled four basketballs at once.

At the end of the show, he asked kids who agreed to give their hearts to Christ to join him in a prayer. He told the audience that he had agreed to do the same in college, when he was 20. Many people mocked him, including his father, who later made the same decision his son had near the end of his life at the age of 74.

After the show, LaMar said he thinks he started his career as a magician in 1975. He and his wife Beverly were asked to entertain kids from their church on Halloween. So he dug up a toy magic set that belonged to his brother and used

them to put on a show. "I saw that the tricks were a neat communication tool," he said, "... that the kids loved it."

Colby Wesleyan pastor Gene Rothfuss said he has known LaMar for many years. Rothfuss said his parents called him to suggest the magician come do a show at his church after he went to theirs. That was in the 1980s, Rothfuss said, when he was in his first pastorate in Junction City. The men said their daughters, who used to play together, are the same age.

Now, LaMar is a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, the International Jugglers' Association and the Fellowship of Christian Magicians. He lives in Greeley with Beverly — they have been married for 40 years — and has been all across the U.S. and to 16 countries, doing shows with a religious message.

