



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Let's all read a book together



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Laura Schmid, a grade school paraprofessional, read to Carter Gordon (left), Peyton Gordon, Destiny Justice, Jaime Williams and Adeden Gonzales Thursday in the Head Start class room at Colby Grade School. A total of 36 kids read and picked out books during the Reading is Fundamental program at the school, thanks to a grant to the Head Start program.



HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press

County Road D, shown here in June, has been removed and replaced by a row of trees and a line of power poles. Drivers have created a dirt track north of the old road to replace it. County commissioners toured the road in June but declined to take any action on a dispute among area landowners.

Road D dispute brought up

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkanas.com

Like other section-line roads, Thomas County Road D is supposed to provide access to farms and homes south of Colby, but right now a chunk of it is missing.

Just west of U.S. 83 south of Mingo, what used to be Road D is now a recently planted tree row and a line of power poles.

Mel Eberle, who owns the property on the north side of that stretch, told county commissioners at their meeting last Monday that his neighbor to the south, Troy Sporer, ditched up the road three years ago.

Eberle said Sporer placed signs on the road saying it was no longer a road and had the poles and trees installed there.

Eberle said farmers and landowners, him included, now have to drive across Eberle's land to get to the rest of the county road. This has created a dirt track that keeps some of his land from being farmed, Eberle said.

He estimated he has lost 2.5 to 3.5 acres of farm ground because of Sporer closing off the road, which he says is about an \$8,000 to \$10,000 loss.

"He basically just came in and stole the ground," Eberle told the commissioners.

Eberle, whose lawyer had sent

a letter to the county asking for action, attended the commission meeting along with his wife Gail and son Scott to again ask the county for action.

Scott Eberle said he wants to build a home and shop on the property but doesn't know where to locate the structures without knowing where the road will be. Without a road, he said, school buses cannot get to his future home to pick up his young children.

At first, the commissioners told the Eberles they couldn't do anything about the disputed road.

Commissioner Paul Steele told the family that Road D is a township-maintained road, not a county-maintained road. Thus, said Steele, the commissioners' hands are tied.

"We believe the township is responsible for maintaining the township roads," he said.

Gail Eberle said she "hadn't heard squat" since their lawyer sent a letter to the county this spring.

The commissioners told her they had given the letter to County Attorney Kevin Berens to take action — if needed.

"I really don't know what responsibilities the county would have," said Commissioner Mike Baughn. "That's probably some-

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Trustees talk fund raising

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkanas.com

The Colby Community College trustees agreed at their meeting last Monday to set a special meeting today to discuss a way to raise money for the college.

The special meeting, at 5 p.m. today, will include discussion about setting up an organization similar to the existing college Endowment Foundation to raise money for college operations.

Vernon Hurd, a member of the foundation board, said he will talk to the board's finance committee to make sure that someone from the foundation is at that meeting. He said the next foundation meeting will be at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14.

He was at the trustees' meeting with foundation board members Lynette Ball and Sharon Redmond to answer any questions the trustees had about fund raising.

"It needs to be sooner than later," Trustee Audrey Hines said. "I

mean it needs to be now."

Nick Wells, executive director of the foundation and a member of the trustees until he resigned earlier this year, said later that the foundation deals with many projects, but mainly raises money for scholarships, not normal expenses for the college.

Hines originally brought up the idea of hiring someone or setting up an organization to raise money for the college, which is perpetually short of cash. She also talked about how she heard about a tour she took of the campus. After the meeting, she said the tour helped inspire her suggestion.

"I just called the admissions office, just like anybody, any new student," she said.

She told the board no one is living in one of the residence halls because the heating and air conditioning are out, and some rooms by a dorm are not being used.

College President Stephen Vacik said the condition of the empty dorm dates from before he was hired, but he decided to stop

using the building because of the cost of repairing the utilities.

During his report to the board, Wells said the group gave a \$250,000 check to the college at its annual board meeting as part of Vacik's "campaign for change" fund-raising program. The school has until the end of the calendar year to come up with another \$250,000 that the foundation will match, Wells said.

Public Information Director Debbie Schwanke pointed out that this means a total of \$750,000 that the college could get at the end of the year. The college can spend the money any way it wants, Wells said, as long as the donors agree.

He said the school got two more \$38,000 checks, for the nursing and agriculture departments, from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation in Logan. He said he told trustees to find three projects where the foundation could help the college, and Hines said the trustees chose the college farm, which needs a new tractor. Wells said the foundation can help the college find

more money to match the Hansen checks.

In other business, the board:

- Approved a new contract for college attorney John Gatz with a 10 percent increase in rates. Gatz will charge \$165 an hour and at least \$165 a month, and he will attend board meetings unless specifically told not to. Administrative or regulatory proceedings such as due-process hearings and litigation will not be included in that fee.

Earlier in the year, the board decided first not to approve the new contract and then to stop using Gatz as its attorney. The board then decided to bring him back on when the college could find nobody to take his place.

- Heard a financial report from Dr. Glenda Overstreet, vice president of business affairs.

The college made a mistake when the board approved its budget in July, Overstreet said, and the total should have

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Quilt to boost festival

Jo Booth, wife of Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Festival favorite Larry Booth, accepted a quilt Monday for a fund raiser for the festival.

Booth and Carla McCoy stopped by the Farmers and Merchants Bank on Monday to display the quilt, which McCoy made. It had been displayed at the Kiwanis Club's annual pancake feed Saturday.

This is the fourth year McCoy has given a quilt to the festival. It will be given away in a drawing on Sunday, Nov. 10, at this year's hometown gospel show — put on to honor veterans and support the festival — instead of at the festival itself. This year, the painting

"Winter Farm Ringnecks" by festival emcee Marshal Allen Bailey was given away at the festival.

Tickets to the gospel show will be available at the door, which starts at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 10, at the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College.

The quilt took about two months to make, McCoy said.

"Typically, if you didn't do it the way I do it, stay up at 2 o'clock in the morning, it would have taken longer," she added.

McCoy said she met Booth four years ago at a wine-tasting fund raiser for the festival.

"A friend of mine dragged me to it," she said of her first bluegrass festival, "probably about six

years ago, because I didn't think I was going to like it."

But, she said, bluegrass is the kind of music you can't help but like after hearing it.

This year's gospel show will feature bluegrass and other music from The McLemores, Gary Wiggins, Jeff Wagoner Family, The Bugbee Sisters, Lisa Schroeder and Family, Leon Woolfer, Pat Ziegelmeier, Jay Stewart and Friends, Perry and Terry Baird and Prairie Rose Harmony.

Tickets are \$10 for adults with children 12 and under free with a paid adult. Veterans in uniform, a military hat or with military identification are admitted free.

5 p.m. Sunday. The 2001 Ford Ranger he was driving went sideways into the north ditch and rolled, the patrol said.

The passenger, Jesus Giron-Fuentes, 27, Menlo, was sent to Sheridan County Health Complex, which would not immediately report on his condition. Neither man was wearing a seatbelt, the patrol reported.



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Jo Booth (left) and Carla McCoy displayed a quilt last Monday at F&M Bank. McCoy will give the quilt to the Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Festival. It will be given out by drawing to raise money for the festival.