



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

County commmits to tax lawsuit

By Heather Alwin

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County Commissioners Paul Steele and Byron Sowers met Thursday for their end-of-month session, and it turned out to be one of the shortest this year.

Steele and Sowers discussed the county's participation in a lawsuit against the state to collect money the counties say is due from and oil and gas severance tax

fund.

The suit, brought by 52 Kansas counties in Shawnee County District Court, including Thomas, was filed last week alleging the state violated legal requirements when it set Oil and Gas Valuation Depletion Trust Fund allocations to counties this year.

The trust fund was created to help cushion the blow counties could experience if oil and gas production or prices dropped dramatically, resulting in signifi-

cantly lower tax revenues in a given year.

The lawsuit argues that the state prematurely reduced payments to the counties, keeping a portion of the money at the state level.

Budget legislation passed this year calls for cuts to the fund, but the counties contend the money should have been cut in future years, not this year. They base their arguments on the wording of the budget bill, which the state Department of Revenue interprets to mean cuts start

this year.

Statewide, counties could be short-changed as much as \$7.6 million, the suit claims. Steele previously estimated Thomas County's share at \$28,000.

The expenses for the lawsuit will be apportioned based on each county's share of the total shortage, so Thomas County can expect to pay .755 of 1 per cent of the total.

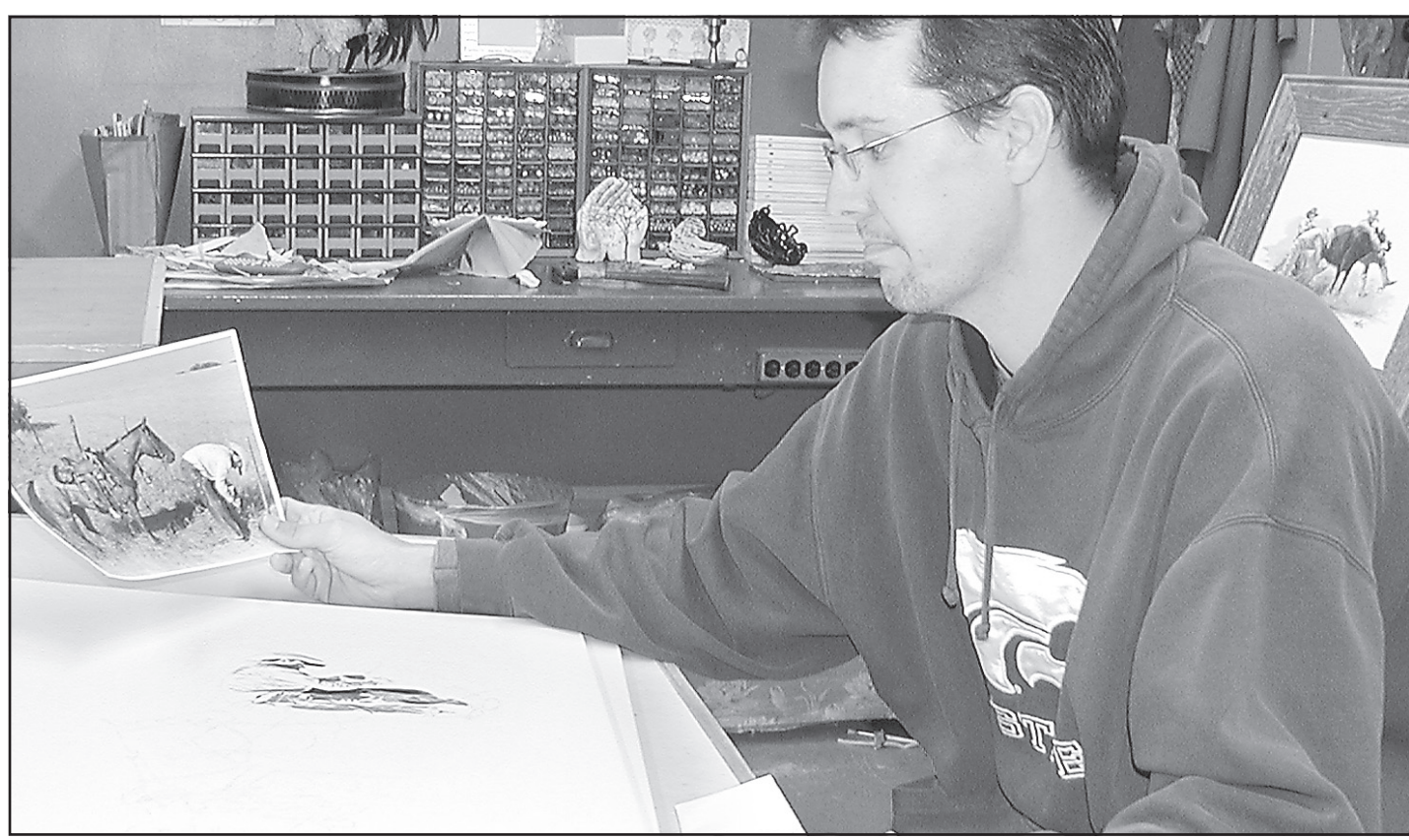
There are no total cost estimates available, but Steele and Sowers voted to sign

a commitment letter to the counties' attorney, John C. Frieden, obligating the county to pay its share.

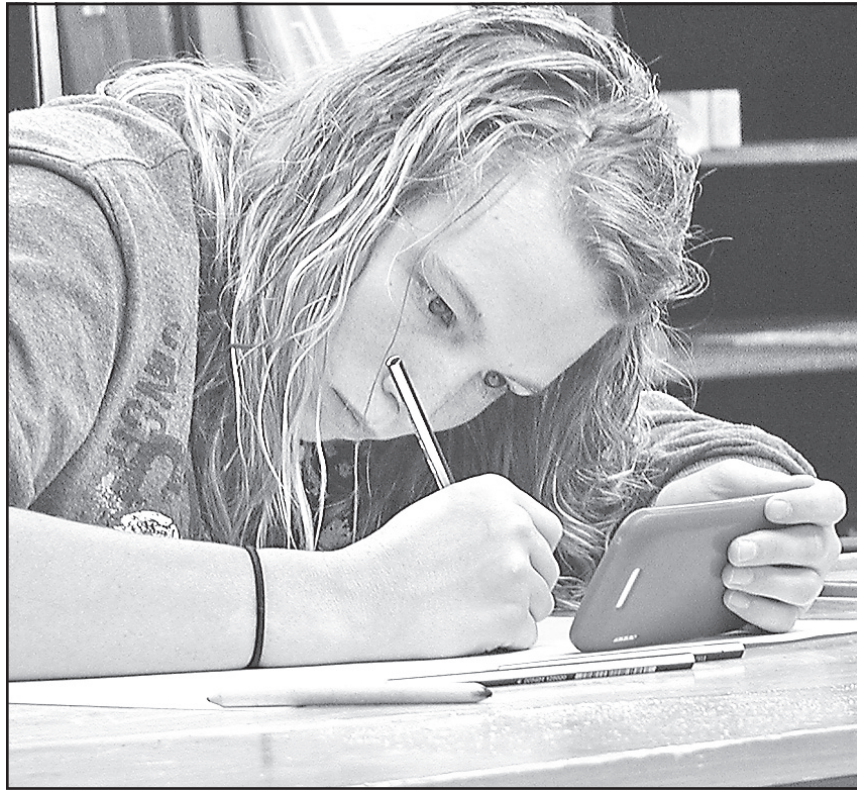
The pair also approved part payment of an invoice from Walter P. Moore, the engineering firm performing a structural analysis of the county courthouse.

The company's contract had been approved, and the part payment reflects the project being 48.91 percent completed.

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New, old, casual technique



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Roy Jessup of Oakley (top) was the featured artist for November's Studio Friday, an artwork session held the first Friday of each month at Colby Community College. He was making a drawing from a photograph he had taken of his cousin, John Hopson. Elle Miller (above) also worked on a drawing, using a cellphone photo of a rodeo in Nebraska. College freshman Lydia Oliver (left) was almost too tired to finish coloring a poster Friday. She is in a work study program for Rebel Jay, an art instructor at the college.

Atwood site to have station

By Sam Dieter

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A long-time Colby radio personality says he plans to set up his own station within a year.

Joe Vyzourek, who has been a familiar voice in northwest Kansas radio for 15 years, said he will set up his station, using frequency 106.3 FM, in his home town of Atwood. He hopes to be on the air within a year.

Right now, Vyzourek does a morning show on Rocking M's KXXX and an afternoon show on 100.3 KRDD. He said his new station will be licensed to Atwood, but will be affiliated with Rocking M, based in Manhattan.

It will be broadcast from an an-

tenna on the KRDD tower near Gem, and Vyzourek said he will use his own equipment in the company's studio before setting up his own studio. The radio stations will share news and information with each other, he said.

"It's kind of a way for me to put a radio station on and save some money," Vyzourek said.

The process of setting up a station started in September of last year, he said, when he heard the Federal Communications Commission would sell a construction permit for a new station in the area.

"I got to thinking, got to talking, and that kind of got the ball rolling," he said.

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Diplomats need reservations now

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce will hold the Annual Colby Diplomats Ladies Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20, at the Colby American Legion Hall, 1850 W. Fourth St.

The event, billed as a holiday how-to, will feature a variety of

quick demonstrations to show women how to add holiday dazzle to themselves and their homes.

Tickets are \$12 and will not be sold at the door. Reservations must be made by Wednesday by calling the Chamber office at 460-3401.

Reading brought to Colby preschool

Kids from Colby and northwest Kansas took home free books this month as part of the Reading Is Fundamental program.

Books were brought to the Head Start classroom at Colby Elementary School on Oct. 24 so that kids could read and pick one out to take home. Staffers read to 36 kids here, who each got to take one book.

The program, organized by the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center in Oakley, is paid for by a grant of about \$600 from

Macy's.

Books were sent to elementary kids in Thomas, Logan, Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Graham, Norton, Rawlins, Sherman, Trego and Wallace counties, serving total of 232 kids Head Start and 66 in Early Head Start program.

Macy's says it has raised \$25.8 million for the program since 2004, and the program has distributed 400 million books to 37 million children since it was started in 1966.

College to show free film on veteran troop greeters

A free screening of the award-winning film "The Way We Get By" will given at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12, in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College.

The film is a deeply moving documentary about a group of senior citizens who are veteran troop greeters. They gather daily (and often in the middle of the night) to greet U.S. military members as they arrive back in the states or leave for deployment.

The Bangor, Maine, International Airport is one of the first or last stops in America before flying out of the country for military service. Over 900,000 troops have gone through the Bangor airport. This dedicated group has been there to meet and greet every one of the soldiers.

Despite their own failing health, age-related illnesses, loss of friends and economic hard times, these people, including former Marines and grandparents of current enlisted men and women, are there to hand out cookies, offer free phone calls home and give hugs and handshakes.

"This film has been shown on Capitol Hill and at the Walter

Reed Medical Center," said college instructor Ryan Hale. "It has won 28 film awards and has received invitations for viewing at over three dozen film festivals.

"Our elders, our vets and our troops — three groups who are often not given the recognition they deserve — come together and show what it means to be dedicated and share love and respect for complete strangers.

"Student government students will provide popcorn and we will be featuring pre-movie music from the World War II era — Benny Goodman, Glen Miller, the Andrews Sisters, etc., For more information, contact me at 460-5544 or ryan.hale@colbycc.edu."

'And then I felt this sinking sensation'



HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press
Colby Police officer Stacy Brooks worked a minor accident just after noon on Friday, where a pickup truck apparently took a turn too fast and ran into a ditch.