



Street study to be shown Thursday

The consulting firm of Kirkham Michael will present its final plans for road improvements in Colby on Thursday morning.

Kirkham Michael, which provides engineering consulting services, will be at the Law Enforcement Training Center at 10 a.m. Thursday to present its final plans for improving congestion on city streets.

This presentation follows an initial one on June 7, when the firm presented its plan to improve highways that pass through town, particularly Country Club Drive and Range Avenue from College Drive south to Interstate 70. The plan as presented then included

adding roundabouts at South Range or Country Club and Willow, widening or narrowing some lanes and adding raised medians to keep people from making left turns on parts of South Range.

Members of the firm faced a hard sell when presenting their plans, mainly from locals who pointed out it would be hard to get farm equipment through a roundabout. The firm took comments the public sent afterwards before coming up with the final plans.

The firm was hired to work on the plans following a survey organized between the city, Thomas County and the Kansas Department of Transportation.

New director in charge soon

A new director will take over at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce on Thanksgiving Day.

Brett Hankin will take over for Holly Whitaker on November 28, but Whitaker is already training her for the position. Hankin comes to the chamber from Colby Community College, where she worked as the registrar for 3 1/2 years.



Brett Hankin

"I am very much looking forward to being out in the community," Hankin said.

She added that she wants to building and keep relationships with businesses in the community. Although she has not worked with the chamber before, she said, her husband Sean Hankin is on the

chamber ambassadors organization.

She said she has been interested in being a representative for the county for a long time, and found out about the job when she read an advertisement in the newspaper.

Whitaker said the chamber is happy to have Hankin on board, and also thanked the county for its support.

"Absolutely loved it, it was the most amazing job I've ever had in my life," she said of her 7 1/2 years here as the director, "I mean, Colby's home."

Her husband Adam works here for agriculture equipment maker Shelbourne Reynolds Engineering, and is transferring to England.

Guns banned in city building

By Sam Dieter
Colby Free Press
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Colby will keep the Community Building off limits to concealed weapons for the next four years with an exemption to a newly-passed state law.

The Colby City Council approved a resolution at its Nov. 5 meeting to adopt a security plan for the Community Building. The plan will make the building - often used for school activities - exempt for four years from House Bill 2052, which otherwise would have made it legal to carry concealed firearms into the building.

City Manager Tyson McGreer pointed out later that House Bill 2052 makes the plan exempt from the Kansas Open Records Act, and would not speak to the details. At past meetings, officials said they might need metal detectors or armed guards around buildings in order to qualify for an exemption.

The plan will be in operation by the end of the year, McGreer said. It will cost about \$2,000 to put the plan in place, and the money will come out of the city's Community Building budget.

House Bill 2052 was passed into law by the state legislature on

April 16 and took effect July 1. It prohibits local governments from banning concealed carry firearms in most state or municipal buildings as long as the carrier has a license. The law also allows government employees to carry guns to their work. It does not apply to school buildings, but does apply to Colby Community College, which already got an exemption.

On June 18, the council voted to ask for a six-month exemption to the law. That exemption lasts until the end of the year. So far the council has approved an exemption for the Community Building.

"We discussed other buildings, but that was the primary focus," McGreer said.

He met in September with Terrel Harrison, the superintendent of Colby Public Schools, Police Chief Ron Alexander, Darvin Strutt and John Gatz, attorney for both the city and the school district, to talk about the Community Building, which is the site of many high school and college sports games.

The Colby School District policy forbids weapons at sporting events. Also in September, the school board voted on a new piece of school policy to put up signs at sports games, explaining that weapons are banned at those events. Harrison said the school district would have lost its insurance if the board had not made that decision.



'Royalty' visits Colby High



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Princess Sydney Stephens (top, left) tried to earn the right to marry the prince Tuesday night at a dress rehearsal for the musical comedy "Once Upon a Mattress" at Colby High School. She failed the test to become the wife of Prince Dauntless, played by Jaden Morrison (above left). Madison

Tubbs is playing Queen Aggravain and Cheyne Weis is playing King Sextimus the Silent during the play, which runs Thursday and Friday night at the high school. Rachel Urban, on stage as Princess Winnifred, (above right) sang "Song of Love" as her character pursued the prince.

Green power carries dirty cost

By Dina Cappiello
Associated Press

CORYDON, Iowa (AP) - The hills of southern Iowa bear the scars of America's push for green energy: The brown gashes where rain has washed away the soil. The polluted streams that dump fertilizer into the water supply.

Even the cemetery that disappeared like an apparition into a cornfield.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. With the Iowa political caucuses on the horizon in 2007, presidential candidate Barack Obama made homegrown corn a centerpiece of his plan to slow global warming. And when President George W. Bush signed a law that year requiring oil companies to add billions of gallons of ethanol to their gasoline, Bush predicted it would make the country "stronger, cleaner and more secure."

But the ethanol era has proven far more damaging to the environment than politicians promised and much worse than the government admits today.

As farmers rushed to find new places to plant corn, they wiped out millions of acres of

conservation land, destroyed habitat and polluted water supplies, an Associated Press investigation found.

Five million acres of land set aside for conservation - more than Yellowstone, Everglades and Yosemite National Parks combined - have vanished on Obama's watch.

Landowners filled in wetlands. They plowed into pristine prairies, releasing carbon dioxide that had been locked in the soil.

Sprayers pumped out billions of pounds of fertilizer, some of which seeped into drinking water, contaminated rivers and worsened the huge dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico where marine life can't survive.

In Kansas, for instance, farmers planted 1.35 million more acres of corn last year than they did the year before the ethanol mandate was passed. More than 560,000 acres of conservation land were lost.

The consequences are so severe that environmentalists and many scientists have now rejected corn-based ethanol as bad environmental policy. But the Obama administration stands by it, highlighting its economic benefits to the farming industry.

Farmers planted 15 million more acres of corn last year than before the ethanol boom, and the effects are visible in places like south central Iowa.

The hilly, once-grassy landscape is made up of fragile soil that, unlike the earth in the rest of the state, is poorly suited for corn. Nevertheless, it has yielded to America's demand.

"They're raping the land," said Bill Alley, a member of the board of supervisors in Wayne County, which now bears little resemblance to the rolling cow pastures shown in postcards sold at a Corydon pharmacy.

All energy comes at a cost. The global warming consequences of drilling for oil and natural gas are well documented and severe. In an effort to reduce those harms, however, Obama's administration has allowed so-called green energy to do not-so-green things.

The government's hopeful predictions for ethanol have proven so inaccurate that scientists question whether it will ever achieve its central environmental goal: reducing greenhouse gases.

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