



Fed ranks local bank among best

By Cynthia Haynes

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The Bank, which began in Winona, has a branch office in Colby and is headquartered in Oberlin, has been named by federal examiners one of the best in the country for investing in and serving the communities where it operates.

The Bank received its second straight "outstanding" rating after a recent examination done for the Community Reinvestment Act, a federal law designed to encourage banks to help people in their own area, including those with low to moderate income, obtain loans and deposit accounts.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., commonly known as the FDIC, the agency which insures

bank deposits, reported that The Bank shows a strong commitment to the area, making loans to farms and businesses of all sizes.

Of 244 banks in Kansas examined by the agency, only seven received the outstanding designation and all but one of those are in the eastern part of the state, the agency said.

It was the second time in a row for The Bank to receive the designation. The last time it was examined for the reinvestment act was in 2007, and it got an "outstanding" then also.

One of the main ways that The Bank is able to loan money to people in northwest Kansas is through the U.S. Department

See "BANK," Page 2

Cold snap felt across Rockies

By Matt Volz

Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — A wintry storm pushing through the Rockies and Midwest is bringing bitterly cold temperatures and treacherous driving conditions blamed in at least six deaths as it threatens crops as far south as California.

The wind chill could drop to 30 degrees below zero in parts of Montana today while wind chills of minus 20 have already been recorded in the Nebraska Panhandle. Low temperatures in the Denver area were expected to drop below zero over the next several days.

The jet stream is much farther south than normal, allowing the cold air to push in from the Arctic and drop temperatures by 20 to 40 degrees below normal levels, AccuWeather meteorologist Tom Kines said.

Areas of Montana and the Dakotas were forecast to reach lows in the minus-20s, while Laramie, Wyo. is expected to see a low temperature of 28 below. The icy arctic blast was expected to be followed by another one later in the week, creating an extended period of cold weather that hasn't been seen since the late 1990s, meteorologists said.

In California's Central Valley, temperatures dropped into the upper 20s overnight, not enough to cause any damage to citrus crops. Citrus farmers, however, are anticipating colder temperatures overnight Wednesday and Thursday and are continuing to take precaution, said Bob Blakely, of California Citrus Mutual.

The unrelenting storm has spread about 2 feet of snow and brought daily activities to a grinding halt in northeastern Minnesota. The heavy snow and ice has contributed to hundreds of traffic accidents around the state and was cited in at least four fatal crashes since Monday. The storm closed the University of Minnesota Duluth and most other schools in the area and canceled holiday parties, Salvation Army bell ringing and a lutefisk dinner in Duluth, where over a foot of snow has fallen over three days.

In Colorado, the American Red Cross opened a warming shelter in a church in Black Forest near Colorado Springs, to help people still recovering from a wildfire in June that destroyed nearly 500 homes and killed two people.

Meanwhile, the snow and cold sent the Denver Broncos indoors to practice and canceled a men's World Cup downhill training in Beaver Creek. The racers need a clean, slick surface to practice on and will try to squeeze in a training run on Thursday, when the snow should taper off but bitter cold will continue.

Officials warned residents to protect themselves against frostbite if they are going to be outside for any length of time.

"When it gets this cold, you don't need 30, 40 mile-per-hour winds to get that wind chill down to dangerous levels. All it takes is a little breeze," Kines said.

The storm hit the northern Rockies on Monday and Tuesday, dumping up to 2 feet of snow in the mountains and in Yellowstone National Park.

A four-vehicle crash in central Montana killed Chelsea Stanfield, 21, of Great Falls. Authorities said Stanfield was driving too quickly for the icy conditions.

In North Dakota, Ronald Waters, 59, of Watford City, died

See "COLD," Page 2



HEATHER ALWIN
Colby Free Press
Bill and Peggy Miller's home is one of four stops on this year's holiday home tour, featuring about 275 Santa Claus statues and ornaments. Peggy's decorations adorned her dining table (above), capped by columns of wheat. The couple's mantel includes dozens of Santas (left) collected over the years. Peggy said her favorite Santa decorations are the paper mâché figures her children made while they were in grade school (bottom).



Home tour shows off season

Kappa Upsilon, a Colby sorority, has organized another Holiday Homes Tour this year, from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, featuring four homes in Colby decorated to highlight the holiday season.

The tour raises money for charities in Colby and the surrounding areas, said Michelle Patman, a member of the sorority.

The event, held every other year, raises between \$1,200 and \$2,000 each time, said treasurer Shirley Skolout. All proceeds go to the charities supported by the organization.

Skolout said these include the Northwest Kansas Foundation for Hope, the

Puddle Duck Soup Supper and families in crisis.

"We've helped so many different families over the years that just need a little assistance," she said.

This year's homes belong to Greg Gordon at 525 LaHacienda Dr., Shane and Kim Franz at 760 W. Fifth St., Bill and Peggy Miller at 2 Lee Circle and Brad and Lindsay Bennett at 670 N. Grant Ave.

Tickets are \$10 and are available prior to the event at Plum Creek, Donelan Jewelry and Just Peachy or on Sunday at any of the tour homes. Call Lana Johnson at 462-3727 for information.

Atwood newspaper sells to native

The Rawlins County Square Deal has been sold to an Atwood native, and control will change in January.

Mary Holle, a co-owner and associate editor, said Lloyd Huff and his wife Susan, who live near Fort Worth, are purchasing the stock of Rawlins County Publishing Inc., with the closing set for mid-January.

Huff recently retired from Lockheed Martin as a senior fellow emeritus after a 34-year career in the aerospace field. He earned Bachelor and Master of Science degrees from the University of Kansas. His wife, a native of Evanston, Ill., grew up in Omaha, then moved to Kansas City as a high school senior. She received a Bachelor of Arts in environmental studies at KU.

The couple met at college and were married in August 1977, just before he started graduate school. In 1979, they moved to Fort Worth, where he started his career developing software for General Dynamics. After working as a lab technician for the Texas Animal Health Co., Susan Huff later joined her husband at General Dynamics as a tech analyst.

Lloyd Huff said the move to Atwood represents a "coming home," especially since they are moving into the house where he grew up. Susan Huff noted that her grandfather was in the newspaper business.

Their son Christopher recently married Lin Zi, whom he met while both were graduate students at Oxford University in

England. They are living there while completing classes. Daughter, Kelsey, married a high school Latin teacher, Bob Weinstein in May, and they live in Lawrence. Daughter Caroline graduated from high school in May and is a student at KU, where she is a German and Spanish major.

The newspaper was started with community support in 1992 by owners Keith and Rosalie Ross, Kevin and Mary Holle and Joe and Katie Snystrup. It has since moved into a new building at 114 S. Fourth St. in Atwood. Employees at the paper include Mary Chessmore, Kathy Davis-Vrbas, Pat Carroll, Keith Reunitz and Leslie Crowe.

"It is our belief that a newspaper is the glue that holds a community together,"

said Rosalie Ross, the publisher. "We have worked hard to keep our readers informed, to promote events, to help our advertisers sell their merchandise and to preserve the history of Rawlins County.

"We are well aware of the fact that none of this would have been possible without the support of our community and the far-flung subscribers who want to stay connected, and we are deeply appreciative."

No staff changes are planned at this time, Lloyd Huff said.