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Lights of season ablaze

EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

Colby residents went all-out with decorations on homes for Christmas. At 1240 W. Fifth St. (above), Christmas decorations mean lights, trees and inflatable figures. At 1145 E. Eighth, rows of luminaries line the yard (right). This tree at 1100 E. Ninth (below) was decked out in true holiday fashion.



Contract to realtor approved

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkansas.com

The Colby City Council approved a contract to sell the former Embark building downtown on at its meeting on Tuesday night, apparently dismissing any hope that a state department would assign employees to work in Colby.

Real estate agent Molly Oliver at Stock Realty and Auction will list the building at 455 N. Franklin Ave. with an asking price of \$200,000. Oliver will be working on a 6 percent commission.

In a memo to the city, Oliver

said she had listed a building of similar value at \$179,000, but only got offers of around \$150,000, and is now valued at \$133,000. City Manager Tyson McCreer said the state has a lien on the building that is probably higher than \$200,000. Three years ago, the city hoped for an influx perhaps 130 jobs when Florida-based Embark Health opened a call center here. After the company closed the call center and let 13 employees go, the city bought the building to help the state, which had the biggest investment in it. Gov.

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Health group briefs county

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Three representatives of the Thomas County Coalition briefed county commissioners on the group's efforts to involve citizens from the entire county in its movement to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Kasiah Rothchild, county health director; Sue Evans, director of the Northwest Kansas Council on Substance Coalition, and Megan Carmichael, Healthy Community Coordinator for the coalition, gave the coalition's "annual report" to the board.

Commissioners had talked about cutting the county's financial contribution if the group did not demonstrate a focus outside of Colby. Evans said the coalition has made efforts to reach out to Brewster, Rexford and their school districts.

In Brewster, a coalition member met with the school board and city council to offer assistance, said

Rothchild. The group helped with the Color Run at Brewster's 125th anniversary celebration and had a booth at the gathering to increase visibility for its efforts. The group will also provide tobacco-free signs for the Brewster school.

Rothchild added that the annual Wellness Challenge attracts out-of-town participants since much of it is offered online.

The coalition's Safe Routes to School program, which encourages kids to walk and bike to school to get more physical activity, is trying to get Brewster involved, offering assistance to map out school routes and get a trail going, said Carmichael.

She said they have distributed flyers to all of the schools, offering parents suggestions for healthier holiday snacks.

The coalition is helping the Golden Plains schools with a program called the Good Behavior Game, which helps students learn

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College costs under budget

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkansas.com

Colby Community College trustees reviewed a financial report from Chief Financial Officer Glenda Overstreet at their Monday night meeting, saying that the college has used up almost half its money for the budget year.

Expenditures were slightly under projection by the end of November, Dr. Overstreet reported. Five months into the fiscal year, the college has \$9.5 million of its \$14,520,000 budget left, or 66 percent. The college had \$185,700 in encumbrances and an unrestricted cash balance of \$649,111 at the end of the month.

Overstreet's report showed that the college expects to spend \$6,150,000 of its budget in academics, \$2,650,000 on student affairs, \$2,780,000 on institutional effectiveness and \$2,940,000 on business affairs. So far, \$2,617,850 has been spent in academics, which still has 57 percent of its money left; \$445,938 in student affairs which has 83 percent left; \$1,094,388 in institutional effectiveness, which has 60 percent left; and \$851,915 in business affairs, has 71 percent left.

The college is trying to manage its cash flow, she said, and has started to review its internal financial controls. The staff has completed bank reconciliations for all accounts through October, she said, and started on November.

This month, the college sent out the last of its bills for past due accounts for money that students still owe the college. Overstreet plans to work with the Kansas Setoff program to help the col-

lege collect its money. The college had 920 open accounts at the end of November and was owed \$1,127,803, she reported.

During Overstreet's report, Trustee Audrey Hines pointed out that some of the college's accounts payable are overdue by over 90 days. Overstreet said that the college plans to pay \$165,000 in outstanding bills this month, and expects to pay up to \$250,000 in January.

Hines also asked where the money will go that the college raises for its "Campaign for Change," and Overstreet said it would go to overall operations.

She reported that the college is sending in requests for several grants, including an application for a veterinary technology grant that was to be turned in today.

The college is also working on its new website and helping students with computer passwords.

In other business, the trustees heard reports from the other college administrators:

• George McNulty, vice president of student affairs, reported that his department got a student support performance report for last school year. The report is based on a five year grant from the federal government to help low income students, first generation students and students with disabilities, although these students do not participate in the program for any set period of time. The school exceeded the expectations of the report, McNulty said. The government expects 50 percent of students in the program to stay in school into the next academic year, graduate or transfer to a four-year school, and 75 percent of Colby's students did so. The government

also expects 15 percent of the students to get an associate's degree or certificate within four year. For Colby it was 48 percent.

The student affairs department is setting up new enrollment management plans. He said he is making sure the enrollment plans are written up properly so that they will increase awareness of the principles of strategic enrollment, make use of technology and have measurable objectives.

The admissions department has seen 1,603 potential students, processed 127 applications this month and 467 this year, Dr. McNulty reported. The college retention department reported 155 academic alerts for 115 students.

Enrollment of classes for the spring semester is being completed. The registrar has taken 18 applications for degrees and certificates for this fall and 290 for graduation next spring.

The financial aid department is still dealing with a corrupted computer file which the U.S. Department of Education sent this fall. College dorms have 267 students living in them. Campus security reported one aggravated assault, one liquor or drug violation and one incident of damage to the campus.

A total of 69 high-school students and 23 parents participated in senior day this year, Dr. McNulty reported, as opposed to 53 students and 27 parents last year.

• Greg Nichols, vice president of academic affairs, reported that a three-year performance agreement with the college had been approved with the state Board of Regents on Dec. 3. He described this as perhaps the most important thing his department does, since it

helps to preserve the college's accreditation.

State laws require the college to work out the agreement, he said later. The school decides on areas

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SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

A half dozen law enforcement vehicles parked alongside this Ford Explorer Wednesday morning after John Michael Haney of Colby wrecked on K-25 north of town. Apparently Haney was not seriously injured, he was treated and released a Citizens Medical Center.

Highway sees two accidents

The same stretch of K-25 north of town was the scene of two accidents in as many days, one involving a sport utility vehicle and the other, two semi-trailer rigs.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Mike Cline, Brewster, who works for Cornerstone Ag, was driving a semi rig at 9 a.m. Tuesday when it and another rig collided about 9 1/2 miles north of town. The patrol described the collision as a non-injury accident, and did not have a blotter report that described how the it happened. Employees at Cornerstone confirmed that Cline was in the accident, but he was not available to comment at the time.

On Wednesday, a Colby man wrecked a sport-util-

ity vehicle in almost the same place, 9.3 miles north of town. The patrol said John Michael Haney, 25, was headed north when the vehicle went off the road about 7:45 a.m.

Haney tried to get the 1997 Ford Explorer he was driving back to the left, and it turned around full-circle as he swerved back onto the road. It stopped in the southbound lane, facing southeast. Both tires on the right side were blown out. Haney was treated at Citizens Medical Center.

