



## Long career for public to conclude

By Heather Alwin  
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Sheila Sloan Frahm, a Colby native and long-time public servant, marked the end of her weekly or monthly travels to Topeka this month.

She stepped down from her position on the Kansas State Post-secondary Technical Education Authority this month.

The end of her term concludes a public service career that began in 1978 when she won a spot on the Colby School Board.

Frahm, born into a family that had farmed in Thomas County for generations, graduated from Colby High School in 1963. She attended Fort Hays State University, graduating in 1967, and the University of Texas at Austin before returning to Colby in 1976 after her father-in-law, Albert Frahm, died and she and her husband Ken returned to the family farm.

She ran for the school board position when the family first moved back to Colby, having two young daughters at the time. She won the primary but lost the general elec-

tion. Two years later, she ran again and won, holding her position on the board until 1985.

Frahm said she enjoyed the opportunities for interacting with the community while she was on the school board. She began traveling to Topeka as the board's representative to the Kansas Association of School Boards.

In 1985, she was appointed to the state Board of Education, winning an election to the board in 1986 and serving as the vice-chairman in 1987. She represented 34 Kansas counties.

In 1988, she was elected to the Kansas Senate for the 40th District, winning re-election in 1992.

Frahm said she remembers going to towns throughout north-west Kansas, knocking on doors, trying to earn votes by talking to each constituent. Some people slammed the door in her face, she said, while others welcomed her in.

She was elected as Senate's majority leader in 1992, a position that allowed her to determine what



Sheila Frahm



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press  
Gov. Sam Brownback got to see – and smell – every part of the ethanol plant at Campus, including the black sludge (above) that is a byproduct of making ethanol and is used as fertilizer. Brownback (far left) took a look at the discharge chute as Jeff Torluemke, on the board of Western Plains Energy, led the group around the plant during a visit Dec. 18. Brownback (left) chatted with state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer during the visit. Derek Piene (below, left) general manager of Western Plains, showed the group the control room of the plant during a tour of the facilities.



## Ethanol plant gets a visit

By Sam Dieter  
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Managers at an innovative ethanol plant east of Oakley gave Gov. Sam Brownback a tour of the facility last Wednesday morning. "These things, they're hard to figure out?" Brownback asked at the start of his visit to the Western Plains Energy plant at Campus. "Serial number zero zero one," said Jeff Torluemke, who led the tour.

About half a dozen people followed the governor on his tour, including state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and state Rep. Don Hine-man. It took just under an hour.

At the end of the tour, Brownback said he could help the plant with challenges it faces from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

"We want to do what we can," the governor said, "treat it as agriculture if we can."

Torluemke, a member of the plant's board, said it is the first of its kind, able to process

any organic material into alcohol. The plant starting to break even after management learned how to run it, he added, but is facing inspections by the state and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The plant only learned about some regulations, Torluemke said, after it was opened.

Torluemke and Derek Piene, the new general manager, showed the governor how the plant works.

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## Voter law under scrutiny

By John Hanna  
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA – A proof-of-citizenship requirement for Kansas voters is likely to come under attack once the Legislature opens its annual session, but the debate over the policy championed by Secretary of State Kris Kobach also will play in out in federal court and his re-election campaign.

The law took effect at the start of the year and requires new voters to produce a birth certificate, passport or other documentation of their U.S. citizenship when registering. As the year ends, more than 19,000 Kansas residents find their registrations on hold – keeping them from legally casting ballots – because they haven't complied.

Several Democratic lawmakers have proposed rewriting or repealing the proof-of-citizenship law, and even some of Kobach's fellow Republicans in the GOP-dominated Legislature want to look for ways to shrink the list of affected voters. Former state Sen. Jean Schodorf, the expected Democratic challenger for Kobach, is calling on legislators to audit how Kobach's office has administered the law once they convene Jan. 13.

Kobach and Arizona Secretary

of State Ken Bennett filed a federal lawsuit earlier this year to compel a federal agency to help their states carry out proof-of-citizenship requirements. The American Civil Liberties Union launched its own legal challenge over the policy in November.

"He promised that this law would be simple, easy and seamless to implement," Schodorf, who voted for the law as a moderate Republican state senator, said during a recent interview. She lost her seat in 2012 conservative primary challenger and switched parties. "We're in this horrible mess."

If Kobach and Bennett are successful, the federal government will be forced to modify its national registration form and Kansas and Arizona residents will be informed they must present proof of their U.S. citizenship to be allowed to vote. Currently, people who use the national form only have to sign a statement attesting to their citizenship.

Kobach and Bennett contend their states face creating cumbersome dual registration systems in which they must accept the national form but limit those people to voting only in presidential, U.S. Senate and congressional races.

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## Thousands still without power after ice storm

By Corey Williams  
Associated Press

DETROIT – When an ice storm glazed over Michigan last weekend, Tony Carone feared he wouldn't be spending Christmas at home with his family.

"Nobody had to call. I heard it on the top of my roof," Carone said.

The 52-year-old lineman for Detroit-based DTE Energy is one of the thousands of electrical workers who have put in double shifts trying to restore power to more than a half-million homes and busi-

nesses. Outages stretched from the Great Plains to Maine and into eastern Canada.

"My power went out the same time as everybody else's," Carone said of the power to his Lapeer home, north of Detroit. It was about 7:30 a.m. Sunday, while he was on the phone with his utility's area leader. He walked out the door a half-hour later and has been working 16 hours a day ever since.

The storm has been blamed for 17 deaths in the U.S. and 10 in Canada. Five people apparently died from carbon mon-

oxide poisoning tied to using generators.

Michigan bore the brunt of the storm as nearly 600,000 homes and businesses lost power, and as of this morning, about 64,000 customers remained in the dark. Maine reported almost 12,000 outages and in eastern Canada, nearly 62,000 still hadn't had their power restored, including 33,000 in Toronto.

It could have been worse, said Paul Graham, a lineman supervisor from Massachusetts whose crew was helping out in Gardiner, Maine.

"If it was a little more ice, poles would have been broken," Graham said. "Things would be on the ground.... If there was another quarter of an inch or a half-inch of ice, people would've been out for a long, long, long time. But I'm sure no one is thinking they're lucky, right?"

Many families affected by the outages sought refuge with relatives or hunkered down with generator-powered space heaters and fireplaces to keep warm. Utility officials say it could be days before power is restored to everyone.

The linemen face a dangerous and physical task, below-freezing temperatures aside. Ice can weigh down power lines so much that they break, or tree branches can fall and take the lines with them. So, the linemen must clear some debris, if needed, and then shimmy up slick utility poles to restring lines using belts and spiked boots.

