

# College made headlines during 2002

## Institution got new name, fitness center and president

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Vignery said he was just doing his job. "I'm a normal guy," he said, "and I just want to be that normal guy."

The Northwest Kansas Technical College made headlines several times in 2001, as it was granted a new name and powers, opened a new student fitness center and started the school year with a new president.

The college board hired Ken Clouse, former president of the Northeast Kansas Technical College in Atchison, in April to take over for Larry Keirns, who retired as president in June after almost 37 years on the job.

Keirns was head of the school, which opened in 1964, for nearly its entire existence.

Headstrong and passionate, Keirns, 63, dedicated his life to making the institution a success, and said he felt like he had accomplished his goals and was ready to pass on the torch.

"I've gotten a lot of self-satisfaction," he said, "out of helping to make this place what it is today."

During his last year, Keirns helped bring about many changes.

Two of the most apparent were the switch to a college and the new fitness center.

Gov. Bill Graves signed a bill in late

March — after the Kansas House and Senate passed it unanimously — turning Goodland's technical school into a college and allowing the institution to award two-year associate degrees.

Keirns said the switch will earn the school and its students more respect from employers and other colleges. The college received national accreditation in June through the Atlanta-based Council on Occupational Education.

The 13,000-square-foot fitness center — named after Keirns — opened at the south end of the campus on May 1, offering students two glass-walled racquetball courts, regulation sized basketball and volleyball courts, a gymnasium, a weight training and exercise room, men's and women's restrooms with showers and a manager's office and front lounge.

The state-of-the-art center was built on 18.2 acres the college bought from the Goodland Elks Lodge more than two years ago. Keirns said the college had saved \$900,000 to pay for the center.

Clouse took over in July, greeting students at an assembly on the first day of school in August. He shared some of his idea for the institution's future — which he believes he can help make bright.

The 51-year-old said he and the college's board and administrators are



Larry Hodgen, a floor finisher with a Colorado Springs contractor, painted the center circle in the technical college's new student fitness center in March. The \$900,000 center opened in May.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

working on a three- to five-year strategic plan to bring in more students and money, evaluate older programs and start new ones and find other

ways to make the successful college more so.

Keirns said the college is ready for a fresh perspective.

"I already sense that he's got ideas that are different than mine," he said before retiring, "and better."

# Meeting frustrates victims

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Kathi Phillips hoped that after Saturday's town hall meeting, she would know something about who killed her son.

She left unsatisfied and more frustrated than before.

"I got all the wrong answers," said Phillips, whose son Frederick, 24, was killed in December. "They're telling me that witnesses might not come forward, like my son doesn't matter. They're saying the ones who could come forward are too scared."

The meeting was called by parents of homicide victims whose cases have not been solved. More than a dozen residents attended.

"What happens if witnesses don't come forward?" Phillips asked.

"That's the end of the case," replied Bob Beard, Jackson County prosecutor. Beard was one of six panelists, including representatives from the Kansas City Police Department and the U.S. attorney's office.

"There are a lot of problems in our community not getting solved," said Cynthia Canady, one of the event's organizers. "We need to find a way to help the police help us in our community."

In 2001 there were 114 murders in Kansas City, only half of which were solved, which is unacceptable, said J. T. Brown, the new president of the community group Move Up.

"We're beginning again the vigils for families of victims to bring attention and hopefully make some people come forward — we're trying to seek out the guilty," he said.

Ron Hunt, chief executive officer of Meet Me in the Middle Peace Coalition, said he hoped the gatherings would be a way for citizens to realize they had a responsibility to law enforcement, just as law enforcement has a responsibility to the community.

The Rev. Wallace Hartsfield agreed. If citizens do not step forward to help police, crime will escalate, he said.

# Argentina residents face era in which one peso won't buy \$1

By Associated Press INTERNATIONAL BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — His hands tied by an economy near collapse, Argentina's finance minister deeply devalued its currency as the country braced for an era of uncertainty in which one peso will no longer buy \$1.

Overriding the worries of foreign investors and citizens alike, Economy Minister Jorge Remes Lenicov broke the news late Sunday that "one-to-one" — as the dollar-peso rate was known — is history.

"We are devaluing, we are in col-

lapse, Argentina is bankrupt," Remes Lenicov said bluntly, announcing the erosion of a currency long the most stable in Latin America — until a run on the banks last Nov. 30 saw Argentines yank \$2 billion in a day. The rioting and looting that followed forced President Fernando de la Rúa from office and brought on a series of interim leaders.

Remes Lenicov said an official rate of 1.4 pesos per dollar would be applied to exports and imports, and a parallel, free-floating rate will be set by the marketplace and applied to most ordinary transactions by Argentines.

SYDNEY, Australia — A massive firestorm threatened three coastal villages south of Sydney today, forcing authorities to evacuate more than 1,500 people from their homes and putting weary firefighters on the defensive.

The evacuation order came hours after heavy rain doused several wild-fires north and west of the city, prompting firefighters to sing and dance, and raising hopes of an end to the dozens of blazes that have burned across Australia's most populous state since Christmas Eve.

But no rain fell on the huge fire burn-

ing in the Shoalhaven area, 120 miles south of Sydney. Authorities ordered the villages of Cudmirrah, Berrara and Fisherman's Paradise evacuated after high temperatures and strong winds fanned flames within about half a mile of homes.


The fires, many of which authorities say have been set deliberately, have destroyed 170 homes and led to thousands of evacuations. Police have arrested 24 people, including several children and teen-agers, on suspicion of starting blazes.

NATIONAL CRAWFORD, Texas — President

Bush is returning to Washington and its already heated election-year blame game over the economy. Awaiting him were his economic team and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.

Bush scheduled the huddle with his advisers and separate meeting with Greenspan as his first order of post-holiday business today — but only after a reluctant farewell to the serenity of his central Texas ranch.

On a warmup work trip to California and Oregon over the weekend, Bush told students in Portland, Ore., that privacy is the biggest sacrifice he has made.


  
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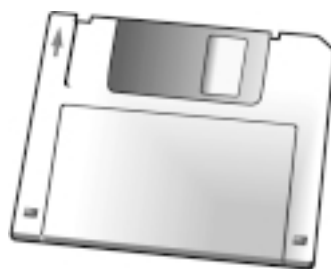
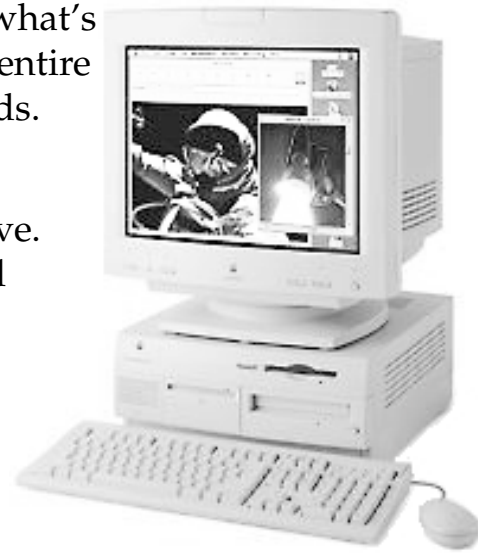
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