

# Cops leave training to put bite on fugitive

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A training exercise for law enforcement agencies in Colby on Thursday turned into reality, when a traffic stop on I-70 turned into a manhunt.

Eventually, a "well-placed bite to the hand" corralled one of two men caught with what officers described as 200 pounds or more of marijuana.

Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones said handler and police dogs from his department, along with the Colby Police and Russell and Ellis County sheriff's departments, were training at the Thomas County Law Enforcement Center.

He said the officers and their dogs were working in the impound lot when the call came, and they loaded up rushed out to a field near I-70.

Lt. Doug Griffiths of the Kansas Highway Patrol said a state trooper stopped a truck west of Colby, and one of the men took off, skittering through a milo field to the south of the rest area.

"It went downhill from there," Griffiths said.

He identified the men as Reynaldo Javier Loya-Grageda, 30, and Abel Cota-Loaiza, 42, both of Mexico.

They were pulled over shortly before 3 p.m. at mile marker 49 near the eastbound rest stop. Officers later found nearly 200 pounds of what appeared to be marijuana in the truck box.

A trooper put the cuffs on Loya-Grageda, but Cota-Loaiza took off.

Jones said sheriff's deputies, police officers and troopers converged on the rest area, which was shut down to all traffic.

Officers searched the field for about 2 hours before of the dogs nailed the fugitive.

At one point, they reported finding tracks where the man was crawling on his hand and knees, but they couldn't follow them.

Officers were stationed around the fields, and they were convinced they had the man trapped.

Capone, the Colby Police Department's K-9, and one of the four dogs used in the search, got the credit for apprehending Cota-

Loaiza about 5:15 p.m.

Both men are being held in the Thomas County Jail.

Loya-Grageda was charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and conspiracy to distribute.

Cota-Loaiza is charged with possession with intent to distribute, no drug tax stamp, conspiracy to distribute and attempting to flee or elude officers.

Colby Police Investigator Gary Shull said the highway patrol sent a helicopter from Salina but it was east of Colby when Cota-Loaiza was captured.

The incident kept a few students from Colby schools from getting home.

District transportation director Alan Wade said he heard on the scanner there was something going on near the Four-Mile Corner area and called Jones to see if he should hold the buses that run there.

Wade said Jones said yes, so he held one bus. Most of the students' parents came to pick them up, but at 4 p.m., Wade drove a bus out to take the remaining five students home.

## Football players ride into town



Goodland High School football player senior Blake Saint rode an all-terrain vehicle along with other members of the senior class in the homecoming parade Thursday. The players rode the four-wheelers onto the field later to perform a skit for the pep rally.

Photo by Kathryn Gurfinkel/The Goodland Star-News

# Flatlander Fall Festival offers cars, food and games

FESTIVAL, from Page 1

painting and fortune telling, too.

At Cowboys Stadium, the Goodland Activities Center held the annual Punt, Pass and Kick contest for kids ages 8 to 15.

A scale model show was held at the High Plains Office Supply store, with miniatures of all kinds on display.

Off Main, the Carnegie Arts Center held the annual Flatlanders Photo Contest. Visitors were encouraged to add to the "community canvas," a large canvas with scenes painted by volunteers.

One block west of the Main, the Prairie Peacemaker Quilt Guild put on their first quilt show at the Goodland United Methodist Church. Over 200

people showed up to see the 110 quilts and wall hangings, with some dating as far back as 1891.

Although the races were canceled due to rain Friday night, stock car excitement was up and running Saturday night at the Sherman County Speedway.

In a near dangerous accident, one driver was stuck in his car, but crews helped him out before fire and ambulance units even arrived on the scene.

Both the car club and the motorcycle show held dinners and dances Saturday night.

The festivities ended Sunday morning for the car club after a poker run and an awards ceremony.

The bike show held its final activities, starting with a Sunday service and a poker run Sunday morning.

## Visitors Bureau looks at logos

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would be acceptable in other states. That could drive business away, she said.

Price said she and her husband went to Salina earlier this month to pick up Goodland's supply of the Ultimate Guide for Northwest Kansas, which saved about \$1,000 in shipping and handling. She said since the order was not complete when they arrived, the publisher will deliver the rest to Goodland at no charge.

Price gave the board members a copy of a marketing proposal for the bureau by Free Birds Business So-

lutions, she asked them to look over the proposal and give her their feedback at the next meeting.

In other business, the board:

- Voted to be a corporate sponsor, for \$500, again this year for the Topside Tipoff Basketball Tournament to be held at Max Jones Fieldhouse Dec. 9-11


- Voted to sign the reimbursement contract with the Northwest Kansas Travel Council for 2005 through which the bureau is reimbursed for some of its travel expenses to various conventions and meetings.

- Voted to contribute a radio/ice cooler donated by board member

Evelyn DeVol to the I-70 Association's gift basket to be given away at the League of Municipalities Trade Show in Overland the first week in October.

The board also voted to contribute items up to \$50 to the association's basket for the auction held by the Travel Industry Association of Kansas at its conference in Emporia Oct. 11-13.




The meeting, which started at 2 p.m., adjourned about 3 p.m. The next meeting will be 2 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 19, in the meeting room of Super 8 Motel, 2520 Commerce Rd.



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