



COLBY FREE PRESS

County hears request for emergency equipment

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Josh Buffington, Thomas County EMS director, and Martin Rinehart, assistant director, presented several requests to the Thomas County Commissioners Friday morning, all of which were approved.

Buffington said in the past the department had used radios for communication, and had two cell phones. He wants to go to digital cell phones, and for \$20 more per month, he can have four phones instead of two.

The radios do not carry to the outlying edges of the county, and can be heard by anyone who has a scanner, he said.

With the cell phones, confidentiality can be preserved for the persons being transported, he added.

Buffington said he had talked to Sheriff Tom Jones to see if he had any cell phones which had been seized, but he did not.

Jones said the drug forfeiture money could legally be used to pay for the phones and will do so. EMS can have a cell phone in all four ambulances in the county, Buffington said.

Buffington said one of the defibrillators has been sent to be repaired. The defibrillators are carried on the ambulances.

The defibrillator part was still working but the monitoring system was not. He uses the monitoring system on 80 percent of the runs because doctors like to have a record of heart action. The repair is expected to cost between \$1,000-\$2,500, and he received a loaner at no extra cost.

The company has offered a service plan to cover all four units at a cost of \$2,160, which includes new batteries for all the units.

The commissioners declined to pur-

chase the service plan.

Buffington said it was time to replace an ambulance.

He brought estimated bids for the new ambulance.

Two, one from Horton Emergency Vehicles, of Ohio, and one from Lifeline Emergency Vehicles, of Iowa, did not meet specs. The lowest bid, \$87,399 from Medtech Ambulance Corp of Indiana, met specs and was the same type of unit being replaced, which was built by Medtech.

The commissioners asked him to request local financing companies to submit lease/purchase options for this unit and come back with the information before ordering the ambulance. The money for the purchase will come out of the capital improvement fund. The company will build the ambulance after it is ordered, which will take a minimum of 150 days. The new unit will replace the Colby First Responder unit, and the Rexford ambulance will be sold.

Buffington said an EMT-D class is being offered in Great Band and three or four technicians are interested in taking it. It will be on Monday and Wednesday for six weeks, and cost \$138 per student.

County Clerk Tracey Perkins said the county could pay tuition from the Junior College Tuition Fund.

The commissioners said they were happy the technicians are willing take the time to take the class. Certification will allow them to read cardiac strips and manually shock instead of using the defibrillator machine.



Buffington

In other business:

• Roads supervisor Chris Bieker told the commissioners he is looking to purchase a water tanker, and brought several pictures and prices.

He said he had been talking to a dealer in Kansas City, Kan. Bieker said he is presently using a 1958 water tanker which leaks, and he plans to give it to the landfill for composting. Money for the new water tanker has been included in capital outlay funds.

The commissioners suggested he travel to Kansas City and "take a look" at the tankers available.

• Randal Hrabec of Northwest Kansas Planning and Development brought the final papers for the community block grant for McCarty Dairy. No one appeared to protest or discuss at the hearing.

• Jeff Horlacher asked the county to pass a resolution and donate \$150 to sponsor a category in the "A Day in the Life of Thomas County" photo snapshot contest.

The contest is being sponsored by Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library and local citizens are asked to photograph the events, people and places in Thomas County on that day. Photographs will be displayed at the library and at the county fair.

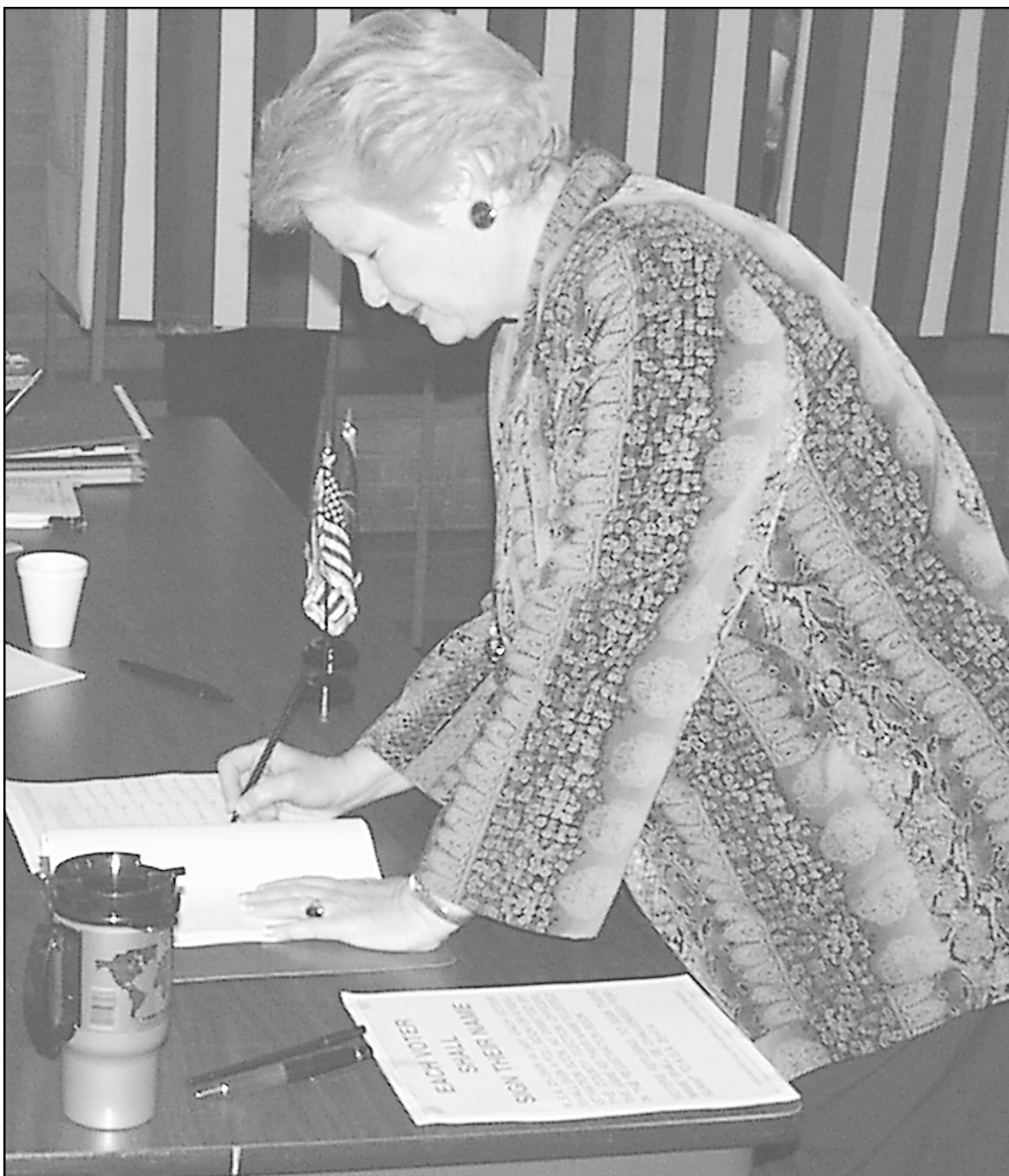
The commissioners said they would pass a resolution, and would consider sponsoring the category.

• The commissioners spent some time Friday afternoon researching bids on health insurance, and decided to make a decision at their Monday morning meeting.

The commissioners are scheduled to meet April 9, 16 and 30 at 9 a.m. in the commissioners room of the courthouse.

All meetings are open to the public and input is appreciated.

Every vote counts



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Cleona Flipse, a candidate for Colby Community College Board of Trustees, signed up to vote early this morning. Along with the college board election, city council and school board seats in Colby, Rexford and Brewster are also up for grabs. Polls will remain open until 7 p.m. today.

Board endorses effort to place old high school on National Register

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Property issues were again the main topic of discussion at the Colby School Board meeting on Monday night as the board decided to endorse the historical society's application to place the old high school building on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historical society representative Sue Taylor and Cathy Beck Ambler, deputy state historical preservation officer, were on hand to answer questions the board had raised when the possibility was brought up at the last meeting on March 19.

Ambler also said placing the old

school building on the register was special to her. Her father was the late Bill Beck, longtime band director at Colby and her mother, Miriam, still lives in Colby.

"I graduated from that high school," she told the board.

Ambler told the board that most school buildings on the historic register were no longer being used as schools, with the exception of Wyandotte High School.

"We are encouraging schools to apply," she said, "and the old high school is an excellent prospect."

In addition to the architecture, the building is significant because it was

a New Deal project.

Ambler also addressed concerns about control of the building. "The current perception is the building can't be modified, and that is simply not true," she said.

A series of grants is also available for repairs and some modifications, according to Ambler. These grants pay for 80 percent of proposed work.

"No one in Thomas County has ever applied for a grant, so we are excited," she said.

Ambler told board members the state society functions only in an advisory role by law. "The final decision is left up to the governing body," she said.

Board member Bill Miller asked about the time frame. Taylor and Ambler said the preliminary work was already done, with only the application left, but they couldn't give an exact time frame. Miller said, "I don't see how we have anything to lose." After his motion to endorse the application, the board voted unanimously, with the exception of the absent Cindi Kriss and Gary Walker, to endorse.

In other action, the board:

• Could not come to an agreement on the sale of excess land east of the elementary and middle school complex and tabled the matter.

• Heard an update on the proposed

middle school tech lab, including costs to prepare the building for installation.

• Voted to pay \$6,900 in membership dues to the Kansas Association of School Boards, including \$900 for legal assistance.

• Set a date of May 17 at 4 p.m. in the high school commons area for a retirement reception for long-time middle school physical education teacher Tom Bowen and library paraprofessional Marilyn Walz.

• Set a date of May 24 at 6 p.m. in the high school commons area for a staff and family get-together.

• Approved the hiring of Terrel Harrison as a new elementary school

principal and Don Balluch as middle school woods teacher, to start next school year.

• Accepted the resignation of Janice Aldrich, family and consumer science teacher. Aldrich has been with the district for 10 years and is moving because her husband has accepted a position elsewhere.

• Accepted the retirement resignation of Bowen, who has been with the school district for 20 years.

• Accepted the resignations of Michael Barry, high school social studies teacher, and Steve Ziegelmeier, middle school science teacher.

Winter wheat crop outlook varies

WICHITA (AP) — Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service reported Monday 3 percent of the state's winter wheat crop was in excellent and 30 percent in good condition. About 41 percent of the wheat was rated as fair, with 17 percent getting poor and 9 percent very poor rankings.

About 77 percent of the fields showed no winter freeze damage. About 93 percent had no insect damage and 91 showed no disease to date. But Hugoton farmer Bob Parsons didn't plant winter wheat on his parched land last fall until after late

rains broke a long drought.

And when natural gas prices soared, he couldn't justify the cost of pumping water to irrigate 300 acres he had seeded into wheat. On other fields, he put in barely enough water to sprout the crop. So Parsons was not surprised this spring that the wheat he seeded on those 300 acres did not come up until late February and early March.

"It will make it, but it will be a poor crop," he said. Parsons already expects to replant at least 50 acres with an alternative crop.

China blames U.S. pilot for crash Saturday

SANYA, China (AP) — As U.S. diplomats waited on a tropical island today to see 24 crew members from a U.S. Navy spy plane, China's president said the United States was fully responsible for a collision between the plane and a Chinese fighter jet.

China says the American pilot caused the crash by suddenly veering into the Chinese jet, one of two sent up to follow the plane into Chinese airspace. U.S. military authorities say it was more likely that the faster, lighter Chinese propeller-driven EP-3, which is about the size of a 150-seater commercial jetliner.

"The responsibility fully lies with the American side. We have full evidence for that," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao quoted Jiang Zemin as saying of Sunday's collision. Jiang said the unarmed EP-3 surveillance plane violated international law and intruded into Chinese airspace by making an emergency landing without permission on Hainan island in southern China.

"It is the U.S. airplane that flew against the rules, made dangerous maneuvers, damaged our airplane," Zhu quoted the Chinese president as

saying. Also today, China said it has the right to conduct its own investigation into the collision, which caused a fighter to crash. It wasn't clear if that meant the Chinese felt they have the right to board the plane, which the United States says is sovereign U.S. territory and cannot be boarded without permission.

Asked at a Beijing news conference if Chinese authorities had boarded the plane, Zhu did not respond directly. "Based on Chinese law, and international practice, we have the right to conduct an investigation."

Appearing to mock the American

claim that the plane is protected by international law from outside inspection without U.S. permission, Zhu smiled and told the reporters: "If this plane is sovereign American territory, how did it land in China?"

"China cannot understand why the U.S. conducts such frequent surveillance missions," Zhu quoted Jiang as saying.

The U.S. plane landed at a Chinese naval air base near the town of Lingshui after an in-flight collision with a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea. China says its fighter pilot parachuted out and is missing.

Briefly

Weather: Warming trend

The temperature is expected to top out around 80 on Thursday, the National Weather Service said this morning. Thunderstorms are also a part of the forecast, as is morning fog. Here is how the weather people see it: Tonight, a 40 percent chance for thunderstorms, fog and drizzle, lows around 45 and east winds around 10 mph; Wednesday, cloudy early with fog and drizzle, then becoming partly sunny, with highs around 75 and light winds turning to the south 10-20 mph; Wednesday night, clear, low around 40; and Thursday, thunderstorms and highs around 80. Monday's high in Colby was 66 and the overnight low this morning was 38, climbing to 48 by 8 a.m.

The records for April 3: 88 in 1929 and 11 in 1975. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

City council meets tonight

The Colby City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m., today, in

council chambers, 585 N. Franklin Ave. Items on the agenda include a review of proposals for firm electric power, purchasing a containment fill station, awarding bid for parks department pickup and preliminary approval of a proposal from Penco on the Range and Davis project.

Blood drive planned next week

The Thomas County Bloodmobile will be hosting an American Red Cross blood drive, from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 11 at the American Legion, 1850 W. 4th, Colby. For information or to schedule an appointment, call toll free 1-888-719-8929.

Salina burial pit focus of event

The Prairie Museum of Art and History has planned a special program for Sunday, April 8, beginning at 2 p.m. recognizing Kansas Archeology Week. According to museum officials, Donna Roper will present the program entitled, "Salina-Area Archaeology in the 1930s: The Indian Burial Pit and Other Adventures of the Whiteford Fam-

ily." Everyone is invited to this free event, which will be held in the Garvey Educational Room at the museum, 1905 S. Franklin in Colby.

League art show Wednesday

The Northwest Kansas League Art Show is scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of this week and features many schools from around the area. The show begins at noon in the Colby High School gymnasium and will be open during the day and until 9 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday. The show highlights the talents of students in grades K-12, said Lamoreaux Fulwider, art teacher.

Jaycees to hold dance

Jimmy Dee and the Original Fabulous Destinations will be in Colby on Saturday, April 7, from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Jaycee Center.

According to organizers, there are limited tickets available. For information or to purchase tickets, call Bonnie Lewis, 462-3627, Lori Haberer, 462-9011 or the Hoxie

Sentinel, 675-3321. All proceeds from this event will go toward community betterment.

Preschool enrollment this week

PuddleDuck Preschool enrollment for children 3 to 5 years of age is planned for Wednesday and Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. at the facility, 520 W. 5th St.

For information or questions, call Amy Jennings at 462-2603 or 462-8388.

Carnival set, volunteers needed

Colby Elementary School's Parent-Teacher Organization is sponsoring a carnival, Sunday, April 22, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. Jurassic Journey is the theme this year, said Julie Price, one of the organizers. In addition to bringing back the egg toss, many other games and prizes are planned.

People are still needed to help. For information, call Price at 462-3506.

