



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Never-ending job



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

City employees Wheat Lippelman and Ron Kogler loaded a packer after finishing concrete work on the corner of Sixth and Mission. City employees will be fixing curbs, sidewalks and streets all spring and summer.

## Colby native coming back home with new title, ‘Dr.’

By **PATTY DECKER**

*Free Press Editor*

A Colby native is one step closer to coming home for good. Dr. Jeff Jennings, who will be setting up permanent residence here in August, is currently in town on a rural rotation until the end of April.

Jennings will be in family practice medicine at the Colby Medical and Surgical Center when he returns at the end of July.

Family practice, he explained, takes in the whole scope ranging from obstetrics to geriatrics.

For Jennings, Colby was always his first choice. “When I went to college, I wanted to do something that would bring me back to my family and a rural community,” he said. “At first, I started out as an engineering major, but later discovered I liked medicine.

“This is a great place to raise a family and I’m anxious and excited to get back.”

Born and raised in Colby, Jennings is a 1990 graduate of Colby High School. He continued his education by completing two years at Colby Community College. From there, he attended the University of Kansas and in 1994 graduated with a degree in biology.

After receiving his bachelor’s degree, Jennings said he was accepted into the University of Kansas Medical School in Kansas City, graduating in 1998. He did three years of residency at Wesley Medical Center in family practice.

Currently there are five family prac-



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Physician Assistant Brian Unruh (left) and Dr. Jeff Jennings reviewed a chart recently at the Colby Medical and Surgical Center.

tice physicians in the area — Drs. Victor Hildyard, LaDonna Regier, Eric Jacobsen, Jeff Kasselmann and Stephen Grillo. In addition, Dr. Raymond Ketting does pediatrics and Dr. Mohammed Fercha is a surgeon.

“Jeff will be a wonderful addition to our medical community,” Hildyard said this week.

Michael Boyles, Citizens Medical Center, Inc. chief executive officer, added that, he too, is excited to have Jennings returning to Colby.

“This is a young man that folks know and trust,” Boyles said today. “He graduated from here, has family roots

here and he knows the people. Jeff will be a tremendous asset for the whole community.”

According to Boyles, the hospital has been working with Jennings since 1998 and has helped subsidize him through his residency years.

Jeff and his wife, Angie, who has a master’s degree in social work, have one daughter, Abby.

His parents are Dave and Donna Jennings of Colby.

“I am looking forward to coming home,” Jennings said, “and look forward to serving a community that has been very good to me.”

## Columbine crosses part of Sunday event

The original 13 Columbine crosses, crafted in memory of the Columbine High School shooting victims, will be the topic of the first assembly of a five-day event featuring Jerry Johnston, Sunday through Thursday, in Colby.

Johnston will speak on “Why Does God Allow Suffering” at the Colby Community Building at 7 p.m. on Sunday night. An accomplished national speaker, Johnston will also be teaching students at Colby schools on substance

abuse, suicide, violence, AIDS and the importance of making right decisions during the week.

Johnston’s schedule will include the Brewster High School at 8:30 a.m. Monday, Colby Middle School at 8:20

a.m. Tuesday, Colby High School at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday and Golden Plains High School at 10:30 a.m. Thursday.

Johnston’s visit is sponsored by the Greater Northwest Kansas Crusade.

## Rexford seeking funds for housing updates

By **MAXINE NELSON**

*Colby Free Press*

REXFORD — The Community of Rexford has applied for a Kansas Small Cities Community Development Block Grant to allow low income people to redo their homes, windows, heating, and other necessary updates.

“This is the second year we applied for the grant,” said Kathi Hapke, one of the coordinators working for the grant. “We did not get anything last year,” she said.

“We had a site visit last Friday when Laura Hefner of Topeka and Linda

Hunziker from Morland came out and did a walk-through, and Corina Cox from Hill City wrote the grant,” she said. Thomas County Commissioner Duane Dawes also did a walk-through.

“We walked and looked at the outside of all the houses in the target area, which is north of the railroad tracks and west of Main Street. We won’t know the results until June, but it sounded positive,” Hapke said.

Positive comments about Rexford by the visiting team included cleanliness, no loose dogs, knowledge of the city, and having lunch at the Ranch

House.

“There are about 20 houses that we are considering,” said Hapke. “The owners or renters fill out application papers, and everyone has been very positive about doing it...and all the paper work.”

The money comes from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing. Eligibility depends on a person’s need and income level. The work will be done through a construction company, and construction companies will bid on the project, Hapke explained.

Rexford has had other grants in the

past. Hapke said ground is staked out and ready to start digging for playground equipment which has been obtained by a grant. The grant, she said, was for \$4,400, and they have received between \$4,700-\$4,800 in matching donations so far. “We are looking for volunteers to help put the playground equipment up,” she said.

“They told me it (the grant for playground equipment) couldn’t be done, and I said ‘sure it can.’ You just have to be positive,” said Hapke.

A grant for a fire truck has also been approved.

## Getting ready



MAXINE NELSON/Colby Free Press

Jamie Bolen, Colby College sophomore from Sharon Springs, made up “Hobo” bingo cards in preparation for the “Hobo Party” on Monday in the Thomas County 4-H Building. A senior talent show is scheduled from 1 to 3 p.m., an information booth will be open from 1 to 4, bingo is set from 4 to 5:30, and a Hobo Stew Supper will be served from 5:30 to 7.

## Here’s to you . . .

- ✓**Kendal & Janice Aldrich** — good luck at your new location.
  - ✓**Max Embree** — an honor well-deserved.
  - ✓**Don Crumbaker** — you earned Hall of Fame status.
  - ✓**Danielle Jones** — nice painting.
  - ✓**Pastor Dale & Janelle Johnson** — welcome to Colby.
  - ✓**Graduates** — of Leadership Thomas County, congratulations.
  - ✓**Kenley German** — your giving has benefited many.
  - ✓**Officer Scott Sittin** — you deserve it.
  - ✓**All volunteers** — three cheers!
  - ✓**Musicians** — good luck at state.
- (Birthday greetings are in the My Turn column on page 2. To include someone or group in this weekly salute, call 462-3963.)

## Briefly

### Weather: More warm

It looks like the 80s will continue in the Colby region for the next several days. The National Weather Service said this morning that 80s can be expected through Tuesday of next week, with overnight lows in the upper 40s to mid-50s. Windy conditions will persist tonight and Saturday, with thunderstorms a possibility Saturday and Sunday. Thursday’s high in Colby was 80 and the overnight low this morning was 43. Precipitation remains at 3.01 inches for the month to date. The records for April 27: 91 in 1989 and 22 in 1924. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Recycling center to hold open house

An open house for the community recycling center is planned from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, at the facility, 720 E. College Dr., next to the blue water tower. According to Lynette Koon, one of the coordinators, city and county officials will kick off the event at 10 a.m. with comments and

the rest of the time will be a “come and go affair.” Koon said she hopes that people will come and tour the building and see the many demonstrations. In addition, from 1 to 4 p.m., an informational tent will be set up in the Wal-Mart parking lot with displays, information handouts and games for children.

### Commissioners meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse. Lynette Koon will present a proclamation for the commissioners to sign, and approve an expansion grant for the recycling center at 9 a.m.; Emergency Preparedness Coordinator John Lygeros will discuss the emergency preparedness manual at 9:30 a.m.; Rosalie Seemann, Thomas County’s representative for the Silver Haired Legislature is on the agenda at 9:45 a.m.; Corina Cox will be present for the Rural Fire District No. 4 fire truck bid opening at 10 a.m.; Fidelis Millan of NexTech will discuss long distance rates at 10:30 a.m.; Phil Finley will discuss property assess-

## Navy pilot from Goodland says he’s no hero

TOPEKA (AP) — Lt. j.g. Jeff Vignery helped regain control of a Navy spy plane after it was struck by a Chinese fighter, but says he’s no hero.

Vignery and another pilot were at the controls of the EP-3E turboprop plane when it was struck April 1 over the South China Sea and forced to land on Hainan island.

“We’re not heroes. We were just doing our jobs. The real heroes are the American people who supported us,”

Vignery said Thursday. The 24 crew members were detained 11 days before they were released and returned to their home base at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station in Washington state April 14.

Vignery, 27, who grew up in Goodland, was at the Statehouse where he was honored by the House and met with Gov. Bill Graves, who presented him with a state flag flown in the pilot’s honor. The tall, thin pilot with close-

cropped red hair received three standing ovations from lawmakers. With him were his parents, brother, sister and wife.

During a news conference, Vignery recounted the harrowing minutes after the F-8 fighter buzzed the four-engine plane and then struck it, clipping the left engines and shearing off its nose. In about 45 seconds, the plane plummeted some 7,500 feet before it straightened out at around 10,000 feet

and landed about 20-30 minutes later, he said. After it was struck, the plane first was pushed up and then rolled left until it was nearly upside down. Vignery said he and another pilot, Lt. Shane Osborne, fought to regain control and made emergency calls.

“My thought was I really couldn’t believe this was happening,” Vignery said. “I looked at Lt. Osborne ... his eyes were big. I’m sure my eyes were about to pop out of my head also.”

ment at 11 a.m.; Larry Jumper, landfill manager, will discuss printer repairs at 11:30 a.m.; and Sheriff Tom Jones and County Treasurer Donita Applebury will discuss upgrading the computer system at 11:45 a.m.

### Athletic physicals scheduled

The Family Center for Health Care will be giving athletic physicals in the commons area of Colby High School on Tuesday, May 1, from 5 to 8 p.m. for students in Colby, Rexford and Brewster. There will be a \$10 charge for the physicals with money going toward the school’s athletic training department. For those unable to make that date, physicals will again be given on Thursday, May 10, from 5 to 6 p.m. for students from all three locations. In addition, Colby Medical and Surgical Center, 175 S. Range, will be offering free physicals again this year to students in Thomas County on Monday, May 7. Colby Middle School students are asked to be at the clinic by 5:30 p.m. Colby High School students should arrive by 6:15 p.m. and students from Golden Plains and Brewster are scheduled for 7 p.m.

Due to construction work at the facility, students are asked to use the east entrance on the north end of the building. For questions, call Jeff Quenzer, activities director, 465-5300.

### Hospice banquet Saturday

The “We’ve Got A Heart” Banquet and Auction to benefit Hospice Services in Thomas County is planned for Saturday, at the Colby American Legion, 1850 W. 4th St. The event starts at 5:30 p.m., with a social hour sponsored by the Kansas Association of Life Underwriters. Dinner will follow at 6:30 p.m. with a live auction starting at 7 p.m. For information, call 462-6710.

### City’s tree board needs volunteers

The City of Colby Tree Board is asking for help with planting new trees at the city’s tree farm near the municipal airport. According to Sharon Steele, one of the board members, there are some 125 trees needing to be planted at the farm. These new trees, she said, will eventually replace older, dying trees on public property. To volunteer, call her at 462-2558 or Randy Brown, 462-6665.

