



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Ethanol plant in northwest Kansas’ future

By JAY KELLEY

*Colby Free Press*

The complexities of getting an ethanol plant built in northwest Kansas have been “overwhelming,” but Jeff Torluemke thinks there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

“We hope to have the plant built in 1 1/2-2 years,” said the Hoxie banker, farmer, cattleman and chairman of Heartland Ethanol, to bring a plant to the area.

Other investors include Brian Baalman, Menlo; Dick Sterrett, Quinter; David Mann, Quinter; Ben Dickman, Grinnell; and Ronald

Blaesi, Sharon Springs.

Right now, the company is looking at building between Grinnell and Hoxie, although that isn’t absolute.

“We are still looking for the right place,” he said. The “right place” depends on water supply, road and rail access and a workforce.

“We need to do something to add value to our commodities out here,” said Torluemke.

Northwest Kansas is a prime location because of its consistent corn crop, proximity to Denver and cattle operations, according to Steve Sershen, project coordinator from Val-

Add Services of Chester, S.D.

Denver is a good ethanol market and cattle operations are a market for distiller’s grain, a by-product of the ethanol production process.

Torluemke’s group is searching for producers and workers in eastern Colorado and southwest Nebraska, also.

“We’re looking for a tri-state interest,” he said. “It will take interest in a wide area to make this successful.”

Torluemke said he got interested after he and a friend, Brian Baalman, toured an ethanol plant in northwestern Missouri.

Tours of plants in Minnesota, South Dakota, Missouri and Nebraska never turned up a reason not to pursue the idea.

Torluemke thinks demand will only increase as demand for cleaner fuels increases. California’s recent ban on MTBE, a gasoline additive thought to contaminate water, has increased expected demand in that state to 600 million gallons, about 35 percent of U.S. production.

In Minnesota, all gasoline must contain at least 10 percent ethanol.

“That demand is only going to increase,” said

Torluemke. Ethanol is also a clean industry. The plants produce carbon dioxide, but even that is being put to use. Carbon dioxide can be made into urea, used in fertilizer.

“We need something to maintain and ensure the way of life out here in western Kansas,” he said. “It seems every time we turn around, there are reasons to leave the area instead of stay here and maintain our livelihood.”

Torluemke thinks the plant would be a step in the right direction.

“I’m having a hard time bridling my enthusiasm,” he said.

## Sampler tour comes to Colby

By JAY KELLEY

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The Kansas Explorers Club has chosen northwest Kansas as the setting for their Group Adventure No. 5, Aug. 4-5, according to Marci Penner of the Kansas Sampler Foundation.

The club is a project of the foundation. “There are about 1,200 members and the goal of the group is to encourage people to get out to the nooks and crannies of the state,” said Penner.

“This is a group that feels good about spending money in small towns and appreciates local efforts.”

Group adventures are designed to include experiences not normally available to the public, said Penner.

The weekend tour will leave Colby at 8 a.m. and return in the evening Saturday.

Sunday, the group will begin with a tour of the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby, again at 8 a.m.

Reservations can be made by calling 620-585-2374.

The trip is open to the public, but Penner said reservations are needed.

Featured stops on the tour include the Arikaree Breaks, Mt. Sunflower, Fort Wallace and the cemetery, the Chalk Pyramids, the Prairie Museum and the Shepherd’s Staff at Rexford.

This group will also stop for breakfast at the McDonald Grocery, eat ParkHill sopapillas at the Cheyenne County Museum, snack at the The General Store in Sharon Springs, enjoy a meal catered by the Butterfield Trail Historical Museum at their courthouse museum in Russell Springs, and be treated to a special meal at the Mustard Seed in Atwood.

Other stops on this tour will include the historic theatre in Atwood, Rudolph Wendelin’s grave in Ludell, and Elephant Rock near Traer, Penner said today.

## Heat hurts corn crop

WICHITA (AP) — Scorching temperatures have hit the Kansas corn crop at a critical time in the plant’s development, turning many fields of dryland crops white and prompting some farmers to cut down their corn as silage.

But so much corn was planted in Kansas this year that even with those losses and lower yields, the state may still pull off a record corn crop of 439 million bushels this fall, said William Tierney, Extension economist at Kansas State University.

Crops grown in the northeast corner of the state — the six or seven Kansas

counties at the fringe of the nation’s corn belt — have gotten plenty of rain and are doing well, said Darrell Holaday, president of Advanced Market Concepts, a Manhattan-based consulting firm.

But elsewhere in the state unrelenting triple-digit temperatures and little rain have caused a rapid deterioration of crops, he said.

Dryland corn yields have already probably dropped 25 percent, and the irrigated corn yields will probably be down 5 to 10 percent, he said.

Losses vary widely across the state.



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Larry McLemore, left, and Duane Johnson were helping set up tents today for the Pickin’ on the Plains Bluegrass Festival at Bourquin’s Campground on south Franklin in Colby. The festival gets underway late this afternoon and continues through Sunday afternoon. The

McLemore Family of Colby takes the stage today at 6 p.m. Saturday events start at 10 a.m. with the youth contest and Sunday activities will begin at 10 a.m. with a Gospel Sing Along. There are many ticket options available and priced affordably for everyone, organizers said.

### The final touches

## Historic airplane scheduled to land in Liberal gets grounded

LIBERAL (AP) — A replica of the first aircraft that crossed the Atlantic Ocean nonstop in 1919 was grounded in Arizona because of legal concerns.

The Vickers Vimy FB27, a twin-engine, open-cockpit wood-and cloth-behemoth, has wings that span 68 feet.

The plane — the world’s largest biplane — was scheduled to fly into Lib-

eral on Friday afternoon en route to Topeka and then to the Experimental Aviation Association’s annual air show at Oshkosh, Wis.

But the plane was grounded in Mesa, Ariz., because of legal action by Germany’s BMW Corp.

The Vimy had passed a surprise FAA inspection requested by BMW lawyers

in California, but at BMW’s request, a judge in Los Angeles issued an order Wednesday grounding the plane.

BMW Corp. does not want the plane to fly in the United States because of potential product liability lawsuits.

The Vimy is operated by Vimy Restorations Inc., a nonprofit organization. Kevin Drewelow of Topeka,

president of the local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, said the Vimy crew was appealing BMW’s legal action.

The Vimy Aircraft Project was the brainchild of San Francisco investment broker Peter McMillan, who competed in the England-to-Australia air rally in 1990.

McMillan set out to build a modified version of the original 1919 Vimy, using tubular steel instead of wire and wood in the fuselage. However, the wings and tail were made from Sitka spruce and birch plywood. The wings are covered with aircraft fabric.

Two four-bladed wooden propellers, each nearly 11 feet wide, are powered

by two Chevrolet V-8 engines. The plane carries 710 gallons of fuel and cruises at about 75 mph.

The Vimy replica was making a cross-country trip across the United States to generate publicity for its planned reenactment of the first non-stop crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, scheduled for June 2002.

## Shutdown of generator becomes issue in proceedings

TOPEKA (AP) — A problem that temporarily will cost the state’s largest electric company about one-tenth of its generating capacity has become an issue in proceedings before state regulators.

Western Resources Inc. shut down a generating unit at its Jeffrey Energy Center last week, after an incident it attributed to hot and humid weather. The company said in a letter to regulators that the outage could affect the supply of power to its customers.

The unit, one of three at Jeffrey,

about 30 miles northwest of Topeka, generates 625 megawatts of power, and the company expects it to be off line for three weeks.

It takes about 570 megawatts to supply Topeka with power during summer’s peak demand.

The company told the Kansas Corporation Commission in its letter that it expected to spend at least \$5 million extra because of the outage. The letter became public Thursday, six days after the incident.

“As our electric facilities age, cus-

tomers demand increases, and the volatility of wholesale power availability and pricing becomes more unpredictable, our business is subject to greater risk,” wrote Leslie Morgan, the company’s vice president for generation services.

Morgan’s statement and others in the letter led a consumer advocate to suggest that Western is using the incident to put pressure on the KCC for a rate increase. Western has requested a \$151 million rate increase, and the commission has until Wednesday to issue a

decision.

The KCC also is reviewing Western’s plans for a corporate restructuring and is expected to issue an order Friday on whether the company can take a step toward those plans.

“They’re using this as a way to argue for higher rates,” said Walker Hendrix, consumer counsel for the Citizens’ Utility Ratepayers Board, which represents residential and small business consumers. “They’re basically trying to make their case after the fact.”

\$20 per running foot, according to John Galli, cemetery board president.

by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Commissioners meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday for a budget work day in the commissioners room of the courthouse. The meeting is open to the public.

### Fence cost corrected

In the Thomas County Commissioners’ story on July 17, the Colby Free Press erroneously reported that the fence along the new section of the cemetery along County Club Drive had cost \$200 per running foot; the actual cost was



### Thumbs up!



- ✓Tom Bowen — enjoy retirement.
- ✓Pickin’ on the Plains Festival organizers — good luck this weekend.
- ✓Rosalie Seemann — grand marshal of the 2001 Thomas County Free Fair Parade.
- ✓Colby Community College Board — on your decision to name the ag and vet-tech building the Stanley Carr Agriculture Center.
- ✓Little Cutter Kvasnicka — keep getting better and better and better.
- ✓Relay for Life Committee — the 2001 event nears. (Helpers, teams still needed. Please call 462-2724, or 8199, or 3481.)
- ✓Jeff Torluemke — on your ethanol plant plans.
- ✓Kansas Explorers Club — enjoy your visit to Colby and Rexford, and your other stops in northwest Kansas.

## Briefly

### Weather: 95 to 105

Temperatures anywhere from 95 to 105 are forecast for the Colby region now through Monday, the National Weather Service forecast center said today. Lows during the period will generally be in the middle 60s. Thunderstorm chances are rated at around 20 percent, with partly cloudy conditions. Thursday’s high in Colby was 101 (the 6th triple-digit temperature this month), and the overnight low this morning was 67. There was no additional precipitation, leaving the month’s total at 0.63 inches. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 87 degrees. The records for July 20: 108 in 1934 and 43 in 1900. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided*

### Nine-Run-Run registration nears

Now in its sixth year, the Thomas County Emergency Medical Services is again sponsoring its Nine-Run-Run beginning at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 4 in Colby. Early registration is underway, said Kathy Wright, one of the organizers with openings in all age groups for the 10K and 5K run, 2K fun run and 2K walk.

The cost of the event for early registration is \$10 for walkers and \$13 for runners and after Monday, July 23, the cost will increase to \$12 and \$15 respectively, she said. All proceeds go to benefit the local service. To register, stop by the facility at 1245 S. Franklin or call any EMS member.

