



COLBY FREE PRESS

Colby now boasts two angels

By JAY KELLEY
and PATTY DECKER

Colby Free Press

Colby can boast of many things. And that list now includes two angels.

Angel Flight Central, a volunteer group dedicated to helping people who need transportation to medical care, has added new partners in Colby.

The volunteer organization, whose mission is to "assist people who have a financial need in getting to medical care," according to regional director Judy Benjamin, has enlisted Mark Ostmeyer and Ken Bixenman to their cause.

"He provides the plane and I do the flying," said Ostmeyer on Sunday.

Their first flight is taking 9-month-old Dylan Lampe on the final leg of his trip, from Colby to Kansas City, Mo. where he has an appointment at St. Luke's Hospital for treatment of plagiocephaly, which if untreated could result in loss of hearing, vision or permanent disfigurement.

George Turk, Denver, was the pilot who brought Dylan and his mother to Colby, adding that the Angel Flight West has flown nearly 2,000 missions this year alone.

"We help people in 11 western states and during the 17 years the program has been operating, more than 10,000 missions have been completed.

In Dylan's situation, his mother said, he started seeing specialists last March and she hopes this might be his last trip to Kansas City for adjustments.

Dylan's mother, Sharanne, Canyon City, Colo., said she is so grateful this program exists since she has had to take her son to specialists in both Denver and Kansas City about every two weeks for helmet adjustments and updates.

Although the people using the service have varying ailments, they must meet certain requirements, according to Benjamin.

"They have to be able to board the plane, and there must be a need," she said.

Angel Flight does not operate ambulances or do emergency flights and the pilots donate their time and resources, so Benjamin said they do screen potential recipients.

Ostmeyer said he saw several ads for the service in flying magazines and heard about the Shriners using the service.

Steve Molstad, local hospital representative for the Shriners, said the service is "an unbelievable thing." According to Molstad, pilots voluntarily give their time and planes to fly people to various locations and once there, "earth angels" transport people from the ground to hospitals.

"Last year," he said, "a Colby child needed to go to the Shrine Crippled Children's Hospital in St. Louis, Mo. every 10 days, and his parents didn't



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby Municipal Airport Manager Mark Ostmeyer and Sharanne Lampe, assisted her son, nine-month-old Dylan, for the next leg of their trip to

Kansas City where Dylan will be treated for plagiocephaly. Ostmeyer and Ken Bixenman, of Colby, recently joined the Angel Flight team.

drive."

"Without this service, it would have been a real hardship," he said.

Benjamin said there are different services, Angel Flight Central, West,

South Central, Northeast, Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, who all cooperate, but are not linked together formally.

"We were started as Wings over Mid-America by Jim Stevens, who still

flies missions for us," she said.

All of the groups cooperate in getting people to their destinations.

Angel Flight may be contacted by calling 1-800-474-9464 or looking up

www.angelflightcentral.org.

Although Angel Flight relies on volunteers, Benjamin said administrative costs can be high, for mission screening and support.

Landfill discussion consumes commission meeting Monday

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners have a lot of things to think about, and not the least is the landfill. They spent Monday morning collecting all sorts of information on its operation, and advised that they are going to ponder before making any decisions.

The county took over operation of the landfill from the city Jan. 1, and will soon be opening another pit, and closing the old one which showed traces of contamination at the monitoring well. They are also considering the best way to dispose of approximately 4,200 tons of concrete stockpiled at the site, and how to finance the operations.

Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor, said the approximately 3,000 square yards of broken concrete is sitting where the west edge of the proposed new municipal solid waste pit will be excavated.

He asked the commissioners whether he should crush the concrete and use it for road material, at a cost of approximately \$35,700, or dig a pit and bury the concrete at a cost of approximately \$7,500. There is a company in Scott City that has equipment to crush the concrete, and remove rebar and other extraneous

material. The owner gave a demonstration in Colby a year or so ago, and would charge approximately \$35,700 for the amount of concrete at the landfill.

Jumper said he had a pledge of \$11,900 from the Thomas County Road Department and \$5,100 from the city of Colby to purchase the crushed concrete and use it for road material. When this \$17,000 is deducted from the \$35,700 total project, the remaining amount of funds needed is \$18,700 to recycle the concrete, after paying its bills, the landfill only has \$11,358.55 in the landfill's building and

grounds maintenance budget for the year. This is a shortfall of \$7,341.45.

If the concrete is buried, Jumper said, the county will have to purchase materials for roads. In addition, burying the concrete will take up space in the landfill which will probably be needed for other materials.

The commissioners are committed to recycling, and trying to keep the landfill open as long as possible. Commission Chair Ron Evans said it made no sense to bury the concrete, fill up the landfill, and then have to buy material for roads. The commissioners decided they could probably make up the shortfall from

money being set aside for closure of the landfill. The commissioners are putting aside \$6,000 a year for 30 years with the intention of having funding for future commissioners to close the landfill. However, they reasoned that they are closing one pit, and opening another, and could perhaps use some of that money. After reading the letter of intent they wrote at the time they started putting the money away, they decided to ask the county attorney, Allan Taylor, if it would be legal to use the money. They presented the information to Taylor, and he took it to study, before making a decision.

Briefly

Weather: Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms, with the possibility of heavy rain, is in tonight's forecast for the Colby area. Chances for precipitation are set at 60 percent, with low temperatures 55-60 and brisk southwest winds 15-25 mph, shifting to the northwest late. Wednesday calls for partly cloudy conditions, some thunderstorms again likely, with highs in the middle 80s and northwest winds 15-25 mph, decreasing late. Wednesday night and Thursday, partly cloudy, thunderstorms likely, lows 55-60 and highs 75-85. Monday's high in Colby was 91 and the overnight low this morning was 61. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 82 degrees. The precipitation for the month remains at 0.05 inches. The records for Aug. 14: 103 in 1937 and 44 in 1920. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Budget hearing Wednesday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Wednesday in the commissioners room of the courthouse for the hearing on the 2002 fiscal year budget. The public is urged to turn out and give their input.

Food distribution set

Commodities will be distributed from 2-3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 20, at the Senior Progress Center in Colby. Expected commodities are rice cereal, corn, peas, beef stew, cranberries, instant milk and applesauce. Eligible persons may receive them according to the following income guidelines, which took effect July 1: household size — one, \$905; two, \$1,219; three, \$1,533; four, \$1,848; five, \$2,162; six, \$2,476; seven, \$2,790; eight, \$3,104. For additional family members, add \$315.

Awareness team meets Friday

The Community Awareness Team will meet at noon,

Friday, Aug. 17, in the student union at Colby Community College. The team, said Janet Worthy, coordinator, is continually looking for new members or people wanting to help with a specific event and, if interested, call her at 462-8152.

Meals On Wheels needs help

The Meals On Wheels program, a service of Citizens Medical Center, is again in need of volunteers. The program receives no outside financial support. Recipients pay a minimal fee for a hot, nutritious meal delivered to their home. Volunteers generally sign up for one day per week, every other month. However they do have some volunteers who share a position, i.e. each delivers three months out of the year. If you can help, or are interested in finding out more about the program, please call Jeanene Brown, director of education/volunteers at Citizens Medical Center, Inc., (785) 462-4850.

Childhood testing offered

Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center, Oakley is offering early childhood intervention testing, including eyesight, hearing and learning disability testing. All test are free. For more information or an appointment, call 785-672-3125.

Pool to close

The Colby Municipal Swimming Pool will close for the season at 4 p.m., Wednesday, according to Colby Recreation Department officials. For information or questions, call 462-4440.

Retirement coffee planned

A retirement coffee is planned from 3 to 5 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 28, for Darrell Witzel, who is retiring from the City of Colby. Witzel has been a refuse collector having started working for the city in March of 1969, city officials said. The coffee is open to everyone.

Goodland firm named in scam

By TOM BETZ

The Goodland Daily News

GOODLAND — An injunction was granted Thursday in Sherman County District Court against Triton Exploration, 120 W. 11th, at the request of state Securities Commissioner David Brant, who charged that the firm was running a "Ponzi" investment scam.

Sherman County District Judge Jack L. Burr granted the injunction, and placed the assets of Triton under the control of Sharon Springs lawyer R. Dean Dinkel.

The petition filed by Rick A. Fleming, general counsel of the securities commissioner, alleges that Triton Exploration has been selling securities on oil and gas leases without being registered in the state of Kansas, and that between Nov. 1998 and July 30 of this year, the defendants have taken in about \$1.2 million from about 50 investors.

The petition lists the principal defendants as Phillip R. McGuckin, president of Triton, 805 Cattle Trail, and Kirk Mitchell McNab, stepson of McGuckin, 1101 1/2 Main.

Fleming said the securities being sold are on about eight oil and gas leases of unknown value that produce annual income estimated at less than \$25,000 in Gove, Hamilton and Sumner counties.

The petition says the securities are not registered in Kansas, and that McGuckin and McNab are not regis-

tered as broker-dealers or agents.

Fleming said the manner in which the securities have been offered constitutes a Ponzi scheme, where new investor money is used to pay previous investors, and the checks were said to be profits from production.

These "profit" checks then were touted in the solicitation of additional investments.

The petition also alleges that investor funds were used for McGuckin's personal expenses.

Fleming said the securities office had been investigating Triton for about a month after receiving some phone calls about the operation.

He said McGuckin and McNab were also involved in an earlier oil and gas venture known as Cambrian Oil and the petition said approximately 39 investors lost over \$500,000 in that venture. Fleming said there is an open investigation on this company, which is no longer in operation.

The petition alleges that McGuckin did not inform investors that, in 1986, he was ordered to cease and desist from selling securities in violation of the state securities act.

Specific allegations include that the defendants "told investors that Triton was a successful producer of oil and gas, but in truth and fact, only one well has produced oil and gas, and it was not in commercial quantities.

"That the defendants told investors that wells were being drilled or being

placed into production when they were not.

"Defendants McGuckin and McNab continued to tell investors that a particular well had high enough pressure to break a gauge used by Western Gas, even after a Western Gas employee told them the information was erroneous.

"When a Triton employee voiced her concerns about this, McNab said 'expletive deleted' the investors."

"That McNab told investors that McGuckin never hit a dry hole in 21 years. In truth and fact, Kansas Corporation Commission records show that McGuckin has hit at least two dry holes.

"That McNab told prospective investors that his name was Kirk Mitchell. In truth and fact, his full name is Kirk Mitchell McNab, so investors were unable to check his background before choosing to invest."

Fleming said it will be up to Dinkel to take control of the assets of Triton, and to determine what real value the oil and gas leases have.

He is to file a preliminary report with the court before Oct. 1, and Judge Burr has scheduled another hearing on the matter for 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 30.

Triton is being represented by Jeffrey A. Mason of Goodland. Neither he nor the respondents, who appeared in person according to court records, made any objection to the injunction or the appointment of a receiver.

