



COLBY FREE PRESS

Getting ready



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Breck Arnberger of Colby tested his skills on the muzzle loader during a special youth skills day held recently. The day-long activity was organized by the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department and included instruction on firearms, muzzleloaders, archery and more. The event, which had 48 participants attending, was just in time for young people who will be among the first to go deer hunting this Saturday and Sunday. For those using bow and arrow, deer season begins Monday, Oct. 1 and muzzleloader's season opened two weeks ago.

Ary credits several factors to college's enrollment hike

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Enrollment is up by 4 percent from the previous year at Colby Community College based on numbers submitted for official enrollment day late last week, officials said today.

Years of static or declining enrollment at the college prompted recruiting initiatives to address the problem and the changes paid off this year, said Dr. Mikel Ary, college president.

"The college recorded 1,093 students on Sept. 19, an increase of 41 or 4 percent above last year's count of 1,052," he said.

Probably the largest contributor to the growth at the college may be the result of a tuition grant authorized by the board of trustees for Thomas County graduates and residents.

"The board voted last spring to provide full tuition grants to graduates of Thomas County high schools and those who could prove long-term county residency," said Ary. "We recorded a significant increase in freshman stu-

dents from Thomas County."

Another recruiting method that contributed to recent increases, Ary said, was by public relations through production and distribution a CD-ROM to high school juniors and seniors in our service area.

The CD included information about various programs, departments on campus, as well as a virtual tour of college facilities, he said. In addition, several video testimonials were provided by current students and graduates.

Another reason for the increase was due to the faculty and staff members who contributed by being among the best in the state, he said.

"Quality faculty and staff are vital to recruitment and retention of our students," Ary said. "Outstanding faculty, a positive campus atmosphere and a dedicated administrative team were all part of the equation."

In addition, Ary said he was especially pleased with enrollment numbers because both full-time equivalency and credit hour production

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Dr. Mikel Ary,
president of Colby College

showed significant increases as well.

"FTE was up 4.6 percent to 902 and total credit hour production was up almost 5 percent at 13,535 hours," he said.

Since state funding is based on the full-time equivalency, student numbers are a critical, vital sign to the health of all state-affiliated academic institutions, Ary explained.

A third initiative that occurred last year adding to the increase was the scholarship effort in the college's secondary market area.

"I need to credit Skip Sharp, dean of students, for his efforts in this enroll-

ment increase," said Ary. "We brought an outside consultant to campus last year who further assisted us in strengthening and improving the work of our admissions office."

Although funding is based on these 20th day official numbers, enrollment at the college will increase as the semester progresses.

"Outreach enrollment will continue for several weeks," said Ary, "and this program provides outreach education in 14 counties and over 30 communities. Many of the classes taught at outreach centers will begin later in the semester.

Sacred Heart numbers steady

Colby's enrollment figures show increase

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Although declining enrollment seems to be a fact of life in some area schools, Colby schools are holding their own. At least for now.

Jo DeYoung, business manager for the Colby School District, said enrollment head counts show an increase of 13 students over last year at this time.

"These are unofficial figures," said DeYoung, "the official results will come after the state audits our numbers."

DeYoung said the state audit usually came in the spring, although they were trying to get them done earlier.

State audits will take into account some pre-school students and count some kindergarten students with special needs as full-time to figure the full-time equivalency, the figure DeYoung said is used for state tax money.

"Our numbers are up, overall, but that includes some alternate school students," she said.

The increase is also due to 23 additional kindergarten students over last year.

Colby schools receive funding for alternate school students, but the money goes to the alternate program, not into the school system's funds.

DeYoung said she didn't know of any reason for the increase.

A call to Heartland Christian School revealed a decline of seven students, almost all from moves, school officials said.

Kathy Elliott at Sacred Heart Catholic School said enrollment was the same as last year, with an increase of four in the kindergarten class.

By building, the numbers are as follows: elementary, 413; middle school, 280; high school 395. Total head count is 1,088 students

Last year's numbers were: elementary, 404; middle school, 275; high school 396, total head count was 1,075 students.

"The enrollment will help our aver-

These are unofficial figures . . . the official results will come after the state audits our numbers."

Jo DeYoung, business manager
Colby School District

age," said DeYoung. She explained that schools are given a choice between the annual enrollment or a three-year average.

Colby schools' three year average is 1,065 students and DeYoung expects the state's audit to show about the same figure.

"That means our enrollment average stays higher for the next three years," she said.

"It's a lot better than losing 48 students like we did in the 1999-2000 year."

School systems figure their income from the state by estimating the number of students they will have. Colby estimated 1,022 students when compiling next years' budget

Colby schools get \$3,870 per student from the state, so estimating the number of students closely is important.

"We always figure on a conservative four percent decline," said DeYoung. School systems that estimate too high can be forced to cut programs in a scramble to make up for lost revenue.

Legislator complains about health plans

TOPEKA (AP) — The chairwoman of Shawnee County's legislative delegation is criticizing Gov. Bill Graves because state employees face higher health care costs next year.

Changes taking effect Jan. 1 are designed to close a projected \$43 million shortfall between the amount raised for the group health insurance program and the projected cost of providing services, while avoiding an increase in the state's contribution.

The state is eating into the cash reserves for the program to cover \$18.9 million of the projected shortfall — and forcing agencies to contribute another \$9 million — to prevent an increase in premiums.

While premiums for employees won't increase, but deductibles would be imposed or raised.

Rep. Annie Kuether, D-Topeka, chairwoman of the Shawnee County delegation, estimated that state employees will be paying 25 percent more for medical services next year.

Kuether issued a statement Thursday on behalf of the 11-member delegation, which includes six Democrats. She accused the Republican governor's administration of leaving state employees "high and dry."

"We are calling on the administration to step up and assume some responsibility," she said. "All options should be explored before placing this

unfair burden on state employees."

Alternatives include having the state kick in even more money or increasing premiums. Graves and legislators expect next year's budget to be tight, and Graves said Thursday that many agencies and programs have needs.

"It's a long list," Graves told reporters.

The health plan covers about 90,000 people, including employees and family members. The state collected about \$202 million for the plan during its 2001 fiscal year, which ended June 30. Projected costs for fiscal 2002 are \$245 million.

The changes facing employees were

approved in July by the Kansas Health Care Commission, which administers the health insurance program. Its vote was 4-1, with Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius, a Democrat who is expected to run for governor next year, the only dissenter.

Under the popular Kansas Choice health plan, employees currently don't pay an annual deductible. It will be set at \$300 per person and \$600 for each family. Also, the maximum amount an individual would pay in out-of-pocket medical expenses would increase from \$500 to \$2,000 a year.

Other plans would have smaller deductibles and allowances for preventative care.

Briefly

Weather: No change

Don't look for any big changes in the area weather picture any time soon, says the National Weather Service. Tonight, for Colby, skies will be clear, south winds 10-20 mph and lows 50-55. Saturday, clear, south winds 15-25 mph and highs 80-85. Saturday night, partly cloudy, lows around 50, while Sunday and Monday will bring partly cloudy conditions, an outside shot for thunderstorms, with lows in the middle to upper 40s and highs 75-80. Thursday's high was 87 and the overnight low this morning was 44. There was no additional precipitation. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 69 degrees. The records for Sept. 28: 98 in 1921 and 29 in 1976. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

College board to meet

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of Thomas Hall. The agenda includes: audit report; discuss battery back-up

for the phone system; magazine subscriptions for the college library; lease on a bus; bids for computers; and a change in meeting date. They are expected to go into executive session to discuss negotiations. The meeting is open to the public.

Commission meeting Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse. Landfill director Larry Jumper is on the agenda at 9 a.m. to discuss new information and personnel.

Students to rake leaves

The Colby High School Service Club is planning a community-wide fall leaves clean-up day beginning the first weekend of October and continuing through until the second weekend of November, said Roni Dietz, adult advisor. "Residents interested in having students rake their yards are asked to call the school at 465-5300 and leave name, address and telephone number on my voice mail." This is

one of community service projects the club is involved in, she said.

Props needed for play

The Colby Community College drama department is searching for props for its play, *Heaven Can Wait*. "We are looking for old boxing or training equipment (preferably from the 1930s-40s), a 1930s style radio, an old saxophone and a furniture piece that could be used as a small bar," said Deb Bickner, one of the organizers. If anyone has any of these items and would be willing to loan them, call Bickner at the college, 462-3984, ext. 300.

Diplomats plan luncheon

The Colby Chamber of Commerce Diplomats are hosting their annual Ladies Luncheon, Oct. 10 at Ramada Inn at noon. This year's theme is "United We Stand." All women are invited and employers are encouraged to send their lady employees to this luncheon. Cost is \$10 which includes a lunch, entertainment and fellowship. Reservations are due

by Oct. 4. To reserve a place or for questions, call Chamber of Commerce at 785-462-3401.



Thumbs up!



√Sheryl Goossen — for your many years of service to Pioneer Memorial Library; good luck in your future endeavors.
√Community of Rexford — congratulations on your Pride award.
√Ryan McLemore and Jessie Brenn — Colby High School's homecoming King and Queen.
√McCarty Family — on your very attractive facility.
√Square Dancers — keep up the crusade.
√Rev. Wade Hatfield — on your elevation to minister at Colby Wesleyan Church.
√Brad Lee — your addresses has been noted (page 4 "Happenings," Thursday, Sept. 27).

