



COLBY FREE PRESS

Proposal could sting college here

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Colby Community College could see a quarter of a million dollars less in state aid if Gov. Bill Graves' proposed 4 percent budget cut for 2003 comes to pass, Dean of Fiscal Affairs Kenneth Johnson told the college board of trustees at their Monday meeting.

Johnson's report was in response to Dr. Mikel Ary, college president, who said he had received a message from Kim Wilcox, executive director of the Kansas Board of Regents, who said the details of the governor's recommendations will be given during his State of the State address, but wanted to warn the public of the major components ahead of time.

The governor will recommend no new money for support of Senate Bill 345, and an additional base cut of \$27,000,000 (approximately 4 percent) for Board of Regents universities and community colleges. SB 345 passed the Kansas Legislature in 1999 and dealt with the restructuring of higher education. The governor's proposed reduction of 4 percent would be approximately \$105,000 for Colby Community College, and with the additional compliance with SB 345 the reduction of county out-of-district tuition would be another \$145,000 for a total approximate reduction in funds for the college of \$250,000, Johnson said. Out-of-district tuition has been reduced from \$24 to \$12 per hour for this year, in accordance with SB 345, and unless any legislative modification takes place it will be reduced to \$6 the following year. SB 345 provided for the state to pay for the difference in funding.

Ary said the recommendation would also impact county taxes and salaries for college personnel.

In other business:

- The board visited Learning Center North, the men's dormitory, to view the new improvements. The commons area has been enlarged to make it comparable to the commons area of the Living Center East, the women's dormitory. A cupola has been installed in the roof to give a distinctive look to the building. The living area of the living center coordinator has also been enlarged.

- Kenneth Poland was appointed to the insurance committee to replace Chuck Moore who went off the board.
- Curt Stephens reported the Endowment Association dessert luncheon will be March 16. The theme is *Treasures of the Nile*.



MAXINE NELSON/Colby Free Press

Don Thieler is doing what he does best, checking under the hood of a car. The Colby man, sort of a car doctor, put 55 1/2 years into making vehicles well.

Colby man puts 50-plus years into the same job

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

It's not uncommon for people to retire after 30, or even 35 years on the job.

But half a century plus 5 1/2 years? And at the same place? Enter: Don Thieler of Colby.

Those are his credentials and after 55 1/2 years, his employment came to an end with the closing of Schwarz Auto Electric just a few weeks ago.

Thieler started working at Dougherty's Auto Electric at 450 Lake in Colby when he returned from military service. And after the business was sold to Herman Schwarz about 16 years ago — and became Schwarz Electric — he stayed on with the new owner.

Thieler said he was drafted into the service before completing high school. "After I was discharged, I got

my diploma, then went to work for Jim Dougherty at Dougherty's Auto Electric," he said, and noted that he had worked on vehicles in the service, but didn't have any training on them.

Dougherty sent him to St. Louis to carburetor school, and also to Kansas City and Denver for United Motors training on electrical systems.

Thieler learned to do auto repair, in addition to carburetors, distributors, magnetos, generators, and later alternators. "They put alternators on police cars starting about that time," he said, explaining that "the alternators would keep the batteries up."

He recalled doing a lot of wiring... "nothing was computerized," he said. "It was a far cry from today's computerized vehicles."

"Everything has changed. It's all computer controlled now and you need to be trained to be able to do it," he said.

Thieler said there are very few car-

buretors to work on any more, noting that some of the farm equipment still have carburetors, and that some irrigation motors have magnetos on them.

"I just let the younger guys take care of that. There was enough else to do," he said.

Thieler now rebuilds starters, carburetors, alternators, and a few magnetos.

He used to get under the cars and work on parts, but recently has been letting the younger guys remove the items from the vehicles.

Thieler said several of the employees who worked at the business kept the same employment, mentioning Minnie Herren, bookkeeper, for many years, and Leo Berens and Gerald Bond, employees for a long time.

He said he is happy to have had a job all these years.

Eagle football coach is leaving for college post

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Colby High School football coach Mike Gottsch is taking a new job.

Gottsch tendered his resignation to the school board Monday night to take a job as assistant football coach/offensive coordinator at Upper Iowa University (Fayette, Iowa.)

Gottsch, who has been at Colby for six years, said he couldn't pass up an opportunity like this.

"When I got my master's, it was with the intention to coach college football someday," he said.

Upper Iowa is a National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III school. Gottsch went to Chadron State University (Chadron, Neb.) with the head coach, Craig Johnston.

"I've had some opportunities in the past, but they made this very enticing," he said.

"As assistant head coach, Gottsch will be involved in recruiting as well as running the offense.



Mike Gottsch

He reports to Fayette on Jan. 14. His wife Liz, who also works for the school system, will be staying in Colby until the summer. She is the C-team girls basketball coach.

Board member Cathy Gordon made the motion to accept Gottsch's resignation, with regret.

Gottsch said he believed playing a tough schedule has helped the Eagles, even though it resulted in an 18-28 record. He is the first coach in 11 years to beat Goodland, doing it at home in 2000 and in Goodland in 2001.

Under Gottsch, the Eagles produced two Shrine Bowl players, Jerad Johnson in 2000 and Zach Brown in 2001. Johnson plays for Kansas State and Brown has completed his first season at Garden City Community College.

Other Eagles in college ball who played for Gottsch include Scott Walker at Kansas Wesleyan, Beau Sheets at Chadron State and both Damien Stephens and Bo Kleinsorge at Garden City.

The Eagles also won a district championship and went to the state playoffs in Gottsch's first year.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said Gottsch's teaching position would be filled with a substitute until next year.

Coach-player matter ends up in board's lap

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Colby School board had mixed opinions on allowing a student to play basketball and a contract with the Regional Prevention Center for Janet Worthy to be the school drug-free counselor.

The board dedicated an hour of executive session time to Bill and Debbie Mariman, with high school principal Bryan Bullington and activities director Jeff Quenzer.

After the executive sessions ended, board members discussed solutions to the Mariman's complaint that their son was not allowed to play basketball.

Although board members did not discuss specifics, Bill Miller said, "We're letting an adult's ego hurt a kid. We've got a kid who lettered last year and he can't play."

Board member Wilburn Holloway said he supported Miller. Both said they thought basketball coach Derek Bissitt should have also been present at the meeting.

The other board members disagreed. Cathy Gordon and Stan Molstad both said they would support the coach, with Molstad adding, "I hope this develops into a black and white policy."

Gerry Fulwider said he wanted to support the coach, but "it is unfortunate for the kid." He asked for a consensus to approach the coach and ask him to allow Mariman to play. The board agreed, but remained divided in their opinions.

When the drug-free schools contract came up, Holloway said, "I can't support this. We have too many drugs in our schools, what good is she doing?"

Gordon asked Holloway if he had an alternative and asked him, "How bad would things be if we didn't have her?"

Bullington agreed, saying, "Janet

can't stop drugs all by herself."

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said the district had an "A" rating for their policies and middle school principal Rob Ross said one of the reasons was that administrators were willing to discuss the problems openly with board members.

"That doesn't happen in larger districts," he said.

Curriculum director Dianna Weiland said Worthy's programs and work would cost at least \$10,000 if the district tried to contract them elsewhere and even more if they tried to hire someone full-time. The contract is for \$4,000 and the money comes from a state grant.

When he found out the money came from a state grant, Holloway withdrew his objection, saying, "I didn't know the state was going to pay for it."

Miller also wanted to know why the contract was in December and what they were doing before. Nielsen explained the district had been contracting with the center for about 5-6 years and it had come due each December.

The board passed the contract on a 7-0 vote.

In other business, the board:

- Approved renewing a membership in Smoky Hills Public Television contract on a 6-1 vote, with John Cranston voting no.

- Heard Christmas carols from the high school show choir and saw the new choir robes. Members were Pam McAdams, Brandon McLemore, Blake McLemore, Jodi Nicholson, Kassie Juenemann, Alicia Talsma, Rachel Albers and Damien Severson. Chris Latta is the instructor.

- Approved resignations of custodians Danny Buford and Larry Pierce and Judy Parker as special education paraprofessional.

Time running out to get packages mailed

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

For those planning to send last-minute packages this holiday season, Colby's postmaster said there's really only one option still open that would guarantee items arrive before Christmas.

"Letters and packages sent (first class) today to either coast will probably not make it," said Jim McDonald, postmaster. "Express mail sent today or Wednesday is the only avenue left and actually I wouldn't push it past today."

The cost for using express mail, he said, is \$12.50 for 8 oz., with the cost going up depending on the size and weight.

Monday was the busiest day of the year for the postal service nationwide and Colby was no exception, he added.

"Last night was our heaviest night yet, but mailing so far during the holiday season has been considerably down from last year," he said.

More than 90,000 packages and letters were processed through the Colby branch on Monday, which is about 40,000 more pieces than normal.

While it might be too late to mail things to some areas of the country, McDonald believes there is still time to mail items to places in the Midwest, although, he added that customers should consider doing so as soon as possible.

Two extra employees have been hired to help with the holiday season here, but the hours of operation were not extended this year and are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

// Express mail sent today or Wednesday is the only avenue left and actually I wouldn't push it past today. "

Jim McDonald
Colby Postmaster

The biggest reason for not being able to guarantee delivery from now until Christmas is due to transportation.

With the airlines cutting back on flights, there aren't a lot of avenues left open, which means that much of the mail is being transported by trucks nationwide.

"Truck transportation can take three days from coast-to-coast and that's excluding the handling and processing

time," he said.

In addition, Colby's post office will be one of the very few offices nationwide delivering express mail on Christmas day.

Besides the Colby office, Liberal is the only other site in western Kansas that will offer express mail on Christmas day. McDonald also reminds customers that the post office will close at noon on Monday, Dec. 24.

records for Dec. 18: 76 in 1980 and -11 in 1983.

(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Internet problems solved

Outage problems for customers of the Internet service, nwkansas.com, have been solved, said Evan Barnum, director of technology for nwkansas.com. "The problem was finally traced to Southwestern Bell's equipment within the Oberlin Central switching office," he said, "and the system was fixed at noon today." Prior to finding the problem, users of the nwkansas.com Internet service were experienc-

ing outages related to sending and receiving e-mail transmissions and trouble getting on the Internet, Barnum said. "If customers are continuing to have problems, they should let us know immediately by calling (785) 899-2338 or (785) 462-3963, since those problems may be unrelated to the recent equipment malfunction."

Council meets tonight

The Colby City Council will hold its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. tonight in council chambers. Among items on the agenda, the council will consider establishing its end-of-the-year special council meeting for 7:45 a.m., Dec. 28, and cancel its regular meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 1. In addition,

the council will appoint the municipal court judge, city attorney, approve replat of White Outlet Addition, which is now known as Southwind Plaza Addition and consider approval to sell Blitz, Colby police dog, to Colby Police Officer Scott Sitton.

Brewster trash pickup changes

Officials at the City of Brewster sanitation department said the dates for normal trash collection will be moved back one day to give city employees holiday time with their families. Normal trash pick up on Tuesday, Dec. 25, will be changed to Wednesday, Dec. 26 and Tuesday, Jan. 1, will be moved to Wednesday, Jan. 2.

Briefly

Weather: Snow mentioned

The Colby region could see some snow by late Friday and into Saturday, according to the National Weather Service. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows 15-20 and north winds 10-15 mph. Wednesday, sunny, warmer, highs 50-55 and west winds up to 10 mph. Wednesday night, clear, lows around 20. Thursday, sunny, highs in the middle 50s. Thursday night and Friday, cloud cover increasing, colder, rain changing to snow late, lows in the 20s and highs in the 40s. Saturday, cloudy, snow likely early. Colby's high Monday was 63 and the overnight low this morning was 23. Precipitation remains at 0.07 inches for the month. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 35 degrees. The

