



COLBY FREE PRESS



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Congressman Jerry Moran (R-Hays), at left, was in Colby on Tuesday to accept a check from the National Association of Realtors in his quest for re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives in November. During the stop, Moran spoke with many local leaders to include Gerry Fulwider, director of the Thomas County/Colby Chamber of Commerce and Mayor Warren Hixson, at right.

Realtors' Association favors Moran with campaign check during visit

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

First District Congressman Jerry Moran (R-Hays), made a brief stop in Colby on Tuesday to accept a campaign contribution of \$1,000 on behalf of the National Association of Realtors.

The event, sponsored by the Kansas Association of Realtors, was held at the Colby Country Club with members of the Colby, Goodland and Hays Board of Realtors offering their support for Moran's re-election to Congress in November.

At this time, no one has filed challenging Moran on the Republican ticket as the deadline for the August primary of June 10 approaches.

Moran, who is seeking his fourth term in Congress, said he wants to continue to "fight the fight to improve the lot in life for others."

Citing some of the major priorities in the coming months and years, Moran touched on the farm bill and healthcare.

The current farm bill, he said, will expire on Sept. 30 and last year the House passed a bill and this year the Senate offered up its version.

"There are significant differences between the two bills — lots of small and big issues alike," he said.

Two of the areas concerning Moran deal with payment limitations that would pit the midwestern states against the south and loan rates when producers pledge grain.

In healthcare, Moran said there are again two major issues. The first is availability of Medicare reimbursements and its impact on the rural hospitals dependent on these payments. Along with that, the affordability of insurance, prescription drugs and other medical costs are skyrocketing.

"I sponsored a bill recently that would allow the importation of pharmaceuticals from Canada in an effort to create competition here," he said.

"I am tired of talking and as chair of the Rural Healthcare Coalition, there is a proposal on the table with

a 12-point plan to initiate changes," he said. "We can't allow rural America to get left behind."

In addition to his work in healthcare, Moran is also one of seven senators and 11 congressman on the conference committee for the farm bill.

"In this committee, will be putting everything on the table and figure out how to put both farm bills together and come up with a workable solution," he said.

For those in rural Kansas, Moran urges they send ideas and concerns to him so that he can bring it forward to this important committee.

Looking around at the 40 some people gathered in Colby, Moran also spoke of leadership.

"We can't wait for Washington and Topeka — what we need are leaders willing to do community service and join in the fight to protect the rural values," he said. "Unfortunately, and too often, not enough people are getting involved in the decision-making process and less than 50 percent even turn out to vote."

During the Presidents' Day recess, Moran not only stopped in Colby, but earlier in the day was in Morland, Hoxie, Oberlin and Atwood. Today, he held his town hall meetings on his 66-town tour in Wheeler and Goodland.

Moran will be returning to Colby as he continues his town hall meeting discussions at 8 a.m., March 26, at the Ramada Inn.

"I believe in a grassroots campaign and politics should be about getting acquainted with every man and woman in a community," he said.

Representing the local Board of Realtors at Tuesday night's meeting were Pat Selby of Colby; Rocky Feltis of Hays; and Rose Anderson of Goodland.

Many local dignitaries were also recognized to include Mayor Warren Hixson, Dr. Mikel Ary, president of Colby Community College; Gerry Fulwider, director of the Thomas County/Colby Chamber of Commerce; along with realtors and other leaders from Goodland, Colby and Hays.

Fire sends man to hospital

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

A burning candle on top of a television set could have been the cause of a house fire at 735 E. 8th on Tuesday night around 6:50 p.m. in Colby, said Rick Dickman, assistant fire chief.

One adult, Charles Ballard, along with a small child, were in the house at the time the fire broke out, Dickman said, and it was the child who alerted Ballard of the blaze.

"They were very fortunate," Dickman said, "since there was no early warning and no smoke alarms."

Ballard was taken by Thomas County ambulance to Citizens Medical Center for smoke inhalation and later released.

The fire was isolated to the living room area, Dickman said, but there was a lot of smoke damage throughout the home. Once firefighters located the origin of the fire, it was only minutes to extinguish the blaze. "Fires aren't like those portrayed in movies," Dickman said. "It is black and dark and in the situation last night, firefighters went past the source and then backtracked before discovering the fire was just five feet from the front door."

Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore said one thing that will help the department in the near future would be a thermal imaging camera.

"The camera will make it a lot quicker in finding the heat source, which will help firefighters and could prevent further loss," he said.

Thermal imaging cameras have been around for about 10 years, McLemore said, and the Colby Fire Department has been looking at the



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Firefighters Bill Jones and Sean Hankin waited for smoke to clear after a house fire at 735 E. 8th Street Tuesday night. Although the blaze was extinguished quickly, firefighters said the family was lucky as there were no smoke alarms in the house.

feasibility of having one in their inventory at some point in the future.

Residents are also encouraged to call the fire department if they need a smoke alarm or suspect one is not working properly.

"For \$7.50 we can install an alarm, along with providing a home escape plan that could save lives and reduce property damage," Dickman said.

In addition, McLemore said the fire department will also check batteries or answer any questions about making homes safer. For information or ques-

tions, he asks that people call, 462-4454.

Tuesday night's house fire was the first this year with all volunteers and officers responding in three fire trucks. The house was rental property owned by Marvin and Betty Albers of Colby.

"Our volunteer firefighters did a wonderful job in acting quickly to put the fire out," McLemore said, "and the reason is because of the constant training these volunteers go through that made all the difference in an actual emergency."

Tonight at the Community Building

The number to break is 1,711

By TOM (TD) DREILING

Free Press Publisher

All eyes will be on the Colby Community Building tonight to see if at least one more person attends the basketball game between the Colby Community College Trojans and Butler County than attended when these two teams played in the building two years ago — Feb. 19, 2000.

One more person?

The Trojans' head coach Brian Ostermann is promoting tonight's game as "Set a College Game Attendance Record at the Colby Community Building."

Ostermann points to the record crowd on Feb. 19, 2000 which num-

bered 1,711. So, if one more person attends tonight than did two years ago the record will be broken.

"In order to set such a record, we need you and all your friends to turn out at the game," Ostermann said. "Wear your blue and show your spirit!"

If 1,712 — or more — fans show up for the contest tonight, how full will the building be? A check this morning with the Colby Recreation Department revealed that the seating capacity in the Community Building is 1,800 for athletic events, which means that if the record attendance mark falls, there won't be a lot of elbow room.

Ostermann also said that in addition to setting a game attendance record,

"we can also set a season record for wins." He explained that the team's 16th win will be a record for the men's program since joining the Jayhawk West Conference six seasons ago. "Our record set last season and currently tied is 15 overall wins," he said.

The Trojans are currently 15-12 overall and Butler is 16-10. In the conference Colby is 4-9 and Butler 5-7, according to Ostermann's chart.

Tip-off is set for 8 p.m. Don't forget that prior to the men's game is the Lady Trojans and the Butler County women, who will face off at 6 p.m.

Tickets for tonight's games will be just \$1.

District contract extensions okayed, but no raises given by school board

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Colby School Board approved contract extensions until June of 2004 at their Monday night meeting for principals Bryan Bullington, high school, Rob Ross, middle school and Terrell Harrison, elementary school, along with activities director Jeff Quenzer

and curriculum director Diana Wieland.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen was given an extension in January.

After a motion was made and seconded, board member Bill Miller wanted to go into executive session. Because of a pending decision he was unable to ask for that, but after the vote, kids to learn on-line and would help the district when they began to develop on-line teaching, something she and Bullington both said is in the district's future. "The issue is flexibility," said board member Cathy Gordon, "and I think we need to do it." "What happens if the Legislature passes a bill to raise the driving age to

6-1 with Miller the dissenter, he requested and got a 10-minute executive session with no action taken when the board returned to open session.

Raises for administrators were not discussed. Their current salaries are: Bullington, \$60,650; Ross, \$60,580; Wieland, \$58,100; Harrison, \$53,000; and Quenzer, \$51,000.

Driver's education discussion sparks heated exchange at board meeting

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Colby School Board approved a new driver's education curriculum after high school principal Bryan Bullington was placed on a hot seat by board members at their Monday night meeting.

Bullington proposed using a curriculum developed by Buhler High School

to teach on-line. According to Bullington, it would be more expensive to students, \$75 vs. \$60 now, but would be more flexible than the old curriculum.

Driver's education instructor Tom Bowen would still be needed for the driving portion and testing, but his hours would be greatly reduced, saving the district money, Bullington said.

In an earlier presentation, Bullington had told the board that Bowen didn't mind losing some hours.

Board member Bill Miller jumped on Bullington, "I keep hearing all about how great our technology is, but now we're using someone else's program. I want to know why."

"Because Tom (Bowen) didn't develop it first," said curriculum direc-

tor Diana Wieland. Bullington added that Buhler had taken on quite a bit of extra cost and the cost of the program was in part to recoup some of that cost.

"We've got the service center, then ESSDACK, now this," Miller said. "Pretty soon we won't have to be a school anymore."

Wieland defended the curriculum, saying it was a good opportunity for the

board, said he thought the program would be a good way to "test the waters of on-line teaching."

The board approved the driver's education program 7-0.

18," asked Wilburn Holloway.

"Then we'll give the program to Colby Community College," retorted Gordon.

Tracy Rogers, another member of the board, said he thought the program would be a good way to "test the waters of on-line teaching."

The board approved the driver's education program 7-0.

Briefly

Weather: Warm, then snow

It's going to get pretty warm and then it's going to snow. That's what the National Weather Service sees for the Colby area. Read on. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows in the middle 20s and northwest winds 10-20 mph. Thursday, sunny, highs in the middle 50s and northwest winds 10-20 mph. Thursday night, clear, lows in the middle 20 and some wind. Friday, sunny, highs near 70. Saturday, partly cloudy, the overnight lows in the upper 20s and the highs in the upper 50s. Sunday and Monday, a chance for snow, lows in the 20s and highs 35-40. Colby's high Tuesday was 54 and the overnight low this morning was 22. The soil temperature

at the 4-inch depth is averaging 40 degrees. Precipitation remains at 0.19 inches for the month and 2.5 inches of snow. Today's highs is expected to reach 56. The records for Feb. 20: 75 in 1930 and —4 in 1918. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Appreciation breakfast planned

The Colby Chapter of the FFA is having an appreciation breakfast from 7 to 8 a.m., Thursday, at the Colby High School ag shop (east of Dennen Field).

All supporters of the FFA program are invited to attend.

For questions, call 465-5300.

Red Cross classes set

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is sponsoring a CPR and first aid class with two sessions on Monday, Feb. 25, and Monday, March 4, at 6 p.m. at the Colby Community College student union. This course, said Donna Finley, director of the Thomas County Red Cross chapter, trains individuals to act in an emergency and to recognize and care for respiratory or cardiac emergencies, sudden illness and injuries. To register or for those with questions, call Finley at 462-7161 or 462-2366.

Brewster board meeting Thursday

The Brewster School board meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 21, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the school cafeteria, 127 Kansas St.

College to host job fair in April

Colby Community College will host a job fair for health care workers from noon to 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, in the Robert Burnett Memorial Student Union on campus. "We are encouraging all health care workers and students to attend this job fair," said Tina Schrick, nursing instructor at the college. For information, call 462-4788.

