



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Off to Topeka!



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Members of this year's Leadership Thomas County class left earlier this week for Topeka to learn more about the state legislature and related government activities. It's the fifth year that Thomas County participants have taken the Topeka tour and the second year for Rawlins and Cheyenne County members. Pictured from left to right are Cindy Cersovsky and Becky Donelan, two members of the 2001-02 class, along with Scott Lockhart with Leadership Sherman County

and Leilani Thomas, director of Travel and Tourism and one of the program coordinators, getting ready to board the bus. The leadership classes, Thomas said, offer a great opportunity to develop leadership through a participatory program. Other Leadership Thomas County participants taking the trip to Topeka included Howard Culver, Donna Finley, Carl Gilbert, Judy Kleinsorge, Kathi Hapke, D'Ette Scholtz, Bill Shields, and Rick Dickman.

## Horton Avenue approved City to get new main traffic way

By PATTY DECKER  
*Free Press Editor*

Work could begin soon on a new east-west street south of the entrance to Village Inn and Comfort Inn following unanimous approval by the Colby City Council to declare Horton Avenue as a main traffic way at its meeting earlier this week.

The new street project, which has been discussed since last June, said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, was prompted because of economic development to the south and due to the need for another east-west street.

"College Drive and Frontage Road are the only two other streets that run through east and west," she said today.

When completed, the new street will be paved the first 1,100 feet and the remaining footage will come under the responsibility of the Thomas County Commissioners.

Horton Avenue will be approximately one mile in length with the county's portion being a gravel road that will connect to Country Club Drive, she said.

After the council approved the ordinance to make Horton Avenue a main traffic way, it then established project costs.

"The estimate from Penco Engineering (the city's engineering firm) was \$178,085.75," Armstrong said.

"However, this does not include the \$6,000 in subgrade materials that will

be furnished by the city, the \$1,368 for asphalt removal paid to Woofter Construction, along with pavement making, slope drains, baskets and dowels for paving, city labor or any other contingencies."

The cost for the baskets and dowels alone, which are used to hold curb and street together has been estimated at \$13,000.

As a result, Armstrong suggested that the council approve the authorization of \$210,000 in temporary notes for the project.

"If we underestimate the cost," she said, "it would mean having to take additional funds from the street budget."

The council approved the recommendation unanimously and when the final costs are known, it can then decide what times will be included in the temporary notes.

The new street, she said, will be a bonded project using general obligation bonds.

At this time, the city is about ready to finish paying off the 1993 street project involving Range Avenue upgrades. Rather than increase taxes for the new street, the council is in agreement to again go with a bonded project for Horton Avenue.

The actual resolution authorizing the issuance of the temporary notes will be placed on the Tuesday, March 5 city council agenda for final approval.

# Mountain lions and bobcats continue to generate talk in county

By MAXINE NELSON

*Colby Free Press*

Despite lack of confirmation by official sources, and scoffing by friends and neighbors, several people have reported seeing mountain lions, and bobcats are also reported to be common in the less populated areas of the county.

Shurl Munkres called to say she heard a mountain lion had been sighted north of Cumberland (a wooded area with creeks north of Gem.) She said the lion attacked a horse belonging to Marvin Barnett, and scratched him up, but didn't kill him.

She said there had been some mountain lions sighted there a few years ago, and one woman told her she had seen a mama lion with babies. Munkres used to go to the area to pick chokecherries, but doesn't any more. She speculated the big cats prey on deer and other wildlife.

"There are plenty of deer around up there. It's quite a jungle, about 20 miles north of Gem. Until about three years ago I used to go up there to pick chokecherries, and anymore I don't. I'm afraid to," she said.

Farther north, in southern Rawlins County, a farmer who declined to be named said he lived on a creek, and they did see a mama lion with a

**I've seen three mountain lions at different times. Before that it has been quite a few years since I've seen one."**

Larry Juenemann,  
Gem rural mail delivery

baby two or three years ago, but have not seen them since.

Alberta (Mrs. Marvin) Barnett said it looked like a horse had been attacked by a mountain lion about two to three weeks ago, but they didn't see the big cat. "It does look like it. The marks on the horse are right. We had several people look at it and that is what they thought it looked like."

She said the "spacing of the claw marks down the neck and down the leg, and the bite marks on the neck did look like a big cat." She said it happened two or three months ago. They didn't take any pictures, and didn't call Fish and Game. She said the marks were too big for a bobcat, and speculated the horse was probably too big for the animal to kill. She said the deer

population is kept down in their area. "I don't know what size deer they eat," she said.

Larry Juenemann, rural mail delivery person for the Gem Post office and self employed farmer and plumber, said he had seen three mountain lions over the years. His mail delivery area covers the area from Herndon to Rexford/Gem.

He said he saw a mountain lion a few months ago. "It was just getting ready to cross Highway 36 when I was going home one night, about 7 p.m. at the end of November. That was the closest I ever got. I've seen three mountain lions at different times. Before that it has been quite a few years since I've seen one."

He said he saw the animal straight north of Gem where you cross the highway between the

Beaver and the Sappa Creek, and speculated it was probably headed back down to the Sappa.

Juenemann said he could tell the difference between a mountain lion and a bobcat, because the mountain lions are a lot bigger and a different color. They also have a long, curving tail, as opposed to a bobcat who has a short, bobbed tail, and is much smaller.

County Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock said mountain lions are reclusive and would not hang around where people are. He said there are some remote areas in the north part of the county where there aren't any people for miles, where a mountain lion might be able to live. He said he thought if any were found around population centers, they should be caught and relocated.

Mark Shoup with Kansas Fish and Game said, "Mountain lion rumors have been going around for years. We get such reports with some frequency. To date, none have been confirmed. Upon investigation, the evidence is simply missing, or the sighting is proven to be a bobcat, dog, or some other animal.

"There have been a few cases of domestic mountain lions escaping into the wild. This may be one source of rumors. Another distinct possibility is that lions travel through the state

on occasion and actually are seen. Colorado has lions although they are in the mountains. So does Arkansas, so it is conceivable that lions — which have a home range of 100 to 200 square miles — might wander into Kansas from time to time. It wouldn't surprise me."

Bobcats are said to be common in the rural areas of the county. Bobcats are smaller than mountain lions and have bobbed tails. Mountain lions have long bodies and a long tail which comes down and curls like a real lion.

Glendora Bastin, who lives five miles north of Rexford, said she and her husband, Dean, saw a bobcat two weeks ago.

"It was not a mountain lion, it was a bobcat. He was just sitting in the back yard in front of the old tractor. Finally he went into an old shed and popped up into one side of the building, came down, went around the tractor, popped up again, came out and walked off."

She said it was the first time they had seen a live bobcat. "We had seen some stuffed ones. He was pretty big. Dean thought at first it was a coyote. Sitting there, it was the size of a small coyote. Then we saw the tufts on his ears and knew he was a bobcat. We thought he was looking for a rabbit. We don't have dogs or anything; the only live thing on the place is rabbits.

## Briefly Weather: Warm, then cold

Much warmer....then much colder....and maybe some snow. That's how the National Weather Service sees it for Colby. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows in the 30s and southwest winds 10-15 mph. Saturday, partly sunny, much warmer with record highs in the upper 70s likely, very windy out of the west 15-25 mph, with gusts up to 35. Saturday night, still windy, partly cloudy early, then becoming mostly cloudy with lows in the 30s. Sunday, partly sunny, then becoming cloudy and much colder with highs only in the middle 40s, falling temperatures by evening with a 30 percent chance of snow and readings in the teens. Monday, partly cloudy to cloudy, cold, lows 5-10 and highs in the middle 20s with snow likely. Colby's high Thursday was 54 and the overnight low this morning was 18. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 40 degrees. The records for Feb. 22: 76 in 1943 and —4 in 1914. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

### Sebelius coming to town

Kathleen Sebelius, state insurance commissioner, has included Colby as one of her stops around the state next Tuesday at which time she is expected to announce her candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor. Sebelius will be meeting the public at a reception in her honor at the Ramada Inn starting at 2:30 p.m. John Sears, one of the county's leading Democrats and an organizer of the reception, told the Free Press that Sebelius is looking forward to her stop here to meet and chat with as many Thomas Countians as she can.

### Rare Saturday session for board

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will

meet in a rare Saturday session at 9 a.m. in the board room of the Thomas Hall Administration Building. They are expected to go into closed session to consult with legal council, discuss non-elected personnel, and discuss negotiations.

### School carnival Sunday

Sacred Heart School is sponsoring its annual carnival and raffle from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday, in the school gymnasium, 1150 W. 6th St., Colby. The event will include lots of games and prizes. Lunch will be served beginning at 11 a.m. in the church basement. The drawing will begin at 3 p.m. and tickets for the raffle can be purchased up until that time. All proceeds from the carnival will go toward school supplies and/or other needs.

### Sorority plans youth tournament

A 3-on-3 youth basketball tournament, sponsored by Kappa Upsilon, will be held on Saturday, April 13 in the Colby Elementary and Colby Middle School gymnasiums. The grade divisions for boys and girls are 3rd-4th; 5th-6th; and 7th-8th, with entry fee at \$24 per team. The deadline for entry forms is Tuesday, April 9. Registration will be at 8:15 a.m. the morning of the tournament with play beginning at 9 a.m. For questions, call Pam Augustine, 462-2924, or Bonnie Dinkel, 462-7247, co-coordinators.

### Softball signup now underway

From now until mid-March, the Colby Girls Fast Pitch Association is looking for softball players, ages 8 through 18, interested in joining a Sweet Thunder team, said Barbara Wieland, president of the association. For questions or information, call Wieland at 462-6501; Tanya Staats, business manager at 462-6537; or check out the website at [www.colbysweetthunder.org](http://www.colbysweetthunder.org)

## Graves says education 'under attack'

TOPEKA (AP) — Just hours after Gov. Bill Graves told school boards that education is "under attack," a Senate panel endorsed his proposed \$20 per-pupil increase in state aid to districts.

But the Education Committee provided no plan for raising the extra \$12 million it would take to provide \$3,890 for each pupil in the 304 districts.

Graves, speaking to a gathering of the Kansas Association of School Boards, said legislative support for public schools has slipped and that

lawmakers have plenty of excuses for not providing more money.

"You are under attack at the Statehouse," Graves said. "Your credibility, your integrity, is being questioned."

Last year, the state increased aid to schools by \$50 per pupil, to the current \$3,870, but Graves wanted a larger increase and pushed legislators to raise taxes. Many fellow Republicans resisted, and the effort failed.

Now, legislators face a projected gap of at least \$426 million between expected revenues and required spending

in the fiscal year that starts July 1. Graves has proposed \$228 million in tax increases to help close the gap and provide the \$20 per-pupil increase.

He told school board members they need to demonstrate that lawmakers will have political support if they increase taxes.

Too few legislators are "stepping up for education," he said.

"The only way that's going to change is if something changes in the communities where those legislators come from," he said.

## Kidnapped reporter Pearl murdered

NEW YORK (AP) — A month after he was taken hostage in Pakistan, Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl has been confirmed dead — murdered by his Islamic extremist captors, Pakistani authorities say, the crime captured on videotape.

The State Department confirmed Pearl's death, saying the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan received evidence of the murder on Thursday. Sources close to the investigation who had seen the tape said it showed Pearl dead, his throat cut.

The announcements crushed the hopes of Pearl's colleagues and his

pregnant wife, who had pleaded for the reporter's safe return ever since he was abducted in the Pakistani port city of Karachi on Jan. 23.

The Journal said its staff was "heartbroken," and Pearl's parents and two sisters said they were "shocked and saddened" by the news.

"Up until a few hours ago, we were confident that Danny would return safely, for we believe that no human being could be capable of harming such a gentle soul," they said in a statement from their home in the Encino section of Los Angeles.

Pearl's wife, Mariane, was told of his

death in Karachi, where she had been staying while awaiting word on her husband's fate, said Steve Goldstein, a vice president of Dow Jones & Co., the owner of the Journal.

In the weeks since her husband's capture, Mariane Pearl, a freelance journalist, had pleaded for his freedom and offered herself in his place. She is now seven months pregnant with the couple's first child.

In Beijing, a grim-faced President Bush said "all Americans are sad and angry to learn of the murder."

"May God bless Daniel Pearl," Bush said.

