



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## County policy dictates

# Positive drug test means dismissal for road workers

By MAXINE NELSON

*Colby Free Press*

The Thomas County Commissioners spent over an hour during their Monday meeting discussing the county's drug and alcohol policy for the road department.

They had received a letter from the drug testing consortium in South Dakota which does random drug testing on road department employees. The letter included a suggested drug policy and County Commissioner Ron Evans wanted to know why they sent it when the county already has a drug policy.

A call to the consortium revealed that the suggested policy was because

of recent federal mandates, and the spokesperson told the commissioners to incorporate the county's policy into the suggested policy and send it back and they would write it up.

Chris Bieker, roads supervisor, said everything suggested was already in place except that, instead of giving a second chance to a road department employee who tested positive for drugs, the employee would be terminated. The commissioners voted to keep the policy in place.

In other business:

- Larry Jumper, landfill operator, said the city was proposing a city-wide clean-up week, May 6-11, and wanted

to know if the landfill would extend amnesty for tipping fees like it did last week. He emphasized this would be for cleaning up alleyways, vacant lots, and other eyesores around town, not for cleaning out the basement or garage.

The commissioners voted to waive tipping fees for such items as tires, chunks of metal, demolition debris, and other waste items lying around outside.

Jumper said Rexford was having their clean-up day April 27.

Jumper said Jo Strange is starting a new business to pick up trash. Evans said to charge her the same fees as any other trash-hauling business.

Jumper said the landfill has averaged 13.68 tons per day of municipal solid waste, well below the 20 tons allowable to keep the landfill open. Some entities, such as cities and contractors, have charge accounts with the landfill, and most people pay their bills promptly.

He said the groundwater in the landfill monitoring well will be tested April 30.

- Thomas County Health Nurse Kathy Ryan said the health departments in the state of Kansas have been charged with developing a bio-terrorism preparedness and response plan. She asked the commissioners for help.

- A tax abatement in the amount of \$29.86 was approved for grain bins which had been sold.

- Tracey Perkins, county clerk, said she had received another application for EMS director. The commissioners agreed to interview him at 11 a.m. Tuesday (today).

- The Thomas County Highway Department gave the following March work report.

The gravel project continued on three miles of County Road 412 west (in the south part of the county). Water is being hauled and 2,364 cubic yards of road gravel were hauled there from Fulwider Pit. The recycler is being

used to work the gravel into the road before laying and packing it.

Field entrances were overlaid with old mix on County Road 465 north and south of Rexford, County Road 391 north and south of Brewster, County Road 407 north and south of Levant, and County Road 412. The courthouse parking lot and roads County Road 465, County Road 407, and County Road 391 were hand patched.

Snow was plowed in East Hale and North Randall Townships.

The next commissioners meeting will be at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room in the courthouse. All meetings are open to the public.

## Waiting in the wings



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Colby High School sophomore Jessica Coplin and her brother James, a senior, practiced their improvised duet acting skills during the Northwest Kansas League forensics meet held at the high school in Colby

Monday afternoon. The top four teams at the meet were Oakley, Oberlin, Quinter and Colby, said Nancy Rundel, head coach. Once results are tabulated, they will appear in the Colby Free Press.

# Two men arrested in burglaries, thefts

By PATTY DECKER

*Free Press Editor*

Two Colby men were arrested last week in connection with a burglary and theft that took place Wednesday, April 3, on Mission Avenue between 7th and 3rd Streets, said Gary Shull, Colby Police Department's investigator.

Eric S. Schiltz and Christopher S. Brown, both 21 and from Colby, were taken into custody during the early morning hours on Friday, April 5, after a search of their home led to the discovery of items from burglarizing and taking items out of four vehicles.

Police officials learned of the incident last Thursday after two of the four vehicle owners reported things missing. In following up on the report, police went to the home of Schiltz and Brown, who gave officers permission to search the premises.

As a result, police found a stereo, CDs, a car battery and other smaller items consistent with those missing from the vehicles, he said.

In addition, items from two other vehicles which had not been reported to authorities were found.

The recommended charges which were forwarded to Allan Taylor, Thomas County attorney, on Monday include four counts of burglary and theft involving three pickups and one jeep. The amount of property taken from the vehicles was estimated at \$400, Shull said. It was also noted that all four vehicles were parked on the street and unlocked.

"Not all the items; however, were recovered in the search," Shull said.

Schiltz and Brown, who are still in custody at the Thomas County jail, had their first appearance earlier today for the purpose of establishing bond.

# Students are disciplined, number reduced to eight

By PATTY DECKER

*Free Press Editor*

Colby Middle School eighth grade students involved in taking a prescription drug known as Ritalin without a doctor's order, were disciplined according to the handbook, said Robb Ross, principal. In clarifying the incident that happened last Thursday, which was reported on Friday, Ross said there were eight and not 12 students who took the drug illegally.

"We followed the discipline plan in place at the school," he said, "and contacted the Colby Police Department, made a report to the superintendent and Colby Board of Education, along with suspending the students based on the guidelines."

Ross said that all parents with children in the middle school are given a copy of the school handbook at the beginning of the year and in Appendix B on page 2, the policy for this type of infraction is defined.

As to the length of discipline imposed on each of the students, Ross said the policy allows for a three to five day suspension from school; however, he didn't elaborate on how many days each of the students received.

Regarding the discrepancy in the number of students involved, Ross said that after reviewing an original list of names and cross-referencing from it, the number was adjusted down to the eight who took the medication and the one youth who distributed it.

# State may have to juggle funds to meet payroll

TOPEKA (AP)—State government is operating hand-to-mouth while it waits for Kansans to file their income tax returns. The state needs \$17 million to meet its next payroll on Friday but had just \$3.8 million in its treasury Monday morning, Budget Director Duane Goossen confirmed.

Goossen said income tax payments

could provide enough money this week to meet the payroll, but he acknowledged he has arranged some financial juggling in case revenues don't flow in as needed. He said the state will make its payroll. However, Goossen said school districts, who were shorted half of the \$136 million due them on April 1, may not see that remaining \$68 mil-

lion until May. Legislators saw the latest developments as more confirmation of the depth of the state's financial problems.

"It looks like state government's ready to be brought to its knees," said Rep. Rocky Nichols, D-Topeka, a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

For months, as revenue collections have fallen short of expectations, the state has eaten into money set aside in its treasury — so-called rainy day funds — to pay the government expenses. Kansas is struggling to pay bills from its treasury because the revenues don't flow in at the same time as bills come due.

# Internet changeover for nwkansas.com will take place on Wednesday

Customers of **nwkansas.com** need to be ready to make changes in their system setup Wednesday as the Internet service provider switches its wholesale connection to Southwestern Bell.

After the actual changeover, expected to come after lunch, customers may not be able to access web sites or get e-mail until they make the changes,

said Tom Betz, director of Internet services for the firm.

"Everyone will need to change their Domain Name Service, or DNS, setting," he said. "We've notified everyone again this week of the new numbers."

The change had been scheduled for last Wednesday, but was put off a week after Bell discovered that several cus-

tomers had been assigned the wrong Internet Protocol numbers.

"Basically, what they told us is that we got numbers to connect to Kansas City," Betz said, "but we have to connect to Topeka. It's a good thing we found out before we made the actual switch."

He said customers should be able to access web sites until the actual

change. E-mail service will go down in the morning, since the server has to move from Oberlin to Goodland. Both services should be back by early afternoon, Betz said.

Customers got an e-mail and a letter outlining the change and what they need to do. Anyone who needs help can call 462-3963 in Colby or (785) 899-2338 for the Goodland office.

"We plan to have both offices open in the evening Wednesday to Friday and on Saturday to help, as long as people keep calling," he said. "If the local office doesn't answer, people can call me in Goodland."

He said the firm expects to have faster and more dependable service after the change. It has been getting Internet from Carroll's Web out of

Salina, which bought out the old supplier. Carroll's had a major outage on it's system last month.

**nwkansas.com** has Internet services in Oberlin, Norcatur, McDonald, Oakley, Bird City, Goodland and Colby. It is a unit of Nor'West Newspapers, which operates the *Colby Free Press* and four other papers in north-west Kansas.

## Briefly

### Weather: Little hope for rain

Not much hope for any rain in the immediate Colby area now through Friday, according to the National Weather Service forecast. Tonight, increasing cloudiness and breezy, lows in the middle 40s and south winds 15-25 mph. Wednesday, cloudy early, the becoming partly sunny, highs in the upper 70s and southwest winds 10-20 mph. Wednesday night, cloudy with a 30 percent chance for showers and thunderstorms, lows in the lower 50s. Thursday, partly sunny, highs in the lower 60s. Thursday night and Friday, partly cloudy, lows around 40 and highs in the lower 70s. Colby's high Monday was 58 and the overnight low this morning was 35.

Precipitation during the past 24 hours up to 8 a.m. today amounted to 0.02 inches. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 51 degrees. The records for April 9: 93 in 1930 and 14 in 1973. (*The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

### Barbershoppers entertain Saturday

The Tumbleweed Chorus will have two performances of "Showtime '02" on Saturday beginning at 4 p.m. and again at 8 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium. In addition to the Tumbleweed Chorus, there will also be appearances by the Hi-Plains Harmony Chorus of the Sweet Adelines and special entertainment by Saturday Evening Post from Denver, Colo.

Tickets are \$8 at the door or \$7 in advance. Those wanting advance tickets can call, 462-8640, 462-3655 or 462-3004.

### Fire department plans pancake feed

The Colby Fire Department is sponsoring a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building. All proceeds will be used toward the purchase of a thermal imaging camera, said Bob McLemore, fire chief.

In an effort to help further the fire department's goal, Midwest Energy is donating all the food items for the feed, he

said. The cost of the all-you-can-eat event will be a free-will donation.

### Fair board to meet Thursday

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday in the 4-H Building to plan for the coming fair, and conduct other business.

### Kindergarten Roundup scheduled

Heartland Christian School announces its Kindergarten Roundup. The event will be held on Friday, April 19, from 8:20-11:30 a.m. at the school in Mingo. All students entering kindergarten for the 2002-2003 school year are invited to attend with their parents. To reserve your spot or to receive additional information, contact the school office at 462-6419 before Monday, April 15.

### Spring turkey permits available

Spring turkey permits are available at the Thomas County Clerk's office in the courthouse. The season dates are from

April 10-May 19.

### Youth training rescheduled

The Hazardous Occupational Training, originally scheduled for earlier this month at the 4-H Building in Colby, has been rescheduled to May 1-2, from 5-9 p.m. at the Thomas County Extension Office. Register by calling the Logan or Thomas County Extension offices by 5 p.m. on April 26. This training is for youth who work on farms.

### Park fee reminder issued

Thomas County Clerk Tracey Perkins reminds that park fees increased on April 1. For questions, call 462-4500.

### Recycling center takes phone books

The Thomas County Recycling Center is taking old telephone books at its collection site, 720 E. College Dr. in Colby. Those wanting to drop off the books should use the magazine bins, coordinators said.

