



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Outside shoppers



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Colby's annual sidewalk sale was held downtown Thursday. Merchants held sales outdoors and vendors had snacks and other refreshments

available. Area organizations also set up booths. Sale prices are still in effect through Saturday.

## Lots of rain hits area overnight

By TOM A. DREILING

Free Press Publisher

Rexford wins the Rain Badge. Thunderstorms and showers moved across northwest Kansas Thursday night and into this morning leaving some pretty good rainfall totals with Rexford leading the way with 2.60 inches.

The least amount of rain, according to the National Weather Service at Goodland, fell in the immediate Oakley area with 0.09 inches.

The Northwest Research-Extension Center in Colby measured 0.94 inches, Willie Engelhardt at Mingo reported 0.74 inches. Colby's total for the month stands at 1.21 inches.

The weather forecasters said there is a 70 percent chance for a repeat performance tonight in northwest Kansas, and they caution that some of the thunderstorms could be severe.

Here are the rainfall totals overnight from around the area, starting with the

largest amount:

- Rexford, 2.60 inches
- Culbertson, Neb., 2.21
- McCook, Neb., 1.57
- Studley, 1.52
- Benkelman, Neb., 1.51
- Hoxie, 0.98
- Colby, 0.94
- Grainfield, 0.93
- Hill City, 0.93
- Selden, 0.83
- Mingo, 0.74
- Norton Dam, 0.73
- Oberlin, 0.60
- Goodland, 0.44
- St. Francis, 0.31
- Atwood, 0.30
- Oakley, 0.09

The Free Press asks anyone in the area, farm folks as well as townspeople, to call 462-3963 to report rainfall figures between 8 & 9:30 the morning after the rain.

They will be included in the published list.

## Patrol grades buses

TOPEKA (AP) — With classes soon to start across the state, the Kansas Highway Patrol is inspecting more than 8,000 school buses for safety.

"Those buses have to be in great condition before they're allowed to transport children," highway patrol Trooper Mark Engholm said.

Before troopers inspect a vehicle, it's checked by a mechanic who examines such factors as whether it runs well, has good tires and has a frame that is structurally sound.

Troopers fill out a separate part of the same checklist form completed by mechanics, Engholm said, and look for such factors as whether the vehicle is clean and has fire extinguishers, first

aid kits, working stop signs, lights and emergency exits.

During the patrol's inspection, drivers perform such tasks as using lights, switching on turn signals and putting out the stop sign on the left side of the school bus.

"If so much as a headlight is out on that bus, it fails," Engholm said. "That bus cannot transport until they fix that problem." By the time school starts later this month, troopers will have inspected more than 8,000 school vehicles across Kansas.

"This is a major undertaking for the patrol," Engholm said. "All our troopers are involved in this at one stage or another across the state."

## County mill levy up, hearing Monday

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

The purposed 2003 budget for Thomas County reflects a 4.769 mill increase over the current 29.642 mills, and residents will have an opportunity to discuss the budget's specifics with the Thomas County Commissioners at the hearing Monday at 9 a.m. in the courthouse.

According to County Commissioner Ron Evans, the increase is due in large

part to preparing for a new landfill. The \$700,000 project which is mandated by both the Federal and State governments will be budgeted out over the next five years, he said.

The \$160,000 budgeted this year for the project translates into 2.215 mills in the 2003 budget.

Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor, said the current landfill will be full in eight to 12 months.

"We have to prepare to have a place

to put our waste," Jumper said today.

County entities, such as the Thomas County Historical Society, mental health, fair board, and others received no increase in budgets to cut costs this year.

However, Evans did say that both jail expenses and court expenses are up.

The proposed budget also reflects a two percent pay increase for county employees and a nineteen percent increase in health insurance costs which

will effect the tax levy too, Evans said today.

The county is looking at a decrease in state funding, and coupled with lower interest rates, this will effect the amount of money coming in to the county, Evans said.

During the regular commission meeting after the budget hearing on Monday, the only item on the agenda at presstime today is Francis Landry discussing Prairie Dog Creek.

## Financial woes mount for WorldCom, Inc.

NEW YORK (AP) — The bad news about bankrupt telecommunications firm WorldCom Inc. has become \$3.3 billion worse.

The company said Thursday that it had uncovered another \$3.3 billion in bogus accounting, bringing the total to about \$7.1 billion, and warned that it could find more accounting problems as it moves forward with its internal investigation.

WorldCom spokesman Brad Burns said the latest figures have already been reported to the Securities and Exchange Commission and won't affect the Clinton, Miss.-based company's ability to keep operating.

"The company identified the financial issues to the investigative authorities and we are working hard to get the company back on solid financial footing," Burns said.

The long-distance and Internet services company said it may write off \$50.6 billion in goodwill and other intangible assets when it restates its finances to adjust for the accounting problems. That would be one of the biggest such write-offs in U.S. corporate history.

The company previously reported finding \$3.8 billion in accounting irregularities for 2001 and the first half of 2002. The latest discovery was made as the company reviewed its books for 1999 and 2000.

Because of the accounting problems, WorldCom said it would restate its financial statements for all of 2000,

2001 and the first quarter of 2002.

WorldCom filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on July 21, listing \$107 billion in total assets and \$41 billion in debts. It was the biggest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history.

Thursday's revelation came amid a string of accounting scandals that has tarnished some of the nation's largest firms, felling once mighty companies like Enron and Global Crossing. The fallout has severely shaken investor confidence, pummeling stocks and pension funds.

The total impact of problems at WorldCom won't be known until accounting firm KPMG LLP finishes auditing the its financial statements for 2000-02, the company said.

Arthur Andersen LLP, the accounting firm convicted of criminal charges for shredding Enron audit documents, had been WorldCom's auditor until May. The accounting fraud that occurred in 2000 is said to differ from the techniques used in 2001 and 2002, according to a report Thursday by the financial news network CNBC.

In the latest case, the report said, former chief financial officer Scott Sullivan is believed to have used a variety of methods to bolster income, including counting reserves for bad debts as operating income.

Sullivan and former controller David Myers were arrested and charged with hiding nearly \$4 billion in expenses and lying to investors and regulators to keep the company afloat.

## 14 days and counting



CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

John Moeder, an Oakley teacher, and George Maier, the bus supervisor for the Oakley School District, continued getting buses ready for the first day of school, Thursday, Aug. 22, from 8:30 a.m. until noon. Beginning on Friday, classes for students at all grade levels start at 8:20 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. Maier said earlier this week that all school vehicles will be inspected prior to the start of school by the Kansas Highway Patrol during its annual statewide school vehicle safety inspections.

## Briefly

### Deadline on workshop extended

The Thomas County Community Foundation is sponsoring a special workshop on Tuesday, Aug. 20, featuring Vaughn Henry, who is one of the nation's leading experts in the design and administration of charitable remainder trusts, lead trusts, gift annuities and other tools that integrate charitable giving and sensible financial planning, said Becky Donelan, director of the foundation. There will be three opportunities to hear Henry speaking, she said. The first two require interested people to register and the deadline has been extended. The first session is geared toward professional advisors from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., with the second session toward non-profit organizations from 1:30

to 4 p.m. The third session will be more general and begins at 7 p.m. The evening session will not require registration. If interested, call Donelan at 465-9152.

### After 5 Club meets in Colby

The High Plains Kansas After 5 Club will hold its 'Fish and Tackle' meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 13, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Colby Community Building's Little Theatre. Featured guest is Jim Ferguson who will share stories on adventures in the outdoors. The guest speaker will be Kelvin Boltjes of Sidney, Neb., whose topic will be "Life Preserver." Reservations can be made by calling Lori Haberer, 462-6557.

### Leadership nominations wanted

Applications are now being accepted for the 2002-03 Leadership Thomas County program, said Leilani Thomas, one of the coordinators. The purpose of the program is to develop future leaders for the county and application requests can be made by businesses, civic clubs, organizations or by individuals, she said. Additionally, people can nominate themselves if they are interested in learning more about 21st Century leadership. Completed forms must be returned to the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce by Friday, Aug. 23. For questions or an application, call (785) 462-3401 or stop by the office at 350 S. Range, Suite 10 in Colby.

### Volunteers needed for August event

Cheryl Schwarz and Chuck Dempewolf, co-chairperson's of the Relay for Life event are inviting people to take part in this unique fundraising event beginning Friday, Aug. 16 at 7 p.m. Kicking off the event, Schwarz said, will be the cancer survivors walking the first lap on Friday night. The luminary lighting ceremony will be held at 9:30 p.m. and if anyone is interested in walking as a cancer survivor, purchase a luminary or to help in any way, call her at 462-3232 or Dempewolf at 462-3481. "The Relay for Life is about being a community that takes up the fight," she said. "Please support the Relay for Life teams when they come to your door."

