



COLBY FREE PRESS

Investigation surrounding chase continues

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

The investigation continues into the high speed chase which occurred in Thomas and Logan counties on Sunday night, and it's connections to the death of a Grand Junction, Colo. man.

Gary Shull, Colby Police Department investigator, said Monday afternoon that an investigator from Mesa County, Colo. flew into Colby to assist in the investigation, and it has been determined that the 1991 Mercury Topez seized at the crime scene in Logan County is the vehicle that was apparently stolen from the man who was shot and killed in Mesa County.

Shull said investigators from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, Mesa County Sheriff's Department, Thomas County Sheriff's Department, Kansas Highway Patrol and the Colby Police Department processed the car all day Tuesday until 8:30 p.m. He said the processing included collecting property and photos of the vehicle as well as items to be processed for latent prints, items processed for DNA traces, bullet fragments and other documents.

Today, plans are to continue the investigation and process the undercarriage of the vehicle. According to

Shull, this would include collection of vegetation, soil, tire impressions and measurements.

The two arrested on scene Sunday night were identified as Melissa Ricketts, 20, of Helper, Utah, and Ryan Schneck, 26, of Provo, Utah. They are still being held in the Thomas County Jail.

Shull said the Thomas County Sheriff's Office has recommended to Thomas County Attorney Allen Taylor that Schneck and Ricketts be charged with aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, criminal discharge of a firearm, and possession of stolen property.

Shull said that Logan County Sheriff's Office is expected to file charges today on Schneck and Ricketts.

The third suspect involved with Schneck and Ricketts was Robert Todd Poulsen, age 30, of American Fork, Utah. According to authorities he was taken to the Logan County Hospital in Oakley on Sunday night where he was pronounced dead after a fatal gunshot wound, believed to be self-inflicted.

Further information about the identity of the victim in Colorado has yet to be released.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Almost 40 people were in attendance during the planning commission's public hearing last Friday. The hearing was to help people understand what the proposed zoning changes meant to their businesses. Approval

of the rezoning was given at Tuesday's meeting of the City Council. Any time there are changes in the zoning, all business and individuals will be notified if they are within 200 feet of the change.

City manager suggests lifting water restrictions, council in agreement

By DARREL PATILLO

Colby Free Press

The Colby City Council approved lifting water restrictions and excess water charges at their Tuesday night meeting on recommendation of City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

"We've been tracking the daily water rates," she told the council, "and along with the rains we've had, I think

that the citizens of Colby have conserved water to the point that we can safely lift the restrictions, and excess charges."

The council agreed, with the provision that restrictions and excess charges be lifted as soon as the current meter readings are completed.

In other business:

- The council tabled discussion of

the right-of-way issue concerning the land near the viaduct.

The city is attempting to purchase the land rights from Union Pacific Railroad, but city attorney Joel Kriss told the council he wasn't comfortable with the terms that the railroad is seeking, and wanted more time to work on the contract.

- The council approved a yes vote on

the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency's Western Area Power Administration Hydro Pool ballot, which will change the amount of energy that the City of Colby receives from federal power sources.

- The council approved Ordinance #1332, which will re-zone Franklin Ave. from 2nd Street to 6th Street from a commercial district to a commercial

business district.

- The council approved Ordinance #1333, which re-zones a portion of Country Club Drive from a light industrial district to a neighborhood commercial district.

- The council approved Ordinance #1334, which amends zoning ordinance #1257 to include fence regulations.

"We didn't really have any guidelines for businesses as far as what kind of fences they could build," Armstrong said. "Hopefully, this will clear things up."

The next regular city council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at City Hall, 585 N. Franklin.

The public is invited.

Books in good shape, county commissioners told by their auditing firm

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Thomas County Commissioners were told at their Monday meeting that the 2001 county audit was in good shape. Brian Staats, of Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball, auditing firm, said, "In the best opinion we could give, we didn't find material irregularities or errors." Staats was accompanied to the meeting by Cynthia Biebele, also an employ of the firm.

Staats suggested improvements in bookkeeping, including using the computers to reconcile bank statement and to log encumbrances.

"This is not going to be a perfect system. We just want to get it as tight as we can. From an audit standpoint, it is getting better every year," Staats said.

After the commissioners reviewed the audit with Staats, he concluded by saying, "I appreciate the efforts Tracy (County Clerk Perkins) and Donita (County Treasurer Applebury) have made to implement our suggestions."

After the audit review, Thomas County Undersheriff Mike Baughn talked with the commissioners about the jail budget and a possible upgrade for the 911 console in the dispatch of-

fice.

When the new console was installed, Baughn said that one was purchased that would be 800 megahertz compatible. Currently, the Kansas Highway Patrol and local Kansas Bureau of Investigation officers have radios that transmit on 800 megahertz.

With Colby Police Department and Thomas County Sheriff's Deputies not being compatible to their frequency, the dispatch officer currently has to "relay" messages between officers from a hand-held radio to local officers via our current system. New software would take care of this problem.

Baughn said that in emergency situations similar to the high speed chase on Sunday night, officers have trouble communicating with each other and

coordinating efforts since there has to be a middle man.

The commissioners reviewed the request and determined to put the item on hold for further discussion before giving a go ahead on the upgrade.

As for the jail budget, Baughn said he wanted the commissioners to be informed as to where they stand for the year. With increases in the inmate populations, jail budgets will be used up before the end of the year.

Commissioner Ron Evans told Baughn that they were aware of the problems and had purposely budgeted more for the jail in the 2003 budget.

"(For the Sheriff's Department) we're going to be running really tight," Baughn said.

In other business:

Congressman Jerry Moran told the Colby Free Press today that a \$4,968 grant has been awarded to the Colby Fire Department to purchase new personal alarm safety devices.

Moran said the funding was awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Moran explained that the safety de-

• Approval was given to road supervisor Chris Bieker to purchase a water pump motor to replace the Yanmar, nine horsepower diesel water pump that is currently in use. Bids were received by three companies on a new pump. S&W bid \$3,999 for an 18 horsepower Vanguard Diesel motor, while Beringer Hardware bid \$4,298 for the same motor. Stan's Automotive bid \$3,916.56 for an 11 horsepower Isuzu motor. Bieker said the pump being replaced is only 9 horsepower, but neither S&W or Beringer Hardware could get a diesel with less than 18 horsepower. The commissioners accepted Bieker's recommendation to purchase the pump from Stan's Automotive.

- A request was made by Catholic

Charities Outreach to have their name added to the sign in the front of the Thomas County Office Complex. They currently share an office with the Emergency Pregnancy Service. Since they are located in the building, the commissioners agreed to allow them to put up a sign, but they would have to pay for it.

• Discussion was held with Bieker to remove the school signs in Mingo since Heartland Christian School is now located in town. Suggestion was to return the speed limit to 30 miles per hour.

The commissioners will be holding their next meeting on Monday, Sept. 23, at 9 a.m. in the commissioners room of the courthouse. It is a public meeting and all are encouraged to attend.

Grant allows new safety devices for Colby firemen

Briefly

Eagle Pep Rally is Thursday night

This year's Homecoming Pep Rally/Bonfire/Football Jersey Auction will be Thursday night at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. All Colby Eagle fans are encouraged to attend. A special football jersey auction will take place, where fans will be able to bid for orange Eagle jerseys to wear during the day on Friday and to the game Friday night. The rally gets underway at 8:30 p.m.

Editor's surgery went fine

Patty Decker, editor of the Colby Free Press, underwent surgery in Denver on Tuesday, and her husband Randy reported today that everything went fine. She is in room 604, Presbyterian/St. Luke's Hospital, 1719 E. 19th Ave., Denver, Colo. 80218. If all continues to go okay, Randy said they may return to Colby sometime Friday.

Irrigation installation field day set

A subsurface drip irrigation installation demonstration field day

will be held on Monday, Sept. 23 at the Jim Franz farm. The farm is located 7 miles south on K-25 to Mingo Road, then 3 miles east on Mingo Road and 1 mile north. The demonstration will start at 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information, call the Western Prairie RC&D, at (785) 462-2602 or the Thomas County Conversation District at (785) 462-7482.

Conference cards mailed

Parent-Teacher Conference cards have been mailed for conferences scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 23-24. Please contact the school offices if you did not receive this information for your child..

Brown reception time corrected

The public is invited to attend a retirement reception for Duane Brown on Monday, Sept. 30 at 3 p.m. in the Colby City Council chambers at City Hall. He is retiring after 28 years in the City of Colby's electric line department. Tuesday's mention contained an incorrect time.

Foundation expanding board

The Thomas County Community Foundation is expanding its board of directors and it compiling names of those who might be interested in finding out more about the roles and responsibilities of board members. The foundation said it is committed to recruiting from across Thomas County. Adding your name is not a commitment to serve. If you would like to be considered, or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact Becky Donelan at 465-9152.

Hospital/college plan program

Citizens Medical Center/Prairie Senior Living Complex and Colby Community College Department of Nursing will co-sponsor a community education program on dementia and Alzheimer's disease on Thursday, Sept. 26 at 7 p.m. in room 108 of the college student union. The speaker will be Cindy Miller, an Alzheimer's Aging Specialist from the Kansas Department of Aging.

As a community service, students from the college department of nursing will be available to provide respite care.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Monday's high, 89
Low this morning, 52
Year ago today, 63 and 54
Temperature at Noon today, 69
Colby's 24-hour rainfall, 0.02
Month's total, 1.16
Oakley's 24-hour rainfall, (not available)

Soil temp at the 4-inch depth, 71
Records for Sept. 18, 99 in 1932 and 35 in 1912

The forecast

Today's high should reach 80. Tonight, cloudy, 30 percent chance for showers, lows in the upper 40s, winds out of the north up to 30 mph. Thursday, partly sunny, highs in the upper 60s, winds out of the north up to 25 mph, with gusts up to 35. Thursday night, clear, lows in the lower 40s. Friday, sunny, highs in the lower 70s. (Temperatures and precipitation are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, unless otherwise noted. Forecasts are from the National Weather Service.)

Colby Water Usage

• Sept. 17 = 1.963 million gallons
Levels of Concern
Watch Level 3.5 million gallons
Warning Level 4.0 million gallons

Emergency Level 4.5 million gallons
(Three consecutive days)

