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Polling causing concern

TOPEKA (AP) — Two consumer advocates expressed concern Thursday about Westar Energy Inc. polling on the governor's race.

The polling suggested that as of early October, Republican Tim Shallenburger was cutting into Democrat Kathleen Sebelius' lead. The GOP candidate cited the poll without mentioning the Westar connection.

James Zakoura, an Overland park attorney who represents large Westar customers, and Walker Hendrix, consumer counsel for the Citizens' Utility Ratepayers Board, said they worry Westar is trying to influence the race.

The next governor will appoint—or reappoint—the three members of the Kansas Corporation Commission, which regulates utilities.

Also, a Sebelius spokeswoman questioned whether Westar, the state's largest electric company, collaborated on poll questions with Shallenburger.

However, a Westar spokesman and Shallenburger's campaign manager said the two had no direct contact. They said Shallenburger's campaign purchased the poll results through the Oklahoma City consulting firm that did the Westar polling and also works for Shallenburger.

Neither Westar nor Shallenburger saw the polling as unusual. Westar spokesman Doug Lawrence said the poll asked more than two dozen questions, some related to the company's image.

Lawrence said Westar isn't passing polling costs to its 640,000 electric customers.

Shallenburger campaign manager Alan Cobb, a former Koch Industries executive, said large companies routinely poll.

A full poll typically costs between \$10,000 and \$20,000, he said, while the Shallenburger campaign expects to pay between \$500 and \$1,000 for its results.

The poll was conducted Oct. 6-7 and Shallenburger gave reporters a summary on Oct. 8.

The poll showed Shallenburger trailing Sebelius 37 percent to 46 percent, with 14 percent undecided and 2 percent leaning toward minor party candidates. The sampling error was 4.3 percentage points.

Hendrix, who represents residential and small-business consumers, said he is concerned the polling was done "with the expectation of some outcome here at the KCC."

Eight cities join to aid the elderly

DODGE CITY (AP) — If Kansans believe that elderly citizens should be able to live in their own homes as long as possible, then their hometowns ought to provide elder-friendly settings.

So goes the thinking behind the Life-long Communities Initiative, a new project in which eight cities — with help from the state — will assess how well they serve older residents and then make plans for doing better.

The other participating communities are Atchison, Concordia, Garden City, Great Bend, Hiawatha, Topeka and Winfield.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers
Thursday's high, 70
Low this morning, 29
Year ago today, 57 and 30
Temperature at 12:15 today, 65
Records for Oct. 18, 90 in 1927, 22 in 1898

The forecast
Generally clear skies with lows in the 30s and highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s though Sunday. A change should occur Sunday night with rain or snow expected. Monday should be cloudy with highs in the lower 50s and Tuesday could bring another chance of rain or snow.

Colby Water Usage
• Oct. 17 = (not available)

Airport talk



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Members of the Kansas Association of Airports are in Colby for their fall workshop. The workshop is being held at Colby's Quality Inn (formerly the Ramada Inn). ABOVE: Members of the Association viewed a computer slide show as part of its work session.

On Iraq situation

U.S. backs away from resolution

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — After backing away from a demand that a new U.N. resolution explicitly authorize military force against Iraq, the Bush administration made clear it already has the authorization it needs to attack.

Confronting strong global opposition to a war against Iraq, the United States offered a compromise resolution aimed at winning support from France, Russia and China, who want to give Iraq a chance to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors without the threat of force.

The new U.S. resolution makes clear Baghdad will face consequences if it obstructs inspections, diplomats said Thursday.

But it drops tough language in the initial U.S. proposal instructing inspectors to report any "interference or problems" to the U.N. Security Council and then authorizing member states to use "all necessary measures" to force compliance — a green light for military action.

Instead, the compromise calls for inspectors to "report immediately to the council any failure by Iraq to comply with its disarmament," according to excerpts of the new U.S. proposal obtained by The Associated Press.

Once a failure was reported, the Security Council would convene immediately "to consider the situation and the need for full compliance with all the relevant council resolutions in order to restore international peace and security."

Some diplomats saw the compromise as a victory for France, which led the opposition to the original U.S. proposal.

French diplomats were reported to be pleased with the elimination of the reference to "all necessary measures" but concerned about other phrases that could trigger military action, such as a reference to Iraq being in "material breach" if it violates any U.N. resolution.

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A senior White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said "material breach" could be interpreted as allowing for consequences, and was used by the United States to take military action in Kosovo in 1999 to oust Slobodan Milosevic's forces.

Secretary of State Colin Powell spoke by telephone with his French counterpart Thursday, and officials in Paris were studying the latest U.S. offer.

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov welcomed the new U.S. proposal and said Powell told him it would be presented formally to the council within days.

"We believe that there are favorable conditions now to preserve the unity of the global community and ensure the return of international inspectors and their efficient work in Iraq," Ivanov said.

While the United States, with British support, has pressed for a single U.N. resolution spelling out consequences if Iraq fails to comply with inspectors, France has pressed for a two-step approach.

France's U.N. Ambassador Jean-David Levitte said France was sticking to its demand for a first resolution to toughen inspections — and a second to authorize action against Iraq only if it obstructs inspections. That position is supported by China and Russia, the other veto-wielding council members.

But the White House official insisted that the U.S. compromise would give President Bush "maximum flexibility" to mete out consequences should Saddam not comply — and a second resolution would not be needed for Bush to act against Iraq.

"The United States does not need any additional authority, even now, if we felt it was necessary to take action to defend ourselves," Powell said in New York. "The United States is now operating behind the authority given to the president by a joint resolution of the Congress."

The crisis began five weeks ago when Bush addressed the U.N. General Assembly and told skeptical world leaders to confront the "grave and gathering danger" posed by Iraq — or stand aside as the United States acts.

Iraq responded to the escalating threat of U.S. military action by suddenly inviting U.N. weapons inspectors to return after barring them for nearly four years. The inspectors left Baghdad in December 1998 ahead of U.S. and British air strikes punishing Iraq for obstructing their work.

Inspectors must certify that Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs have been destroyed before sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait can be lifted.

The standoff among the five permanent, veto-wielding members dragged on for weeks behind closed doors. On Wednesday and Thursday, the council held a public debate on the Iraq crisis for the first time.

More than 60 countries spoke during the debate, which was requested by the Non-Aligned Movement comprising 115 mainly developing countries pressing for a peaceful solution.

Ambassadors from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America warned that a new war would add to the suffering of Iraqis, possibly engulf the Middle East and have dire consequences for global stability. With the exception of Britain and Israel, they refused to endorse the original U.S. demand.

"The message was we don't want war, we want peace. We can resolve this peacefully," said South Africa's U.N. Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, whose country heads the movement.

"It showed that many, many countries want the inspectors to return to Iraq immediately ... so the Security Council just has to let them go."

Tickets still a 'go' for Hospice event

By TOM (TD) DREILING
Free Press Publisher

A timely reminder was issued today that tickets are still available for the 2002 Hospice Auction & Dinner in Colby next Saturday, Oct. 26. The annual event will be held at the Comfort Inn Convention Center.

Annette Kasselmann, president of the local Hospice Advisory Board, said, "We ran out of tickets and had to get a reprint. With nearly 200 auction items and City Limits' prime rib dinner, the word is out that it's going to be a special evening."

For time conscious individuals, here

is the schedule:

- 5:30 p.m. — silent auction and social hour
- 6:30 p.m. — dinner
- 7:30 p.m. — live auction, featuring Tom Harrison, Tom Simpson of TNT Auctions.

Kasselmann commented, "It's a good cause and the community's response has been heart-warming."

Tickets can be purchased at Kansas Quick Lube or at Colby Bowl. The cost is \$25 and that includes the dinner and admission to the auction.

You can call 800-315-5122 for additional information.

Salina's Lawton Nuss joins Supreme Court

TOPEKA (AP) — Within days after becoming the newest member of the Kansas Supreme Court, Justice Lawton Nuss expects to don his black robe and join the other six members hearing arguments in cases.

Nuss, 49, of Salina, was sworn in Thursday by Chief Justice Kay McFarland during a special court session. He replaced Edward Larson, who retired in September, as some 250 spectators in the courtroom watched.

After his five children helped him put on his robe, Nuss walked behind the bench, shook hands with each new colleague and took the seat once occupied by Larson.

During his remarks, Nuss said, "I have been given what I truly believe to be the greatest job in Kansas."

Nuss' appointment was the first of three positions Graves is expected to make before leaving office in January.

Larson was the first to leave because of the mandatory retirement age of 70.

Starting Monday, the state's highest court will hear arguments in some two dozens cases. The chief justice said the newest member already is up to speed.

"He'll be fully equipped and prepared to participate starting at 9 a.m. Monday," she said, adding that he will write three opinions from this month's cases, as will the other justices.

Nuss brings to the court some 20 years of experience in private practice. McFarland said having someone come straight from private practice to the bench will help the court.

"Things have changed in the practice of the law over the years," McFarland said. "He will add a good dimension to our court."

The other justices came to the Supreme Court from lower court positions.



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Law enforcement officials responded to a Greyhound bus Thursday afternoon at McDonald's restaurant. A passenger had called the Colby police and claimed that 10 people in the restaurant were armed and trying to rob him.

Respond to alarming call

By DARREL PATTILLO
Colby Free Press

A Greyhound bus passenger telephoned the Colby police Thursday afternoon from McDonald's with an alarming report.

According to Colby Police Department investigator Gary Shull, the man, whom Shull would not identify, called police from McDonald's at 3:05 p.m. and told them that 10

people in the restaurant were trying to rob him.

Police and other law enforcement personnel responded to the scene, and were unable to substantiate the caller's claim. Shull said that High Plains Mental Health was contacted, and after they interviewed the man it was determined that he was no threat to the public, and he was subsequently released.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners meet Monday at 9 a.m. at the courthouse. Denny Burke and Pam Medford will discuss property lines and road access; Undersheriff Mike Baughn will discuss a bill from Citizens Medical Center; and Gerry Fulwider will give a report on loan funds.

College board to meet Monday

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Colby Community College will be held on Monday at 5 p.m. in the board room of the Thomas Hall administration building. Items of business on the agenda include a bookstore tour, approval of contracts, approval of agreements, computer bids, electrical bids, request for early retirement, and payment of claims.

Voter books close Monday afternoon

The last day to register for the Nov. 5 election is Monday, said Tracey Perkins, county clerk. The books close at 5 p.m. that day.

If you need more information, please call the county clerk's office at 462-4500.

Public health meeting scheduled

The Area Citizens for Health Care will hold an open meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 23 in the Little Theater in the Colby Community Building. The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. The public is invite and urged to attend.

SHARE delivery announced

SHARE delivery is Saturday Oct., 26, at 9 a.m. at the Sacred Heart School gym. Menu for the October order is: Little Smokies, bratworst, chicken breast fillets, ham steak, chicken pot pie, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, apples, grapes, tangerines, grapefruit, and rice. If interested in ordering an October share, call 462-3579. A food share is \$16.50 plus two hours of volunteer time.

Vocal departments to perform

The Colby Middle School and High School vocal departments

will present their fall Concert starting at 7:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium on Tuesday, Oct. 22. (Note: this is a change from the school calendar). Along with American folk songs, the choirs will perform selections in Latin, Spanish, Hebrew, and Samoan. A reception sponsored by the Music Boosters will be held in the Commons Area after the concert's conclusion.

Kids to collect food on Sunday

The Colby Girl Scouts will be participating in the "Trick-or-Treat So Others Can Eat" program this coming Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m. They will be joining the Catholic Youth Organization and United Methodist Youth as well as other community volunteers to go door-to-door collecting non-perishable items for the Genesis Food Bank. Food items may be left on the front step marked "Genesis."

Boy Scouts taking popcorn orders

Boy Scouts are going door-to-door in the Colby area taking popcorn orders as part of their annual fund raising effort. Delivery will be in November around Thanksgiving. Call 694-2599.

