



COLBY FREE PRESS

Biggest seizure in history

By **PATTY DECKER**
Colby Free Press

A record 700 pounds of marijuana worth as much as \$1.5 million was rolled up Tuesday afternoon during a traffic stop nine miles east of Colby.

"This was the largest seizure that the Thomas County Sheriff's office has ever had," said Sheriff Tom Jones.

Jones said a deputy stopped a speeding 2002 Ford Explorer eastbound on Interstate 70 about 12:50 p.m. near the Mingo interchange southeast of Colby (milepost 62).

Lewis Hilbert Constantine, 51, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was driving the rented car with California license plates.

When the deputy approached the car, Jones said, it didn't take him long to notice the smell and identify the wrapped bundles in the back seat and cargo area, which were covered with blankets.

When deputies weighted the badly-wrapped bundles later, Jones said, they varied from 15 to 58 pounds.

Constantine was arrested and is being held at the Thomas County Jail facing charges of possession and transporting an illegal substance. Jones said he and federal authorities are discussing the case and Constantine could be turned over to the federal Drug Enforcement Agency in Wichita.

Although Jones said this was the largest seizure in the county's history, he is predicting that the figure could be broken in the fu-



PATTY DECKER/Free Press Editor

Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones looked over the 691 lbs. of marijuana seized off Interstate 70 on Tuesday during a traffic stop.

The seizure was the largest amount ever in the county's history, he said.

ture as tighter security at airports forces drug haulers to the highways.

"I can't foresee the amounts getting less," he said, "and ever since

9-11, there has been a lot more illegal drug trafficking on the

interstates as alternative ways to transport these substances."

Weather, controversy and more make headlines in 2002

By **DARREL PATTILLO**
Colby Free Press

It was a busy year in 2002 in Thomas County. Taking a look back were the following highlights:

January: Colby Grade School opened its computer lab with the last of 24 new iMac computers; Kyle Railroad changed hands, becoming Rail America; The Colby Lady Eagles won the Orange and Black basketball tournament; Work began on Colby's Tourist Information center; Two Colby individuals helped carry the Olympic Torch to Salt Lake City.

February: Police seized \$700,000 during a traffic stop; Police seized 33 pounds of cocaine;

Colby wrestling coach Mitch Beims was named Coach of the Year;

March: Police find 15 pounds of cocaine; Later in the month, police would find 300 pounds of marijuana along with \$100,000 in cash.

April: Air rescue comes to Colby; 13 middle school students are caught with drugs; S&T Telephone breaks ground; Dr. Victor Hildyard is accused of inappropriate conduct which triggered a battle between Colby doctors and the administration of Citizens Medical Center, which continues to this day.

May: Plans are begun for a home-owned carnival; Phil Schindler finishes school without ever missing

a day; May 24 becomes the latest day ever that Colby has received snow.

June: Don Barta is hired as the new principal at Colby High School; Long-time Colby Free Press columnist and Family and Religion editor Maxine Nelson retires and former Free Press sports editor Michelle L. Hawkins returns to take her place.

Other highlights in June include a tornado touches down north of Colby; Drs. Eric Jacobsen and Jeff Kasselmann and surgeon Mohammed Fercha leave Colby.

July: The Colby Municipal swimming pool is placed on the National Historic Register; Clean-

up begins on the Ace Services site; Citizens Medical Center purchases Family Center for Healthcare.

August: Thomas County is declared a federal disaster area, due to extreme drought and Heartland Christian School holds grand opening.

Also in August, Colby hosts gubernatorial debate between Kathleen Sebelius and Tim Schallenberger.

September: Colby Chamber of Commerce holds first ever "Celebration on the Plains."

West Nile virus strikes horses in Colby; 'Ad Astra, the Kansa warrior statue that will sit atop the Capitol building in Topeka, stops in

Colby for a visit.

October: Area Citizens for Healthcare forms in response to the local medical controversy; Colby High School tennis, cross country, and volleyball teams compete at the state level.

November: Citizens Medical Center turns 20 years old. Also in November, Colby holds its first Veterans Day parade in decades; Colby Community College instructor Keith Coplin publishes historical novel.

December: Stuckey's Restaurant in Brewster burned down; Colby Police shut down a meth lab; A suspect in 1993 rape in Colby is arrested in Wichita.

Kansas fares poorly in tobacco control reports

TOPEKA (AP) — Earning a C, the Kansas cigarette tax received the state's only passing mark in a report from the American Lung Association grading tobacco control efforts.

Like many other states, Kansas' efforts to provide smoke-free air, curb youth access, and prevent the use of tobacco were not strong enough, according to the State of

Tobacco Control 2002 report, released Tuesday. The report is a first-ever for the association and gave Kansas Fs in those three categories.

"We are truly unhappy," said Judy Keller, the association's state director. "We can surely do better. Imagine how you'd feel if your son or daughter came home with 3 Fs and a C."

The state earned its highest grade

for its cigarette tax, 79 cents a pack as of Jan. 1. In July, the tax increased to 70 cents from 24 cents.

Keller said she would like to see the tax raised to at least \$1 per pack.

For every 10 percent a cigarette tax is raised, there's a 7 percent decrease in teen smoking, Keller said. About 4 percent of adults stop.<

Kansas gets about \$60 million a year from the tobacco settlement,

said State Budget Director Duane Goossen. By state law, the majority of that money goes to a fund for children's programs, which does finance tobacco prevention efforts.

During the first few years of receiving the funds, about \$80 million moved into the general fund, Goossen said. Overall though, most of the money goes to children's programs, he said.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Tuesday's high-63
Low this morning-28
Soil temperature: 36
Temperature at 1 p.m. today: 64

Record high for today: 74, 2002. Record low, -14, 1937.

The forecast

Tonight: Clear. Brisk and mild. Low in the mid 20s. North wind 15 to 25 mph gusting to 35 mph after midnight.

Thursday: Partly sunny. Brisk and cooler. High near 40. North wind 15 to 25 mph gusting to 35 mph. Thursday night: Partly cloudy. Low near 10.

Friday: Mostly sunny. High 35 to 40. Friday night: Partly cloudy. Low in the mid teens.

Saturday: Partly cloudy and breezy. High in the mid 30s.

Sunday: Mostly clear and windy. Low in the lower 20s and high in the lower 40s.

Monday: Mostly clear. Low in the lower 20s and high in the lower 40s.

Tuesday: Mostly cloudy and breezy. Low in the mid 20s and high in the mid 40s.

Briefly

Deadline extended for program

There's still time to register for the Master Gardener Program scheduled to begin in February. This program is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension and will certify participants in horticulture and related areas, said D'Ette Scholtz, extension agent. For information or to pick up a registration form, call the Thomas County Extension Office.

Youth group plans soup supper

The Catholic Youth Organization in Colby is sponsoring a soup supper, Saturday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. (after the evening mass) in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church basement, 1065 W. 5th. The cost is free-will donation and all proceeds will go to support the youth group's activities. The menu will include potato, chicken noodle and chili soups. For questions or information, call 465-9103.

Soup supper to be held tomorrow

There will be a soup supper held in the Colby High School

commons area before the Colby and Goodland wrestling dual on Thursday. Serving will begin at 5:30 p.m. Both chili and chicken noodle soup will be served along with desserts. A free-will donation will be accepted. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Thomas County Amusement Association.

Free throw contest Sunday

The Knights of Columbus annual free throw contest will be held Sunday, Jan. 12 in the Colby Elementary gymnasium. Registration begins at noon and competition begins at 1 p.m. The contest is open for all boys and girls ages 10-14, with age determined as of Jan. 1, 2003, organization officials said today. Proof of age is required by providing a copy of birth certificate. For those with questions, call Miles Ladenburger at 462-7687 or Dewey Augustine at 462-2924 or 443-1548.

Health Care meeting cancelled

The Area Citizens for Health Care will not have their regu-

lar meeting tonight, a spokesperson for the group said. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 21, starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Colby Community Building's Little Theater. The public is invited and urged to attend any and all of these meetings.

Colby reports cards out Friday

Colby Public Schools are reminding parents and guardians that semester grade cards will be sent home with students on Friday. For questions, call the appropriate building level administrators: Colby Elementary School, 465-5100; Colby Middle School, 465-5200; or Colby High School, 465-5300.

Chamber luncheon Friday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon is scheduled for Friday beginning at noon at the Quality Inn in Colby. Special guest speaker is Doug Murphy, who is the drug enforcement coordinator with the Quad County Task Force. All chamber members and their guests are encouraged to attend. For questions, call 462-3400.

Couple charged with lab

By **DARREL PATTILLO**
Colby Free Press

A Colby couple out on bond for operating a meth lab are back in custody after being arrested Saturday evening at their home, located at 660 N. Range Avenue.

Colby Police Investigator Gary Shull said that Ray and Bobye Chadwell, who had been arrested in September for manufacturing methamphetamine, were arrested again for possession of marijuana and possession of material to manufacture meth after police obtained a warrant to search their residence.

Early Saturday afternoon, police received information about possible illegal drug activity at the residence, and executed the warrant at 5:30 p.m.

The search and clean-up of the home took about three hours, Shull said, with the assistance of the Thomas County Sheriff's Office and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

No other arrests were made at the time. Also in the residence at the time of the search were the Chadwell's two grade school age grandchildren, the children's parents, two additional men, and an in infant a preschool age child with their mother. The investigation is continuing at this time, Shull added, with reports to be forwarded to the Thomas County Attorney when they are completed for his consideration in the filing of charges.

Drought is costing producers

WICHITA (AP) — Drought cost Kansas farmers \$1.1 billion in crop losses last year as lower yields and abandoned acres hurt production of the state's winter wheat crop and its fall crops as well, an agricultural economist said Tuesday.

Marty Albright, administrator of the Farm Management Association at Kansas State University, said the drought also hit livestock producers by an additional \$300 million, as cattlemen were forced to buy feed when pasture conditions deteriorated.

"The issue of this drought is that it is so much more widespread," Albright said.

"This has affected all our crops — both wheat harvested in summer and our fall crops. If you look at some maps, it is drier now than it was last year."

Kansas has about 16,000 commercial farm operations, and between 10,000 and 12,000 of them suffered drought losses, Albright said. Albright made the comments in a telephone interview from his car while en route to Kansas City to board an airplane to Washington, D.C. There, he planned to join 100 other farm leaders from around the nation gathering Wednesday and Thursday to ask Congress for drought aid.

