



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Sheriff requests KBI investigate Rexford incident

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Sheriff's Office and the joint Thomas County and Colby Police Department Special Response Team responded to the Roger F. Wark residence in Rexford on Wednesday, following a report that he was threatening suicide and firing a weapon in his home, Sheriff Tom Jones said this morning.

Jones said that following numerous attempts to establish contact with Wark, that at approximately

12:43 this morning he confronted officers with a firearm and was subsequently incapacitated by officers' fire.

Jones said Wark, 48, was transported by Thomas County EMS to Citizens Medical Center, and then transferred to Denver.

Jones said he requested that the Kansas Bureau of Investigation conduct an investigation of the incident.

There were no other details or information made available, pending the investigation by the KBI.

School board okays bid from Stephens

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS
Colby Free Press

Stephens Construction of Colby was awarded the bid for the new school administration building at this week's school board meeting. Stephens' bid was \$223,463.48.

Board member Gerry Fulwider was the lone vote against the bid; board member Wilburn Holloway was absent.

The approval was to accept the general bid from Stephens Construction in the amount of \$223,463.48. This includes the external portion of the structure, such as walls, exterior doors and windows, roof, masonry work, utility extensions, handicap ramps, and site work. An option included interior work, such as walls and partitions, bathroom fixtures, ceilings, and doors and framework. That will be handled by the district's maintenance department, headed up by Gary Barton.

The bid for mechanical construction from McKee Inc. of Colby was accepted in the amount of \$59,763, and the bid from Don's Electric of Colby for electrical construction was for \$26,910.

Glen Strait of Strait Associates of Colby, presented plans for the new building to be erected at the southwest corner of Grant and Third.

Much discussion focused on the liability of the current administration building at 210 S. Range — the former Thomas County Hospital. With the roof needing repair and the

increasing concerns over being able to maintain insurance, the board had looked at several options besides a new building, such as leasing or purchasing an existing structure.

In addition, utility expenses for the current building were said to have been excessive. Jo DeYoung, business manager for the district, said that a two-year average is \$31,044. After checking industry standards for what a new facility would be, it is estimated average yearly costs would be \$8,400, a difference of \$22,644.

DeYoung also estimates that property insurance will decrease \$4,000 per year. Currently the school pays \$4,500 for insurance since the building is valued at \$5.3 million dollars, according to DeYoung. On a new facility that would be valued at \$300,000, insurance costs would be \$500 per year.

"We really have a short vision if we are going to throw out \$30,000 per year when in 10 years we could have bought a building," said board member Kathy Gordon.

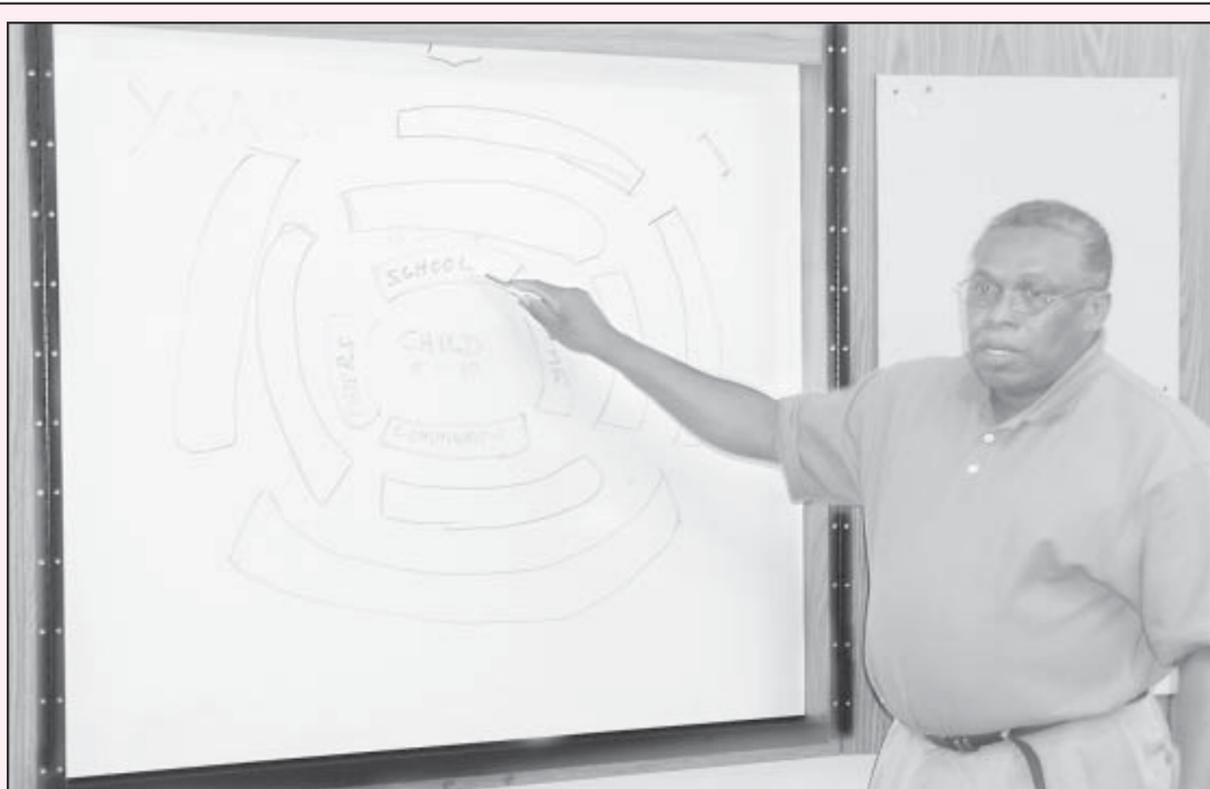
To use rent or lease a building in the community, the school would have to spend \$100,000 to connect the facility with the school's network, the board was told.

Fulwider, who has been openly against building a new facility due to uncertainty in state funding and the economy, said after hearing the presentation by DeYoung, "It is not necessarily a brilliant deduction that this is the wise thing to do."

Kline comments on hiring of nephew

TOPEKA (AP) — Attorney General Phill Kline said his office is saving the state money by employing his nephew as his driver and that the decision to hire 23-year-old Brad Kline as an assistant was not his. In an interview, Kline said he would not discuss his nephew's 12-month license suspension in June 2000 for refusing to be tested for alcohol or drugs.

Brad Kline holds the title of "special assistant" and is paid \$22,006 plus benefits a year to drive his uncle to appointments.



Dr. Walter Barker, Kansas State University child development specialist, spoke to representatives from various agencies in Thomas County and the northwest region about a new program to help youth learn positive life skills using technology.

Colby is site of one-of-a-kind project

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

There's a new pilot program being launched in Colby that is the first of its kind in the nation, said Dr. Walter Barker, specializing in child development with Kansas State University based in Colby.

The announcement was made during a special meeting held earlier this week at the Thomas County Office Complex with more than 15 representatives from various agencies throughout northwest Kansas in attendance.

The program entitled, "Youth and Seniors Achieving Success," seeks to bridge the generational gap between youth and adults, using technology to help this inter-generational partnership, he said.

The project is a joint venture

between Kansas State University and the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization in Thomas County.

"We are so excited about this program," Barker said, "because it will be driven by the children themselves." For this first program, 25 children ranging in age from 8 and up were selected from the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.

Those children will then be involved in the project for the next two years, meeting once a week with a variety of professionals to include Rick Haskin with Colby On-Line Services (after the first year), representatives from 4-H, Big Brothers Big Sisters and more.

The model, which was developed by Kansas State University, is the product of years of research in youth development, Barker said.

"If we are successful in Colby, we plan to market this program throughout the country," he said.

During the two-year process, he said, the young people involved in the pilot project will learn a variety of skills and how to apply those lessons in the home, school or community. "The curriculum will be simple, but effective in helping this young people build meaningful relationships with the goal of partnering with senior citizens in computer technology," he said. The most important part of the whole process, Barker explained, is that this project will be completely designed by the young people.

"Parents and mentors are encouraged to attend the weekly meetings, but only as observers and to offer feedback — we want the children to own this project," he said.

Along with building their own self-esteem, Barker said, these young people will also provide a community service by helping older people on how to use comput-

ers for e-mailing pictures to their grandchildren, retrieving pictures of the grandchildren, or researching on the Internet.

The cost to run this program for two years is about \$105,000, he said, and donations are necessary. Thus far, the Thomas County Community Foundation, Juvenile Justice Authority, Thomas County attorney, Colby Community College, Pioneer Memorial Library, RSVP, and others have either given money, time or access to equipment toward the program.

The program will be starting in the near future, Barker said, and for questions about how others can get involved or donate to the project can call him at (785) 462-6281.

"We know this will be challenging and we are also confident we can do this," Barker said at the meeting Monday night.

Oakley, Goodland airports receive grants

By TOM (TD) DREILING
Free Press Publisher

Two area airports have been named to share in grants totaling \$4.1 million, Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) told the Colby Free Press today.

The Oakley Municipal Airport will receive \$217,269 to rehabilitate connecting taxiways, and Renner Field, Goodland's municipal airport, will receive \$409,510 to

rehabilitate runway and taxiway lighting.

"These funds," Roberts said, "are vital to improve airports throughout rural Kansas. Access to our community airports is simply not a luxury — it's an imperative."

Some other airports in the region sharing in the grants, include:

- Hays, \$1,139,074 to rehabilitate runway 16/34 and update the Airport Layout Plan as part of the new

crosswind runway 4-22 project.

- Hill City, \$41,200 to update the Airport Master Plan and conduct construction survey.

- Phillipsburg, \$134,367 to rehabilitate the T-Hangar Taxilane, replace regulator and replace lighted windcone.

- Hugoton, \$39,771 to relocate Runway Edge Identification Lights to meet current standards, and install apron edge lights to increase

safety of night operations.

- Dodge City, \$157,500 to rehabilitate taxiway.

- Stanton County, \$165,135 to rehabilitate the apron, and \$31,500 to conduct an Environmental Assessment for a new runway 17/35.

- Liberal, \$360,000 to rehabilitate runway 17/35 to meet FAA standards.

The Department of Transportation awarded the grants.

Washington banquet honors native of Colby

WASHINGTON (AP) — He was often the "word man" behind the stinging wit of Kansas Sen. Pat Roberts, but longtime aide Leroy Towns was in the spotlight Wednesday evening at the spring banquet of the Kansas Society of Washington, D.C.

Towns, a Colby native, was the

special honoree at the dinner, and he and Roberts traded stories about their 23 years working together.

Towns, a former reporter for Harris Newspapers, went to work as Roberts' campaign manager for his congressional race in 1980, the first of 11 successful campaigns, counting primaries.

Towns said he found several mementos cleaning out his desk, including a comment sheet a constituent filled out and gave former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum at the 1981 state fair. Her chief of staff had dropped it on Towns' desk, saying the senator was not happy.

"It is written in shaky hand: 'Dear

Nancy. How are you? I am fine. You are a nice lady, but you vote too liberal. Help the farmer. Talk to Roberts.'" The signature was former Sen. Art Capper, who had died, but "there was no mistaking Roberts' handiwork," Towns said.

Towns resigned late last year and is pursuing a private-sector career.

Briefly

'Work days' set by carnival group

The Thomas County Amusement Association is planning to hold "work days" each Saturday until fair time and everyone in the community is encouraged to lend a hand. The association, the driving force behind the home-owned carnival, has purchased several rides and with help on work days may be able to have some of those in operation by July 4th.

Hospital to hold public meeting

Citizens Medical Center is sponsoring a special community meeting next Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Colby High School auditorium, said Vern Schwanke, president of the hospital's board of trustees. The purpose of the meeting, he said, will be to discuss and answer any questions regarding the Colby hospital's critical access status and transition.

Chamber luncheon features Donelan

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce will hold its regular noon luncheon on Friday at the Quality Inn,

said Jada Tubbs, executive director. Becky Donelan, executive director of the Thomas County Community Foundation, is the guest speaker and will be discussing projects and opportunities the foundation can provide. All chamber members and guests are invited. For questions, call 460-3401.

Youth plan performance next week

A multimedia production called, "Come to Me," will be presented on Wednesday, May 14, at 7 p.m. at the Bedker Building on the Colby Community College campus. The presentation is by *The Remnant*, a group of 10 young people who use drama, video, music, and dance to communicate a message of hope in hurting times. *The Remnant* is a traveling ministry of Youth With a Mission. A free-will offering will be taken and the program is open to the public. For questions call Rachael Walker at (785) 462-6432.

'Great Strides' needs teams

Teams are now forming for the Western Kansas Great

Strides 2003 event to raise money in the fight and cure of cystic fibrosis, said Doris Reed, co-chair in Monument. This is the first time the Great Strides walk will be held in Colby, she said, with the event planned for May 31, with check-in at 8 a.m. and the walk beginning at 9 a.m. at Fike Park. For questions, call 465-7907.

Childbirth classes underway

Childbirth education classes are underway, said Amy Hutfles, one of the teachers. The classes are from 7-10 p.m. on May 8, 15 and 22 in the Health Sciences Building on the Colby Community College campus. The cost is \$40 and includes books and materials.

Barbershoppers plan guest night

The Tumbleweed Barbershop Chorus is sponsoring a special guest night at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 15, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Barbershoppers are inviting everyone to come and enjoy the fun, food and fellowship of the Tumbleweed Chorus.



Sunny and 70s

Thomas, Logan Counties
Tonight...partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 40s. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph becoming north early in the morning. Friday...mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 70s. North wind 10 to 15 mph becoming east late. Friday night...partly cloudy with a chance of showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 40s. Chance of rain 30 percent. Saturday...showers and thunderstorms likely. Cooler and breezy. Highs in the mid 50s. Chance of rain 70 percent.

The numbers
Wednesday's high, 71
Low this morning, 30
Year ago today, 70 and 43
Records, 95 in 1934, 27 in 1975
24-hour precipitation, 0.07
Month's precipitation 0.67
Year's precipitation 4.69
Water Usage/Colby
May 7 = 1.285 million gallons

