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Local officials comment on increased alert

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

With the nation's security alert elevated to orange or "high" status, the *Free Press* today turned to local officials to gauge the impact on Colby and Thomas County.

Colby and Thomas County law enforcement officials said they are taking the most recent terrorism alert seriously, along with asking others to report any suspicious behavior.

Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones said today that suspicious activities around feedlots, natural gas lines, or food sources should be reported to either the city or county officials.

"Whenever we are made aware of heightened alerts from the FBI," he said, "we take a look at not only the threat level, but also what the chatter is about and possible targets."

Unlike major metropolitan areas, he said, rural communities pay close attention to any disruptions of the food chain, which is why feedlots, water supplies and fields are monitored more closely.

"We receive teletype information about alert changes," Jones said, "and for us out here we are tuned in differently than in bigger cities."

Carolyn Armstrong, Colby's city manager, said the areas that could be interrupted such as wastewater and water operations are regularly monitored. In the event that something is shut down, city crews are alerted by the system in place and could act quickly if the need arises.

Jones added that officials are concerned about the recent threats and well aware that this area is a main avenue across the country.

People are encouraged to report unusual situations by calling either the Colby Police Department at 462-4460 or the Thomas County Sheriff's office at 462-4570.

The *Associated Press* reported today that despite Federal counterterrorism authorities increasing the security level nationwide few specifics on where al-Qaida could strike inside the country were provided.

Officials are fearful that al-Qaida could expand its plans for a wave of attacks overseas into the United States. FBI Director Robert Mueller said this morning, "The American public ought to go about its business understanding that it ought to be vigilant," he said on ABC's "Good Morning America," explaining the system of alerts deters terrorism. "We know that from our interrogations" with suspected terrorists, Mueller said.

Asked whether President Bush spoke too soon in saying al-Qaida was "on the run," Mueller said: "They are on the run."

Mueller said authorities believe that Osama bin Laden "is still out there. I think there's some concern about what kind of control he has over the people." Although Mueller said the warnings are nonspecific, federal law enforcement officials speaking on condition of anonymity said that among the intelligence picked up recently were two electronic transmissions that discussed the possibility of an attack on New York, Washington, Boston and more broadly the U.S. coastlines.

Around the country, state and local authorities stepped up security measures. Police in California worked 12-hour shifts. National Guard troops in New York were called up to protect subways and bridges. In Washington, the Capitol police SWAT team prepared to conduct random patrols.

The United States, Britain and Germany temporarily closed their embassies and consulates in Saudi Arabia.

'Orange' forces state to also act

TOPEKA (AP) — Security across Kansas increased Tuesday, in keeping with the national moves to gird against possible terrorist attacks.

The changes were instituted after the national threat level was increased from yellow, or elevated, to orange, or high. At the Statehouse, only the east entrance remained open to the public. All other access was restricted to authorized employees and elected officials.

Additional police will be patrolling the grounds in and around the Statehouse, the governor said, and employees will be required to always wear their state identification cards. Elsewhere, Westar Energy Inc. closed the grounds of its Jeffrey Energy Center near St. Marys to the public. In addition, Coffey County State Fishing Lake adjacent to the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant was closed until further notice.

For a job well done



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby Community College President Dr. Mikel Ary (left) recognized Bob Selby, an instructor in accounting and economic courses, as the 2003 recipient of the Dr. Tangeman Award. Since 1987, the award has honored faculty members displaying outstanding excellence in teaching. Previous winners were Dr. Max

Pickerill, Joyce Hansen, Cyril Leiker, Victor Oelke, Larry Koon, Dr. Philip Shuman, Roger Hale, Juliann Groom, Nick Wells, Kirk Hunter, Pat Erickson, Steve Lampe, Joan Jilka, Tom Moorhous and Sandy Harper. The honor was presented to Selby at Saturday's commencement in the Colby Community Building.

Close-up School board eyes track, stadium at Dennen Field

By **MICHELLE L. HAWKINS**

Colby Free Press

The proposed improvements for Dennen Field, including a new track and stadium, were presented to the Colby Board of Education at their Monday night meeting.

A representative of the Colby Booster Club, Joel Powell, gave a presentation on the stadium and also shared information about the grants which have been applied for to help fund the project.

Board members also got the opportunity to take a lap around the track and see some of the areas where the track is completely worn away or in many cases is paper thin. Athletic director and assistant principal Jeff Quenzer was on hand to answer questions and share the proposed track resurfacing project.

He said the current track surface is nearly 14 years old and is made of latex, which typically has an 8- to 10-year life expectancy. For the past four years, the school has been patching the worn areas in the spring prior to the beginning of track.

"The track is worn out," Quenzer said. "Not only from the athletes running (and) walkers walking, but

also the elements have caused wear on the track."

Quenzer said that the sun, rain, snow and dirt have played a role in the deterioration. Quenzer compared the types of tracks to tires. "A person can buy a set of tires made for 20,000 miles or 60,000 miles," he said. "Our present latex track compares to the 20,000-mile tires, while a polyurethane track is like the 60,000-mile tires."

Several different options have been explored, including companies who could relay another latex track to those who could install a polyurethane one. Quenzer reported that polyurethane tracks have always been the number one track surfaces in light of durability, but in the past have been too expensive for most purchasers. The polyurethane tracks repel the water whereas a latex track would absorb it to a draining system below.

Prices range anywhere from \$40,000 to resurface with latex to \$270,000 for the high-end polyurethane track.

Powell said the Booster Club has applied for a grant from the Nike Corporation which is for \$50,000 and with continued fund raising

hope to complete the renovations, starting first with the track and ending with the completion of landscaping and a new stadium.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from high school band instructor Julie Groom about her concern over changing the time of band to the last hour of the day for the 2003-2004 school year. Groom said that the last classes of the day are usually the ones that suffer from students being absent for a variety of athletic and school activities. She was concerned that the only day to guarantee that all the band students would be there to practice would be on Wednesday when no extra-curricular activities can be planned.

High school principal Don Barta said that in keeping with the concern over students missing the afternoons for school activities, all of the block classes such as math, language and science would be scheduled earlier in the day. Barta said that with teachers coaching and students participating, there are instances when a student and teacher don't see each other in the classroom for over a week.

Barta said the schedule was made in the best interest of all programs,

not just band. The only two options for the non-block classes are right after lunch or the last hour of the day. Currently the seminar class, a study hall and time for students to get extra help from teachers, is after lunch.

Quenzer said the concern over scheduling seminar at the end of the day is keeping students from leaving early. Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said he would meet with Barta and Groom this week to try to work out a solution.

- Approved to allow the woods class to build a house for their project next year. The class would be supervised by woods instructor Don Balluch who has done projects similar to this at other schools. Balluch has taught at the high school for two years. Students will work on the project as a double-block course each day to complete the project by the end of the year.

- Approved the school to seek bids for a bus as well as a Suburban or Excursion. The bids will be opened at the June 16 meeting, prior to the ending of the fiscal year when it can be determined if the funding will be available to purchase the vehicles.



Cloudy, warmer

Thomas, Logan Counties

Tonight...mostly cloudy. Lows in the mid 40s. South wind around 10 mph. Thursday...mostly cloudy in the morning...Then becoming partly sunny. Highs in the lower 80s. South wind 10 to 15 mph. Thursday night...mostly cloudy. A chance of showers and thunderstorms early in the morning. Lows in the lower 50s. Chance of rain 30 percent. Friday...mostly cloudy. A chance of showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon. Highs in the lower 70s. Chance of rain 30 percent. Friday night...mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and possibly a thunderstorm, mainly in the evening. Lows near 50. Chance of rain 30 percent.

By the numbers

Tuesday's high, 60
Low this morning, 39
Year ago today, 82 and 49
Records for the date, 97 in 1934, 29 in 1915
24-hour precipitation up to 8 a.m., 0.00
Month's precipitation to date, 2.30
Year's precipitation to date, 6.32

Water Usage/Colby

May 19 = 1.258 million gallons
May 20 = 1.332 million gallons

Briefly

Fund raiser near, teams needed

The Western Kansas Great Strides 2003 fund raising event to help in the fight and cure of cystic fibrosis will be held in Colby on Saturday, 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.

Poppy sales start Friday

The Ladies VFW Auxiliary will be conducting their annual Buddy Poppy campaign on Friday, said Hazel Duffey, coordinator. "Your nation's war dead have made it possible for you to live a life of freedom," she said. "Honor them with your donation for a Poppy and wear it in memory of their sacrifice." For questions, call Duffey at 462-3476.

Piano recital Thursday

Piano students of Pat Ziegelmeier will be participating in a recital beginning at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, in the Frahm The-

atre on the campus of Colby Community College. The students performing are from all levels to include early elementary through high school, she said, and there will be a variety of duets and solos. Everyone is invited to this free event.

Clinic to give free physicals

Colby Medical and Surgical Center, 175 S. Range, will be providing free physicals to all students entering seventh through twelfth grade next year, a spokesperson from the clinic said Tuesday. Physicals will be given on Thursday, May 29, beginning at 5:30 p.m., for students at Colby Middle School; 6:15 p.m., for Colby High School students; and 7 p.m., for students from Brewster and Golden Plains. Students are asked to bring their physical forms with them.

Leftover commodities available

Commodities from the Monday distribution are still available at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office for those eligible, said Laura Withington, coordinator. For questions

on eligibility or to receive commodities, call her at 462-6744.

Vacation bible school next week

Trinity Lutheran Church, 5th and Country Club, Colby is sponsoring a vacation bible school, "Let the Son Shine In," from 9 a.m. to noon, Tuesday, May 27 through Friday, May 30. To pre-register call either the church at 462-3497; Melinda Olson, 465-8137; or Renell Bell, 462-8362.

Retirement reception set for Delzeit

A public retirement reception for Corky Delzeit, director of public power, will be held at 3 p.m. on May 30 in the council chambers of Colby City Hall, 585 N. Franklin.

Red Cross plans annual meeting

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold its annual meeting at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 27, at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range in Colby. For questions, call Mary Smith, director, 462-7161.

