



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## City sewer charge will triple with May billing

By **PATTY DECKER**

*Free Press Editor*

Colby residents will be paying nearly three times more on their sewer bills starting May 1 following action by the city council on Tuesday.

The new rates will be \$22 for the first 2,000 gallons of water and \$3.25 per 1,000 gallons of water used above the initial cost.

In most situations, Armstrong said the cost will be triple what a resident is currently paying. Prior to the increase, residents were paying \$9 for the first 3,000 gallons of water and \$1 for each 1,000 gallons above that.

In explaining the sewer charge, Armstrong said there are four parts to the monthly city bill. Those include sanitation (trash), sewer, water and electric.

The sewer rate is based on water carried from a residence or business to sewers and on to the wastewater treatment facility.

For example, flushing toilets, running the faucet, washing clothes, and showers all require the use of sewers. The water charge is based also on the amount of gallons used per month, but some water will not be carried to the sewers, citing examples such as watering plants or yards.

The reason for the increase is be-

cause the city needs a new wastewater treatment plant, said Armstrong.

By raising the rate now, she said, the city will be able to contribute \$2,200,000 towards the project and lower the amount of the loan to around \$6,500,000. The design for the new plant should be completed by December with bids going out in early spring of 2005.

The location for the new facility will be east and north of Wagoner and Sons, a salvage operation east of town on Highway 24, Armstrong said.

The idea for a new wastewater treatment plant has been studied for many months and the city has no choice but to conform with the pollution control act required by the state and federal government.

"Sewer rates in Colby have been extremely low for many years," she said, "and last year the minimum sewer rate was increased from \$4.56 a month to \$9 a month."

However, that slight increase has not helped to build any cash reserves to pay for a new plant. In addition to the new plant, Armstrong also said the city needs another major sewer main to serve the business expansion occurring on both sides of Interstate 70. In total, the new plant and additional sewer main is estimated to cost \$8,659,250.

Funding for the more than \$8 million project will come from the state revolving loan fund with an interest rate of 2.76 percent over a 20-year term, she said.

"The city's existing wastewater treatment facility was initially constructed in 1932 incorporating an Imhoff Tank and Trickling Filter," Armstrong said. The plant was upgraded in 1954 and in 1966 a contact stabilization facility was added. The last improvement to the plant was in 1996 with the installation of a mechanical bar screen, new flume and grit removal system.

"This treatment facility has far exceeded the normal life expectancy of any plant," she said, "and is in imminent danger of complete failure."

During the council meeting, Armstrong further explained that the city of Oberlin is also headed the same way with regard to their wastewater treatment facility.

Mayor Warren Hixson and the other members of the council are encouraging residents or businesses to stop by Colby City Hall, 585 N. Franklin, and pick up an informational sheet explaining why the changes are needed, background information and cost breakdowns. Photographs are also available showing the dangers of the current facility.

## Governor reads to third graders

MANHATTAN (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius showed her support for Kansas schools Wednesday by reading poetry for third graders and answering questions about public service from sixth graders.

During a visit to Marlatt Elementary School in Manhattan, she told teacher Ken Garwick's sixth-graders that finding legislators willing to make tough decisions about schools was difficult.

"A lot of people say we need more money for schools but don't want to make anybody mad," she said.

Sebelius said she understands concerns about raising taxes — she wants to keep the money she earns — but Kansans have expectations for government services, including

education. The Democratic governor was making her second visit to a Kansas school this week, after stopping Tuesday in Emporia. Other visits are expected with the Legislature on break until April 28.

Legislators began their annual recess Friday night after the Senate failed to pass a school funding package. The chamber has considered at least six different funding plans, ranging from the governor's three-year, \$304 million plan that required increases in sales, income and property taxes, to a \$25 million plan relying on existing revenues.

Senate Majority Leader Lana Oleen, R-Manhattan, joined Sebelius at the elementary school. Oleen said legislators continue to

work on a funding package, with increases in sales and income tax likely sources of funding.

"We're finding our range, but we didn't get there yet," Oleen told the students.

Sebelius prefers a House-passed bill worth \$155 million, which would raise the 5.3 percent state sales tax to 5.5 percent and impose a 4.5 percent surcharge on individual income taxes.

The new revenue would give schools an additional \$100 per pupil, plus more money for at-risk programs, bilingual education and special education.

The plan also lets school boards raise local property taxes by up to \$120 million with voter approval.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

The International Students and Friends Organization hosted a special meal for fellow students, faculty and others on Wednesday in the student union at Colby Community College. Naoni Suzuki, one of the Japanese students, was busy in the back kitchen making dumplings. It was also the first time the students said they had ever cooked for so many people.

## Japanese cuisine fills college plates

By **PATTY DECKER**

*Free Press Editor*

A group of international students at Colby Community College treated more than 200 fellow classmates to supper on Wednesday which featured an assortment of Japanese foods.

The International Students and Friends Organization hosted the event, said Connie Davis, advisor, with preparations taking 30 hours.

"This was strictly a voluntary project," she said, "and they didn't get any extra credits or money — it was just something the students in the organization wanted to do."

It was a way, she said, for the in-

ternational students to interact with fellow students, faculty and community members.

Davis said the students not only spent many hours preparing and cooking food from scratch, but they also decorated the dining area in the student union. In order to have all the ingredients necessary for the menu, Davis said the students spoke with the food service director, Butch Herbel, to place the order.

The menu included chicken teriyaki, individually-wrapped dumplings, beef curry and rice and miso soup.

"They spent hours during the last four days," she said, "chopping vegetables, trimming and cutting

meat, making individual skewers of mean and boiling chopped vegetables for the beef curry."

The students involved in creating the menu were Yurie Fujisawa, Akira Itoh, Naoya Izutani, Masami Shirata and Yasuko Tsuchiya.

Choromi Jang and Tatsuro Kogo also helped in the food preparation on Wednesday with many American students helping in the kitchen or decorating.

"I was very impressed with their dedication to this project," Davis said.

Along with Davis, Barbara Ann Szwytsis, also an organization sponsor, was there to assist.



### Snow, snow, snow

**Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area Tonight...**Occasional rain showers and isolated thunderstorms. Lows in the lower 40s. Southeast winds 10 to 20 mph. Chance of showers and thunderstorms 80 percent. **Friday...**Cloudy with rain likely. Breezy. Cooler. Highs in the mid 40s to around 50. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph with gusts to around 40 mph. Chance of rain 70 percent. **Friday night...**Cloudy with a 50 percent chance of rain and *snow*. Colder. Lows in the upper 20s. North winds 10 to 20 mph with gusts to around 35 mph. **Saturday...**Cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain. Highs somewhere in the 40s. North winds 5 to 15 mph. **Saturday night...**Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of *snow*. Lows in the 20s. **Easter Sunday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 40s to around 50..

#### The numbers

Wednesday's high, 74  
Low this morning, 34  
Records for April 8, 89 in 1978 and 14 in 1914  
Year ago today, 59 and 20  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
April total, 0.24; April snow-fall, 0; Soil temperature, 57

#### The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby.

## Extension agent says job here is a win-win situation

By **TISHA COX**

*Colby Free Press*

There's a new face at the Thomas County Extension office.

Joe Leibbrandt has been on the job as the county's agricultural Extension agent since March 29.

Leibbrandt is filling in for Doug Musick who is deployed with the National Guard in Kuwait. Leibbrandt could be on the job for up to 18 months or less, but he's not sure how long it could last.

"I'm here for the time period he

will be gone serving the country," he said.

Originally from St. Francis, this job is offering the chance to work in the field he loves and be close to home at the same time. "It was close to family," Leibbrandt said. "That was



Leibbrandt

the main thing. I've always had an interest in agriculture and working with kids."

He worked as an agriculture Extension agent in Post Rock country in Lincoln and Mitchell counties. He majored in animal science at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

Before taking the job here, Leibbrandt said he was working with his father on his ranch in St. Francis for a few months.

He said the temporary Extension

position was a chance to get back into the profession.

His duties in Thomas County will cover more than his previous job.

"It's a little bit different," Leibbrandt said.

"It's a little bit more of a challenge."

In Mitchell and Lincoln counties, his responsibilities were livestock and 4-H. Now he will cover all areas of agriculture for Thomas County.

He's been meeting people and is

excited about the job.

So far, he's getting caught up on everything and said there's a lull before things start picking up with the 4-H spring livestock show April 17, 4-H dog show May 1 and camps and other activities in June.

Leibbrandt said he's enjoyed meeting the county's residents and they seem to want to work to make the community and county a better place.

"I've been impressed with that," he said.

## Raising money on Colby Community College board's mind

By **TISHA COX**

*Colby Free Press*

Raising money was on the minds of the Colby Community College board of trustees at their Monday meeting.

Bob Hartsook and John Pepperdine, of Hartsook and Associates, Wrightsville Beach, N.C. gave a presentation on their fund raising services.

The board is looking into hiring someone to help raise money for the

proposed wellness center. The college received \$250,000 from the federal government earlier this year for that cause.

The board took no action following Hartsook's presentation, and Dr. Mikel Ary, the college's president, said the company hasn't been hired yet but they will submit a proposal at a later meeting.

Hartsook said most organizations are looking for someone to do the work for them but most end up hav-

ing to do it themselves. He said they've done more than 1,200 fund-raising projects in 17 years of business.

"This is hard work," Hartsook said. "This is not something that somebody else is going to do for you."

He said the first step is an assessment and then they come up with a plan after seeing how much money they can potentially raise.

"We assess economic viability

from a non-profit point of view," Hartsook said.

Then, the company can place someone in the community for six months to help with fund raising or work out an arrangement where someone from the company would drop by several times a month to see how things are going.

"You can raise some money," he said. "I just don't know how much."

Board member Don Kready said Hartsook's presentation was infor-

mative.

"I thought it was a real good presentation," Kready said. "It indicates there's going to be a lot of work involved to raise the funds."

He said it will be up to the board to make the final decision on whether they bring in someone from the outside to assist in raising money or use someone in-house.

"It's going to take more than just us to get the thing accomplished," Kready said.

## Briefly

### Landfill closes for holiday

The Thomas County landfill will be closed Sunday in observance of Easter, said Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor. The landfill will be back on regular hours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### Kindergarten performance set

The Colby Grade School kindergarten class will perform "A Day on the Farm" at 7 p.m. April 22 at the Colby Grade School auditorium. There is no admission charge.

### Preschool open house announced

Heartland Christian School will hold its preschool "Open House" on Thursday, April 15 for parents wanting to start their 3-4-year-old child for the 2004-2005 school year. It begins at 9 a.m. with an informational meeting with classroom participation to follow. For questions, call 460-6419.

### Easter Cantata scheduled

A community-wide Easter Cantata will be performed at 7 p.m. on Good Friday at the Berean Church in Colby. The public is invited to attend.

### Fair board meets tonight

The Thomas County Fair Board will hold its regular meeting at 8 p.m. tonight at the fairgrounds. The meeting is open to the public.

### Hamburger feed Saturday

The Cystic Fibrosis "Great Strides Walk" will hold a hamburger feed fund-raiser in the Colby Wal-Mart parking lot starting at 10 a.m. Saturday. Items on the menu will be hamburgers, hot dogs, sodas, treats and chips. Also available will be Easter cakes and pies.

