



COLBY FREE PRESS

County commission candidates discuss issues

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Three Republican candidates will be duking it out during the primary election next Tuesday for the District 3 Thomas County Commissioner seat.

Whoever is chosen Tuesday will face Democrat Rosalie Seeman for the seat at the November election. The seat is currently held by Duane Dawes, who announced earlier this year he wasn't running for re-election.

The candidates are Ken Christiansen of Brewster and Bert Stramel and Bill Miller, Jr. of Colby. The three talked about why they think they would make good repre-



Ken Christiansen

sentatives for the residents of the county and some of the issues they see that are important for the county's future.

Christiansen said if county residents want someone who will give them "fair and honest representation," he's the man they should vote for.

He added common sense, conservative, fairness and honesty are other reasons people should vote for him.

On county issues, Christiansen said funding for the county, including money to maintain roads and paying for insurance are what he sees as matters of concern.

"Funding for the county will be an issue that is with us from now on and doing the most with what we have," he said.

Christiansen said using what money there is to keep existing programs and making do to provide

residents with what they're used to is an important issue. He said there's only so much money to work with and it will have to be dealt with.

He and his wife Janet farm and raise livestock in northwest Thomas County. Christiansen also sells real estate. He is a lifelong county resident and attended Colby schools.

Stramel is ready to take on the responsibilities of a county commissioner. He said he would be a good representative because he would offer a different perspective.

"I'm a younger generation," he said, adding he sees getting young people to stay in the area or come back after college is one of the prob-



Bert Stramel

lems he sees in the county. "I can identify with what they want and look for."

Other issues he sees at the county level are economic development and escalating property tax, both of which need to be dealt with.

"I think those are some key issues we need to look at," Stramel said.

Being a county commissioner is something he's always wanted to do and it's something he wants to build on, and maybe run for other political offices in the future.

He also wants to encourage people to exercise their rights and vote in the primary.

He said he is also supportive of House Bill 2725, passed this year, which will allow counties to recover the cost of housing inmates in their county jails.

Stramel said it's something he would like the Thomas County commissioners get involved with.

Stramel, a Thomas County native, farms and is the board president of the county farm bureau. He also attends Mingo Bible Church.

Miller said he thinks some of the requirements to being a good commissioner are being established in the county and having a business background.

"I think you need to be well-rounded," he said, adding that includes both with family and business.

Miller said some of the key issues he sees are taxes, the cost of running the county and health care. He said county taxes can't continue to be raised.



Bill Miller, Jr.

He said population decline, ground water and economic development are also important issues.

He said retaining businesses and the population will have to be dealt with and said that will probably be a continuing issue.

Miller said he's running because with his experience, he could benefit the county. He served on the Colby school board for 10 and a half years.

Miller has been active in Kiwanis Club and various other community activities, including helping with the fair and other volunteer work.

He also wants to encourage people to vote and is glad to see there are other candidates running for commissioner.

Miller and his wife Peggy have three children and one grandchild. Miller has been self-employed as a farmer for more than 30 years.

Advance balloting continues in county

Voters can pick up a ballot before noon on Monday at clerk's office

By TISHA COX

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Voting for Tuesday's primary election has already started. County Clerk Tracey Perkins said so far 105 voters have taken advantage of advance voting.

She said county residents can still get an advance ballot if they call the clerk's office or come in by noon on Monday. Sick or disabled voters can also still get a ballot until 7 p.m. on election night.

The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, primary election day.

"All advance ballots have to be turned in by 7 o'clock on election evening," Perkins said.

She said the law changed from absentee to advance voting almost six years ago.

"It was more or less a convenience," Perkins said. "Some people do take advantage of it."

She said there are 5,467 registered voters in the county with 3,080 Republicans, 1,107 Democrats, 31 Libertarians and five Reform Party members. There are also 1,244 unaffiliated voters registered.

Perkins said they can vote in the primary but have to keep in mind the Republican ballot is closed and unaffiliated voters will have to fill out

a card to vote that ballot. The Democrat ballot is open so they don't have to fill anything out.

She said only the Democratic and Republican parties are recognized for the primary but for the November election, all parties are eligible.

Important races in the county are the District 3 county commissioners race which has three Republican candidates vying for the chance to make it onto the ballot for the general election in November.

Bert Stramel and Bill Miller, Jr. of Colby and Ken Christiansen of Brewster are all on the ballot for Tuesday's primary.

The District 2 seat also has two candidates on the primary ballot for the District 2 seat. They are Democrats Richard Stefan and Jim Cousins of Colby.

Residents might also be interested in the Logan County Attorney primary race. Colby resident Andrea Wyrick, a Republican, has filed to run against incumbent County Attorney Douglas Spencer, a Republican.

Wyrick will also be going head to head with Thomas County Attorney Allan Taylor, a Democrat, in the November general election. Wyrick is trying to become county attorney for both counties.

Eye-to-eye with the judges



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Kayla Hockersmith showed off one of her craft projects during judging of 4-H arts and crafts projects at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds this morning. It was one of several pre-fair activities that have been going on all week. The Thomas County Free Fair starts Aug. 3 and runs through Aug. 7.

Hundreds attend services for Congressman's son

WICHITA (AP) — Hundreds of mourners came Wednesday to funeral services for the teenage son of Republican Rep. Todd Tiahrt.

Luke Tiahrt, 16, died Saturday of an apparent suicide at the family's home in Virginia. The circumstances surrounding his death have not been disclosed.

"His loss was felt very deeply by

many people," said the Rev. Gene Carlson, of Westlink Christian Church. "In a very profound way his tragic death has wounded his father and mother, his brother and sister, his grandma (Audene) Holland, his grandpa and grandmas (Tiahrt)."

The Tiahrts' youngest child was remembered at the public funeral

service as a very outgoing person, but also somewhat shy and sensitive. He was a musician and artist, and his sketches were shown along with family photos at the service.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay and House Majority Whip Roy Blunt, along with several other members of Congress and commu-

nity leaders, attended the service.

Condolences sent from President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney were read. In Bush's note, he and his wife told the Tiahrt family: "Our hearts ache for you."

Luke Tiahrt would have been in his junior year this coming fall at W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, Va.

Briefly

Queen/Princess events set

The Thomas County Queen and Princess Horsemanship is scheduled for Friday at 10 a.m. at the fairgrounds in Colby. The fashion show and speech contest starts at 7 p.m., also Friday, at Quality Inn.

The pubic is welcome to attend both events. There is no admission charge.

Garage sale donations needed

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Thomas County is holding a garage sale in early August. Donations are appreciated and can be dropped off at 1960 W. Fourth. Call 460-9125 to schedule a time to drop off items. "Mercury thermometers break easily and often," said Karen Shoemaker, assistant scout leader, "and when they break, they let off toxic vapors that can be hazardous to your health. We hope to make Thomas County aware of this danger and rid the community of this hazard."

For information, call Jo Cheney at 462-2082 or Sandy Swob at 462-3438.

Blood drive scheduled

The Thomas County Chapter of the American Red Cross is holding a blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 17 at the Colby Community Building. For information on donating blood, to volunteer or to schedule an appointment to donate, call 462-2082 or visit www.redcross.org/br/centralplains.

Colby Sacred Heart enrollment set

Enrollment for the 2004-05 school year at Colby Sacred Heart School will be Tuesday, Aug. 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., said Dave Evert, principal. The enrollment will be for all students in grades preschool through fifth grade. For questions, call 460-2813.

Library book sale starts Saturday

Pioneer Memorial Library will hold its annual "Summer Book Sale" July 31 through Aug. 8. Book prices will start at 10 cents. As the week progresses, all book prices will drop. The book sale will take place during normal library business hours.

Colby
Rexford
Atwood



Back to warmer weather

Tonight...Partly cloudy. A chance of thunderstorms then a slight chance of thunderstorms after midnight. Lows in the upper 50s. South winds 10 to 15 mph and gusty. Chance of thunderstorms 30 percent. **Friday...**Partly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of thunderstorms in the morning. Highs in the mid 80s. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph shifting to the northeast in the afternoon. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 60s. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Highs around 90. South winds 5 to 15 mph. **Sunday...**Partly cloudy. Highs around 90.

The numbers

Wednesday's high, 80
Low this morning, 57
Records for July 29, 109 in 1935 and 43 in 1971
Year ago today, 90 and 60
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00
July total, 4.19 inches

The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Water use

• July 28 = 1.983 million gallons.

Water advisories

• Water **Watch** is 3.5 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.
• Water **Warning** is 4.0 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.
• Water **Emergency** is 4.5 million gallons for 3 consecutive days.

