



Two sections  
30 Pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

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Speaker says:

## National Guard big business

By TISHA COX  
Colby Free Press

Area residents had the chance to find out just how much their local Kansas Army National Guard armories contribute to their communities.

Col. Eric Peck, chief of staff for the Kansas Army National Guard in Topeka, gave a briefing on the Guard's economic and other local impacts at the Colby armory on Thursday.

He said the Army National Guard has 5,600 soldiers in Kansas and the Air National Guard has 2,250 airmen. The two service branches contribute \$280 million (Army) and \$168 million (Air) to the state's economy each year.

Locally, 27 soldiers in Colby and Thomas County are contributing \$680,443 to the local economy right now. Peck said the Colby unit isn't at full strength and needs 11 more soldiers/mechanics. When it's at full strength, the contribution is \$893,079. He said each soldier living in a community contributes \$18,743 to the economy where they live.

In northwest Kansas, Peck said the Guard has a significant im-

pact on the economy, putting \$7,678,015 back into the area.

Peck also talked about the Guard at home and abroad and how communities can strengthen their ties with their local units.

"We are a community-based organization," he said. "That is our strength."

He said there are Guard units in 74 counties and 273 communities in the state. By the end of the year, 2,000 Kansas Guard members will be deployed and Peck said that will include at least one soldier from each community.

He said at the local level, Guard units across the state are involved with Memorial Day and Veterans Day events and other community functions. Some hold youth camps for at-risk kids, several armories are open for senior citizens to walk and several are used as daycare facilities during the week.

"We add a lot of value to the community," he said.

Peck also touched on the history and function of the Guard. He said it's been around since the Revolutionary War and has evolved over the years to serve its current function, and the Guard has a dual mission at the state and national level.

At the state level, the Guard pro-



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Col. Eric Peck, Chief of Staff with the Kansas Army National Guard, chatted with Jon Pope, president of Peoples State Bank, at the Colby armory Thursday. Peck gave a presentation on the Guard's

economic impact and community relations during a luncheon at the armory. More than 50 people were on hand to listen to the officer's presentation..

pects life and property, maintains peace and order and is also for homeland defense. At the federal level, their job is to train for wartime and support Army and Air Force missions.

"Congress's army is the militia," he said, adding Congress has control over the Guard while the President is the commander-in-chief of the rest of the service branches.

Peck said the federal government

provides the funding, equipment and training, and communities provide the people.

"That's the contract," he said.

In these times, Peck said, the Guard is also serving an important function just by being in communities across the state and countries.

"Having a presence in these communities is important," he said. "We're always talking about where it is we have vulnerabilities."

## New law concerns KBI

TOPEKA (AP) — The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is reviewing six recent inmate deaths, and an official worried Thursday that a new law requiring such reviews is placing unexpected demands on the agency.

"Given limited resources, we want to use our resources appropriately," said Kyle Smith, a KBI special agent and the bureau's spokesman.

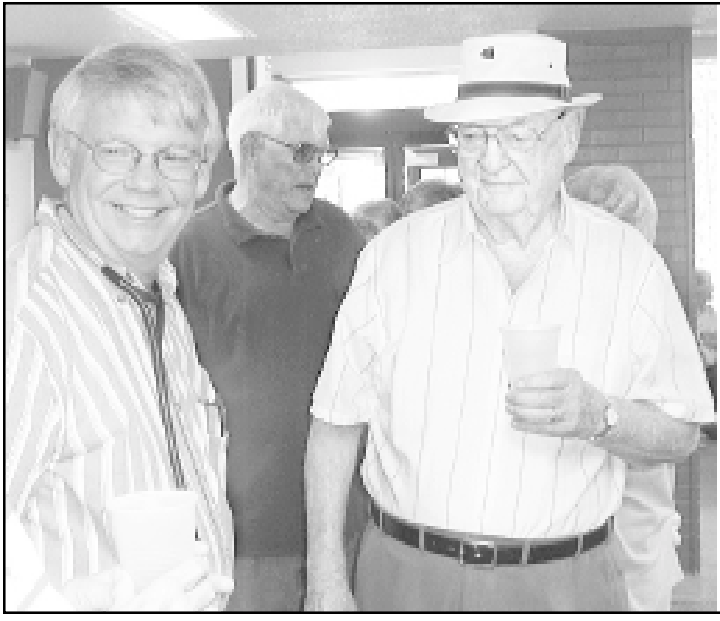
Smith said the "rash" of deaths was somewhat unexpected. The KBI supported the new law, which

took effect July 1, expecting to conduct between five and 30 reviews annually.

Smith said it is difficult to determine the cost of conducting each review and that agents were investigating the deaths as part of normal duties.

Two men have died in the Sedgwick County jail, one in Shawnee County, one in Sumner County, one in the El Dorado prison and one in the Lansing prison. Smith said the investigations are continuing.

## Just one of many



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

More than 600 people attended a public reception honoring Drs. Victor Hildyard and LaDonna Regier Thursday for their 30 years of service to Colby and the surrounding area. During the two-hour event, congratulatory flowers, candy, candles, plants and more filled the lobby of the Colby Medical and Surgical Center. Dr. Hildyard (left) spoke with Pete Morrison of Colby (right) with Bob Coleman (background) waiting to greet the two doctors.

## Colby robbery suspect caught at I-70 reststop

By TISHA COX  
Colby Free Press

A Colby robbery came to a halt at a rest stop along Interstate-70 near Grainfield Thursday afternoon.

After holding up Maurices store at 1923 S. Range, the suspect, identified as Earl Garrett, 32, of Minnesota, took authorities on a chase through Thomas, Logan and Gove counties, said Gary Shull, investigator with the Colby Police Department.

In the process of robbing the store, Garrett is reported to have injured clerk Jessica Ann Halbleib, 19, of Oakley. Shull said Halbleib was put in a headlock, knocked to the floor and then Garrett threw the cash register on her.

Halbleib was taken by ambulance to Citizens Medical Center. Shull said she has a concussion but was treated and released.

Shull said the call came in at noon.

After the robbery, Garrett lead law enforcement on a chase through

Thomas, Logan and Gove counties before being caught near Grainfield.

Shull said the chase ended at a Grainfield rest stop when Garrett crashed the stolen 1992 Lexus he was driving. Garret fled the car and Shull said he was tackled by two people at the rest stop and held until the Kansas Highway Patrol arrived.

"Nobody was hurt," Shull said.

The stolen money, a few hundred dollars, was recovered he said Garrett is in custody in the Thomas County jail. He was arrested on charges of aggravated robbery, aggravated assault, attempted involuntary manslaughter and numerous traffic violations.

Shull said they just found out this morning Garrett was recently released from prison in Mississippi and are waiting on a search warrant to go through the car he was driving, which was reported stolen at about 1 a.m. Thursday morning out of Fort Collins, Colo.

Colby  
Oakley  
Winona



## More heat on the way

**Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 60s. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Warmer. Highs in the mid 90s. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of thunderstorms in the evening. Lows in the lower 60s. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph. **Sunday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 90s. South winds 5 to 10 mph. **Monday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 90s. **Tuesday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 90s to around 100.

### The numbers

Thursday's high, 82  
Low this morning, 54  
Records for July 30, 109 in 1935 and 43 in 1971  
Year ago today, 90 and 57  
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.06  
July total, 4.25 inches  
Soil temperature, 76

### 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 29 = 2.256 million gallons.

## Briefly

### College board to meet

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of the administration building. Items on the agenda are a budget hearing, approval of contracts and agreements, worker's comp coverage, Jenzabar payment, dorm air conditioning purchase, cement bids, discussion on the Policies, Procedures Manual.

### Commissioners to gather

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the county courthouse. Items on the agenda include county road department director Clair Schrock. The meeting is open to the public.

### School board agenda noted

The Colby School Board will meet at 7 p.m. Monday in the board room of the administration building. The meeting will start with a public hearing on the 2004-2005 budget. Other items on the agenda include principals, superintendent and curriculum director reports, approval of the 2004-

2005 budget, out of district student requests and personnel matters, if necessary. The meeting is open to the public.

### Young Continentals perform tonight

The Young Continentals, a high-energy group featuring 30 singers and technicians between the ages of 12 and 15, will perform at 7 p.m. tonight at Colby Berean Church, 1000 S. Franklin.

### Gaither concert planned Sunday

Another Gaither video concert will be presented at the Colby Wesleyan Church on Sunday at 6 p.m. on the big screen. Featured will be the concert, "New Orleans Homecoming."

### 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.

