



COLBY FREE PRESS

Parade winners announced

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

Businesses, organizations, families, pets and more were out in full force Sunday night during the annual Colby Christmas Parade downtown.

It was a tough decision, but the judges came up with their choice for first and second place in six categories.

First National Bank with its "Shrek" theme took first place in the Best Lit category followed in second place by Lon Sowers and his "lighted nosed" oxen. In the organizational category, the Girl Scouts took first and Toys for Tots was second.

Business entries saw Colby Ag in first and Lang Diesel second, along with Matt Lindberg and the Quagliano children taking first and second respectively in the Youth category.

The Knights of Columbus with the theme of keeping "Christ" in Christmas won first place in religious theme and Dale Deaver, representing the VFW won first place in Patriotic. Now in its seventh year, said Jada Tubbs, executive director of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, the parade started off at the TNT Auction building and ended at Santa City.

The parade, she said, began with the National Guard in Colby's Detachment 2, 170th Maintenance Division and was followed by Santa and Mrs. Claus in Jim Brown's 1974 restored Cadillac El Dorado.

Among the many floats and other lighted displays, Ashlee Haines and her Tumbleweed Tumblers made their way up the street on a tractor-trailer combo with many of the children doing cartwheels and roundhouses along the way, Tubbs said.

Lindberg, one of the winners in the youth category was on a three-wheeler pulling a small float behind him as the Quagliano children rode pedal carts and the Plumisto children either walked or were on a lawn mower.

"Bring the World to You," was S & T's theme using lighted truck and carrying a special visitor, Fiber Freddie, with Pat Mallory and Shawna Kersenbrock giving out candy.

Another highlight were the Girl Scouts with more than 50 youngsters walking. The Daisy Troop made up of kindergarten students were dressed as angels while the Brownie Troop, first graders, were walking packages and second and third graders were a mixture of Christmas items. Junior Girl Scouts were in homemade cars and seventh



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

ABOVE: Shrek the ogre made a celebrity appearance on the First National Bank's entry in the Colby Christmas Parade Sunday after dark. The bank's float won first place in the best lit category. **BELOW:** Motorcyclists riding for Toys for Tots made an appearance in the parade and took first place in the best organizational category.



grade cadets carried a banner.

Stan and Grace Kauk went by in a blue 1952 International pickup with two tractors following behind and Unicel stayed with it despite their giant telephone fialing to inflate..

Horlacher Jewelers displayed the largest lighted diamond in the Midwest and Karen's Pet Salon (Karen Davis) drove by with a cat on the hood and dogs in the vehicle.

Colby Ag Center had the famous green Grinch that stole Christmas and Arby's oven mitt rode on the back of a pickup.

Dale Deaver in his blue 1941 Chevy was in the parade to remind everyone to remember and "thank a veteran," while residents at the Prairie Senior Living Complex took part in the parade festivities by traveling in their special van.

Lang Diesel also made a big hit

in the Masey Fergusen 6490 tractor and Gleener R65 combine.

The Abilene Hustlers Club was also had nice displays and Colby City.

Dougherty Implement, McB's, Tubbs and Sons and Taylor Motors also had nice displays and Colby Medical and Surgical Center was a newcomer this year with employees and their children caroling, along with two doctors as Santa and Mrs. Claus, and another doctor dressed as a reindeer.

Great Western Tire had a "merry" float and the Krzycki family could be seen on an electric scooter. Citizens Medical Center had a large float with little red wagons attached and young children riding in them.

One of the newer businesses in town, PastTime, had a float, which was right by the Colby Glass Christmas tree. Fotogirl Photography had

the largest camera in the midwest ready and JM Tree Service, the Army Recruiting Office and Rainbow Drive-In all brought their own special touch to the parade.

A horse and buggy combination made with Mr. and Mrs. Claus and other Santa helpers were reminding everyone to visit Santa at the Scout Hut with Toys for Tots being promoted by Harley Davidson riders.

"This was the first parade I have been involved in," said Mary Ann Downing, who will soon be replacing Tubbs as the executive director of the Chamber.

"I was very impressed with the participants. As for those attending, we appreciated everyone who came out during this very busy time to help enjoy the holiday season," Downing said.

County deals with issues on insurance

By **TISHA COX**

Colby Free Press

Insurance was the main topic of discussion at this morning's Thomas County commissioners meeting. The employee benefit fund and insurance for county attorney-elect Andrea Wyrick were discussed.

The commissioners learned the employee benefit fund has gone beyond the projected number of claims by \$21,779.50.

Commissioner Ron Evans said the claims are in excess of what was budgeted for the year and money from the general fund will be transferred over to take care of the insurance claims.

The commissioners also discussed insurance for Wyrick, who takes office next month. Because Wyrick will also take over the same position in Logan County, the commissioners had a conference call with the Logan County commissioners to see how her insurance is going to be handled between the two counties.

Evans said Thomas County will

pay the single employee premium for Wyrick, just as it does for all other county employees who have health insurance. The premium will be \$382 per month, Evans said. The Wyrick family insurance will be handled through Logan County.

The commissioners also went into executive session twice. The first was a 10-minute session dealing with personnel issues with county treasurer Donita Applebury, and a 15-minute session to discuss personnel issues at the road department. No action was taken on either matter when the meeting reopened to the public.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved the purchase of a new boiler pump for \$700 from Midwest Energy to be installed in the boiler at the Thomas County Office Complex.

- Announced the date of the Thomas County landfill advisory committee annual meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 20 at the Thomas County Office Complex.

Agencies to hear about report card

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

Many Thomas County agencies will be discussing the results of this year's Kansas Children's Report Card at noon, Tuesday, Dec. 14, in the student union on the Colby College campus, said Nathalie Higerd, education coordinator with Smart Start Northwest Kansas in Colby.

The Kansas and Thomas County grades will not be available until later in the week; however officials did provide some general information and insight into the process.

"This is the sixth year Thomas County has participated in the state's program," she said, "which is sponsored by the Kansas Action for Children.

"Every year we look at our grades to evaluate our progress and make improvements so that Thomas County is a better place for families."

Thomas County is one of only 13 counties in the state participating to develop the report card. Of the 105 counties in Kansas, Douglas, Ellis, Ford, Grant, Harvey, Lyon, Marion, Rice, Riley, Sedwick, Shawnee, and Wilson were the other 12 partnered, said Gary Brunk, Kansas Action for Children.

Although the state will not be releasing grades until Tuesday, officials noted that while the state did good, it wasn't great, Brunk said.

In determining a grade, he said there are five categories on the report card: safety and security; health; education; child care; and teen years.

Those planning to participate in presentations at the Colby meeting

next week include Randy Jones, police chief, talking about violent crimes; Roxy Cabral speaking on child abuse and neglect through that agency, and Sue Evans, director of the Prevention Center, looking at childhood poverty.

The Thomas County Health Department will review health issues such as early prenatal care, low birth weight, infant mortality, and immunizations. Colby Public Schools Superintendent Kirk Nielsen plans to discuss high school completion, achievement scores and school readiness.

Diane Stithem, also with the Regional Prevention Center, will touch on teen birth rate, substance abuse and teen violent death and how these statistics relate to Thomas County's young people.

Jeanne Thyfault with the Colby Community College Resource and Referral and Maureen Ostmeier, Smart Start Northwest Kansas, will go over child care issues to include quality, cost to parents, capacity and resource and referral.

On the state-level, Brunk said there are ways to improve its grades by expanding afterschool programs to make communities safer and more secure for children.

In the health category, the Kansas Action for Children has identified affordable health insurance as a way to improve that grade and voluntary pre-kindergarten would be one avenue to improve education and child care in the state.

"The teen years grade," Brunk said, "could be improved by strengthening child passenger safety laws."

**Colby
Rexford
Grinnell**



Nice week in store for area

Tonight...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. West winds 5 to 10 mph. **Tuesday...**Mostly sunny. Highs around 50-53. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph. **Tuesday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. South winds around 10 mph. **Wednesday...**Partly cloudy in the morning then becoming mostly cloudy. Highs in the lower 50s. **Wednesday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. **Thursday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s.

The numbers

Sunday's high, 46
Low this morning, 24
Year ago today, 50 and 12
Records for this date, 82 in 1939 and -14 in 1972
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
December, 0.00
Snowfall, 0.00
Soil temperature, 34

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.

Council meets Tuesday

The Colby City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers at City Hall. Items on the agenda include acquisition and removal of hangars owned by Vern Unruh; award bid on Colby Well #15 and transmission main project; approval of Resolution No. 912 to authorize Horton Avenue project and funding; approval of Ordinance No. 1370 levy-

ing a city retailer's sales tax in the amount of one-fourth of one percent for economic development; approval of agreement for design and construction services on Horton Avenue; establish Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m. a public hearing on issuance of industrial revenue bonds by the city of Colby for K. Young, Inc. Truck Town to not exceed \$1,400,000; reports and discussions.

Briefly

Fair board to meet

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H Building at the fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include: Thomas County extension agent report, financial report and bills; committee reports on the building and grounds, carnival, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising; blue grass festival payment and committee sign-up. The meeting is open to the public.

USDA program cutoff looming

The cutoff date for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications to be considered for fiscal year 2005 funding is Jan. 21, 2005. Stop by the local United States Department of Agriculture Service Center and visit with the Natural Resources Conservation Service or local conservation district staff to get more information about helping address your resource concerns. In Colby, call (785) 462-7671 Ext. 300.

Soup supper planned Tuesday

The Colby All-Sports Booster Club is sponsoring a soup supper starting at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, in the Colby Community Building. The supper will be in conjunction with the Colby High School boys and girls basketball games against Hays High. Three soups: chicken noodle, chili, and vegetable beef, along with relishes, dessert and drinks will be featured on the menu, said Dana Dempewolf, soup chairperson. The supper is free-will donation and all proceeds will benefit the football stadium.

Santa Helpers Shop to open soon

The Santa Helpers Shop will once again be open to give infants and young children through fifth grade the opportunity to buy wrapped gifts for their moms and dads, said Julie Harlow, one of the coordinators. The event is sponsored by the Blue Jean Ladies (formerly Mu Epsilon) and will be open from 9 to 11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 11, at Pioneer Memorial Library. All gifts are \$3 and there will be a four-gift limit.

