



'Here's my list'



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Kyler Britt visited with Santa Claus earlier this week at Santa City. Children will have plenty of chances next week to visit with the jolly old elf to tell him their Christmas wishes. Santa City will be open from 1-5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday and from 6-8 p.m. every night next week.

Eighteen bids reviewed

Council approves water well projects

By **PATTY DECKER**
Free Press Editor

The Colby City Council approved more than \$500,000 for use in getting a water well and its water line into town up and running at the meeting held earlier this week.

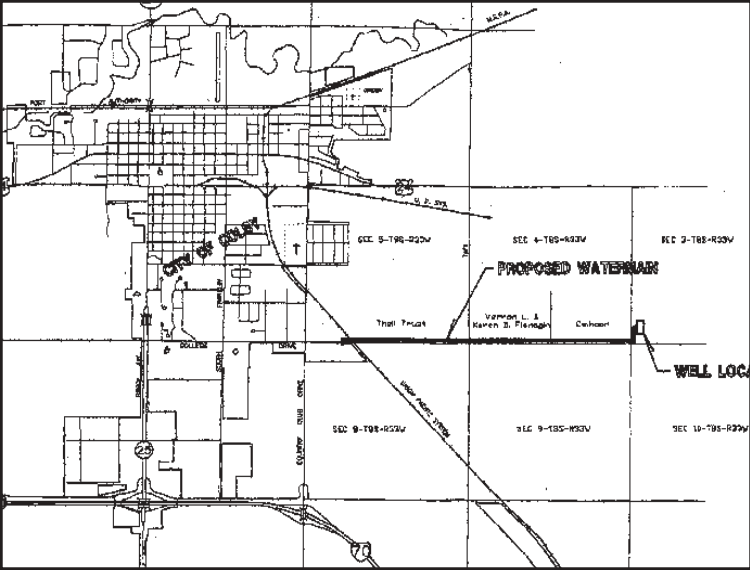
Chris Miller with Miller and Associates in McCook, Neb., project engineer, said there were 18 bids received for either the water well construction or transmission main.

The council approved the low bidder on each project, awarding Woofter Pump and Well, Inc., Hoxie, for the water well at \$272,000 and Midlands Contracting, Inc., Kearney, Neb., for the transmission main at \$231,628.

This project became a necessity in order to accommodate future growth while also alleviating stress on the remaining wells after losing one city well to contamination caused by the former Ace Services, Fourth and Convesse.

Other bidders for the water well included Sargent Drill Co., Broken Bow, Neb., at \$299,582; Clark Well and Equipment Co., Great Bend, at \$311,848; Interstate Irrigation, Inc., Yuma, Colo., at \$321,200; Western Sprinklers, Inc., Colby, at \$334,296; and Layne Western, Kearney, Neb., at \$371,7233.

Those bidders not accepted for the transmission main, which when completed would connect the water well into Colby were: Elk Creek Backhoe and Trenching, Inc., Arapahoe, Neb. at \$237,094; Starostka Group Unlimited, Inc., Grand Island, Neb. at \$237,860; Van Kirk Brothers Contracting,



The map shows the proposed watermain area and well location.

Inc., Sutton, Neb., at \$241,544; APAC-Kansas, Inc., Hays, at \$259,078; Myers Construction, Co., Broken Bow, Neb., at \$264,379; BSB Construction, Inc., Topeka, at \$288, 925; Morris Plumbing Plus, St. Francis, at \$294,221; Deep Creek Construction, Inc., Lincoln, at \$297,335; Instestate Irrigation, Inc., Yuma, Colo., at \$299,748; Woofter Construction and Irrigation, Inc., Colby, \$306,262, and Western Sprinklers, Inc., Colby, at \$360,125.

Miller told the council it was their opinion that probable construction cost would be \$193,500 for the well, which was low; however, the transmission main bids came in lower than projected costs at \$376,605.

Although the bids were opposite of the engineer's estimates, he said,

the total project is still coming in under estimates.

The council also approved Mayor Warren Hixson's recommendations for various appointments.

On the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance, the reappointment of Junelle Hills was approved with her term to expire in December of 2007.

Loretta Weeks was reappointed to the Housing Authority with her term to expire in December 2008. JoAnne Sunderman was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Roberta Heaton, which will expire in December of 2005.

The council also approved the route for the third annual Northwest Kansas Great Strides Walk on May, 21 from 8 a.m. until noon.

State's archeology highlight of lecture at Prairie Museum

By **TISHA COX**
Colby Free Press

The past could be the future for some Thomas County residents.

High Plains Archeology Group of Colby hosted a lecture Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History on Kansas archaeology.

Dan Rowilson, curator of Cottonwood Ranch in Studley, near Hoxie, gave the presentation, talking about everything from Pawnee earth



D. Rowilson

lodges to Ice Age mammals that once roamed over the plains.

Rowilson, an archaeologist, started with the state historical society in the 1970s and is familiar with what the state has to offer, especially parts that haven't been surveyed or excavated significantly.

"Western Kansas is almost virgin territory archaeologically," he said.

The High Plains of western Kansas remain mostly untouched because most of the state's surveys and digs took place in the eastern third.

Rowilson said this was because of road, sewer and housing developments during the early half of the 20th century, which uncovered

many sites. And, he said, much of the work done in the state hasn't been written up.

That is a concern, because with each passing day, more sites and knowledge are lost.

Concerns over preserving the states heritage aside, Rowilson also gave an overview of what archaeology encompasses and some of the sites that are already excavated and documented.

"Archaeology itself isn't all about digging," he said. Instead, it involves site surveys, which involves going out to see if anything can be found.

He described archaeology as the study of remnants of past human

activity and used slides to illustrate the state's rich past.

Several examples he used were the Salina burial mound, the evolution of pottery in the state, hunting methods, the migration of different cultures as well as the different structures different plains peoples used over the years.

And Rowilson said recorded history in the state is what people could consider recent, relatively speaking.

Everything in Kansas up to the summer of 1541 is considered prehistoric, he said, and everything after historic since that is the year recorded history began in Kansas with the advent of Hernando

Coronado's journey across the state and the American southwest in search of Cibola, the fabled seven cities of gold.

"History doesn't exist until you have a written record," Rowilson said.

Western Kansas also has petroglyphs. Some were found in Russell and Lyons counties.

The state also used to have anthropomorphic (human-like) stone figures but Rowilson said archaeologists know of only one remaining site in Kansas. He said the figures were found from North Dakota to the Texas Panhandle.

Other stone artifacts include tipi rings, but many have been lost to

farming.

He also briefly discussed burials and how they're handled, using the Salina burial pit as a prime example.

The pit had more than 100 burials in it and the remains were on display where they were uncovered. It was discovered by a highway patrolman and excavated, but has since been covered over with a concrete dome and grass. Rowilson said the burials were claimed by the Caddoan-speaking Pawnee.

Archaeologists, he said, don't go out looking for burial mounds and don't dig them anymore unless they're going to be affected or destroyed by construction or development.

Fair board gives nod to race contract in 2005

By **TISHA COX**
Colby Free Press

Pencil in Aug. 5 and 6 on the calendar for the races at the 2005 Thomas County Fair. The fair board approved the dates as well as a contract with Kerry Wark to run the races at next year's fair at its meeting Thursday.

"It's basically the same contract we had last year," Wark said. "We'd be interested in doing it again."

He said the only thing changing was the dates.

Wark also said they're still trying to decide what classes will run next year. He talked about the possibility of IMCA stocks and drawing racers from Denver.

He said a members of a group from Denver have signed up to run races in Colby as part of a tour this summer and hopes to draw some of them back for the fair races.

Another possibility is an exhibition of old stock cars, but Wark said if it happens, it would be later in August. He said they're talking about it but doesn't know if anything will come from it.

Wark also gave an update on the Thomas County Amusement Association's activities.

He said the association will be switching out some games for new ones at next year's fair, but there won't be any other new additions.

"We're going to take a year off on

adding anything big," Wark said.

The board also heard a report from extension agent Joe Leibbrandt and a report on the buildings and grounds.

Leibbrandt told the board the 4-H spring livestock show is scheduled for April 23 and they approved that date for use of the fairgrounds.

He also said after the first of the year, they'll start looking for judges for next year's fair.

And at the end of his report, Leibbrandt surprised the board when he presented them with the Thomas County Extension Council extension appreciation award for their support and letting 4-H use the fairground for different activities.

Board president Stan Strange thanked Leibbrandt on behalf of the board and then gave his report on the buildings and grounds.

Strange said the queen's barn was finally torn down and cleanup is all that needs to be done.

He also said groundskeeper Ron Kogler has been busy, getting up signs and is still trying to move out to the fairgrounds.

Strange added they're still thinking about getting a utility vehicle of some kind for Kogler to use. He said he didn't want to spend a lot of money on it and suggested a four-wheeler could be a possibility.

"That's something we can think about down the road," Strange said.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet

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

Santa Helpers Shop open Saturday

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 at Pioneer Memorial Library. All gifts are \$3 and there will be a four-gift limit.

Library plans holiday activity

Pioneer Memorial Library is sponsoring a 'Make 'n Take' ornaments event for youth ages 9-13. For questions, call 462-4460.

Heartland SHARE delivery Dec. 18

Heartland SHARE delivery will be Saturday, Dec. 18, starting at 10:30 a.m. Anyone who signed up for Shares this month can go to the Sacred Heart School gymnasium on that day, said Gene Griffin, one of the coordinators. For questions, call her at 460-3579.

Colby Hoxie Oakley



Colder and maybe snow

Tonight...Mostly clear in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 30s. West winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. Warmer. Highs in the upper 60s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph with higher gusts. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 30s. West winds 10 to 15 mph. **Sunday...**Partly cloudy. Breezy. Much colder. Highs in the upper 40s. North winds 15 to 25 mph. **Sunday night...**Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow. Cooler. Lows in the lower 20s. **Monday...**Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow. Cooler. Highs in the mid 30s.

The numbers
Thursday's high, 56
Low this morning, 29
Year ago today, 36 and 10
Records for this date, 67 in 1952 and -17 in 1972
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
December, 0.00
Snowfall, 0.00
Soil temperature, 37

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.

