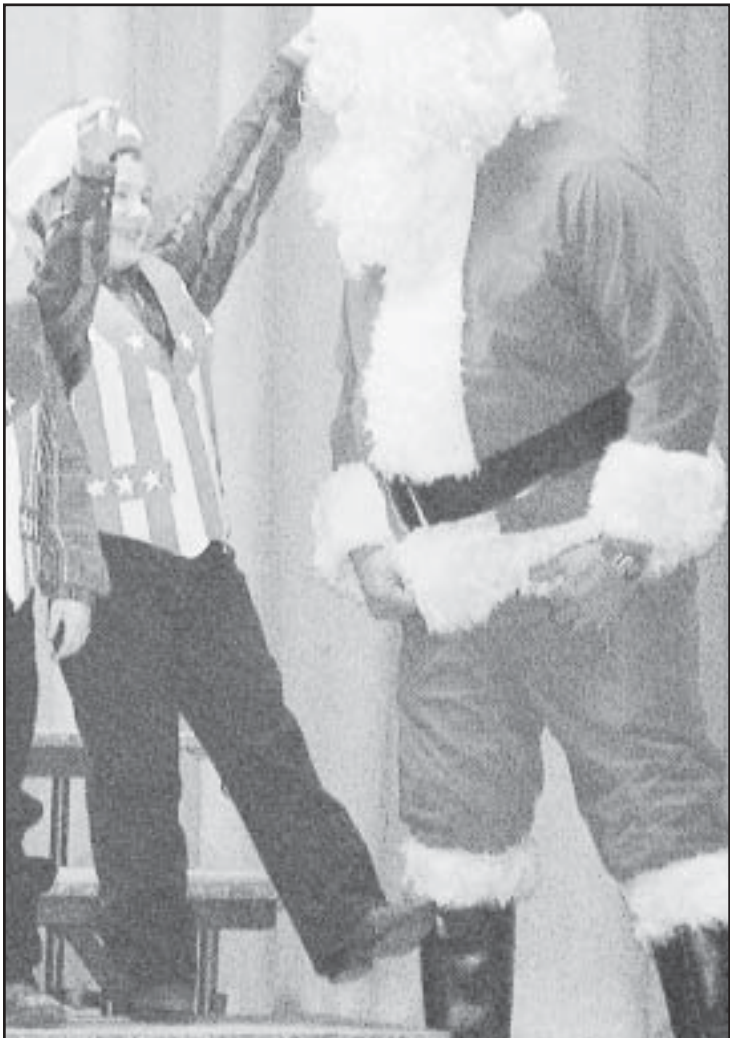




# COLBY FREE PRESS



PATTY DECKER & CRYSTAL RUCKER/Colby Free Press

Along with all Santa's other duties, he took time to visit Colby and Winona recently to take part in their Christmas programs. **ABOVE LEFT:** Vocal students at Colby Elementary, Colby Middle School and Colby High School filled the auditorium with music Monday night under the direction of Amanda Kidder with Joey Nickols accompanying on the piano. The sixth and seventh graders concluded their portion of the program with lighthearted tunes for the holidays. **RIGHT:** Winona students in K-12 had an "All-American Christmas" also on Monday under the direction of Glenda Graham combining the choir and band. Skylar Hanson, Winona, was ready to give Santa a big hug during one of the songs.

## Winter weather arrives

By TISHA COX  
*Colby Free Press*

Tuesday was the first day of winter. Today Old Man Winter arrived with a cold, snowy landscape. It was time to reevaluate driving the streets, highways and roadways in and out of Colby. Walking also needed some attention.

So far in Thomas County and Colby, at mid-morning anyway, no accidents were reported.

Marlene Pfeifer, a dispatcher at the law enforcement center, said she hadn't heard anything about any accidents since coming in at 7 a.m.

Undersheriff Mike Baughn said no accidents have been reported despite roads that were starting to become snowpacked and icy, and the western half of the county has had heavier snow than the rest.

Despite the bleak weather to-

day, conditions should improve throughout the weekend.

Anyone wanting to know the road conditions to their holiday destinations now have an easier way to find out.

Dispatch at the Kansas Highway Patrol said travelers can call 511 for current road conditions, which gives updates for the entire state of Kansas and neighboring states.

As of 9:15 a.m. this morning, I-70 was snowpacked and icy in spots from Trego County to the Colorado state line, and drivers could expect "normal seasonal driving conditions" all day.

U.S. Highway 83 from Scott City north to I-70 had similar conditions as of this morning, mostly snow covered and icy to spotty coverage in some places.

The sun made it's arrival late in the morning in the Colby vicinity.

## City council meeting Leadership class gets government lesson

By PATTY DECKER  
*Free Press Editor*

Members of the Leadership Thomas County group attended the Colby City Council meeting earlier this week to learn more about how local government works.

In addition to seeing a public hearing on industrial revenue bonds for Truck Town, the leadership group also listened as the council approved transferring money from the city's reserve fund into the electric and water utility accounts.

Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, said the resolution would authorize \$600,000 be moved into both accounts — \$350,000 into the electric reserve and \$250,000 in the water reserve.

"This may be conservative," she said, "but it was the suggestion of our auditor to make the transfers and I am not comfortable doing

**"This may be conservative, but it was the suggestion of our auditor . . ."**

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong, regarding money transfers

more than that."

The council agreed, adding that if a major wind storm or other disaster were to knock out transformers and power lines in the city, the cost would be sizable, estimating \$2 to \$2.5 million or more.

Donna Inlow with Inlow Interiors offered to sell the city the one-quarter block of lots at East Fifth Street and Lake for \$22,000.

After discussion, the council agreed it was not interested in adding any additional property.

The council also approved the

airport board budget.

Armstrong said the airport board thought this was a fair agreement.

Wal-Mart was issued a temporary use permit for two storage containers until Saturday, Jan. 29 as recommended by the planning commission at its Thursday, Dec. 16 meeting. The council approved that recommendation.

Approval of an agreement between the city and Rural Fire District #3 was made by the council and will be good for a three-year period.

Armstrong said the city gets a 1.5 mill tax on the assessed value of property in the Rural Fire District #3, which has been adequate and is included in the new contract.

The council's end-of-the-year special meeting was approved for Wednesday, Dec. 29, at 7:45 a.m. with the next regular meeting Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2005.

## Christmas lighting contest winners get cash

By TISHA COX  
*Colby Free Press*

Winners in the Colby Promotion Committee's "Christmas Lighting Contest" were announced this week.

Jeff Horlacher, chairman of the fourth quarter subcommittee, said there were two categories in the contest — residential and commercial.

The winners in the residential

division were Jim and Terry Cousins, first place; Mike and Debbie Grove, second place; and John and Darlene Mick, third place honors. First place was worth \$300; second, \$200 and third place, \$100.

Commercial division winners were Lang Diesel, first place; Pasttimes, second place and Pioneer Memorial Library, third place. Commercial and business winners received a night's stay at the Colby

Comfort Inn.

Horlacher said it's the first time in several years the contest has been held.

"We thought it would help promote the Christmas spirit," he said, adding anyone who had up Christmas lights was eligible for the contest.

Judging for the residential division was Sunday, Dec. 12 and judging for the commercial division was

done Saturday, Dec. 18, and the judges were all from out of town.

"We spent three and a half hours and drove every street in town," Horlacher said. "We saw some tremendous displays and the judges had a difficult time deciding."

Pictures of the winners and other light displays from around the community will be featured in Monday's Community Page in the *Colby Free Press*.

## Briefly

### Museum closes for holiday

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will close at noon Christmas Eve and reopen at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 28, said Sue Taylor, museum director.

### Santa City open late

Santa City will be open Christmas Eve from 1-3 p.m. for those last minute wishes.

### County offices close Friday, Monday

All offices in the Thomas County Courthouse will be closed on Friday and Monday for the Christmas holiday.

### No newspaper published Friday

The Colby Free Press office will be closed all day Friday and no news-

paper will be published. The office will reopen Monday at 8 a.m. Publisher Tom Dreiling and his staff wish everyone a happy holiday season.

### Senior Center announces holiday closings

The Colby Senior Progress Center is closed and there will be no meals or home delivery and the senior van will not be operating. The center will reopen at its regular times from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday, Dec. 27.

### Fish/game licenses available Saturday

The Thomas County Clerk's office said the 2005 fish and game licenses and trout stamps will become available starting Saturday. For questions, call the clerk's office at 462-4500.

### No trash pickup Friday

The City of Colby Sanitation Department will not be operating on Friday due to the Christmas holiday.

Colby  
Jennings  
McDonald



## Warming trend setting in

**Overnight...**Clearing. Lows near zero. Southwest winds 5 to 15 mph. **Friday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 30s. West winds 5 to 15 mph. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. West winds 10 to 15 mph. **Christmas Day...**Eventual clearing. Warmer. Highs in the lower 50s. West winds 5 to 15 mph. **Saturday night...**Mostly clear. Lows around 20. **Sunday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. **Monday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. **Tuesday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 40s.

### The numbers

Wednesday's high, 25  
Low this morning, 11  
Year ago today, 51 and 18  
Records for this date, 74 in 1901 and -30 in 1989  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.03  
December, 0.03  
Snowfall, 1 inch  
Soil temperature, 33

### 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.

