

Sheridan County ready to launch foundation

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

HOXIE — A new community foundation will be used as a way to distribute donated money county-wide for a variety of purposes.

The Sheridan County Community Foundation is expected to be up and running within two months.

"We are in the process of starting the foundation. We are working with Ken Eland at Sloan and Eland Law Office and his staff has been doing the paperwork for us," said Bert Mosier, director of the Sheridan County Economic Development Corporation and spokesman for the new foundation.

Mosier said the organization will be used as a "vehicle" to promote various types of projects "yet to be

decided."

"We hope to set up a unit where we can take donations, either project specific or just have the money go to a general fund," he said.

The idea behind the foundation is to give people wanting to enhance Sheridan County a place to send money and make sure their plans for the money are carried out.

"We are looking for a way to disburse money from people who have had a connection to the communities, such as a past alumni member or business owner who would choose to remember us fondly if they choose to do so," Mosier said.

He said donations of any size could be channeled through the foundation and each suggested

project will be looked at on an individual basis.

"At this point, we see no boundaries to the foundation," Mosier said.

Paperwork has been submitted to the state for approval, and one of the initial steps to take place after the foundation is approved by the state is the placement of a board of directors.

"We've had some initial discussion with some people who will volunteer to serve on the board and those names will be announced when the state approves the foundation," Mosier said.

For more information about the Sheridan County Community Foundation, contact Mosier at (785) 675-3016.

Senate comes up with school plan

By John Milburn

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — A Senate committee has proposed a \$415 million school funding package aimed at satisfying a Kansas Supreme Court order to increase funding for elementary and secondary education.

The plan would phase in the full increase over three years. It would increase spending in its first year by \$125 million, using existing state revenues and tapping \$80 million in cash reserves. The committee has identified no funding source for the second and third years of the plan.

The package, drafted mainly by Republicans on the Education Committee and outlined Tuesday, was the first proposal this session designed to meet an April 12 deadline set by the Kansas Supreme Court for improving school funding.

While the proposal would increase aid to all school districts, it also would provide new dollars for bilingual education, special education and programs for at-risk children, following suggestions offered by the court in its Jan. 3 order to the Legislature.

The plan would give districts au-

thority to raise local property taxes to supplement the additional state dollars.

"I believe this plan will improve education for Kansas," said committee Chairwoman Jean Schodorf, R-Wichita.

Last year, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius proposed increasing sales and income taxes to allow the state to phase in over three years a \$310 million package increase in annual spending.

Sebelius spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran said the governor is pleased to see a Senate plan but added, "We all need to know about the funding strategy."

Kansas spends \$2.7 billion in state aid to its 301 school districts. The proposed increase would be the largest infusion of state dollars since the current finance law was rewritten in 1992.

Under the plan, a \$400-per-student increase in aid for all districts would be phased in over three years. Also, a district could use local property taxes to raise an amount equal to 30 percent of its state funds; the limit is now 25 percent.

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley said raising the limit on

local property taxes favors affluent districts and wins votes for any school finance plan.

"I understand the local option budget is a political factor because of Johnson County. But I believe the Supreme Court criticized us for making decisions based on politics," said Hensley, D-Topeka.

The plan also would resurrect an oversight committee — created in 1992 but later abolished — that would be charged with monitoring trends in education and recommending funding adjustments each year. Oversight would include annual audits of school spending.

House Republican leaders have said repeatedly they think legislators can address the Supreme Court's order without increasing taxes. In the Senate, President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, hasn't ruled out higher taxes to finance the second and third years of the Senate committee's plan.

Democrats have been skeptical that legislators can satisfy the court without raising taxes.

Hensley said relying on existing revenues would restrict future budget decisions and force legislators to abandon the education package.

By Jan Katz Ackerman

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The radiology department at Citizens Medical Center, Inc. needs your help in locating old photos.

Tama Unger, Director of Fund Development and Community Relations, said on Tuesday the hospital's radiology department is undertaking a project to display historical pictures of Thomas County on its walls.

"They are wanting to start a historical collection on the large walls in their department. Radiology will be copying pictures, so the originals will not be used. However, they are in need of historical shots to make their wall complete," she said.

Anyone who has images available for the project is asked to call Rich Barton-Rhan at (785) 460-1250.

Hospital in Colby looking for photos

Judge refuses to dismiss Sprint lawsuit

OLATHE (AP) — Sprint Corp. has failed to scuttle a class-action lawsuit brought by investors over the telecommunication company's decision last year to recombine its wireline and wireless business stocks.

Johnson County District Judge Kevin Moriarty last week denied Overland Park-based Sprint's motions to dismiss the case against itself, its board of directors and some former executives. After operating for almost six years with two stocks,

Sprint said last spring it planned to recombine the stocks.

The company converted each share of PCS wireless stock into half a share of FON, the tracking stock for the company's traditional local and long-distance business.

PCS stockholders cried foul, saying the wireless stock had steadily risen in value and that they were being shortchanged. Several filed suit, charging Sprint's board of directors with breach of fiduciary duty.

The shareholders also claimed company officials had unfairly manipulated the PCS stock price by filing false financial reports.

On Tuesday, attorneys for the shareholders welcomed the judge's decision not to dismiss their lawsuits and noted that Sprint last fall wrote off \$3.2 billion in long-distance assets, which the plaintiffs said was proof FON was overvalued.

Sprint spokesman Scott Stoffel said officials were "disappointed."

Special day noted



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Lisa and Kristina Kirby got a free loaf of bread from Brice Barton of the Thomas County Farm Bureau at the Colby Dillons store on Monday. The bureau was handing out bread as part of Food Check-Out Day, the 40th day of the year, which is when most people have made enough money to pay for their food supply for the entire year.

Liberal retains pancake title

LIBERAL (AP) — Jill Wettstein won the American leg of a trans-Atlantic pancake race Tuesday in a time just fast enough to edge out the winning English runner, giving the United States its seventh straight victory.

Wettstein, 25, finished the 415-yard run in 67.38 seconds. Earlier, British winner Andrea Rawlings ran the course at Olney, England, 50 miles northwest of London, in 69 seconds.

Wettstein, a medical technologist who runs every day and lifts weights, finished third at Liberal last year. Cheri Bevis, the winner in Liberal the last two years, didn't compete this year. A year ago she finished in 60.6 seconds, beating Rawlings' time by nearly five seconds.

Julie Sumner, 29, a preschool assistant director, was second this year and Jennifer Hyde, 28, a teacher, was third. Brooke Buchman, who finished second last year, fell about 100 yards from finish line.

Each town holds the race at 11:55 a.m. local time, meaning the Ameri-

can race is run almost six hours after the English winner has been decided.

Rawlings was the fastest in a field of 26 apron-clad contestants between ages 20 and 73, who ran from the Olney market place to the local church while carrying a pancake in a frying pan.

The women are required to flip their pancakes before the start of the

race and at the end to prove they haven't dropped the pancakes.

The 1:09 time clocked by Rawlings, a 31-year-old mother and local saddler, was four seconds slower than her winning time last year.

Shrove Tuesday, widely known in Britain as Pancake Day, was traditionally the last day for merry-making before the start of Lent.

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Colby Community Building
Colby, KS

Monday, February 14, 2005
7:30 PM
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