



COLBY FREE PRESS

Brotherly love



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby Middle School seventh grader Lucas Baumfalk practiced his saxophone solo while his brother, Dryden, held his music during the Northwest Kansas League seventh and eighth grade music festival at Colby Community College Wednesday.

Council okays utility software

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

The Colby City Council during its meeting earlier this week gave its approval to buy a utility billing software package which will replace the older version currently in place.

In offering some background information, Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, said that for many months the city was looking at various programs since the current program has no new upgrades and no support in the event there's system problems.

Consequently, the city staff searched for a newer utility billing program, which they thought they had found with the Mastertrack program last spring.

However; the Mastertrack program failed to successfully mesh resulting in customers being billed in only certain areas or were left out completely during the billing cycle.

After returning to the older, more reliable billing program, the search started up again to find something compatible and city staff believes they have found it through Continental Utility Solutions, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark.

"We are not foreseeing any problems (with the proposed software program)," Armstrong said.

The company (Continental) has gotten good reports from other towns in Kansas, Illinois and Texas and the cost for the entire package to include training, one year of maintenance, products and services is at \$43,849, she said.

Prior to approving this new soft-

ware, the city was using American Fundware and working with the Denver office. Since Fundware is partnered with Mastertrack (the software which was to replace Fundware, but later caused all the problems in billing), an agreement was reached that the down payment of \$36,510 would be refunded.

"We have \$8,000 in encumbered funds from 2002 (for the software)," Armstrong said, "which will cover the cost of the Continental package."

Councilman Phil De Young did question the cost of \$1,000 per day for training with the Continental package.

"Many companies will throw in the training (when someone buys the software)," De Young said.

In response, Mike Albers, the city's technology director, said these utility software programs are not the same as buying more expensive programs.

"We aren't buying \$500,000 packages," he said, adding that within the city's price range, the training amount is not out of line.

"It's the best thing so far out there we could find," Albers told the council.

Armstrong also assured the council that in the event this new software package does not work properly, Continental Utility representatives have already agreed to refund all the amounts associated with the data conversion.

An exact date was not set for the changeover, Armstrong said.

Logan County Hospital's new administrator starts Monday

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

OAKLEY – Logan County Hospital will have a new administrator starting Monday.

Kyle Hahn believes he'll be a good match for working with the board of trustees and the employees of the hospital and Logan County Manor.

"I'm looking forward to working in Oakley.

"The board members, the doctors and the department heads seem to have positive attitudes and are forward thinking," he said.

Hahn will begin his tenure in Logan County as hospital administrator earning \$70,000. That figure will be bumped to \$75,000 once he obtains a nursing home license.

Chief Financial Officer Darcy Howard said Hahn's salary will be higher than former administrator Jay Plank's because of his added duties.

She said Hahn will not only be in charge of the hospital and the Manor, but he'll also oversee the human resources departments.

Hahn's benefit package will include health insurance, state

KPERS retirement at 4.01 percent of his gross pay, and use of a hospital-owned cell phone.

By Hahn wearing administrator hats at both facilities, Logan County taxpayers are estimated to see an estimated cost savings of just over \$29,000.

Former hospital administrator Jay Plank earned \$54,000 plus benefits.

His wife, Pat Plank, former administrator at Logan County Manor, earned \$50,003 plus benefits, for a total of \$104,003.

Hahn brings to Logan County an

extensive medical background with him.

Having earned a bachelor's degree in life science from Kansas State University, Hahn also earned a bachelor's degree in medical technology from the University of Kansas. And, he earned his master of liberal studies from Fort Hays State University.

Right out of college Hahn worked as a general bench technician with Could County Healthcare Center in Concordia. He has also worked as a microbiology lab technician for Hays Pathology Labora-

tory, and was an evening shift supervisor at Rush County Memorial Hospital at LaCrosse.

Hahn worked at Central Kansas Medical Center's laboratory for two years before moving to Hoxie to become the administrator of Sheridan County Health Complex in 2003.

Calling himself "forward thinking," Hahn said one of his assets is to successfully set long-term goals.

"I was able to start fundraising for the (Hoxie) hospital and to perk community interest in supporting

the hospital," he said.

This same philosophy is what Hahn says he will add in Logan County.

"I would like to build a team-like atmosphere which enables the organization to reach its full potential and maintain a high level of performance," he said. Hahn said he is excited about working with an organization which wants to have "goals for the future."

"I'm hoping we can increase our services to the Logan County citizens," he said.

Investigation continues on alleged child abuse

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Authorities continue an investigation into the alleged abuse of a Colby toddler. Colby Police Investigator Gary Shull said an emergency temporary custody hearing took place Wednesday afternoon in Thomas County District Court to protect a 23-month old female and

her 11-month old sibling.

"The court has placed both of the children in temporary SRS custody with out-of-home placement. The child was picked up by SRS authorities from Children's Hospital in Denver today," he said late Wednesday afternoon.

A 23-month old female was airlifted to Children's Hospital in Den-

ver late Sunday night. Authorities were notified early Monday morning by the Social Rehabilitation Service Protection Report Center of an alleged child abuse. Shull said although the injured child has been released from the hospital, further medical care is likely.

"At this point in the investigation we are looking at a child that has

been physically abused on several part of her body, including abusive head trauma. It is anticipated that the child will need surgery in the near future," Shull said.

The ongoing investigation is being conducted by the Colby Police Department, Kansas Bureau of Investigation and Kansas Social Rehabilitation Service.

School board meeting set

The Colby School Board will meet at 7 p.m. Monday at the Administration Building.

Items on the agenda include approval of the consent agenda and a curriculum presentation on English as a Second Language.

In addition, the board members will hear reports from the principals, curriculum director

and superintendent; coordinating council recommendations; a discussion on the budget; emergency substitute licenses; an out-of-district field trip request; personnel matters if necessary and negotiations.

The meeting is open to the public and for questions or an agenda, call 460-5000.

Briefly

Gaither Video Concert Sunday

There will be a Gaither Video Concert at the Colby Wesleyan Church, Sunday, starting at 6 p.m. The featured video is "Church in the Wildwood," and the concert is open to the public and free of charge.

County offices closed Monday

The Thomas County Courthouse to include the federal courts, along with the Thomas County landfill and health department will all be closed on Monday, Feb. 21, in observance of President's Day, said Shelly Harms, county clerk. All county offices, she said, will reopen at 8 a.m. on Tuesday. The commissioners will not meet on Monday as well, but will convene at 9 a.m., Tuesday.

Amusement Association meets Monday

The Thomas County Amusement Meeting will be held on Monday at 8 p.m. in the Thomas County Office Complex. The public is invited and encouraged to bring any ideas for changes, new games and more.

Heartland SHARE delivery Saturday

Heartland SHARE delivery is at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Sacred Heart School gym. There are a few extra shares left for \$18.50 plus two hours of volunteer community service. If interested call Margurette Edmundson at 460-8640 or Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Communications scholarship available

The Kansas County Clerks' and Election Officials' Association 2005 scholarship applications are now available, said Shelly Harms, county clerk. Any high school, college freshman or sophomore who plans on majoring in journalism, political science or communications is qualified

to apply for this scholarship, she said. Applications can be picked up at the Colby High School Career Center, Colby Community College admissions office or in the clerk's office at the courthouse, 300 N. Court Ave. Application deadline is April 1, 2005.

Homestead property tax deadline nearing

The county clerk's office is reminding everyone that it's time for residents eligible to submit their claim for Homestead property tax refunds and food sales tax refunds. The Thomas County Clerk's office has the forms available and will assist in completing them. The deadline for filing is April 15, 2005.

Legislative town hall meeting Saturday

Rep. Jim Morrison, R-Colby, and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, R-Grinnell, are holding a town hall meeting from 9:45-10:45 a.m., Saturday, at the Quality Inn in Colby. They will be giving a legislative update and answering questions. For information, call coordinator Bert Stramel at 462-9748.

'Raise the Roof' Singspiration planned

There will be a "Raise the Roof" community-wide Singspiration, Sunday, Feb. 27, at the Wesleyan Church starting at 6 p.m. The event is old-fashioned singing combined with yesterday, today, and the hope of tomorrow into one special gospel evening, organizers said.

Pre-enrollment planned at Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart School will hold pre-enrollment for preschool and kindergarten children for the 2005-06 school year on Wednesday, March 9, in the school lobby between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. School officials ask that parent/guardians bring birth certificate, physical, social security care, and immunization records. For questions, call 460-2813.

Colby
Hoxie
Oakley



Some clouds, some moisture

Tonight...Increasing clouds. Lows in the lower 20s. Northwest winds 5 to 10 mph shifting to the northeast after midnight.
Friday...Increasing clouds. Highs in the lower 40s. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.
Friday night...Cloudy with areas of drizzle and slight chance of rain. Areas of fog. Lows in the mid 30s. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 20 percent.
Saturday...Decreasing clouds. Highs in the upper 40s to around 50. South winds 10 to 20 mph.

The numbers

Wednesday's high, 35
Low this morning, 20
Year ago today, 60 and 20
Records for this date, 72 in 1961 and -13 in 1978
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.02
Precipitation for month to date: 0.34
Snowfall for month to date: 3.7 inches
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.

