



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Weed contract approved

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans and Ken Christiansen approved a contract Tuesday between the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the county for weed forage inspections.



Christiansen

“Ken Ptacek is trained for voluntary inspections,” Christiansen said.

“He can do the inspections on his own time, and if he doesn’t have time the state will do them.”

Ptacek is the county’s noxious weed and prairie dog control officer.

Commissioners also talked about a letter they received from members of the Menlo Fire Department asking to start a fire district.

Evans asked Deputy Clerk Kristy Rubio to have Thomas County Clerk Shelly Harms contact Menlo firefighters and ask they attend a commission meeting to talk about their request.

Commissioner Paul Steele was absent from the meeting.

In other business:

- The commissioners reviewed the January landfill totals that ran at 14 ton per day of the county’s average which runs 14 to 16 ton per day.

- The annual report submitted by the Menlo Township was also reviewed.

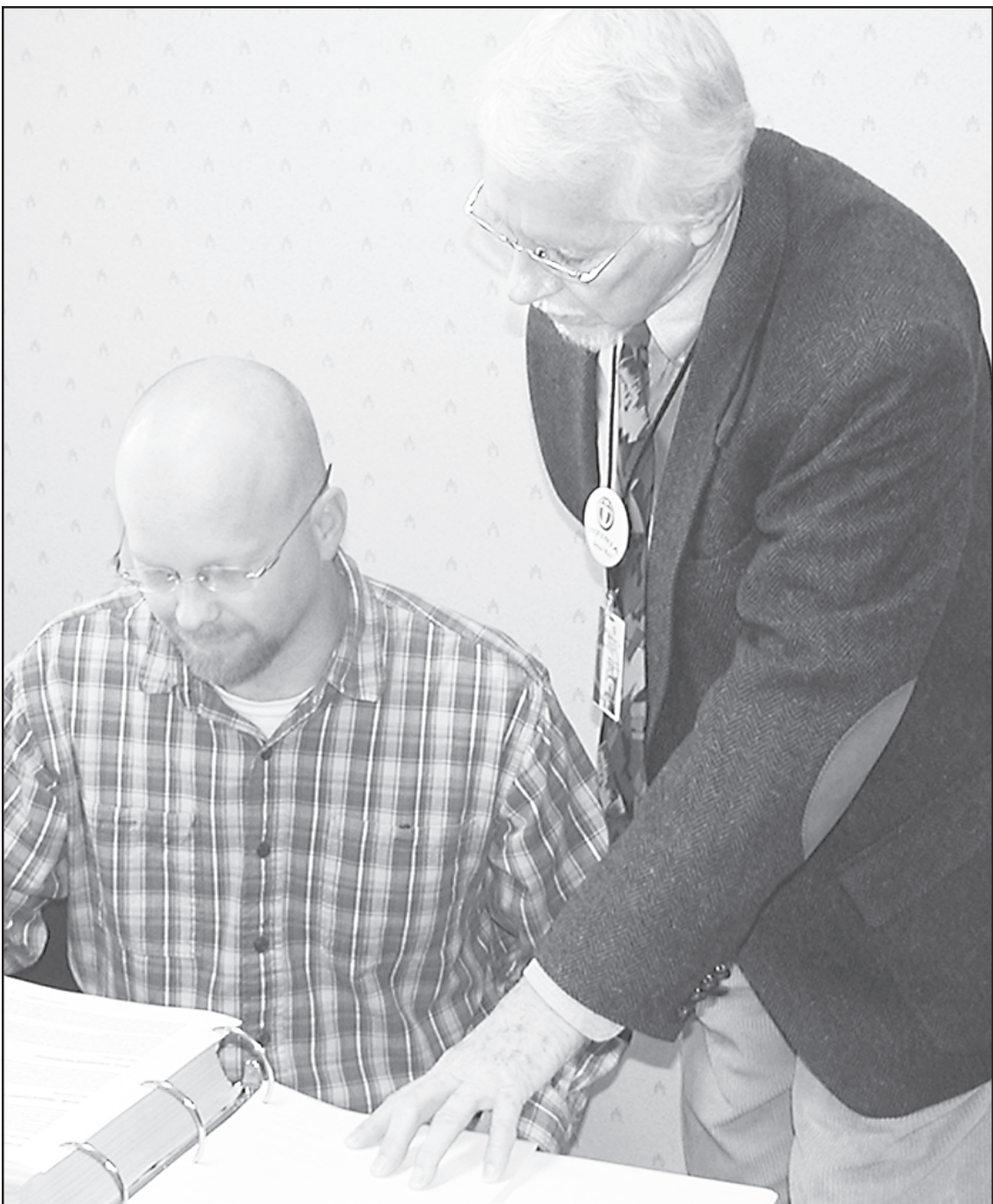
- Commissioners approved to have someone from the county appraiser’s office attend the Ad Valorem Taxation conference July 23-27 in Wichita. Who will attend will be decided at a later date.

- Tabled items included whether to issue a proclamation recognizing National County Government Week April 23-29; and a request by the Kansas Department of Transportation for a five-year plan.

Another item that was tabled was an update on a bill submitted by Colby Medical and Surgical Center to the county’s public health department.

The commissioners held a 20-minute executive session for purposes of non-elected personnel. Those involved in the session were Evans, Christiansen and Rubio.

No action was taken when the meeting reconvened.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

James Foster, right, new administrator of Infinia of Colby, went over the facility’s operating manual Friday with Larry Booth, who has moved into marketing. Foster took over as administrator last month.

## Infinia names new administrator

By Tisha Cox  
Colby Free Press

Infinia of Colby has a new administrator. James Foster took Larry Booth’s place in mid January because of a promotion.

Foster started with Infinia in early January as an administrator in training, but quickly became administrator.

“They were going to place me somewhere in Kansas as an administrator,” Foster said. “I got lucky because they moved Larry up and I got to stay in Colby.”

Booth moves into marketing, and will market Infinia across the state from the Colby office.

“It was a good move for both of us,” Booth said.

Foster spent the last year and a half as a physical therapy assistant at Citizens Medical Center and has a bachelor’s degree in health ad-

ministration.

“This is where I wanted to be,” Foster said.

It’s Foster’s first position as a nursing home administrator, but he has worked in rehab administration in the past.

Foster, 33, has been in health care since 1993.

He said health care administration is important.

“It’s the best place to have the area, and most overall effect on quality of care and make sure it improves,” Foster said.

Care has to get better as resources get tighter, he said.

“The constant challenge of health care is to provide the best service,” Foster said.



J. Foster

Foster’s responsibilities include making sure everyone has made it to work; meals are prepared; building is in good shape and the budget is in good order. He also networks with the hospital.

Booth said Foster is spending time out of his office and among the staff and residents.

“He’s just what this kind of business needs,” Booth said.

Foster grew up in western Kansas and eastern Colorado. He completed Colby Community College’s physical therapy assistant program in the early 1990s.

His family also relocated to the area, which also helped bring him back here. He has one daughter.

Booth said he plans to work on rebuilding the patient base. Other future plans for the facility include decoration and remodeling, both which are still on the drawing board.

## Golden Plains could face alcohol tests

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

Golden Plains High School students may be tested for alcohol at future school dances following a suspicious incident that took place over the weekend.

Superintendent and high school principal Dr. Roger Baskerville said after law enforcement declined to test several students at Saturday’s Sweetheart Dance he asked the school board to allow him to purchase a breathalyzer.

Baskerville met with the school board Monday to talk about his attempt to have several students tested he thought brought alcohol into the building.

“We have suspicions, and pretty good ones, but you have to prove it,” he said. “We think it’s an isolated type thing, but the board wants me to contact the Kansas Association of School Boards’ legal counsel and develop a policy to use a breathalyzer at all dances in the future.”

Baskerville said part of developing the policy to test students will be to decide whether to test all 70 of the high school students or randomly.

Rod Bieker, legal counsel for the Kansas Department of Education in Topeka, said the state does not have a policy for schools to follow when it comes to testing students for alcohol. He said development of such policies up to local school boards.

Baskerville would not specify the number of students he was suspicious of. In an effort to prove alcohol was on the premises, he called the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office and asked for a deputy to respond and administer preliminary breath tests to “several students.” His request was declined since there was no school policy in place to administer the test.

Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn Tuesday said he has yet to determine why the deputy refused Baskerville’s request. Baughn said he leaves such decisions “up to the discretion of each deputy.”

“I have no problem with my deputies giving a preliminary breath test when requested,” Baughn said. “I do know if we’re called and a student tests positive

“I have no problem with my deputies giving a preliminary breath test when requested.”

Mike Baughn  
Thomas County sheriff

we’ll have to take necessary legal steps.”

Baughn said his practice when called to administer a breath test to someone younger than 18, is that he tells the teen should he test positive a ticket will be given.

“If the student or teen then enrolls in the Prime for Life Under 21 alcohol course at the local prevention center and completes it I’ll withdraw the ticket,” Baughn said.

Baughn said he supports Baskerville’s effort to curb underage drinking.

“It’s a mentality of parents that underage drinking is a socially acceptable form of drug,” Baughn said. “I can’t tell you how many times I hear, ‘Thank God my child isn’t using marijuana or methamphetamine.’ Law enforcement can’t effect social change in that area, it has to come from parents and other adults.”

Baughn said he is upset the dance in Rexford had a suspicious situation involving alcohol because he helped support the dance.

“I gave Golden Plains cheerleaders \$250 out of drug forfeiture money for the dance with the understanding it was drug and alcohol free,” Baughn said. “Whatever my office can do to work with schools to address underage drinking is what I’ll do.”

Thomas County Undersheriff Jason Moses supervises all deputies attached with the sheriff’s office. Moses said he learned about the incident at Golden Plains High School Tuesday.

Moses said details as to why the deputy called to the school did not administer the test “are unclear” but plans to follow up on the matter and issue a statement about it in the near future.

## Thomas County approves asphalt bids for annual road projects

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

A Kanopolis company was the only bidder in for cold mix asphalt to be laid this summer for Thomas County projects.

Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans and Ken Christiansen awarded Hi-Plains Sand, Inc. the job to make 12,000 tons of asphalt at \$6.50 per ton. Commissioner Paul Steele was absent from Tuesday’s meeting.

“As far as I’m concerned he’s the only one who responded and it’s not unreasonable,” Evans said.

Thomas County Road Supervisor Clair Schrock met with the commissioners and said the county overlays between 10 and 12 miles of asphalt each year. The county currently has 118 miles of asphalt paved roads.

Schrock said this year’s project includes overlaying a 6-mile stretch of road between Menlo and Rexford, a 2-mile section of asphalt south of U.S. Highway 24 and a 1-mile strip from U.S. Highway 24 into the town of Menlo.

Hi-Plains Sand’s bid calls for Thomas County furnishing the material for the job,

and the company will furnish the labor, equipment and fuel to mix, weigh and stockpile the asphalt.

The project is to be completed by June 1.

### Retirement plans

Commissioners also met with Donna Bennett and Linda Vaughn, Colby representatives of Waddell and Reed, to talk about retirement plans for county employees.

Bennett and Vaughn wanted to know if the county commissioners had any plans to change its retirement plans. Evans said there was nothing in the works for making

any changes.

“County commissioners aren’t going to tell employees where to invest for their retirement,” Evans said.

Evans said employees are not required to put money into any specific retirement account, but if Bennett and Vaughn wanted to educate employees about options they could do so at any time.

### Appraisal

A letter from First National Bank supporting continuation of an on-line Thomas County appraisal site was talked about.

“We support this, but want to get all the

information we need first,” Evans said about the end of a 90-day test site.

Bank Vice Presidents Relda Galli and Kristen S. Ostmeyer, along with assistant Vice President Cliff Leach and loan officer Shannon Wells want to see the on-line appraisal site continued. The letter stated the four individuals found the site “very beneficial” for accessing information needed for real estate loans. They stated while the county appraiser’s office “does an excellent job” providing information, the Web site allowed faster response time and was available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Bound for nationals

Colby Community College Trojan wrestling coach Steve Lampe watched the final practice Tuesday before six of his wrestlers compete in the national tournament Friday and Saturday in Rochester, Minn. For more about the Trojan wrestlers, turn to page 8.



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

## Band students compete in festival

The Colby Middle School band competed in Middle School Music Festival on Feb 15. Bands and choirs were judged by three judges. Members were given scores of I, the best, or II. Some scores may also include a plus or minus. Overall scores were: 6th grade band I-; 7th grade band I-; 8th grade band II; 7/8th grade choir, I.

**Small groups and ensembles:**  
Brass Choir I-; Clarinet Trio II-; Clarinet Ensemble I-; Flute Trio II-; Flute Quartet I+; Flute Quartet I-; Flute Ensemble I-; Percussion Ensemble I; Saxophone Ensemble II+; 7th grade girls choir I; 8th grade girls choir I; 7th/8th grade mixed vocal ensemble I.

### Solos included:

AP: Amanda Barnum, Vocal Solo;

Barbara Bickner, Flute Solo; Gray Henry, Piano Solo.

I+: Barbara Bickner, Piano Solo; Heather Griggs, Vocal Solo; Gray Henry, Percussion Solo; Anna Juene-mann, Vocal Solo; Jacob Rose, Vocal Solo; Brock Wagoner, Vocal Solo; Caitlyn Wright, Vocal Solo I: Barnum, Piano Solo; Lucas Baumfalk, Piano Solo; Jaylea Black, Vocal Solo; Seth Bredemeier, Alto Saxophone Solo; Audrianna Cope, Vocal Solo; Audra Fleming, Vocal Solo; Heather Griggs, Flute Solo; Grace Hankin, Vocal Solo; Gray Henry, Vocal Solo; Kayla Hockersmith, Trumpet Solo; Anna Juene-mann, French Horn Solo; Bailey Koerperich, Vocal Solo; Tera Raymond, Vocal Solo; Lauren Shoaf, Vocal Solo, Percussion Solo and Violin

Solo; Anna Taylor, Flute Solo; Shelby Terrell, Trumpet Solo; Brock Wagoner, Piano Solo and Percussion Solo; I-: Barnum, Flute Solo; Dryden Baumfalk, Alto Saxophone Solo; L. Baumfalk, Tenor Saxophone Solo; Bredemeier, Clarinet Solo; Megan Dougherty, Flute Solo; Britany Hanson, Clarinet Solo; Laura Juene-mann, Vocal Solo; B. Koerperich, Piano Solo; Sara Martin, Trombone Solo; Abby Miller, Vocal Solo; McKenzie Sigg, Vocal Solo; II+: Sunny Creighton, Clarinet Solo; Katherine Kaus, Flute Solo; Katrina Kaus, Clarinet Solo; Sam Kendrick, Trumpet Solo; Aryn Khan, Clarinet Solo; Ashley Klippert, Trumpet Solo; II: Cameron Crocker, Instrumental Solo.