



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Future growth begins

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The first step in planning the county's future was a meeting at Colby High School Monday evening. The meeting was sponsored by the Pro-active Committee, a cooperative effort between the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and the Colby Promotion Committee.

The "County-wide Visioning and Planning Session" held in the high school commons area was hosted by Dave Jennings of the His Shop in downtown Colby.

Jennings said the county has taken advantage of "wonderful leadership in the past," citing several examples of how goals have come to pass. He mentioned the Colby Community Building, Interstate-70 and Colby Community College.

"Someone had to have that first idea," he said. "Now it's out turn to continue that."

Jennings added the future is a question of the county being all it can be and that should be the goal.

Dr. David Darling, a K-State Research and Extension agricultural economist and rural community specialist, was also there. He showed a video called "Power of Vision" and gave a presentation on how having a vision can help a community succeed.

The video outlined the importance of planning for the future and how a positive attitude and vision of the future can influence outcomes for the better.

After the video, Darling organized groups based on birthday months and handed out a worksheet on for them to come up with the county's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The "Sustaining Progress Checklist" worksheet had cat-



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Dave Jennings, owner of the His Shop in downtown Colby, hosted the "County-wide Visioning and Planning Session" Monday night at Colby High School. Seated is Dr. David Darling, a K-State Research and Extension agricultural economist and rural community specialist.

egories like community attitudes, vision, plan, resources and beneficial actions. After completing the paperwork, groups discussed their answers and then had to come up with the strengths and weaknesses they think the county has.

Strengths suggested were the college, hospital, infrastructure, sales tax for economic development, partnering with other communities, community participation and attitude.

Weaknesses offered were an aging and declining population, no wage increases or lack of competi-

tive jobs, water and lack of information sharing. It was also suggested that the same group is always involved in leadership and that needs to be diversified by getting different people interested.

Darling said the county is in the first stage of developing its next strategic plan. He asked who was missing and said everyone needs to be involved.

He said vision can affect planning, taking a community from "who we are" to "who we want to be." Darling added vision is empowering and the tool to move in the

right direction. Thomas County Economic Alliance Director Gerry Fulwider also gave a historic review on past strategic plans. He said the plans have to be reviewed every three years to qualify as an enterprise zone. The past three versions of the current plan were revisions, with the last completed in June, 2002.

Fulwider said some of the goals from that plan are already reality, including the Colby Visitors Center, the recycling center and the Colby High School technology lab.

## Area producers urged to attend program signup

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

There will be an informational meeting in Colby starting at 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 8, at the Colby Community Building for farmers in Thomas County as well as producers in Graham, Rooks, Sheridan, and Sherman counties.

Sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the focus of the meeting is to offer information to producers on sign up for the 2005 Conservation Security Program or CSP.

Farmers in the specific five counties can apply for the program based on the fact that all are part of the Upper South Fork Solomon Watershed, which has been chosen as a priority watershed for this program by the federal government, said Layton Billips, Sheridan County district conservationist.

For those unable to attend the Colby meeting, there are three other meetings planned to include: Hoxie High School, 1625 Queen Ave., Hoxie, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 8; and Frontier Stage, 312 E. Main, Hill City, at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., Wednesday, March 9. For questions call any of the district conservationists in the five counties.

In Colby for Thomas County farmers, call Andy Burr, (785) 462-7482 or e-mail: andy.burr@ks.usda.gov; Sherman County, call Fred Wedel, (785) 899-3070 or e-mail: fred.wedel@ks.usda.gov; Sheridan County, call Billips, (785) 675-3353 or e-mail: layton.billips@ks.usda.gov; Rooks County, Darrel Beougher, (785) 425-6316 or e-mail: darrel.beougher@ks.usda.gov; or Graham County, Bradley Shank, (785) 421-3491 or e-mail: bradley.shank@ks.usda.gov.

## Legislators to visit five nearby towns

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

There will be an informational meeting, along with time for questions and answer, when Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer (Grinnell) and Rep. John Faber (Brewster) visit St. Francis, Atwood, Oberlin and Norton on Saturday.

St. Francis is the first stop from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Dusty Farmer Restaurant then from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. in Atwood at the Farm Bureau Building. The legislators will continue to Oberlin from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Decatur County Courthouse and from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. at the Town and Country Kitchen in Norton.

"There are several important bills that have been passed the first half of the legislative session," Ostmeyer said. "The Senate pass the 'clunker' bill to fix last year's tax on certain used cars and there was a bill to help combat racial profiling and bills to promote the growing ethanol industry in our state."

A couple of changes are expected to help streets and highways in becoming a little more safe with the passage of strobe lights on the top of school buses and the use of headlights when windshield wipers are in use. During the five-town tour on Saturday, both legislators said they are inviting and encouraging everyone to attend one of the sessions.

## Commissioners: Recycling going strong in Thomas County

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners learned Monday tons of waste are being kept from being disposed of because of efforts at the landfill and county recycling center.

Landfill supervisor Larry Jumper gave a presentation on the landfill and his duties. He said the landfill takes in an average of 15 tons a day but can handle up to 20 tons.

But, he said, seven tons of waste a day are recycled at the landfill. Last year, that amounted to 2,576

tons recycled last year.

They take in recyclable materials such as millings, oil, tires and rims, yard waste, metal, concrete, grain and grain dust and more. Those items amount to 20 percent of all the materials that end up at the landfill.

Chairman Ron Evans said Jumper and his crew are doing a good job holding down the amount of municipal solid waste taken in at the landfill.

He complemented the citizens of the county for their use and participation in recycling.

"The three commissioners ap-

plaud everyone," he said, adding recycling is helping to prolong the life of the landfill.

Evans said he would like to keep using the old pit as long as possible before having to use the new pit.

Jumper showed the site plan for the new are and said he thinks they need a hardtop road. Evans told him to get a quote from road department supervisor Clair Schrock.

He also wanted Jumper to see how much money is left in his budget from the \$700,000 they had from a no-fund warrant for the new landfill cel.

On the subject of waste, Lynette Koon gave a presentation on the recycling center.

Evans said the citizens of Thomas County owe their thanks to Koon and Laura Davis, who helped start the center 10 years ago.

He said recycling is the right thing to do. Evans said Koon has developed a good rapport with the state and written and received \$500,000 in grants to develop one of the "best recycling centers in western Kansas."

Koon said the Colby facility is becoming a regional center because

more counties are coming on board. Oberlin and Gove will be sending materials to Colby and other counties already do. She said 2004 was the first year for the facility as a five-county center.

Koon said the facility does sell some materials and last year sold 518 tons, which was worth about \$33,000, which went back into the center for wages and equipment.

Commissioner Paul Steele said the facility is an asset.

"I think everyone in the community can be proud of it," he said.

Commissioner Ken Christiansen

also noted it's doing it's job because more and more people are coming to recycling.

The commissioners also got their first look at a new county vehicle.

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services director Kathi Wright showed pictures of their new ambulance. She said once they have it, it will only take three days to get it ready for service. They will have to put in equipment and supplies before the vehicle can be used.

Wright said once it's outfitted, she will bring the ambulance for the commissioners to see.

## Effort underway to mobilize parade for celebration

A celebration is planned in conjunction with the Enlisted Association of the Kansas National Guard meeting in Colby on Friday and Saturday, March 18-19, said Leilani Thomas, executive director of the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau. As part of the celebration,

she said, a parade is being organized and entries are requested.

The parade will begin at 2 p.m., Friday, March 18 from Fike Park to the National Guard Armory.

As part of the festivities honoring the 150 years of service by the Kansas Air and Army National Guard

there will be displays of vehicles, traveling exhibit and free hot dogs and pop from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, at the Comfort Inn parking lot.

In addition, spouse tours will be available to the Visitor's Center and Prairie Museum of Art and History.

"If you would like to be part of the parade, please call the Chamber of Commerce or Convention and Visitors Bureau," Thomas said.

"This is truly an opportunity to showcase our community."

For questions, call the Chamber Office at 460-3401.

## Briefly

### Second grade music program next week

Colby Grade School second graders will be performing "Temples and Tombs" under the direction of Jennifer Koel at 1:30 and 7 p.m. in the grade school auditorium Thursday, March 10. The public is invited.

### Colby district music concert next week

The Colby Public Schools Music Department presents "Music in Our Schools," the district concert, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 15 at the Colby Community Building. The concert will feature musicians from Colby Grade, Middle and High Schools. March is nationally known as "Music in Our Schools" month.

### Judges needed for Forensics tourney

The Colby High School Forensics Tournament will be hosting their home meet on Thursday, March 17 and judges are still needed for the tournament. Training is available, said Nancy Rundel, head coach. Persons interested in judging should call Rundel at 460-5300 or at

nrundel@colbyeagles.org

### Murder mystery event Saturday

Pioneer Memorial Library is sponsoring its first-ever Murder Mystery at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 5. This will be the perfect opportunity for those amateur sleuths to solve a mystery, organizers said. Local celebrities will act out this tongue-and-cheek mystery. Hors d'oeuvres and dessert are included in the \$10 ticket on sale at the library. For questions, call 460-4470.

### Donations for cemetery fence sought

Donations are being accepted by the Colby Cemetery District for a new fence to be installed on the south side of Beulah Cemetery. Anyone interested in contributing to this project should mail their donation to Dale Deaver, 316 First St., Levant, Kan. 67743. Checks should be made payable to Colby Cemetery District. A map display of graves locations has also been installed at Beulah Cemetery. A directory listing names is available along with the display.

Colby  
Hoxie  
Oakley



## Mild temperatures to prevail

**Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. West winds up to 5 mph. **Thursday...**Partly cloudy. Highs around 60. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph. **Thursday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. South winds 5 to 10 mph shifting to the east after midnight. **Friday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s. North winds 10 to 15 mph. **Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. **Saturday...**Partly cloudy. Highs around 60.

**The numbers**  
Tuesday's high, 58  
Low this morning, 27  
Year ago today, 41 and 22  
Records for this date, 90 in 1935 and -11 in 1943  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
Precipitation for month to date: 0.00  
Snowfall for month to date: 0.00  
Soil temperature, 40

**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.



