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Blowouts, bullets end chase

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A Nevada man lead law enforcement on a chase Thursday that started on I-70 in Thomas County and ended just outside Wakeeney but not before it took blowouts, bullets and a near demolition derby to stop the chase.

Tod Hileman, public resource officer for Northwest Kansas with the Kansas Highway Patrol, said the chase began at 8:52 a.m. when Trooper Jason Duffey pulled over a 2005 Toyota Camry at mile marker 54 for speeding.

Hileman said Duffey took the preliminary information from the driver and went back to his car and ran the information on the Toyota's driver, 45-year-old Howard Ackerman of Las Vegas, Nev.

Duffey said he found out the Camry was listed as stolen out of Nevada and walked back to confront Ackerman but he drove off instead.

The chase ended at 9:50 a.m. near Wakeeney, Hileman said. He said speeds during the chase went up to at least 120 mph. Hileman said they finally managed to flatten two of the car's tires with the stop sticks but Ackerman kept going and tried to ram his car into two highway patrol vehicles.

A third tire on the Toyota was blown out and Ackerman still attempted to escape by trying to ram another car, which forced troopers to fire two shots at the Camry's engine. Hileman said the chase ended when Ackerman rammed a trooper's car and his car stopped working. He was placed under arrest and taken to Trego County Hospital with minor injuries. Ackerman was held overnight at the hospital and taken to the Trego County Jail. Hileman said he faces one charge in Trego County and six in Thomas County but none have been filed.

Spring break breakaway



Nathan and Casey Quagliano raced go-karts around their driveway Thursday afternoon. They were enjoying the last few days of spring break before having to go back to school on Monday.

TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Revitalization highlighted by ag agencies

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Residents from around the area had the chance find out more about government programs that could help them and their communities.

Representatives from United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development were in Colby for one of four regional meetings the agency is holding in the state.

Chuck Banks, state director, said the meetings are focusing on the needs of communities.

Thursday's conference was geared toward community and business programs and value-added producer grant programs.

Banks said the meetings are partly the result of department of agriculture and commerce research that more investment in rural economies will help build up communities up to support business opportunities.

The day was divided into two halves with community-based programs in the morning and business in the afternoon.

"They work really well together," he said.

"You've got to have both angles in place."

Banks said infrastructure such as water, education and health care will impact quality of life and business opportunities.

He said people are starting to realize that community development is as important as business development, adding even value-added agriculture can be affected.

Value-added products are agricultural commodities that have had their physical nature changed, like ethanol or a milling plant for flour.

Banks said the agency has many projects going around the state, including the ethanol plant in Campus and soybeans in Grinnell.

He said the agency also works on rural housing and utilities.

One of the programs they would like more involvement in is grant assistance to farmers, ranchers or businesses to help put in renewable or energy-efficient upgrades. That can be anything from lighting to air conditioning and Banks said they can get a 25 percent rebate.

Many people don't know about the programs Rural Development offers, Banks said, and if they don't know about them, they can't be ac-

cessed. That's why he has done outreach work to try to get the word out about what is available.

Regional meetings and listening tours are just a few of the ways the agency has made its presence known.

"I think it's starting to pay off," he said, adding they've raised the amount of work they've done and last year the result was \$152 million in programming.

Such efforts have helped save and create jobs in the state, single-family homes and also impacted thousands of people, Banks said, giving more people the chance to stay in rural communities.

He is passionate about what he does and said the whole picture has to be looked at and the concept of "community" is more than just the local municipality.

Regional awareness is also key because Banks said neighboring counties can sometimes they have assets that complement each other.

Another area of concern is out-migration. He said it worries him that so many people are leaving rural Kansas and that also needs to be addressed.

The federal government provides money for programs but Banks said they need to realize the value of human capital.

He said he's trying to do that through grassroots community development which is a "basic rural community 101 course" to help develop leaders.

Kansas is the only state in the nation taking such an approach and the agency has trained 200 people and is getting ready to implement course this year.

"We're really excited about that," Banks said.

He said it all boils down to rural renewal and said people in urban areas are starting to see the appeal to rural life.

The quality of life is a big draw and Banks said it could help revitalize rural Kansas.

The federal government and the state both offer the tools to help with that and Banks wanted to make as many people aware as possible.



C. Banks

Big Brothers Big Sisters celebrate 5th year

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

The Big Brothers Big Sisters organization celebrated its fifth year in Thomas County on Tuesday with its board and staff looking toward many more years of helping young people.

Much of the organization's success is attributed to the dedication of the "bigs" (adult volunteers or couples) matching up with "littles" (children needing mentors), said Teresa Gotchall, case manager and acting director.

Gotchall has been involved in the program since October of 2003.

"Teresa has a passion for this (group)," said Donna Jennings, board secretary, who talked about how lucky the organization is to have someone like Gotchall.

"The most exciting part of working as case manager," Gotchall said, "is when a match is made between a big and little."

For her, that's what Big Brothers and Big Sisters is all about. "In the past 18 months," Gotchall said, "we have had growth spurts and are expanding our reach to school-based matches, along with community-based matches."

The school-based matches are a way to help a "little" by being a "big" an hour a week and maybe helping the student with homework along with playing board games or having fun time together.

"Right now we have 16 littles without a match," she said.

"There are 14 boys and 2 girls waiting for an adult or couple willing to spend two to four times a



Teresa Gotchall, acting director, and Donna Jennings (right), secretary, look at this year's T-shirt for the Big Brothers Big Sisters "Bowl for Kid's Sake" event.

Teams still needed for annual event

Donna Jennings, board secretary with Big Brothers Big Sisters, said the single, largest fund-raising event of the year is known as "Bowl for Kids Sake."

The hope is that many people will help make the "Bowl for Kids Sake" the best ever by having a team on Saturday and Sunday, April 9-10, at the Colby Bowl and Fun Center.

The deadline for registration is April 1 and with a goal of 60 teams, there's still plenty of time to sign-up and organize a team.

Corporate sponsors for this year's "Bowl for Kids Sake" are Sunflower Appraisal, SBC, the

Law Enforcement Fund with the City of Colby, Pepsi, Pizza Hut, Woofert Construction and Irrigation, Northwest Decorating, Colby Bowl, Fotogirl Photography and Cal Williams, attorney. Other sponsors are BankWest, Beiser Transportation, CKLumber, Colby His Shop, Colby Implement, Farmers and Merchants Bank, First National Bank, Harrison Chapel, Johnson Transport Inc., L & C Home Health Agency, LeRoys, Mattson Ranch, Nancy LePell, Orschelns Farm and Home Supply, Palace Drug, Paul Steele and Optometrist Larry Washburn.

month and between two to four hours each visit with the child."

Currently, there are 32 active

matches involving either men, women or couples matched with a child. Age requirements dictate that

the youngest little must be 6 and the oldest no older than 13.

Matching "bigs" with "littles" requires help, not only in volunteers, but also money.

"We have been fortunate to have supportive businesses and individuals helping to make our fund-raising events possible," Gotchall said.

In fact, all funding for the program is either by grants or rests on the generosity of organizations, business, and individuals.

Groups have also donated their fund-raising earnings for special events over the years that have helped Big Brothers Big Sisters as well. For example, the "Friends of the Airport," who have contributed hundreds of dollars from the annual "Fly-In and Open House."

Kansas State University's "Youth and Seniors Achieving Success," has also involved the "littles" using technology to help bridge the gap of old and you and create an inter-generational partnership.

Since its inception, the organization (Big Brothers Big Sisters) has received support or encouragement from Thomas County individuals, businesses and other groups.

By the end of April, Gotchall said, they will have a new full-time director.

Currently, Gotchall is serving as the case manager and acting director, along with her full-time job as a counselor with the Northwest Kansas Service Center.

For questions, call 460-9125 or stop by the office from 5 to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

on Sunday, April 3 for Kristin Rathbun, the daughter of Fred and Marvia Miller of Colby, who is battling cancer. The spaghetti lunch will begin at 11:30 a.m. and will include salad, bread and dessert and spaghetti.

Landfill closed Easter Sunday

The Thomas County landfill will be closed on Easter Sunday. It will be open regular hours, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and will re-open on Monday, March 28 for business.

Colby
Oakley
Rexford



Snow back in forecast

Tonight...Cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow. Lows in the upper 20s. East winds 10 to 15 mph. **Saturday...**Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow. Highs in the upper 30s. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.

Gusts up to 30 mph late in the afternoon. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. North winds 10 to 20 mph. **Sunday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. West winds 10 to 15 mph. **Sunday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 30s. **Monday...**Partly cloudy. Highs around 70.

The numbers

Thursday's high, 46
Low this morning, 29
Year ago today, 81 and 42
Records for this date, 86 in 1907 and +2 in 1965
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
Precipitation for month to date: 0.74
Snowfall for month to date: 1 inch
Soil temperature, 41

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.

Briefly

Parent-teacher group meets Monday

The Colby Secondary Parent-Teacher-Student Association is meeting Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Pioneer Memorial Library Meeting Room. This meeting will be an informational meeting with Judy Tiller, Northwest Kansas Juvenile Services talking about "Empowering Parents."

Spaghetti fund raiser scheduled

The Colby Community Building will be the site of a spaghetti fund raiser

