

COLBY FREE PRESS

Red fox alert issued

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Missing cats have prompted the city's law enforcement officials to alert residents that an estimated 30 red foxes are roaming the outskirts of town.



Red fox

Thus far, three cats have been reported missing, said Randy Jones, chief of police, and suspicion has fallen on the red fox population. "We have had one resident tell us that he actually saw a fox carrying a cat off recently," Jones said.

After that sighting, the chief himself said he was checking into the area where the incident occurred and spotted a fox nearly in the act of killing a small cat as well.

There are about six areas where the foxes have dens, but all of those locations are on the outskirts of Colby.

"We have not had any reports inside the city limits, though," he said.

Jones said he would recommend keeping a close eye on cats and small dogs if someone lives close to fields or open areas.

When requested, there are a limited amount of animal traps that city police can loan out to catch the animals and then call to have the animal taken away.

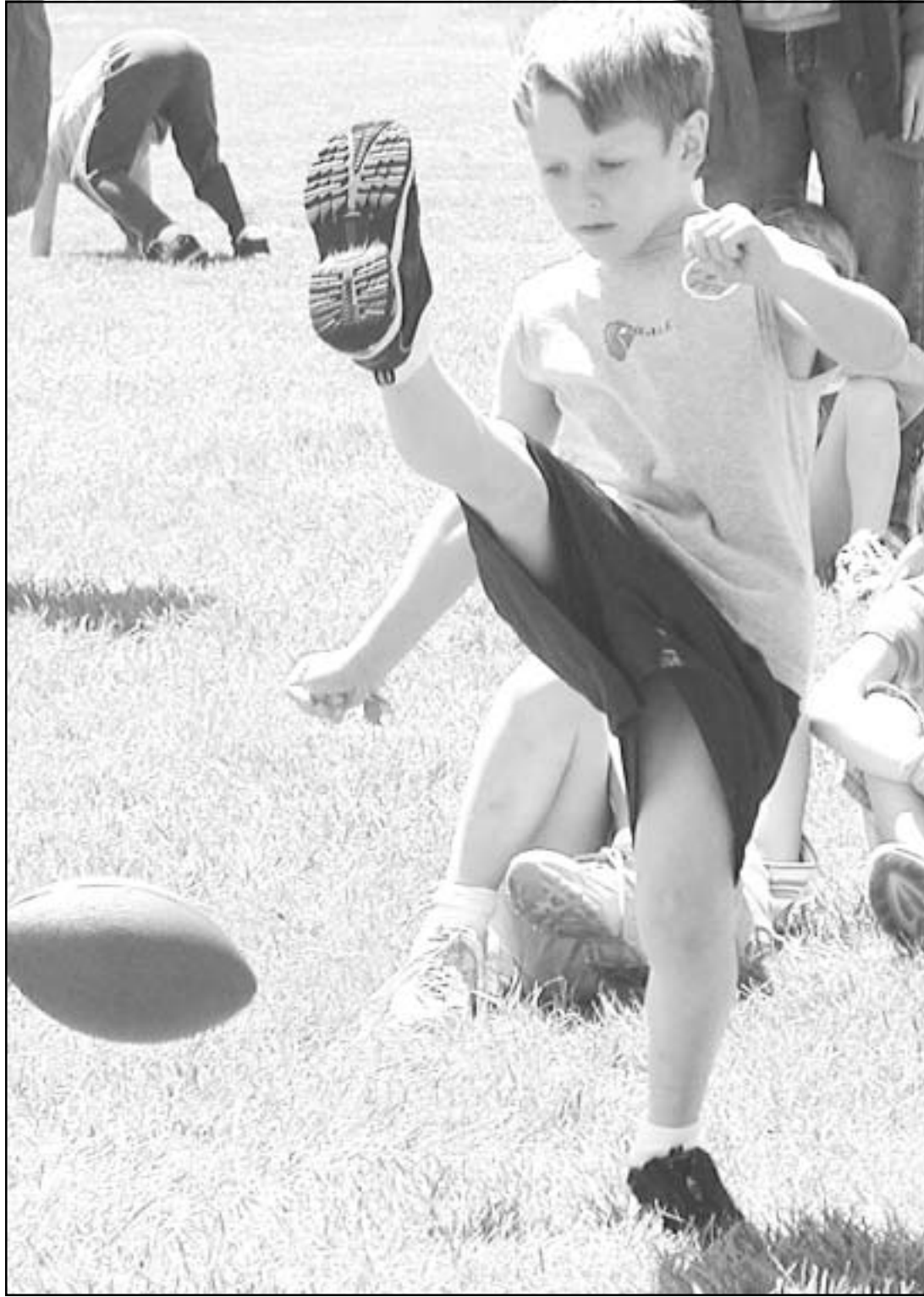
In checking with the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department in Pratt, Jones said officials said that residents have the right to protect their domestic animals.

However, Jones also indicated that should someone catch a fox and bring it to the law enforcement office, they will contact local fish and game officials to consider arrangements in releasing these animals in a more proper habitat.

Jones said he discourages residents from releasing these animals outside of town since the fox could cause problems to farmers with chickens and other livestock.

For questions or other information, call the police department at 460-4460.

Determination



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

AT TOP: (Left to right) Colby first and second graders Chase Eggert, Jessica Cook and Kramer Wrinkles ran the 25-meter dash during the grade school field day at Dennen Field. **ABOVE:** Alex Young tried his hand at kicking a football during field day activities. All of the grade school students took part in the event, which included running, tug-of-war and more.

Colby hospital program helps assault victims

Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Citizens Medical Center will soon be the site of a new program designed to help victims of sexual assault.

Tama Unger, director of fund development and community relations, said because of recently trained nurses who have joined a special response team the hospital will be able to help assault victims in the near future.

"There are a lot of pieces to this story, but the bottom line is that sexual assault victims historically have not reported the crime because of the he-said-she-said component.

"However, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and Sexual Assault Response Team is a program where our staff is professionally trained to consult with and assist the victim, as well as collect evidence for DNA testing," Unger said.

Prosecutors and law enforcement agencies from nine northwest Kansas counties have agreed to use the new program at Citizens Medical Center. Those counties are Thomas, Sherman, Sheridan, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Logan, Gove, Trego and Wallace County.

Unger said new equipment will allow evidence collection which will assist prosecutors in developing cases against alleged assailants. The equipment costs \$7,500, of which 90 percent has been raised.

"We've had donations from the Colby Police Department, Thomas County Sheriff's Office, and both the Sherman and Thomas County Attorney's Offices," said Tricia Carney, emergency room nurse and response team leader.

"With the culpascop, exams will include color video and photos as well as DNA collection so when the case goes to trial, it is based on facts and the prosecution of the case is valid. As a matter of fact, 88 percent of the cases don't make it to court because of the evidence," Unger said.

Carney said when she did initial research about starting a program at Citizens Medical Center she learned from the Kansas Bureau of

Investigation that half the assault cases in Thomas County involved children.

"An investigator told me that on average there are five (assault) cases each month in the nine-county region. He said about one-half of the caseload is pediatric. We've already had three cases in the first quarter of this year," she said.

She said three registered nurses will make up the team which will begin working as soon as the equipment is purchased.

"The program is going to help Citizens Medical Center provide more continuous care in the emergency room. We'll have a nurse which will be called in and we won't be taking someone off the floor," she said.

Carney, along with two other nurses, trained for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and Sexual Assault Response Team program at Via Christie Hospital in Wichita.

"We had to take a 40-hour course and also had to tour a crime lab, watch a sexual assault court case and do 16 hours of pelvic exams. We rode with Wichita Police Department members and were told we had a good beat because we saw a lot," Carney said.

The new program at Citizens Medical Center will also help assault victims who, in the past, have had extensive travel involved, in making a case against their alleged attacker.

"The closest assault nurse examiner and response team program is in Garden City," Unger said.

She said county attorneys from the area have contributed to the purchase of the scope as this program helps everyone in something like a 100 mile radius of Colby.

"Victims no longer have to travel some three hours for help. That just adds to the trauma.

Jeff Grauerholz, hospital director of nursing, said he's pleased the new program will be operational soon. He said he's confident it will help young adults, particularly those from Colby Community College, feel better about reporting alleged sexual assaults.

City's sewer main break not as serious as first thought

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Tuesday's sewer main break near Southwind Plaza, which could have been a major problem, was resolved within two hours Wednesday morning, said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager.

"Basically what happened was the sewer line had sheered into south of Interstate 70," she said. "All the city crews had to do was dig out the affected area and repair it with pipe clamps to take care of the break."

The reason for initial concerns was had the line break occurred under the interstate

it would have required a lot more time, money and expertise.

"Thankfully, that was not the case," she said today.

The cost was \$125 for the clamp and time by city crews and equipment.

As for the liquid seeping from the sheered

sewer line, Armstrong said that about 75 gallons escaped from the pipe.

However, she added, that has already dissipated into the ground.

Regarding contamination, she said there was no contamination, but had solids come up from the sewer break, then the city

would have had a major problem.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment was called as part of the procedure when something like this happens, she said. As it turned out, the break was repaired even before the state returned the city's call earlier Wednesday morning.

Teachers honored for service

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Former students, family and friends turned out for a reception at the Colby Grade School cafeteria Wednesday to honor grade school Title I math teacher Pat Turrell, K-5 media specialist Carol Robison and Colby Middle School technology education/trade industry teacher Dean Anderson.

Anderson and Turrell are retiring and Robison is leaving to take a position with a school in southeast Kansas. Turrell spent the most time with the district, completing her 41st year of teaching this year. Jo DeYoung, the school district's financial officer, said she started in 1964 and taught first grade and later Title I math. "She's the teacher that's been



Left to right: Carol Robison, Dean Anderson, with his wife, Bev, and Pat Turrell were guests of honor at a retirement reception on Wednesday.



with the district the longest," DeYoung said.

Though retiring, Turrell will continue part-time with the district next year, helping with Thomas County Academy, the new charter school for grades five through eight.

Also retiring is Anderson, who taught in the district from 1974-1976 then returned in 1981, with a

total of 26 years.

Robison also had two stints with the district, her first from 1974-1980, then from 1986 to now, with 25 years.

DeYoung said Robison is taking a position in Chetopa, where she will be director of title reading and math, and library services at their grade school.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

A crowd of around 150 turned out to honor the three, said DeYoung.

Grade school principal Terrel Harrison was pleased with how the event played out. She said they've never had a full house before for a retirement — since she's been in the district — and was glad to see it.

Thomas County agrees to share in road matter

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Straightening out a road was on the agenda at Monday's Thomas County commissioners meeting.

The commissioners met with Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong, director of public works Marc Gilman and county road department supervisor Clair Schrock to talk about Willow Avenue. The county will pay half the cost of buying 2.71 acres, or \$6,000 to help straighten out the double curve where Willow meets Country Club Drive near I-70.

Issues with the lawn sprinkler system at the Thomas County Office Complex might make replacing it a necessity. The commissioners found out the system isn't working like it should.

Rob Stithem, who mows the lawn at the office complex and courthouse, told the commissioners a new system for the 15,000 square feet of grass at the office complex

would run about \$5,000. Chairman Ron Evans said they're going to consider installing a new sprinkler.

The commissioners also heard from Ed Dean, who is on the board at the Senior Progress Center and drives the community van.

Dean wanted to know if money from the county would be available to help install an interlock door entryway at the senior center. It would be a second set of doors inside the entrance to help keep the temperature inside more easily regulated and bad weather outside.

The estimated cost is \$14,000. The commissioner suggested looking for grant money and contacting the Thomas County Community Foundation to see if they could help out. Another suggestion was letting center patrons know about the idea and see if they might give donations. Evans said the county gives \$24,000 a year to the center and didn't know if any more money was available.

