



COLBY FREE PRESS

Colby College enrollment ideas continue

By **Patty Decker**

Free Press Editor

Changes in the legislature four years ago, regulations governing community colleges, population trends, and falling high school graduation numbers are only some of the issues facing Colby Community College officials who continue searching for ways to keep enrollment numbers growing.

Similar to other colleges and universities in rural areas, Colby's board of trustees and its administrators know for one thing that they cannot depend on their "traditional" base of students.

In offering some numbers for full and part time students at Colby College, in 1004 the amount was 1,761 compared to 1,951 total students in 2003.

Those recent numbers when compared to 1990 with a total of 2,163 and the highest recorded in 1995 at 2,462 for both full and part time, the administration has been looking at how to change accordingly.

Skip Sharp, dean of student services at Colby College, recently provided a information substantiating declines at the 14-county high schools served.

In Thomas County, Brewster's graduating class lost 9 students, but Colby and Golden Plains both had an increase of 29 and 8 graduates respectively.

In Sherman County, the loss was 9 from last year's graduates, with Sheridan County at a loss of 2. Other area high schools graduating less students from the previous year included Oakley with 20; Quinter, 11; St. Francis, 21; Norton, 36; Oberlin, 12; Hill City, 19; Phillips-

burg, 6; Tri-Plains, 8; and Cheylin, 9. Although there were others county schools included, the general trend was about the same.

In addition to Colby and Golden Plains showing an increase, another area school showing an increase this year was Atwood with 17 more than the previous year.

Even with some schools showing increases, the total loss of students in the college's service area (not all schools were included) was 196.

Looking forward to next year, Sharp said the impact would continue to have a negative effect.

Addressing the political side, the state's four-year universities have been pushing legislation on limiting faculty only those with a master's degree, plus 18 hours in their subject matter as outreach/concurrent enrollment teachers.

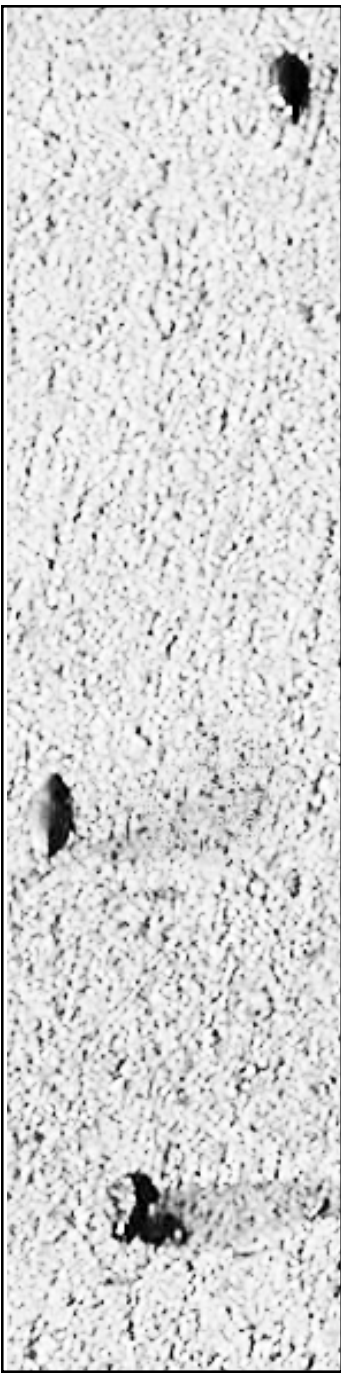
According to Dr. Mikel Ary, president, this would almost give university faculty with doctoral degrees a monopoly in that type of instruction.

A compromise was reached, but not before many potential students questioned whether their credits at a community college would be honored by Regent regulations.

Sharp also noted that college enrollment numbers surpass Dodge City, Pratt and Seward Community Colleges in western Kansas and with a lot less money. As the school year nears, another avenue to draw students to the college will be through advertising and attracting the late decision-makers.

In addition, the administration will target the area for nontraditional enrollments using the areas where outreach courses are already distributed.

Bug phenomenon



Jim Vollmer, who recently moved from Colorado to Amber Waves Apartments in Colby, pointed out some little bugs that in recent weeks have been making themselves at home in the complex. Vollmer and his wife, Henrietta, said the little critters haven't bitten or seemed to present any health problems, but they can be annoying when hundreds of them make their way into the buildings. The Vollmers aren't the only residents who have noticed the influx. Bill Adams, who has lived in Colby many years, said he has never seen these insects before. "There are just so many



PATTY DECKER/Free Press Editor

of them," Adams said. Both Vollmer and Adams can only speculate as to why the insects have swarmed the complex in such great numbers, but so far nobody knows for sure what is causing it. Until some type of answer can be found on how to dissuade their new guests from the area, the residents are keeping their humor and making the best of the situation. Described as looking like a small watermelon seed, their identify and recent appearance remains somewhat a mystery. Vollmer said plans to talk with the Thomas County Extension office soon.

Colby's district could get \$305,000 more from state aid

By **Tisha Cox**

Colby Free Press

The state legislature's special session is over and school districts around Kansas are starting to find out how much more money they're going to get for the coming school year. The Colby School District is no exception.

District financial officer Jo DeYoung said the estimates from To-

peka having Colby receiving about \$305,000 more than last year from the state.

Of that, \$96,208 must go to the district's at-risk program and \$1,277 has to go to bilingual programs with the rest going into the general fund.

"Sixty-five percent of the money appropriated by the state to school districts must be spend for instruc-

tional purposes, or in the classroom," DeYoung said. "The only thing that changed significantly was the at-risk. She added the budget for at-risk will nearly double.

In addition, the district will receive increased funding for special education.

However, DeYoung said this money is a separate amount from the \$305,000. The additional

money for special education will be \$70,043 for the 2005-2006 school year.

She also explained because of the increases to the general fund, the district can raise its local option budget authority to \$93,887, or two mills.

They will also get an additional \$109,264 in state aid. DeYoung said the state contributes approximately

20 percent to the district's local option budget. In 2004-2005, the district received \$314,457 in state aid.

Board member Kevan Taylor said the extra money is a good thing but he has concerns over how the state will disperse the money and how much each district is actually going to get.

He hadn't yet seen any of the state's figures and said he knows the

state has appropriated the money to give to districts.

"I just hope they give us our fair share of the money," Taylor said.

He added another concern is just where the state is going to get the additional money.

Taylor said he hopes it doesn't turn into a situation of spending the money and trying to figure out how to pay for it later.

Looking it over



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Workers from the city of Colby and Thomas County road department inspect concrete laid down on Horton Avenue Wednesday. Marc Gilman, director of public works for the city, said the project is about one-fourth done and the street is being paved from west to east, starting at Range and going toward Country Club Drive. The project is a joint effort between the city and county.

Colby's 10th annual Bluegrass festival begins Friday

By **Patty Decker**

Free Press Editor

Pickin on the Plains kicks off Friday starting at 6 p.m. on the Thomas County fairgrounds with the McLemore Family with hundreds of people expected to arrive for the largest bluegrass festival in the area, officials said.

Organizers have planned many youth activities, concessions, opportunities to win prizes and more.

Friday's agenda includes the McLemore Family, but there are five other groups scheduled as well. Those include at 6:40 p.m, Sappa

Strings with Colby's Larry Booth entertaining from 7:20 to 7:50 p.m.

At 8 p.m. the Pearce Family will be here with the New Old-Timers from 8:50 to 9:30 p.m. Rounding out the first night, Hot Strings will perform from 9:45 to 10:30 p.m.

Many young people might want to consider the youth bluegrass contest at 10 a.m. on Saturday. Information about the event will be available at the information booth, said Susan McLemore, entertainer and one of the organizers.

Children might also like to take advantage of the "Make and Take"

crafts, which will be provided by the Prairie Museum of Art and History and facilitated by Judy Kleinsorge. Saturday will also bring free Scottish oxen-drawn wagon rides provided by Lon Sowers throughout the day.

Other sideline items will include games of jacks, hopscotch, chess and backgammon with concession booths available.

In the Friday edition, more information about the festival and the Saturday and Sunday schedule will be publicized. For tickets, call 460-7643 or (800) 611-8835.

Governor names health advisor

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius put her top health policy adviser in charge Wednesday of administering seven programs that provide medical coverage to the needy and state employees.

Her appointment of Bob Day is a step toward reorganizing health programs to make them more efficient and to give the state more clout in forcing changes in the private health care market.

Sebelius sought a reorganization of programs, and a law that went

into effect July 1 created a new Kansas Health Policy Authority to manage programs and study policy issues.

The governor and legislative leaders must appoint the authority's nine voting members by Aug. 1.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Melvin Neufeld, initially at odds with Sebelius over the details of the reorganization, said he expected Day to get the administrative job. Day advised Sebelius on the reorganization and other health

issues. "I'm not shocked," said Neufeld, R-Ingalls. "That was her health guy."

Neufeld said appointments to the authority are even more important.

"If you get a bunch of political hacks, nothing's going to happen," Neufeld said.

"Whether the health authority gets off the ground and runs and takes control and does things to change how we look at health care depends on who the appointees are."

