



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## 2005 Royalty



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Robin Wilson of Colby was crowned as the 2005 rodeo queen Tuesday during the first night of Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association action. Wilson is the daughter of Leland and Roxy Wilson of Colby.



Candee VonLehe was crowned as the 2005 Thomas County Rodeo Princess. She is the daughter of Jim and Sheila VonLehe of Gem.



Dana Wilson of Colby was named the 2005 Thomas County Rodeo Junior Princess Tuesday at the fair rodeo. She is the daughter of Lonnie and Lori Wilson of Colby.

## Two programs, one coach

# Colby school board hires new high school girls basketball coach

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The Colby High School girls basketball program has a "new" head coach. However, it's a face familiar face.

Derek Bissitt, head coach of the boy's basketball team, will head up both programs this winter. Bissitt replaces coach Tom Beckman, who resigned in June.

The board approved his takeover of the girls program at its Monday meeting, with a 6-0 vote. Board member Janice Frahm was absent.

Board president Tracy Rogers said if the recommendation committee was "sure," he was willing to give the idea a try for one year.

The committee was made up of Superintendent Kirk Nielsen, high school principal Rocky Robbins, activities director Jeff Quenzer and board member Dewey Augustine.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Shawn Stephens, who was going on with the coaching situation and asked if the board had thought things through.

Bissitt is a good coach, Stephens said,

"I just wanted to know how they



D. Bissitt

were going to handle the two positions," she said, adding after the meeting it looked like they had covered all their bases.

Robbins said Bissitt had an answer for all of their questions and concerns.

There were several concerns, Robbins said, about how it would affect Bissitt's effectiveness in the classroom and also if he had his family's support, but he said Bissitt seems to have a plan in mind.

"Logistically I think he can do it," Robbins said. "I've been very impressed. I think it's a very viable solution right now."

He added he was "happy" to recommend Bissitt and his coaching style will lend itself well to what they're going to try this school year.

Nielsen told the board there were three applicants — Bissitt, Shaun Kidder and Beckman. Only Bissitt and Kidder were interviewed.

"The committee decided not to offer him (Beckman) an interview," Nielsen said.

Board member Stan Molstad asked how the whole thing would affect the boy's program.

Nielsen said Bissitt impressed them and he is dedicated and will work with both teams. He said Bissitt will have one practice early and the other later, and will switch off each week.

Bissitt made approximately \$4,500-\$4,600 last year as head

boys coach.

Quenzer said the amount this year hasn't been determined yet because negotiations aren't finished. Bissitt will get paid for both of his head coaching jobs.

Quenzer also said tournament play isn't an issue because both teams will be going to the same events.

"One guy is going to do two jobs, right?" asked board member Gerry Fulwider.

Rogers asked if it was something they needed to decide that night, but did concede they needed resolve the issue.

"I think this has dragged on long enough already," Rogers said.

Augustine said he thought Bissitt will be able to handle the additional coaching duties.

Several people who had given their support for Beckman at the two June school board meetings weighed in on the hiring of Bissitt and the consensus was he is a good coach.

Marybeth Flanagan, who expressed her support for Beckman at a meeting last month, said Bissitt's a "great coach," but she thought it might be hard for him to spend time with both teams.

She said she knows he's a good coach and has seen what he's done with the boys team and isn't against the idea of Bissitt coaching both teams.

"We'll see how he does," Flanagan said. "I think he'll do great."

Jerry Baird, whose daughter, Zanae, will be a senior this fall, played under Beckman for three years.

Baird said Bissitt was the best the board could under the circumstances. He said if they were going to start a search for a new coach, they should have done it after the basketball season was over instead of waiting until the last minute.

He wondered how Bissitt will be able to keep an eye on junior varsity games while the other varsity team is playing. Baird said that's important because the younger players are the future. He said he has mixed feelings about the whole matter and doesn't want to see the boys program short-changed.

Baird did say, however, that the district hired the best coach it could.

Pete Stephens was another Beckman supporter who addressed the board at a June meeting.

He said he wished the district would have let Quenzer do his job, otherwise they wouldn't have been put in the position of having to find a coach right before the beginning of the school year.

"Bissitt is the best person that they could have hired that wasn't involved with the woman's program," Stephens said.

Beckman could not be reached for comment.

# Entries sought for Saturday's fair parade

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The 2005 Thomas County Free Fair is underway and one of its signature events will be the parade on Saturday.

Entries are being taken now and registration will be taken up until before the parade starts on Saturday at 10 a.m., said fair board secretary Audrey Hines.

The theme for this year's fair parade is "Celebrating 100 years of Kansas 4-H Ride High in 2005."

The "Ride High in 2005" theme was chosen by the Brewster Grade School fifth grade class, which received \$250 from the fair board for the school and the students in that class were awarded rodeo tickets for having the winning theme chosen from a contest earlier this year.

Parade registration begins at 9 a.m. Saturday under the picnic shelter on the north side of Fike Park, Hines said.

Fair board members Kathi Wright and Justin Alexander, who

are the parade committee co-chairs, will be in charge of registration.

The parade itself starts at 10 a.m. Entries will need to line up on Eighth Street on the north side of the park.

Hines said the parade route goes down Franklin to Cedar, then west to the fairgrounds.

There are adult and children's categories for the parade. Adult categories are antique vehicles, animal-drawn vehicles, organizational and personal floats, horse and

saddle clubs or individuals, business floats, 4-H clubs and bands, drill teams or cheerleaders.

Children's categories are organizational and personal floats, best-decorated wheeled vehicle, best-dressed pet and most unusual costume.

Prizes in both categories are \$15 for first, \$10 for second and \$5 for third.

For more information, contact Kathi Wright at 460-4585 or 462-3831.

# Tiny town about to get its first water system

WILSEY (AP) — A tiny northeast Kansas community that can trace its origins back 120 years will get a public water system for the first time, which officials hope will give the town a much-needed boost.

The Morris County town of 191 residents is primarily a bedroom community, with residents who

commute to Fort Riley, Manhattan and Emporia. Their water came mostly from private wells, but the quality has been going down, leading officials to turn to a public water supply. The new system is expected to be ready in October.

"It should have been done 50 years ago when they put the sewer

in," said Welby Mitchell, a member of the City Council. "With a few grants we finally got it through. Now, it's just a matter of getting it done." Leah Hanson, who moved to Wilsey from Colorado recently, said many of the private wells had begun testing high in nitrates.

"We could do dishes and laundry,

but we couldn't drink the water," she said. "We bought water from Culligan machines in Council Grove or Herington."

Public water could help increase the local population. Even if it doesn't, says Mayor Sylvester Sauder, public water will still be well worth the effort.

# County considers one polling site for elections

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

In the near future, Thomas County residents might have only one place to vote. The matter came up during preliminary budget discussions at the Thomas County commissioners meeting Monday.

County Clerk Shelly Harms said they're being required by the state to get equipment that complies with American Disabilities Act requirements.

Brian Staats of Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball presented a copy of the audit and a preliminary budget which included \$120,000 in the election fund for capital outlay to purchase new voting equipment.

However, the commissioners budgeted \$25,000 instead of the \$120,000.

Buying equipment for all of the polling locations in the county would be expensive but if the county consolidated to one place in Colby, new equipment would only have to be purchased for that location.

That, Harms said, would save the county money.

She's heard other counties have consolidated or are considering it.

Sherman County consolidated several years ago, said Deputy County Clerk Mary Ann Snethen, and apparently, it's been a boon to the clerk's office and residents of the county.

"It's fantastic," Snethen said.

All of Sherman County precincts vote at the Veterans of Foreign Wars building. Each ward and precinct, she said, has its own table and voting area.

There was a boom in the number of advance voters the first year but people quickly found out the amount of time to vote on election day really didn't change at all.

"We have very few lines," she said. "Basically we're busy all day long."

Snethen said all of the voting equipment is now at one location, which saved money. It's also made setup and tear-down at election time easier. She said they now can set up the day before the election and take down everything the day after. Storage in one place has also made repair and updates simpler.



## Thomas County 2005 Fair Schedule

### Today

3-9 p.m. Antique tractor and garden tractor show and stationary engine display, 4-H Building and parking lot  
8 p.m. PRCA rodeo

### Thursday

8:30 a.m. 4-H, Dairy, Bucket Calf, Breeding and Market Beef Show  
8 p.m. Demolition Derby, sponsored by Roof Masters Roofing

### Friday

9 a.m. 4-H Round Robin  
5 p.m. Buyer's Appreciation Barbecue and 4-H Livestock Sale  
7 p.m. Races, ASCS 360 sprint cars, Modified qualifying and bombers, E&G Promotions along with F&M Insurance Store

### Saturday

8 a.m. Release of livestock and clean-up of barns.  
10 a.m. Parade  
Noon Pioneer Day, 4-H Building  
7 p.m. Races, Modified shootout and Stock,  
E&G Promotions along with F&M Insurance Store





