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Quarter-cent sales tax More than \$90,000 collected since April

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The sales tax increase approved in last year's general election has generated more than \$90,000 since going into effect on April 1, said Gerry Fulwider, director of the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance.

Fulwider said \$92,637.45 has been collected since April, when the quarter-cent sales tax started generating money for economic development.

"It's strictly for economic development," he said. "None of the money's been spent."

There have been two requests for proposals, Fulwider said, both large projects but nothing came of either.

He said that's the type of thing the money will be used for, to help make a proposal and be used for such things as infrastructure, land or employee training if a business decides to come into Colby.

One of the proposals was a dis-

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Gerry Fulwider, director
Thomas County Economic Development

tributing company looking to relocate to Kansas. Colby was one of seven sites in the state but Fulwider said they chose not to come to Kansas.

However, that, along with manufacturing or research and development are the type of business they're hoping to encourage to come to the area with the help of the money from the sales tax increase.

He said those are types of businesses that would complement what's already here and boost the local economy. Retail, on the other hand, would be competition for

business. Another possible use for some of the money could be another business lending program but Fulwider said there are no solid plans yet and it's something that's only being discussed right now.

He said they already have three lending programs in place to help existing and startup businesses. They would have to go before the city council to get approval for any such plans.

"We're looking for a more effective way to help startup businesses and existing businesses," Fulwider said.

Logan County businesses could get help from loan fund

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Logan County businesses have an opportunity to grow and have money to do it with.

According to Logan County Development Director Fred Jones, the county has \$60,000 to loan to businesses which want to expand and add employees.

The money is available through the county's micro-loan program which was generated through the Kansas Department of Commerce.

"We can make loans up to \$25,000 to new businesses or businesses that are expanding their operation and adding employees," Jones said Thursday.

A grant worth \$100,000 is making money available at low interest to borrowers.

"Generally it's going to be in the five to seven percent interest range," Jones said, "depending on the applicant and how much security he or she can contribute."

A review committee made up of Logan County Development board members, a representative from the three Oakley banks, and a represen-

tative from the county reviews loan applications.

"We make recommendations to the county commissioners for the terms of the loan and the county commissioners have the final say on issuing the loan to a business," Jones said.

Businesses have the option to participate in the micro-loan program for operating money or purchasing equipment or real estate.

"They can have a five-year payback for operating money, a 10-year payback for equipment, or a 15-year payback for real estate.

"They can have a combination of these on one amortization schedule as well," Jones said.

Since its organization in 1997, Logan County Development has developed a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan that has provided tax incentives to homeowners and businesses for improvements on more than \$1 million of property in Logan County.

It has conducted surveys for participation in Community Development Block Grants, assisted various entities in the grant application pro-

cess totaling more than \$1 million this year and helped regionally with obtaining \$225,000 in Rural Business Enterprise Grants which can be loaned to small businesses in Logan County and surrounding counties.

Logan County Development helps train small business owners with financial management and has helps obtain about \$55,000 in workforce training money.

In 2000, the corporation negotiated the purchase of the nursing home by the county, preserving approximately 30 jobs and a \$660,000 payroll. It has been instrumental in helping the community retain its hardware store and lumber yard, as well as its theater.

Last year, Logan County Development, through Northwest Kansas Planning and Development helped bring more than \$1 million in construction and improvements to Oakley through moderate income housing, including the eight-unit apartment complex on Ivory Street in the northeast part of town.

For information on how to participate in the micro-loan program, contact Jones at (755) 672-4550.

Ready to be spooked?



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Konnor and Karly Kriss helped put out Halloween decorations at the home of their grandparents, Jim and Sandy Kriss. The kids were taking advantage of a day off from school to help make sure the house looks spooky for Halloween.

‘Come and go’ 4-H event nears

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Thomas County 4-H is hosting a "come and go" project fair as a way to introduce its members and give prospective 4-Hers and their families an idea of what the organization is all about.

The fair is scheduled for Tuesday from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the 4-H Building on the county fairgrounds, said Jan Poore, county extension office.

Almost every project area will be

represented to include beef, citizenship, clothing and textiles, dog care and training, electricity, entomology, fiber arts, food and nutrition, forestry, geology, goats, healthy lifestyles, home environment, horse, leadership, performing arts, pets, photography, plant science, poultry, public speaking, rabbits, reading, self-determined, sheep, shooting sports, small engines, Spaceteach, swine, arts and crafts, wildlife and woodworking.

Examples of other opportunities in the organization include leadership skills, public speaking, community service, parliamentary procedure, project meetings and camps.

In addition to the many opportunities and project areas offered by 4-H, it is also a group that can involve the entire family, she said.

Youth interested in 4-H are encouraged to attend and learn more about what the group has to offer.

District attorney sees corruption, oversights in Topeka narcotics unit

TOPEKA (AP) — Narcotics officers regularly tampered with drug evidence and falsified records, and Topeka's police chief knew about the problems when he sought prosecution of flawed criminal cases, Shawnee County's top prosecutor said Thursday.

District Attorney Robert Hecht said top Topeka police officials, including Chief Ed Klumpp, knew

about problems in the narcotics unit by 2003, yet no officers were disciplined. Hecht also said his office was forced to dismiss 25 criminal cases filed since 1999 because of questions about officers' conduct.

"It is clear that the chain of command, including the chief of police, were aware that there were serious factual flaws in these cases and that they contained false statements and

allegations," Hecht said in a report on the narcotics unit.

Hecht's 125-page report resulted from an 18-month investigation of the narcotics unit his office conducted with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. Its release came only two days after Klumpp, 56, announced he would retire in December for personal and financial reasons after 35 years with the depart-

ment — including four years as chief.

Klumpp told The Associated Press that while the report details problems within the 11-member narcotics unit, it may leave a misleading picture of the entire police department of 285 officers.

"I don't think there's any false information in this report," Klumpp said. "But I think what it does is

paint with too broad a brush over the entire narcotics unit and perhaps the entire department and command structure."

As for his retirement being prompted by the investigation, Klumpp said, "Certainly this is a huge issue. It's weighed heavily on me. It's taken its toll on me and worn me out. But the fact is I would have retired in December anyway."

Mayor Bill Bunten said he hadn't read the report and wanted to talk to Klumpp about it, adding, "We'll see what his side of the story is." The City Council scheduled a special meeting for Saturday morning to discuss the report.

One former Topeka narcotics officer has been sentenced to prison for misconduct and his ex-partner faces 144 criminal charges.

Time for flu shots

Karla Haggard with the Thomas Health Department waited on Vickie Arnberger, June O'Hara, Doris O'Dowd and Marj Brown while they stood in line for flu shots at the Senior Progress Center Thursday. The health department held a flu shot clinic at the center, one of many planned. Administrator Juanita Dewey said more than 80 people came for shots.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Truck rollover on K-25 caused by blown tires

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

A truck rollover accident that blocked both lanes of Highway 25 Wednesday resulted in no injuries, said Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper Brian Horney. He said the road was blocked between 30-45 minutes while the truck was moved off the road.

The accident took place at 11 a.m. Wednesday when a southbound semi truck headed for Denver rolled and ended up on its right side across both lanes of the highway two miles south of Colby. The load shifted, which caused the truck to head off the road. Horney said

two blown tires on the driver's side caused the truck to go into the ditch. He said the driver, who he didn't identify, did a good job keeping the tractor out of the ditch and only the end of the trailer was in the ditch.

The semi had a refrigerated trailer and was hauling a cargo of frozen food to a Denver store. Horney said they had to call in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to observe the unloading of the cargo to make sure its temperature didn't drop. Horney said the last of the cargo was finally offloaded between 9:30 and 10 p.m., Wednesday. The truck and trailer were taken to Oakley by Mel's Motor Co.

