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Free dinner served

Tri-State Praise KGCR sponsored its second annual Thanksgiving family gathering Thursday with more than 30 people attending.

The idea behind the dinner, said James Claasseeen, station manager, was to provide families who may otherwise not be able to have dinner with extended family members a place to go.

"Dinner was open for everyone," he said, whether it was a truck driver passing through Colby, a family with financial hardships or anyone who just wanted company.

KGCR supplied the tea, coffee, and tableware and Wal-mart in Goodland donated the ham and decorations with Dillons in Colby supplying the turkey, he said.

Anyone who came was asked to bring a side dish or dessert, if they could, and some attending even brought board games for after dinner.

Similar to last year, people from Colby, Oakley, Oberlin, Atwood and Hoxie attended.

We had a good turnout this year and a lot of fun, he said.

Claassen and his wife, Brenda, said they are planning to have the gathering again next year.

Helping serve the meal was Becca Bargmann, afternoon announcer.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

From left Brenda Claassen, Becca Bargmann, and Kacy Claassen helped serve ham, turkey and other fixings at a free Thanksgiving dinner Thursday at the 4-H Building in Colby.

District policy to prevent child obesity

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Colby School District student will be a little healthier next year thanks to a new policy the district has in place.

Curriculum director Diana Wieland said it's a federal and state law that is the cause of the change.

"We're required by July 1, 2006, to have a wellness plan and policy in place," Wieland said. The main purpose is to prevent and reduce childhood obesity.

The board adopted a wellness policy earlier this year. However, she said the district has a wellness committee currently reviewing everything from the items available in school vending machines to how much physical activity students get in a week.

It's all part of the federal child nutrition program.

Minimum requirements have already been set forth, and Colby is ahead of the game.

"We really have met almost all of



D. Wieland

"We're required by July 1, 2006, to have a wellness plan and policy in place."

— Diana Wieland

it," Wieland said. "We met basic on almost everything."

But they district is having to take a close look at what they're doing now, and are in the analytical stage, and looking toward the future.

She said they're looking at things like connecting with the college, and other entities in the community to see how everything with wellness is coordinated.

"The idea is a good one," Wieland said, and she doubts there will be any major changes for the school district.

Students already get 100 to 150 minutes of physical activity a week, but the focus in the future will be getting nutrition and wellness information to students and families.

In the past, the district has not documented when they send information out but will have to start doing so next year.

Grant improves Oakley Fire Department operations

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Oakley's fire department has been awarded grant money that will help purchase a new air compressor.

The fire department received a grant of \$29,678 from the 2005 Assistance to Firefighters grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland and Security said Jerry Robben who wrote the grant.

The money is part of \$650 million awarded by the Homeland and Security and this is the third time he's applied for grant money for the department.

The grant money can be used to help local fire departments and emergency medical services organizations purchase or re-

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— Matt Mayer

ceive training, first responder health and safety programs, equipment and response vehicles.

"We recognize the importance of the Fire Act Grants to our nation's fire departments and we will continue to work closely with the fire service community to meet their needs," said Matt Mayer, acting executive

director of the office for state and local government coordination and preparedness.

"The money will be used for updating the air compressor system used to refill air bottles on self-contained breathing apparatus units," Robben said.

"These SCBA packs are used during

structure fires, automobile fires and hazardous material incident."

Robben said the current air compressor is about 20 years old and in need of replacement. He said he's pleased Oakley fire department was selected as part of the 11th round of the grant process.

"In my eyes, it will free up some of the budget money to buy other things that are needed on a day to day basis.

For instance, if our compressor went out today, we'd have to spend about \$30,000 to replace it and that would buy a lot of other things," Robben said.

Oakley Fire Department currently has 15 SCBA tanks and with the current air compressor it takes about three hours to partially refill them after training or an actual

fire.

Filling the tanks faster will mean tanks won't have to be taken back to the station as often.

"With the new compressor it will take about 30 minutes to completely refill the tanks," Robben said.

"It will really help us out a lot. We get by with the old things because you get used to them."

Of the compressor's total cost of \$31,240, Robben said local taxpayers will only be paying \$1,562 for the equipment.

"This is an expensive item that is needed in the fire service," he said.

The only other town in Kansas to receive part of the 11th round of grant money was Hesston, which received \$27,550.

Anti-Kansas

Man upset with sign in Oregon

TOPEKA (AP) — A trip to a Subway sandwich store in Oregon left one Kansas resident with a case of indigestion.

It wasn't the food, it was the sign Joe Davis of Topeka saw on Oct. 2 when he was paying for his order at the Subway in Reedsport, Ore.

The sign, which was promoting a new salmon sandwich, included the line "Another reason you're lucky not to live in Kansas."

"I was a little offended," Davis said.

The sign appeared to be professionally produced and carried the Subway logo, Davis said.

After returning to Topeka, he e-mailed Subway to ask for an explanation.

"I asked them simple questions, like, 'Do you have more than one

reason that people are lucky not to live in Kansas?' That opened a Pandora's box for me," he said.

"I said, 'Why did you separate us out? And why would you do that when you have several of your restaurants in our state?'"

Davis said he never got a response from Subway.

Subway spokesman Kevin Kane said the sign apparently wasn't produced by the corporation's national advertising firm but may have been created by a regional company. Subway offered the salmon sandwich for a limited time in Midwest and Northwest states, but not Kansas, he said.

"We're going to look into it," he said. "Sometimes, when you put something like that together, you try to get clever, but nothing we do

should be offensive. If it offended anybody, I apologize."

It's the second time this year a national chain has drawn fire from Topeka.

In September, a birthday card produced by Hallmark upset Topeka officials.

The cartoon-style card was labeled "CSI: Topeka" and showed a crime scene investigator suggesting that a corpse had been "bored to death."

In response, Topeka Mayor Bill Buntin said the card probably had been drawn by "somebody from West Virginia who hasn't been here."

That remark prompted 125 angry e-mails to Buntin, most of them from West Virginians who accused him of disparaging their state.

Troops enjoy Thanksgiving feast

QAIM, Iraq (AP) — Cpl. Brian Zwart set out his turkey, stuffing, corn and mashed potatoes on a makeshift picnic table — the hood of a Humvee — before going out to patrol the Syrian border Thursday to watch for foreign militants sneaking in to join Iraq's insurgency.

"Serving my country is important but losing friends makes me more thankful for what I have and for what I used to take for granted,"

the 20-year-old Marine from Fruitport, Mich., said as American fighting men and women celebrated a third Thanksgiving in Iraq.

U.S. troops around the world marked the holiday in a variety of ways, serving a traditional turkey meal to Serb schoolchildren in Kosovo, dining on food ladled out by senior officers in Afghanistan and staging a parade of makeshift floats in Kyrgyzstan.

For many of the 140,000 U.S. sol-

diers, sailors, airmen and Marines in Iraq, Thanksgiving Day was another work day — albeit with special holiday meals. Troops in Baghdad and elsewhere turned out for three-mile fun runs called "Turkey Trots" before resuming security patrols and other duties.

"We feel like we're protecting our friends, family and loved ones back home," said Lt. Col. Guy Glad, a military chaplain from Colorado Springs, Colo.

The holidays are here!



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Mary Ann Downing, executive director of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce put the finishing touches on one of the many stuffed animals adorning Santa City this year. Children around the area will get an early chance to tell Santa Claus what they want now that Santa City has opened. The hours for Santa City today were from 1 to 5 p.m., but will continue to stay open on Saturday and Sunday, also from 1 to 5 p.m.