



COLBY FREE PRESS

Parade sees 46 entries

By **Patty Decker**
Free Press Editor

Bitter cold temperatures didn't stop participants or spectators from attending this year's Christmas Light Parade, Sunday, in Colby.

"The parade went well," said Mary Ann Downing, director of the Thomas County/Colby Chamber of Commerce.

With a total of 46 entries, it was the largest parade in its eight-year history and also the coldest, she said.

"Last year, we had 35 entries," she said, "and Mayor Warren Hixson commented to me that if a prize could have been awarded for the coldest parade on record — we would have won."

Downing thanks judges, Hixson, Chamber board President Charles Schwanke, and *Colby Free Press* Publisher John Van Nostrand, for their help in choosing the first and second place winners.

Parade entries could fall in one of five categories; best lit, organizational, business, youth and religious.

Results saw Martin Tractor in first and Colby Ag in second for best lit. Colby High School's dance team took first place and the Abilene Hustlers were second in the organizational category.

Bickner Electric and First National Bank took first and second respectively in the business category. The Plumisto Family finished first and Colby Girl Scouts second in the youth division.

The Colby United Methodist Church placed first in religious theme with Crusade for Christ taking second place.

In addition to the winners, others involved included the Colby National Guard with presentation of colors.

Tubbs and Sons Ford Sales drove Santa and Mrs. Claus with the Thomas County Emergency Medical Services and Colby Fire Department close behind. The parade lineup continued with Tumbleweed Tumblers (Ashlee Haines), S & T Communications and Horlacher Jewelers driving a large diamond.

A lawnmower with a gingerbread house was from Greg and Emily Griffin and CW Cheney. MC Auto entered a lighted Durango. The Girl Scouts walked and formed a train. Unicel dis-



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Santa and Mrs. Claus waved at everyone who turned out for the eighth annual Christmas light parade in downtown Colby Sunday.

Spectators braved the cold to see the ushering in of the holiday season.

played a large, inflated cellular phone. First National Bank made a shopping cart float. Dale Deaver was in his 1941 Chevy pickup and Dougherty Implement had a lighted baler.

McBee's Motor Company, Infinia of Colby and Citizens Medical Center and Prairie Senior Living Complex had entries.

A sleigh with reindeer was from Motortown. James Elling and the Plumisto grandchildren in a manger scene were also featured.

Colby Glass, Pasttimes, United Methodist Church and Tina Harris Physical Therapy offered winter wonderlands, live nativity scene and more.

"It's OK to Say No Way," was the message from the Thomas County Interagency Coalition. Martin Tractor, Southwind Plaza, Taylor Motors and Abilene Hustlers offered candy and other items.

Famous Footwear, Bickner Electric, Crusade for Christ, TNT Auction, Lang Diesel, Colby Ag Center, Colby High School Dance Team, Thomas County Rodeo Royalty and Princess Dana Wilson had many unique ideas for their floats, tractors and vehicles.

Colby Medical and Surgical Center, Sears, Northwest Technical College, Three-Wheelers, Nathan and Casey Quagliano and motorcycle riders braved the cold to take



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

A Caterpillar tractor from Martin Tractor in Colby was decked out with Christmas lights for the annual Christmas parade. The tractor was one of the parade winners.

part in the event.

Downing thanks Randy Jones, police chief, and the department for their assistance; Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Committee for use of their stage and to Bob Mc-Lemore; Ryan Sturdy for use of the sound system from Colby Commu-

nity Building; and Colby College's baseball coach, Ryan Carter, and four players — Mike O'Dwyer, Ron Pietras, Gary Harley and Russell West for assisting in the parade lineup.

Others included Pat Sloan for use of Homeland Real Estate's office;

Leilani and Chuck Thomas for serving hot cider and the other groups serving refreshments.

"Thank you to all the participants and spectators to make this 8th annual parade a success. Remember to Shop Colby First, Shop Colby Last," she said.

County appoints nurse

By **Tisha Cox**
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Health Department has a new administrator.

County commissioners appointed Juanita Gatz to the position, effective today, at their meeting today. The group approved the appointment in open session after a 30-minute executive session to discuss personnel matters at the health department.

Gatz replaces Juanita Dewey, whose resignation the commissioners accepted at their meeting Wednesday.

Chairman Ron Evans said they are "thrilled" to have Gatz as the new administrator.

"We're really happy that she applied for the job," he said, adding she is well-qualified for the position and knows all of the people in the medical community in Colby and Thomas County.

Commissioners also received a report on the county road department's activities for November.

The department has been busy stockpiling sand and doing routine maintenance and dealing with the first snowstorm of the season.

Another item discussed was the 2006 holidays, time sheets and accounts payable.

Evans said they'll talk more about setting the county's holidays at the first meeting in January.

He also wanted to know why bills can't be turned in after Dec. 18. County Clerk Shelly Harms and deputy clerk Kristy Rubio explained since it is the end of the year, they need to get everything processed early because of bookkeeping and it's also a time issue because of the holidays.

Rubio said they need to get everything in early so County Treasurer Donita Applebury's books are correct. They also talked about a Web site for the county. It's a matter that's been discussed before, but the cost to create a site and maintain it could be well over \$4,500 a year.

The commissioners also set their meetings for January. Their first meeting will be on Jan. 3 instead of Jan. 2. because the courthouse will be closed for the New Year holiday. Other meeting dates for the month will be Jan. 9, 16 and 31.



J. Gatz

City Council considers budget amendment on Tuesday

By **Patty Decker**
Free Press Editor

Colby City Council will consider a budget amendment and set a public hearing date, along with other agenda items, when it meets at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, in council chambers, 585 N. Franklin.

Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, said the council will need to consider amending the capital improvement budget by \$130,000 to cover additional cost on the

airport project. In addition, the electric budget will need amending of \$70,000 to cover the additional design fees for new building projects.

Should the council agree to the amendments, the next action will be a hearing date for public input.

Other agenda items include awarding bid for the demolition of Jay Epard's property at 440 W. Plum. According to Armstrong, the signed release from Epard has not been

returned to the city and unless received by Tuesday, bids will be opened at 2 p.m. that day.

As for the second property at 775 S. Lincoln Ave., Armstrong said the work is progressing well and may suggest allowing the family more time to complete the project on their own.

In another matter, the planning commission is working on the proposal of requiring sidewalks for all new developments.

Until this issue is settled, however, Armstrong said the commission would like to see the council go ahead and amend the code for existing sidewalk construction and adopt the sidewalk standards previously submitted.

The council will consider sewer improvements in the first phase of the east sewer construction project. Armstrong said the change order is for about \$8,000 and includes an additional manhole costing

\$3,300, along with epoxy lining for the manhole would be an additional \$3,566.

Armstrong will also provide updates on how the city crews handled the snowstorm last week and will remind council of bid openings for the remainder of the sewer project at 4 p.m., Thursday, in council chambers.

The meeting is open to the public and an agenda can be picked up at city hall or by calling 460-4410.

Secretary of State defends terrorism policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice turned the tables on European critics of tough U.S. tactics in the war on terror Monday, maintaining that intelligence gathered by the CIA has saved European lives.

Responding for the first time in detail to the outcry over reports of secret CIA-run prisons in European democracies, Rice said the United States "will use every lawful weapon to defeat these terrorists."

In remarks delivered as she got ready to leave on a trip to Europe, she steadfastly refused to answer the underlying question of whether the United States had CIA-operated secret prisons there.

"We cannot discuss information

that would compromise the success of intelligence, law enforcement, and military operations.

"We expect other nations share this view," Rice said in a statement at suburban Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

The secretary said that information gathered by U.S. intelligence agencies from a "very small number of extremely dangerous detainees," has helped prevent terrorist attacks and saved lives "in Europe as well as in the United States and other countries."

Reports of the existence of the secret prisons has caused a transatlantic uproar.

The European Union has asked the Bush administration about these

secret reports.

Britain sent a two-paragraph letter to Washington late last month embodying the request. That came after weeks of increasing concern in Europe over reports that the CIA has detained and interrogated terrorism prisoners in Soviet-era compounds in Eastern Europe.

Rice said the United States does not permit or tolerate torture under any circumstances. "The United States does not use the air space or airport of any country for the purpose of transporting a detainee when we believe he or she will be tortured," she said.

"With respect to detainees, the United States government complies with its laws, its Constitution and its

treaty obligations," she added.

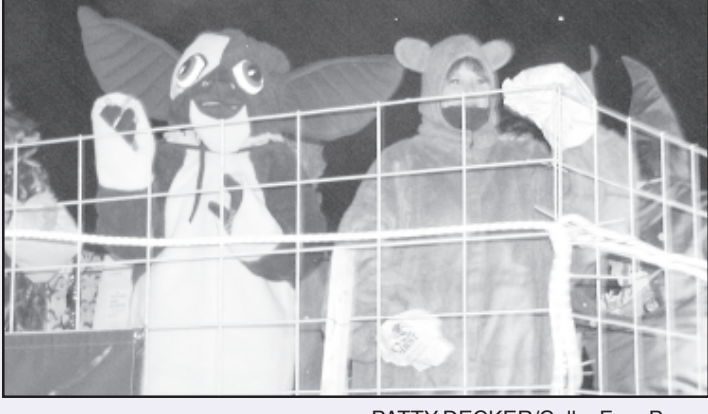
"It is the policy of the United States that this questioning is to be conducted... without torture," Rice said.

"The United States has fully respected the sovereignty of other countries that have cooperated in these matters," the secretary said. "The United States is a country of laws."

"My colleagues and I have been sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. ... The United States must protect its citizens."

"So now before the next attack," Rice said, "we should all face the hard choices that democratic governments face."

Cold Colby



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

First National Bank of Colby took second place in the business category at the annual Christmas light parade Sunday. See page 5 for more photos.