



COLBY FREE PRESS

County looks at road costs

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners are looking at ways to re-coup the cost of road work.

Clair Schrock, county road supervisor, and Jerol DeBoer of Penco Engineering talked about the matter with commissioners Monday.

Through a Force Account Project, the county could be reimbursed by the state up to 80 percent on certain projects.

"It takes a while to get through the KDOT process," DeBoer said.

Schrock said a possibility would be removing a couple of miles north of Levant off the county's five-year road plan and adding County Road 35 instead.

County Road 35 runs east-west through southern Thomas County and into Gove County. In recent months, trucks hauling loads to the ethanol plant at Campus have been using the road, causing damage and dust.

At an October commissioner meeting, residents who live along County Road 35 voiced their concerns about traffic and conditions, saying the road lacks a crown, and

is lower than the ditches on either side. Commissioner Paul Steel said the project is too big for the county to do on its own.

For now, Schrock said, his department work the shoulders on the road, elevate it and put down gravel.

"However, it would be a temporary fix," Schrock said.

If added to the five-year plan, all 19 miles of the road would be elevated.

Commissioners also discussed the amount of millings the state is willing to trade to the county if the county takes over maintenance on a section of road in Brewster.

The state would trade 38,000 tons of millings if the county agrees to take responsibility for a mile and a half of Kansas Highway 184 from Interstate 70 to the south edge of Brewster.

"That's a good trade," said chairman Ron Evans.

DeBoer said if they do agree to take Highway 184, the county should ask for the road be up to standard. Schrock said if the road is put on the plan, they could get money back. He will put together figures on the project and bring them to the commissioners at future meeting.

Trustees increase spending limits

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

How much money Colby Community College President Dr. Lynn Kreider can spend has been changed.

The college board of trustees approved the change at its meeting Monday. Dr. Lynn Kreider will now be able to authorize purchases up to \$20,000 without the board's approval. That amount was raised from \$10,000. The policy is reviewed periodically and changed when needed.

If a purchase is less than \$20,000, it doesn't have to be submitted for sealed bids, said college attorney Dave Starkey. If more than \$20,000, sealed bids have to be accepted.

A second motion approved will allow Kreider to sign contracts once approved by the board.

Daniel Erbert, dean of fiscal af-

fairs, gave a review of the audit. He said Cynthia Bieberle of Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball conducted the audit.

According to the audit, the college is in decent financial shape. Erbert said the school's finances are better this year than at the same time last year. However, there audit did produce a couple of recommendations. The college shouldn't be late in returning money back to the federal government.

Another recommendation was for the school to have a reserve of one year's operating budget, which would be about \$8 million.

"I think that's difficult to attain," Erbert said. The college also had a net cash increase of \$673,407 for 2006.

In other business, the board approved the resignation of Terrilyn Fleming, drama instructor, and assessed damages of \$375.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

ABOVE: The Tubbs and Sons Ford showroom won first place in the decorating contest business category. The business won \$75.

BELOW: The home of Bob and Donna Schwindt, 585 W. Sev-

enth St., was the first place winner in the Colby Promotions Committee annual Christmas decorating contest residential category. They received \$100 for first place.

Holiday winners named

The winners of the annual Colby Promotion Committee's Christmas decorating contest, which is part of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, were announced.

First place winners in the residential category were Bob and Donna Schwindt at 585 W. Seventh St. They received \$100 prize.

In second place, winners of \$75 went to Jim and Deb Micek, 1315 E. Eighth St.

Steve and Marilyn Friesen, 1860 W. Fifth St., received honorable mention.

First place in the business category was Tubbs and Sons Ford. They received \$75.

Second place and a prize of \$50 went to Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. Fourth St.

The Colby United Methodist Church, 950 S. Franklin, re-



ceived honorable mention. Nominations for the contest were taken

until Friday at Dillons and Wal-Mart.

The nominated homes and businesses were judged Saturday.

Congressman talks about changes in Washington, D.C.

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press

Kansas Rep. Jerry Moran (R) cracked a joke at Colby Rotary Tuesday that nobody answers congressman when asked who has made a difference in their lives.

All jokes aside, Moran is hoping the new Democrat controlled Congress will make some positive differences for Kansas and the country when it resumes after the holidays.

Moran spoke in Colby as part of his tour of his district.

"I can't yet predict how the new Congress will work," he said.

Democrats took control after the Nov. 7 mid-term elections.

"But if Nancy Pelosi is like a Kansas Democrat, and not like a California Democrat or Massachusetts Democrat, we'll be OK," he said.

After the elections, Pelosi, a California Democrat, was named speaker of the house, the first woman ever for the position. But Moran said what is discussed proposed and approved is more important than who holds what position.

Moran touched on many different topics, but emphasized education, health care and items related to

Kansas.

Moran said the No Child Left Behind will be reviewed by Congress next year.

Approved by President Bush in 2002, the bill requires public schools to have their students at a specific level of competency over a determined amount of time. Moran said he was not in favor of the bill then because Kansas had its own program that emphasized student progress.

"It's all a false pretense," he said about the federal bill.

"It doesn't reflect reality. Kansas was already doing it, so why are we doing it again?"

According to Moran, No Child Left Behind puts too much emphasis on a classroom's progress, rather than individual students. Moran said classrooms have too many intangibles, like students with certain needs or immigrant students learning English.

Moran said No Child Left Behind implies people want to see schools fail to potentially create more attention for a voucher system.

Teachers may be under too much pressure to meet No Child Left Behind requirements Moran said.

"We have rural Kansas teachers teaching beyond their strengths," he

said. For example, Hugoton hired two teachers from the Philippines for math and science.

"We can't find teachers to teach the subjects required," Moran said.

Health care

Moran suggested creating efficiencies in the health care industry should lower health-care costs.

"No one has found the efficiencies in the paperwork for health care," he said.

Using his own parents as an example, Moran said his mother needed to provide several pages just so she could pick up her husband's prescription.

Moran also reminded people to consider how many people are needed to process all the insurance information during a typical visit to a doctor.

Moran said health care industries need to emphasize more preventive health care and screenings. Finding and treating symptoms early on costs less than when a disease is fully developed.

Moran said work must be done about the growing number of people without health insurance. He said Kansas has 11 community health care sites.

A doctor and a nurse practitioner provide services only to those with-



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Kansas Senator Jerry Moran, far right, shared a moment with people after the Colby Rotary meeting Tuesday.

Agriculture

The farm bill will be revised during 2007. Moran said the shift to Democrat leadership should not be detrimental knowing the importance of the bill. Included in the bill are crop subsidy payment plans. But with the growth in ethanol, producers are getting paid in other ways.

Moran said the increase in the production of ethanol is a benefit to corn producers, hence the recent increase price for corn. But not all

ethanol has to be derived from corn kernels. Moran said there are processes in some ethanol plants that use milo or even corn cobs to produce the fuel.

"If we are not farming in western Kansas, what are we going to do," he said.

The growth in ethanol is another step toward the government's plan toward 2025 to have 25 percent of the country's energy to be renewable.

"What a great day it will be when we tell Saudi Arabia we no longer need their oil," he said.

In a related matter, Moran said Sunflower Energy's proposed electric generation plant near Holcomb can benefit western Kansas. Under the proposal, the electricity would be sold to metro-Denver, Colo., utilities. The transmission lines to get the electricity to Denver could also be used by wind turbines in southwest Kansas.

Earlier this year, a proposed wind turbine project for Thomas County was turned down because of the lack of needed transmission lines.

Moran's first district includes about two-thirds of the state stretching from the Colorado border to portions of central and northern Kansas.