

For the Record

The following arrests or incidents have been provided by either the Thomas County Sheriff's office or the Colby Police Department. All suspects were booked into the county jail and are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Thomas County Jail is used by the towns of Colby and Oakley and Logan and Thomas counties.

Thomas County Sheriff's office

Sunday, Jan. 21

Disorderly conduct, property damage: Ramon Michel-Barajas, 39, of Tecalitlan, Mexico, was arrested by the Colby Police at 8:26 p.m. at the 24/7 Store on Range Avenue for criminal damage to property and disorderly conduct.

Monday, Jan. 22

Indecent solicitation: Nathan Dean Kriegh, 21, of Sharon Springs, was arrested at 4:45 p.m. at the Thomas County Law Enforcement Center for aggravated indecent solicitation of a child under 14, and released to Wallace

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club is holding a soup supper at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Build-

ing. A square dance will follow at 8 p.m.

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include approval of Jan. 11 meeting minutes; Thomas County extension agent report; bills and financial report; reports on the buildings and grounds, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising expenses and income; a discussion on the bluegrass festival contract; a drip irrigation system; committee for map of vendor sites; profit-loss report for the end of 2006 and the 2006 audit. The meeting is open to the public.

High Plains Mental Health Center is searching for families to help with its new program Homeward Bound. The program will serve children with emotional and behavioral problems and their families in crisis situations. Participating families will provide a home and daily needs for children.

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and higher education officials are facing a backlash after telling legislators that state universities need hundreds of millions of dollars to tackle a backlog in building repairs.

Some lawmakers simply aren't buying it.

"Why weren't they maintaining their buildings for the last two decades?" said Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, said Monday.

"What has happened to the monies we've been giving them to take care of their buildings?"

Sebelius has proposed a package designed to generate \$575 million for repairs on state university campuses over the next six years. More than half the money would come from issuing bonds, then using Kansas Turnpike tolls to pay them off.

But as generous as Sebelius' proposal seems, the Board of Regents contends the backlog of critical re-

pair projects is even larger and will grow more serious if legislators don't act.

"Right now, we have 55 acres of roofs that need to be replaced, 12 miles of steam lines and 1.1 million square feet of sidewalks and curbs," said Jon Wefald, Kansas State University's president. "Our buildings are falling apart."

The regents have been distributing pictures of decay and disrepair, and they have been noting when delaying a project has caused problems, such as last week, when human waste dripped from a leaky sewer pipe through ceiling tiles in a chemistry classroom at the University of Kansas.

Last year, the regents said their campuses had a backlog of \$727 million worth of projects.

After legislators questioned individual items, the regents trimmed \$64 million of less critical projects from its list, making it \$663 million.

But for some legislators, the regents still have a lot of list-shortening to do.

While the regents contend they need \$84 million a year to prevent the backlog of projects from growing, House Speaker Melvin Neufeld contends \$40 million is a more accurate figure.

"I think the package needs to be more of an actual needs-based

package, of what do we really need to do this year and next year?" said Neufeld, R-Ingalls.

Even some legislators who view the maintenance problems as serious, such as Sen. Jim Barone, D-Frontenac, question whether the universities have been diligent in keeping up with their problems.

As some lawmakers are quick to note, the Legislature in 1996 authorized \$156 million in bonds to help the universities catch up.

"The regents need to treat maintenance just like they do salaries and utilities and everything else. It is an ongoing business expense," said Barone, whose district includes Pittsburg State University.

"Apparently, the regents have not treated it that way for years."

But Wefald considers such criticism unfair. He said in recent years

Kansas State University has been receiving \$4 million in funds from the state dedicated to maintenance and diverting an additional \$9 million in operating funds. It actually needs \$28 million a year for repairs and maintenance, he said.

"Do you know how much money I have in my university reserves, for the whole university?"

Oh, about \$150,000," Wefald said. "That's not even one roof. That's all I've got. Yeah, we're broke."

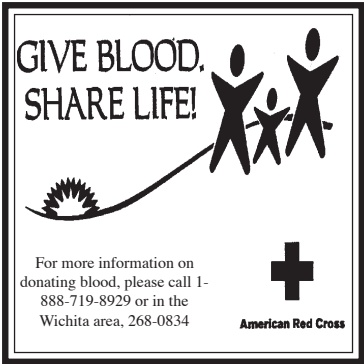
Barone suggested the regents could consider tapping some private moneys they've raised.

Neufeld and other legislative leaders said proposals to require university communities to levy special property taxes — just as counties with community colleges do — are under discussion.

But Huelskamp said the regents have hurt their credibility with his constituents because they're back for another big package after the "Crumbling Classrooms" initiative in 1996.

"Where did that money go?" he said.

"The expectation is, you take care of your buildings. We expect that of every state agency."



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