



# COLBY FREE PRESS

*Is a new facility in our future?*

## County begins researching jail needs

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The need for a new jail exists in Thomas County. Whether that includes building a new jail or expanding existing facilities has yet to be seen.

Either way, that need could be solved sooner rather than later. Sheriff Mike Baughn said he is working on finding out what is needed.

"It's on the agenda but more long-term now," Baughn said. "We were waiting to see what happened with the college before we got serious. At some point we're going to have to address what we do need."

In the April general election, Colby Community College put on the ballot a question about building a new gymnasium. Property taxes would have increased to fund construction. However, it was defeated.

The jail and Law Enforcement center

were built in 1976.

The jail has a linear design — its cells are all in a row. Newer jails are built with a circular or pod design. All the cells are visible from a central control room.

The jail has nine beds, but up to 30 prisoners have been held at one time. Baughn said 15 to 18 inmates at any one time is not unusual. To accommodate extra prisoners, beds are put on the floor. The maximum capacity is 15 prisoners.

The jail is used to house people arrested by the sheriff's office and Colby Police Department. Gove and Logan counties sometimes send prisoners to Thomas County because they do not have jails.

"We're often at capacity," he said.

The county receives \$40 per day per prisoner from the other counties.

Baughn said the first step for a new jail is forming a criminal justice coordinating committee, which has begun. The follow-

ing step is doing a needs assessment.

"That's in the future," he said.

The committee will see if the county will need to expand the current facility, or build a new jail. The need exists.

Expanding the jail is an option, but space at the center is a concern. The other option is building a new jail, but cost is an issue. Baughn's recommendation is expanding

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## Town OKs liens

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Hoxie home and business owners had a lien placed on their property by city officials last week.

"There's a provision in the law to make sure property is cleaned up, like in Greensburg, so we retain a portion of the insurance proceeds until the property is cleaned up and then we'll release the money," City Attorney Ken Eland said.

Eland said an ordinance which went into effect June 21, allows Hoxie officials to temporarily hold 15 percent of the money an insurance company would pay a home or business owner should the property be destroyed.

According to the ordinance, the lien applies to property that sustains damage caused by "any fire, explosion, or wind storm" in excess of 75 percent of the face value of the policy.

Eland said after the ordinance was passed at the June 11 city commission meeting, the city was required to file a copy of it with Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Prager's office.

He said Prager's office will advise Kansas insurance companies Hoxie passed the ordinance and companies writing property insurance in Hoxie will need to comply.

Eland said should an insurance company fail to comply with the 15 percent lien the city can clean up property involved and assess the costs back to the property owner.

Should the ordinance be enforced, insurance companies are to send 15 percent of the proceeds to the city treasurer, Sandy Reitecheck, who will deposit the money in a special fund.

Any time the city receives money from an insurance company, Eland will have 20 days to investigate whether the city will instigate proceedings against a property owner.

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DIANN GERSTNER/Courtesy photo

## Training young sitters

**ABOVE:** Connie Walden, Thomas County Health Department, finished a demonstration of how to properly give a baby a bath during the babysitting clinic, which continued today. The two-day event offered young people the chance to learn about all aspects of babysitting including infant care, emergency procedures, fun activities and nutrition. A total of 29 youth attended the clinic with 26 girls and three boys.

**RIGHT:** One of the participants helped a youngster with her shoes while experiencing hands-on training with a group of young children at Fike Park.



MICHELLE MYERS/Colby Free Press

## College reviews roofs

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees are scheduled to meet at noon, Friday, in Thomas Hall to review bids on three roofs needing either repair or replacement.

The three buildings on campus include Ferguson Hall, the Garvey addition of the HF Davis Library and the Animal Science building, said Dan Erbert, vice-president of business affairs.

"Ferguson Hall is one of the original buildings on the campus," Erbert said, "and I am not sure how old that roof is."

After a recent inspection by the college's insurance company, which is through Colby's F&M Insurance Store, the decision was Ferguson Hall's roof needed replacing.

"The roof (at Ferguson) deteriorated to the point it needs so much repair that it's going to require a new roof," he said.

Regarding the section of the library roof and the Animal Science building, Erbert said both of those are insurance-related.

"Those roofs suffered from hail damage in previous years," he said.

Although the insurance company won't pay the total bill, Erbert said they will pay a partial amount."

In addition to the three roofs needing immediate attention, Erbert said the college is reviewing its plans for replacement and maintenance schedules on all of its buildings.

"We will be looking at a plan to evaluate roofs on a yearly basis," he said. "Because of age, all the roofs need varying kinds of attention."

Bids for the three roof projects were opened today, and Friday, the trustees will need be deciding on whether or not to accept or reject those bids.

All board meeting are open to the public.

## Governor stresses rural development

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius made the rounds in the nation's capitol on Wednesday, urging one congressional panel to consider a new approach to rural development and telling another about the importance of early childhood education.

Sebelius, a Democrat, told lawmakers that federal programs should allow communities to follow a long-term plan for growth instead making them compete for federal grants that offer a quick fix.

Many federal grant programs to spur job creation or training programs ignore the needs of the community as a whole, Sebelius told the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

The panel was hosting a forum on the challenges facing rural America, such as rising poverty, a decreasing reliance on farm work and health care needs.

Sebelius highlighted the Public

Square Process being used to help rebuild Greensburg, Kan., after

tornadoes devastated the city earlier this year. That approach brings together business, government, schools and health care providers, along with other community groups, to map out the community's goals.

"This then allows them to follow a long-term plan, rather than just applying for whatever grants and programs become available," Sebelius said.

Sebelius also criticized the "alphabet soup" of federal grant programs as having overly restrictive rules and a one-size-fits-all mentality. She praised Kansas' new Office of Rural Opportunity, which

helps communities better use federal assistance programs.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., who chairs the panel, said lawmakers should focus on "smart investments" in rural communities like direct single family loans, water and waste programs and distance learning.

Sebelius agreed that loans to help entrepreneurs bring new businesses other than farming to rural areas.

Later Wednesday, at a hearing of Congress' Joint Economic Committee, Sebelius discussed the importance of funding early childhood education programs to help get children ready for school and later success in life.

She testified in support of a bill sponsored by Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., that would provide federal funds to support pre-kindergarten in the states and does not cut into existing childhood development programs.



Sebelius

## A family affair

Left to right: Brandon, Susan, Blake and Bob McLemore serenaded the public with their trademark bluegrass music at Pickin' on the Plains that is coming up in July.



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