

## Update

Colby Elementary School kindergarten teacher Krysti Terrell, back, discussed the progress of one of her students to the child's parents Kevin Stoltz, left, and Lori Stoltz Monday evening. Parent/ teacher conferences continue Thursday form 2-7:45 p.m. at the grade school.

## Dispute plagues mental health centers in Kansas

tal health centers say they are struggling to stay open, as millions of federal dollars earmarked for Medicaid patient services have sat unpaid in state coffers for years while two government agencies quibble.

"We are having trouble making payroll and because of that, if we don't get paid, we are going to have to sell a building and cut services," said Greg Olson, chief executive officer of Sumner Mental Health Center in Wellington.

The sale of the building, which cares for long-term mental health patients, will cause the Sumner County facility to send more people to state hospitals, Olson said. His center is owed at least \$250,000 in back payments for its care of Medicaid patients, some dating back to 2003.

It is not alone. Every community mental health center in Kansas serving Medicaid patients has been affected by an ongoing dispute involving the so-called administrative claiming program.

The dispute is between the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services and the U.S. Services' regional Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services in Kansas City, Mo.

state, CMS spokeswoman Julie began in December 2002 and ended Brookhart said. It is the state's on July 1, when the state switched decision whether to make the pay- to a managed care system.

WICHITA (AP) — Kansas men- ments to the mental health centers, she said

"That depends on your perspective," countered Ray Dalton, SRS's deputy secretary for health care policy. "At this point, there is still a possibility they could take all that money back if we pay all the mental health centers."

In play are millions owed to community mental health centers in the state.

SRS already has received \$8 million of that money from the federal government. But it won't pay the mental health centers until it is assured by CMS audits that the state will not have overpayments to repay, Dalton said. The state is waiting for the process to be finalized before filing to CMS for an additional six fiscal quarters of claims payments, bringing the total owed Kansas mental health centers to roughly \$16 million.

"We are hoping it will be resolved in the next few weeks and we can make a payment," Dalton said, saying the CMS is now auditing three centers to check the state's

Although CMS is a federal agen-Department of Health and Human cy, the problem appears confined to Kansas mental health centers because of the way the state handles those particular payments. The CMS has paid the money to the administrative claiming program

## Thomas County Feeders honored

County Feeders will do whatever it takes to keep cattle healthy and get them to grade, even if it means more work. That focus earned the Colby, Kan., feeder the 2007 Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Progressive Partner of the Year award.

Manager Mike Hunter accepted Sept. 15, at the CAB annual conference in Savannah, Ga. Hunter and his crew put extra effort into everything from receiving and starting cattle to sorting and marketing.

"Cattle are never penned unless the bunk is full of hay, the tank is cleaned and mineral is out. The high-quality hay keeps their rumens working, providing a good source of protein until they take off on the ration," he says. "That gives calves a better chance at success from day one." Time to adjust is important. "To recuperate from the haul, cattle get at least 24 hours before we process them," Hunter says.

Special care and attention is part of this 18,000-head feedlot's strategy to supply cattle for the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Natural brand. Part of the Beef Marketing Group (BMG), a marketing cooperative of 14 feedyards in Kansas and Nebraska, Thomas County and four other BMG yards are dedicated to the production of natural beef as ears for implants and antibiotics. part of an agreement with Tyson Cattle foreman Mark Bird checks

WOOSTER, Ohio - Thomas ually identified and never receive records. Cattle hat pass the test get livelihood of the whole program." antibiotics, hormonal implants, ionophores or animal by-products. The CAB-licensed feedlot shoots for at least 80 percent USDA Choice and 35 percent CAB.

> "They're not just purchasing black calves. They're looking for Angus influence and cattle that have been set up to succeed in their system," says Paul Dykstra of CAB.

> The beef cattle specialist says Thomas County's move to both natural and a carcass-quality focus is uncommon among yards of its

> 'We're talking about a feedlot that feeds more than 15,000 head at a time. They sell all of them on a grid where they really need to hit a high-quality target to be profitable," Dykstra says. "That's a move away from conventional thinking."

> Thomas County's commitment to 100 percent natural production began in November 2005, leading to many changes for the yard. "The learning curve for the staff was probably fairly steep as they came to fully embrace all of the management challenges," says Dykstra. "They adhere to a zero-tolerance policy, using all kinds of quality control measures."

At processing, the crew palpates and enters all data. Cattle clerk To qualify, cattle must be individ- Rachel Smith double-checks all the

electronic identification (EID) and assignment to a home pen where they stay until harvest. That is, unless they get sick. Calves walking the tightrope between sickness and health find themselves in an observation pen where they get plenty of

JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

"We give them every chance we can before we stick that needle in them," he says. Cattle continuing in the natural program move up on a ration that nets 2.5 to 3 pounds of gain per day. Without ionophores, acidosis issues need to be monitored more closely.

good hay and extra attention.

'Allowing cattle to become acidotic runs the risk of creating respiratory problems or liver damage," Hunter says. "Both are detrimental to carcass quality." Months of cautious management culminate in sorting cattle for the BMG Tyson grid. "I consider that my responsibility," says Hunter, who spends two to three days a week evaluating market-ready cattle. "Sorting is the Annual sales top \$2.5 billion.

His visual appraisal led the feedyard to an overall record of 32.3 percent CAB and Prime for the 2006- 2007 award year. He's also reined in the share of yield grade 4s and 5s to 6.7 percent, —about half the industry average for high-quality cattle. After a couple of years of increased attention to all the details, Hunter reflects on the natural high at Thomas County Feeders.

"I don't know of another feedyard in the United States that has the capacity we do, that is 100 percent natural and black, and that's very exciting," Hunter says.

"When you go from feeding a high percentage of exotic cross cattle to feeding some of the best black Angus cattle in the country, it's a feeling of accomplishment."

CAB held its annual conference Sept. 13 to 15 in Savannah, Ga. More than 13,500 partners sell CAB brand products throughout the United States and internationally.

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### Westar will invest in wind farms; one between Leoti, Scott City

TOPEKA (AP) — Westar Energy chief executive officer. Inc. has agreed to develop three wind farms in Kansas, which would nearly double the amount of wind energy produced in the state.

If approved, the deal would cost more than \$500 million, with the plants producing 300 megawatts of energy by late next year, Westar said Monday. The 300 megawatts of energy is the equivalent of the electricity used by 88,000 homes.

And the Topeka-based company said it will seek another 200 megawatts of wind energy by the end of 2010.

The agreements depend upon the Kansas Corporation Commission approving a new rate structure for

Westar said the average residential customer would see bills increase about \$2 to \$2.50 per month, but said adding wind resources would lower energy costs

in the long run. The agreements call for Westar to own about half of the wind generators, at a cost of about \$282 million, and purchase energy under supply contracts for the other half.

The company's plans include construction of a 99-megawatt farm in Wichita County between Leoti and Scott City, the purchase of 96 megawatts from the Meridian Way Wind Farm near Concordia in Cloud County, and a proposed 100 megawatt wind farm near Medicine Lodge in Barber County.

Westar, the state's largest electric utility with about 673,000 customers, has asked for an expedited approval by the end of this year.

In a filing with the KCC, Westar said the wind farms - combined with the company's generating assets — would allow Westar to put off building another coal plant.

"If we can defer that as long as possible, we believe that will benefit our customers and our state," said Bill Moore, Westar's president and

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Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and other officials endorsed Westar's plan.

"This commitment from Westar will help us secure a clean energy future in Kansas," Sebelius said.

### **Public Notice**

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THOMAS COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of

Myrtle G. Carson, Deceased No. 07-PR-29

NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED

You are hereby notified that on September 27, 2007, a petition was filed in this Court by Security State Bank, Executor named in the "Last Will and Testament of Myrtle G. Carson. deceased, dated December 18, 1992, praying that the will filed with the Petition be admitted to probate and record; Petitioner be

appointed as executor without bond; and it

be granted Letters Testamentary.

You are required to file your written defenses thereto on or before October 25, 2007, at 10:00 AM, in the District Court, Thomas County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

All creditors are notified to exhibit their demands against the estate within the latter of four months from the date of first publication of notice under K.S.A. 59-2236 and amendments thereto, or if the identity of the creditor is known or reasonably ascertainable, 30 days after actual notice was given as provided by law, and if their demands are not thus exhibited, they shall be forever barred.

SECURITY STATE BANK,

John D. Gatz, #10808 Attorney at Law P. 0. Box 346 Colby, Kansas 67701 (785) 460-3383 Attorney for Petitioner

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