



8 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Council to review fire station

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor  
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Following the collapse of Colby Fire Station's roof in December 2006, the majority of its trucks and equipment have been housed in the National Guard Armory since January 2007, but this week the estimated cost and a design for a new fire station will be discussed at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, at the council meeting.

Architect Glen Strait and representatives from Gossen-Livingston Association provide drawings to the council, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

In addition, Fire Chief Bob McLemore will also have information

on fire station projects in other parts of Kansas and Nebraska.

Other agenda items include a request for restroom facilities at the soccer field west of the city baseball complex; awarding a bid for sewer manhole rehabilitation project and approving a proposal for street work in the vicinity of Court Avenue, Court Place and Court Terrace.

The council will also consider a recommendation from the Colby Municipal Airport Board to include land lease fees at the airport by 3 percent in 2008; purchasing car camera systems for five of its police vehicles and discussing the use of sewer cameras outside the corporate limits.

"At budget time," Armstrong said, "funds for a grass area to the north of the municipal swimming pool and to evaluate the existing structure were set aside."

With the swimming season over, she said, this would be the right time to talk about improvements at the facility prior to the next season.

All council meetings are open to



Armstrong

## Smooth ride



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Construction crews apply a seal to Interstate 70 near Colby's west exit on Friday. The work continued west to Levant.

## Colby man guilty on two counts: assault, disorderly

By Kevin Johnson

Colby Free Press

Disgruntled utility customer Marlin Stramel of Colby was found guilty of one count of assault and one count of disorderly conduct Thursday in the Municipal Court of Colby as the result of an incident that took place inside Colby City Hall on Wednesday, Aug. 22.

Stramel was sentenced to 30 days in jail and fines totaling \$340. However, the court ruled to suspend the sentence provided Stramel's fines are paid by Nov. 10.

Stramel, a 40-year-old self-employed farmer, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and assault after throwing coins at Colby City Hall employees over a dispute concerning Stramel's non-payment of an electrical bill.

According to Stramel, in an open letter to the *Colby Free Press* the "unannounced

**“He was an upset utility customer who paid part of his utility bill in pennies.”**

Police Detective Gary Shull,

and unexpected" shut down of power to his residence on Aug. 22, "caused considerable emotional distress and direct damages to (Stramel) economically."

"The surprise and unwarranted premature shut-off of my home residence indeed put at risk over \$35,000 invested in tuition and fees up to that point in time", Stramel stated in the letter.

Adding that "approximately eight to 12 hours of condensed footnotes, text, and reference documents needed to meet a looming deadline" were "put into jeop-

ardy" when the power was shut off to Stramel's residence, causing the loss of research work in Stramel's Microsoft Word documents.

This surprise shut down of power and the subsequent loss of "many hours of very labor intense research" stored on Stramel's personal computer, coaxed Stramel to "satisfactorily" seek a settlement with the city of Colby.

With a check for \$19.95 in hand, Stramel went to the city office to settle his debt and was met with what he described in the open

letter to the Colby Free Press as: "what is widely known in the business world as level 1, the "lowest level" of business interaction with their customers", snarls and "downcast faces", and the harsh realization that he would have to pay another 20 dollars before the city would turn his power back on.

Upset by what he deemed less than stellar customer service, and the city of Colby's "god-like authority" to "arbitrarily shut off my power as they saw fit", Stramel left the city office only to return approximately an hour later with two bags of pennies totaling \$107.52, asking that his check for \$19.95 be returned.

According to Stramel, he then scattered with "minimal force" approximately 20 to 30 cents across the counter top, at which point around "a dozen or so" of said coins "rolled sporadically over the counter top, spilling downward onto the adjoining table

level below," eventually resting at the feet of the billing clerks.

The penny pummeling was perpetrated to prove a point.

"If they wanted to give me the lowest level of customer service, I would gladly mirror back at them the same level in return," Stramel stated in the letter.

Stramel was arrested about five hours after the incident and booked into Thomas County Jail at 3:50 p.m. He was released at 4:17 p.m.

"He was an upset utility customer who paid part of his utility bill in pennies," said detective Gary Shull of the Colby Police Department at the time of the arrest.

"In the process he allegedly threw some of the pennies at the staff."

Stramel threw 20 dollars worth of pennies at Colby City employees, Shull said.

Stramel's fine, for those scoring at home, is 34,000 pennies.

## Veterans' Clinic opens today in Burlington, Colo.

The Community Outreach Veterans' Clinic in Burlington, Colo., located at 1177 Rose Ave., is ready to open today.

A brief program kicked-off the open house with presentation of the flags by the Burlington Veterans of Foreign Wars and the national anthem to be sung by Linda Schall.

Speakers included Burlington Mayor Kim Knox, Duane Hitchcock a Vietnam Veterans and past commander of the Burlington Veterans of Foreign Wars, City Administrator Bob Churchwell, Danyel Brenner, who staffs the Eastern Colorado office of U.S.

**“We have received around \$10,000 in donations from individuals in the area.”**

Bob Churchwell,  
speaker at the dedication

Sen. Wayne Allard; U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, state Sen. Greg Brophy; state Rep. Cory Gardner and Department of Veterans Affairs representatives Brian Mullen and Lynette Roff.

The drive for a community veterans' clinic began in 2004 with a

public forum held at the Goodland Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall where nearly 400 veterans and supporters gathered to urge the Denver Regional Veterans Affairs office to consider opening a clinic in the area.

The Denver Veterans Affairs

Office sent out a request for proposals in January, and in March said the sites had been narrowed down to Goodland, Burlington and Yuma, Colo.

Visits were made to the three sites in March, and Burlington was notified on April 30 their proposal had been accepted.

Burlington's proposal included charging no rent for the building as long as it is occupied by the veterans clinic, all utilities will be paid by the city for three years, as well as all maintenance and cleaning.

After three years, the contract will be re-written for a period of

seven years. It is assumed the veterans' clinic will begin to pay for utilities, maintenance and cleaning, but no rent will be charged.

Burlington has spent approximately \$200,000 on remodeling and expanding the building formerly known as the Medical Arts Building Churchwell said.

"We have received around \$10,000 in donations from individuals in the area," he said,

The building now has 2,040 square feet, plus adequate parking.

The clinic will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Officials have said there is a possibility that over 4,600 patients in this service area could utilize the clinic in Burlington.

The building was constructed in 1971 as a medical clinic for Dr. C.L. Ross.

Burlington purchased the building from the Ross family in 1990 for \$76,100. The community was involved in searching for new doctors at the time and needed a building such as the clinic to assist them with the search.

*Editor's note: Rol Hudler, publisher of The Burlington Record provided information for this story.*

## Briefly

### Heartland event planned

Mark Schultz will be the featured speaker Friday at Heartland Christian School's annual endowment banquet at the school, 1995 W. Fourth, in Colby. Raised in Colby, Schultz has established himself in the contemporary Christian music industry. "He will do some songs," said Jenny Niblock, a Heartland Christian School board member. "But he will tell more about his life, songs, moving to Nashville and being a Christian. He does not do this too often." Tickets are limited. The meal begins at 6:30 p.m. followed by Schultz's presentation. For ticket information, contact Heartland Christian School at 460-6419.

### Food drive Sunday

Colby Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Colby Sacred Heart's youth organization will be collecting food for

the Thomas County Genesis food bank from 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday. In the event of bad weather, the alternate date will be the same times but on Sunday, Oct. 28. Anyone wanting to support Genesis by donating canned goods or other non-perishable items are asked to leave items on their front porch for pickup.

### Massage clinic begins

Colby Community College's physical therapist assistant program is sponsoring a massage clinic Wednesday and again on Tuesday and Thursday, Oct. 23 and 25. The cost is minimal and proceeds help students with trips and other related expenses. Anyone wanting to take advantage of a reasonably priced massage, said Pat Erickson, physical therapist instructor and program director, can make an appointment for those dates and between the hours of 5 and 9 p.m. The last appointment time is 8:30 p.m., she said. For questions on cost or to

scheduled a massage, call 460-4797.

### Auction Saturday

The Sacred Heart Parish and School is sponsoring its 10th annual benefit auction "Let's Tailgate," Saturday, at the City Limits Convention Center. Officials are asking for donations of cash, service or items for the event. If interested, forms are available at Sacred Heart Church, 585 N. French Ave, Colby. For questions, call (785) 462-2179.

### Essay contest near

The Masonic Grand Lodge of Kansas is again sponsoring an essay contest for high school junior and senior class students. Now in its 48th consecutive contest year, this year's topic is: "Is there such a thing as global warming? Explain your rationale." More than \$12,000 will be awarded in prizes with first place receiving

\$4,000; second receiving \$3,000; third, \$2,000 and fourth, \$1,000. All junior and seniors in Kansas public schools are eligible to participate. Essays can be no longer than 500 words and should be mailed to: St. Thomas Lodge 306, P.O. Box 421, Colby, Kan. 67701. The deadline is on or before Nov. 1.

### Workshops to begin

Anna Seeber Shaw of Oberlin will be leading one of 12 basic drawing workshops at 1 p.m., Saturday at the Oberlin Covenant Church. This workshop, she said, will continue instruction in drawing in perspective. The workshops are sponsored by Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission and may some materials might need to be purchased.

A small fee will also be charged for the sessions. For questions, call Anna Shaw at (785) 475-7202 or Mary Henzel (785) 470-0218.