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County discusses road issues

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County commissioners on Monday decided to keep open a road that runs through ground farmed by one of them.

Commissioner Byron Sowers in July filed a petition asking the county to close part of County Road K which runs between Section 7-9-31 and 12-9-32, extending north and terminating at County Road L, which is a portion of County Road 31.

That road is located 9 miles south east of the intersection of U.S. Highway 83 and Highway 24. Sowers, in filing the petition, acted in the capacity of a taxpayer, not a commissioner.

The petition drew opposition from Thomas County taxpayer Lonnie Wilson. He told Commissioners Ken Christiansen and Paul Steele if they closed the road they would be setting a precedent that might shy oil, gas and wind developers away from Thomas County.

“Contrary to what the college president said, companies are surveying for wind farms in that area,” Wilson said.

Following a meeting last week in Oakley where experts in the field of wind energy met with residents and commissioners from 13 northwestern Kansas counties, Colby Community College President Lynn Kreider wrote a letter to the editor of the Colby Free Press saying Colby was not as supportive of development of alternative energy as it should be. Kreider said Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan. visited northwest Kansas and his talks, which included the topic of wind energy, were better received outside of Colby.

Sowers wanted the road closed

because it criss-crosses the south fork of the Solomon River and is S-shaped making fencing land near the road difficult.

He said the road is seldom used and only minimally maintained.

At the July 31 commission meeting, Loren Guill, a member of the Menlo Township, showed the commissioners an agreement drafted in 1954 between Menlo and North Randall Townships about the road’s upkeep. Guill said Menlo Township is not interested in maintaining the road. On Monday, he reiterated his earlier statement.

“Menlo Township has no interest in opening that road and it would cost a tremendous amount of money to open and maintain it,” Guill said.

Wilson said closing the road would be a “conflict of interest.” “You are giving him free land,” Wilson said.

Christiansen said he had given the measure a considerable amount of thought since July 31, and has talked with people from both sides of the issue.

“I’ve heard comments both ways,” he said.

Sowers asked Christiansen where he stood as far as his position as a taxpayer and that of commissioner.

“As a commissioner,” Christiansen told Sowers. “I think you should relive yourself from making a motion or voting on one.”

“Thank you Ken,” Sowers said.

Steele said he didn’t see any reason to keep the road open. He said if the road needed reopened, whatever board of commissioners was seated at the time could open it back up.

Steele made a motion to close the road, but it died for the lack of a second.



MICHELLE MYERS/Colby Free Press

Sunflowers are not only the state flower, but they are also one of the fall crops in the northwest Kansas area. As evidenced by this field near Mingo, it looks like a fair to good harvest is likely for farmers.

Fall harvest could begin soon

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Fall harvest is only weeks away and statistics are showing positive signs, according to the Thomas County Extension office.

Thomas County Extension Agent Clint Milliman said he is starting to get numbers about the upcoming corn, soybean and sunflower harvest and things are looking good.

“When harvest will start is a good question,” Milliman said.

“I’d say high moisture corn will be harvested starting about the same as last year, some

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When harvest will start is a good question.”

Clint Milliman,
Thomas County Extension agent

around here will be mid-September.

Everything else will start at the end of September or first of October.”

Milliman said a report he received listing corn crop percentages for both Thomas County and state-wide shows corn at

3 percent very poor, 9 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 41 percent good and 10 percent very good.

Percentages for the local and state soybean crop, according to Milliman, are 1 percent very poor, 4 percent poor, 27 percent fair, 51 percent good and 17 percent excellent.

The sunflower crop is running about the same, with 1 percent very poor, 6 percent poor, 23 percent fair, 62 percent good and 8 percent excellent.

Eric Sperber, manager of Cornerstone Ag in Colby, said train cars of wheat are being shipped out to free up space for the fall harvest.

He said recent rains have improved the outlook of things.

“The rain has improved the outlook for dryland corn and sorghum,” Spueber said. “Things are looking good.”

“For those whose corn was marginal, the rains have certainly improved things.”

Olympic hopeful competes

Former Colby Community College wrestler Daniel Cormier will face Michel Batista of Cuba in the Olympics Thursday.

“If he wins,” said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer, “he will face the winner of Luis Vivenes of Venezuela and Taimuraz Tigiev of Kazakhstan.

On Cormier’s side of the bracket is 2007 world silver medalist Saeid Abrahimi of Iran, who defeated Cormier at the World Championships last year. Also on his side of the bracket is former World

champion Georgi Gogshelidze of Georgia

“As the bronze medalist from last year, he is confident he can win the gold medal,” said Jackson. “His training has gone better than it ever has.

“He has made the weight, probably the last time he will ever be at 96 kg. We are ready for him to wrestle.”

Cormier, the team captain, is competing in his second Olympic games. He was fourth in the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece.

Cormier was a 2007 world bronze medalist. He has made every US World and Olympic team since 2003.

He is from Lafayette, La. and was a NJCAA national champion at Colby College and a NCAA runner-up for Oklahoma State.



Cormier

Fixing streets

Crew members of Smoky Hills LLC Heavy Contractors of Salina poured concrete Tuesday morning as part of a \$1 million dollar street project in downtown Hoxie. The street, Highway K-23 runs north and south through Hoxie and serves as Main Street which is lined on both sides by the town’s main business district. Of the project, the state will pay for \$700,000 of it and the city pays \$300,116. One of the Smoky Hills foreman said similar projects have been completed by the company in Goodland at the airport and at the rest area west of Colby.



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Briefly

Square dance Saturday

A square dance is planned from 8 to 10 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St.

For questions, call Elaine Hurr, member of the Golden Buckle Square Dance Club, 460-2895.

Boosters plan event

The Colby Music Boosters will have a potluck at noon Saturday in Fike Park. The event is open to everyone. Those attending are asked to bring a side dish, table service and lawn chairs.

Drinks will be provided, said Elaine Bremenkamp, co-coordinator.

Church offers supplies

Colby Wesleyan Church is offering free school supplies for Colby students. “We are doing this as a way to show God’s Love to the Colby community,” said Gene Rothfuss, pastor. Supplies may be picked up at the church, 320 W. Pine, today through Thursday. To arrange a time, call 462-8391.

Group offered well testing

The Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group in Colby does testing on private wells. For questions or to make an appointment, call (785) 462-8636 or stop by the office, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 4, Colby. Residents can also call the Thomas County Health Department, 460-4596 to set up an appointment.

Pet adoption available

Colby Animal Clinic has animals ready for adoption. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Gaither video Sunday

The Colby Berean Church, 1000 S. Franklin Ave., is hosting a Gaither video concert at 6 p.m. Sunday. Organizers are inviting everyone to attend this free concert. “Come and enjoy,” a spokesperson said. The event will be shown on a big screen television with refreshments available.

Artist to exhibit work

Colby artist Bev Kern will exhibit her paintings

throughout the month of August at the Prairie Museum of Art and History, 1905 S. Franklin Ave. in Colby.

Senior center plans event

The Colby Senior Center will hold August birthday celebrations at 11 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 27 at the center.

Homerun Derby planned

The Colby Recreation Department is hosting a Homerun Derby during the men’s and co-ed softball tournaments for all league participants. Participants must provide their own pitcher, shagger, and ASA approved balls. A minimal competition fee is required. First place winners for each division will receive cash pot from entry fees. To register, call 460-4440.

