



12 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## McCain chooses running mate

**By Liz Sidoti**  
*Associated Press Writer*  
DENVER — John McCain tapped little-known Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin to be his vice presidential running mate on Friday in a startling selection on the eve of the Republican National Convention.

Two senior campaign officials disclosed McCain's decision a few hours before the Republican presidential nominee-to-be and

his newly minted running mate appeared at a rally in swing state Ohio.

Palin, a self-styled hockey mom and political reformer, has been governor of her state less than two years.

Her selection shocked many Republican officials.

In making his pick, McCain passed over several more prominent prospects who had figured in speculation for months —

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, among them.

At 44, Palin is a generation younger than Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware, who is Barack Obama's running mate on the Democratic ticket.

She is three years Obama's junior, as well — and McCain has made much in recent weeks of

Obama's relative lack of experience in foreign policy and defense matters.

Palin flew overnight to an airport in Ohio near Dayton, and even as she awaited her introduction, some aides said they had believed she was at home in Alaska.

A former mayor of Wasilla, she became governor of her state in December 2006 after ousting an incumbent governor of her

own party in a primary, then dispatching a former governor in the general election.

More recently, she has come under the scrutiny of an investigation by the Republican-controlled legislature into the possibility that she ordered the dismissal of Alaska's public safety commissioner because he would not fire her former brother-in-law as a state trooper.



Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin

## Stores, offices closing Monday

Except for a few retail businesses, most offices and stores in Colby will be closed Monday for Labor Day.

The Thomas County courthouse and all its departments will reopen at 8 a.m. Tuesday, except that the county landfill, which will shut down Saturday, Sunday and Monday, reopening Tuesday at 9 a.m.

The Thomas County Emergency Medical Service and all law enforcement agencies will be on duty. Citizens Medical Center will close most offices, but the hospital will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. so families can visit patients and the emergency room will be open all weekend.

The City of Colby Public Works Department says sanitation trucks will not operate Saturday or Monday. Anyone who has trash collection those days will need to have tipper cans curbside by 8 a.m. Tuesday, said Director Chris Bieker.

All schools in Colby and surrounding areas will close Monday, but reopen Tuesday. Colby Community College offices and classrooms will observe the holiday.

The Colby Free Press office will not publish Monday and offices will be closed. The next publication is Wednesday, Sept. 3.

Some businesses that will be open include Dillons, Village Inn, Oasis Travel Center, Bosselman's and other eating establishments.

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers, says the U.S. Department of Labor. The first Labor Day was celebrated Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1882, in New York, and by 1884, the federal government declared the first Monday in September as a national holiday.

## Make way for wide load!



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press



Colby and Thomas County law enforcement officers guided a semi-trailer rig maneuvering through the city between 11 and 11:30 a.m. Thursday. The truck was carrying a piece of equipment north on K-25. City crews had to unhook power lines to allow the truck to pass across the railroad tracks.

## Traffic stop yields meth

**By Jan Katz Ackerman**  
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A traffic stop in Colby last Friday ended with more than 7 pounds of methamphetamine taken off the streets by Thomas County sheriff's officers and two people in jail.

Undersheriff Allen Marcum said a deputy noticed a car making an unsafe turn into the Oasis Travel Center.

"The deputy stopped the driver of the car, and while talking to him, asked for consent to search the car, and consent was given," Marcum said.

After searching the vehicle, the deputy arrested Tammy Jones, 45, and Joe Vega, 44, both of Liberal, on a traffic violation and drug charges.

Sheriff Mike Baughn said the deputy did what is called a walk-and-talk, where officers talk to potential suspects to gain information.

"In the process of the investigation of the traffic violation, the deputy had probable cause to ask to search the vehicle and found 7.8 pounds of methamphetamine," Baughn said.

The street value of the drug was estimated at \$356,000. Jones and Vega were being held in the Thomas County Jail.

## Investigation continues in power-line accident

**By Jan Katz Ackerman**  
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Officials of a power-line contractor working east of Colby aren't saying much about an accident Aug. 6 which killed one worker and injured two, but a federal agency says it's continuing its investigation.

Jerrel C. Bingesser, 23, Council Grove, was killed and two other employees of PAR Electrical Contractors Inc. of Kansas City, Mo.,

**“We are investigating the accident, but I have nothing to release at this time.”**

Judy Freeman,  
area director in Wichita

were burned in an accident about a mile east of town. The firm is replacing the power poles and transmission lines along U.S. 24.

Reba Reid, communications director with Quanta Services, the

Houston-based parent company of PAR, confirmed earlier this month that those injured in the electrical accident were a 42-year-old man from Rossville and a 51-year-old from Reading. At that time, Reid

said the cause of the accident was being investigated by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Calls to Reid on Wednesday were not returned.

Judy Freeman, area director for the federal agency in Wichita, said the investigation is not yet done.

"We are investigating the accident," Freeman said, "but I have nothing to release at this time."

Freeman said federal law gives her agency six months to complete the file on workplace accidents.

"If it is determined there was a violation of OSHA standards we'll issue a citation," Freeman said. "If there is no violations, the case will be closed."

She said once the investigation is done, the findings will become public. PAR says it is one of the largest outside electrical contracting companies in North America, with more than 2,500 employees. Quanta has 13,000 employees, with major offices in 40 states, and field and support offices in all 50 states and Canada.

**Thomas County  
4-H, Open Class  
results  
in today's edition**

## Briefly

### 1958 Class reunion planned

The Colby High School Class of 1958 is holding its 50th class reunion Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 2-5 in Branson, Mo., said Sandy Harper, one of the organizers. "If you were in the class, we would like to hear from you," she said. For questions, call 462-3759 or Norma Higerd, 462-7806.

### Memory Walk Sept. 20

The annual Alzheimer's Memory Walk and balloon release will be held Saturday, Sept. 20 at Fike Park in Colby. Anyone interested in walking should register at 10 a.m. (walk begins at 10:30 a.m.) If interested in sponsoring or forming a team, call Jody Metcalf, 462-3275

or Jada Tubbs, 460-9084. Money raised by walk participants goes toward advancing research into better treatments and a possible cure, organizers said.

### Two dogs found

Colby Animal Clinic has two dogs waiting for their owners to retrieve them, clinic officials said. One is a Jack Russell Terrier and the other is a mixed breed, which was found close to Levant. No other details were available on the Jack Russell. To identify, call 460-8621 or visit the clinic, 810 E. Fourth St. If the owners cannot be found, the dogs will be available for adoption.

### Fruit ready for pickup

The CYO fruit will be ready for pick up Thursday and Friday, Sept. 4-5, at the 4-H Building on the Thomas County fairgrounds. "CYO is asking every-

one who ordered fruit to pick it up on Thursday at the 4-H building from 5 to 9 p.m.," said Megan Augustine, one of the coordinators. For questions call her at 443-2599.

### Yearbooks are available

The Colby Middle School yearbooks have arrived, said Linda Haas, yearbook advisor and can be pick-up at the office. Extra copies are available. For questions, call Haas at 460-5200.

### Fundraiser tonight

The Colby High School Dance Team is holding a Potato Bar fundraiser at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Dennen Field prior to the high school football scrimmage. Baked potatoes and toppings, cookies and drinks will be featured for a free-will donation.

### New group forming

A new group for people ages 50 and over is forming called "More Fun Together." The group is open to widowers, divorcees, people never married, or anyone who is alone. The first meeting is a potluck at 5:30 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 13, at the First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. Call 462-6342.

### School board meeting set

The Colby School Board will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the board room of the administration building. Agenda items include reports from building principals, superintendent, fundraising activities in 2008-09, out-of-district requests, resignations, employment recommendations and supplemental contracts. All meetings are open to the public. For questions, call 460-5000.

