



8 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

50¢

Thursday

September 18, 2008  
Volume 119, Number 148  
Serving Thomas County since 1888

## County asked to help save crossings

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A railroad's threat to close 10 road crossings southeast of Colby has some Thomas County landowners worried, and one of them came to county commissioners Monday to ask for help.

A railroad spokesman, meanwhile, indicated that the signs would come down and the company would work with the county, with no immediate threat of closing any crossings.

"What I'm asking you guys," farmer Wayne Wilson told commissioners, "is to work with the railroad to see what can be done to keep crossings open."

He showed commissioners photos of signs he said have been placed at 10 crossings on the Union Pacific branch between Colby and Oakley.

"If we lose the crossings, I'm afraid they'll never be put back," he said.

The signs were posted Aug. 18, he said, adding that six of the 10 crossings are at public roads while the other four are private crossings. They say the crossings

will be closed, but give no time frame:

"Notice: This private crossing is subject to closure. Please call (816) 399-1703 if you believe you are legally entitled to this crossing, Union Pacific Railroad."

Wilson asked the commissioners to research ways to negotiate with the firm, one of the nation's largest rail carriers.

"That's why I came to you guys," he said.

"You want us to stand the legal bill?" Commissioner Paul Steele asked with a grin.

Wilson said he called the number listed

on the signs and spoke with Mike Benjamin, a Union Pacific spokesman. Reached Tuesday, Benjamin said he couldn't make any official comment on the signs.

"I'm not at liberty to talk to the press," he said. "I will tell you we are going to take down the signs and provide the county with more information."

Wilson said he wants the commissioners to talk to Union Pacific representatives and let them know he's willing to help maintain his crossing so he does not have a six-mile detour to some of his ground.

"If they want help maintaining (cross-

ings)," Wilson said, "I'm sure the townships will do what's needed to help out. I don't want to fight them; I want to approach this in a friendly way."

"I like that," Steele said.

The commissioner asked Road and Bridge Supervisor Clair Schrock to contact the railroad and report back.

The branch, which once ran east from Colby to Salina, today is used mostly to haul grain from Colby to terminal elevators in 100-car units. Trains run once a week or less.

## Auditor gives county ideas on its money

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
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Thomas County's auditors recommended several changes to strengthen financial controls, aiming to be sure taxpayers' money is being spent properly.

Brian Staats of Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball gave the audit report to county commissioners on Monday. He noted that a former public health administrator apparently breached county policy when she purchased \$1,250 worth of furniture for her department without commission approval.

"Basically, somebody circumvented the policy of the county," Staats said.

He said Lisa Molstad, who since has moved to Florida, in January bought nine chairs and two cabinets on a county credit card issued to her department. It was not until March, when she submitted bills for the charges, that County Clerk Shelly Harms learned about the purchase. County policy says purchases for more than \$350 must be approved in advance.

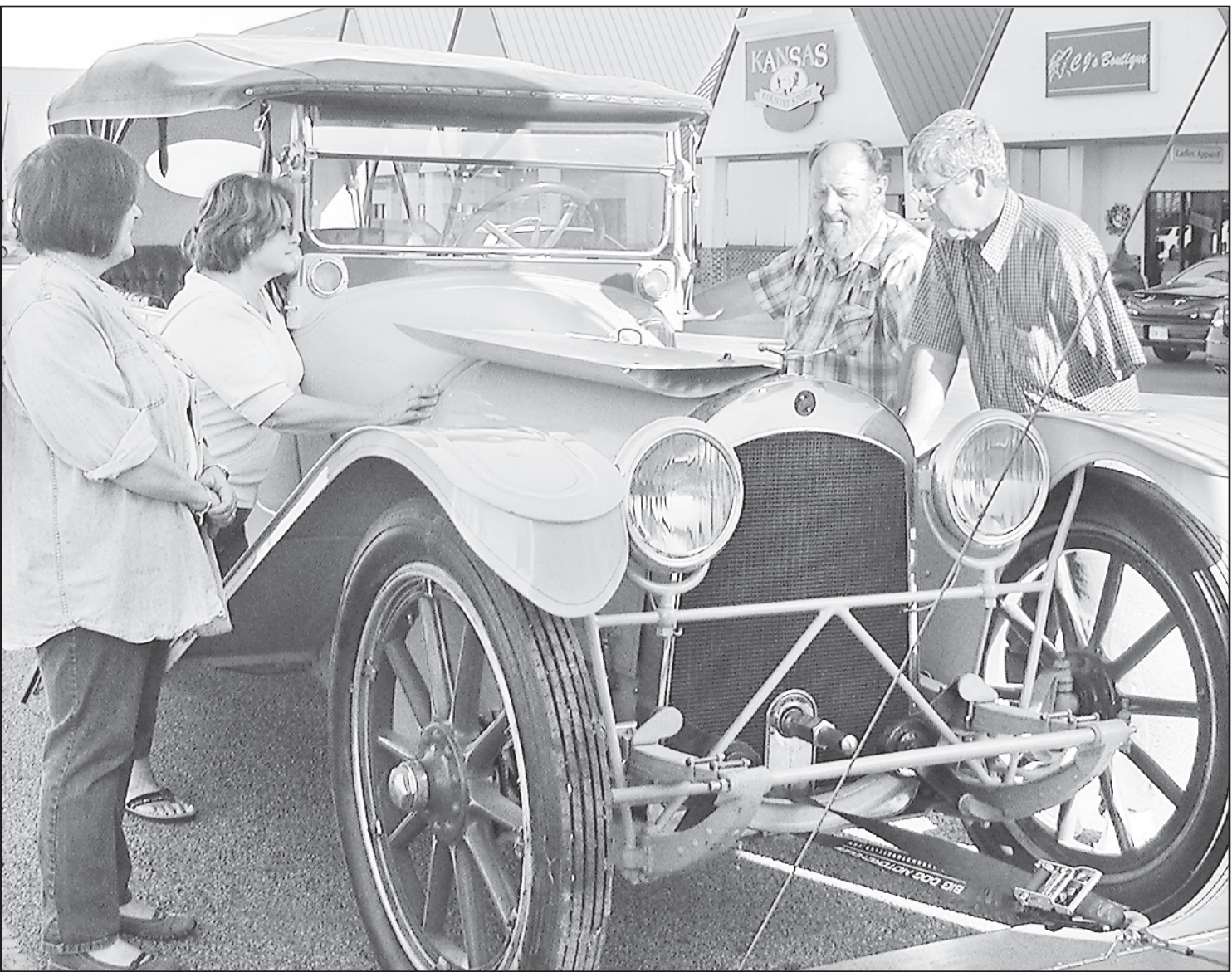
dle money need to have their duties defined and need to take a full week of vacation each year. That way, he said, other employees might notice any pattern of theft or diversion of county money.

"There is an absence of appropriate segregation of duties consistent with the appropriate (financial) control objectives of the county," Staats said. "We recommend that accounting personnel be required to take five consecutive days of vacation."

"This policy is designed to allow other employees to perform different functions within their respective departments. When someone else fills in, errors or problems may arise that would not have been detected otherwise."

Staats also suggested that Applebury cross-train her employees, citing the case of an official in another county who had a stroke and was the only person who knew how to run the office.

"Overall, the county is relatively debt free compared to similar counties," Staats said. "The commissioners are only spending basically what you've raised."



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Members of the Friends of the Norwalk Foundation from Martinsburg, W.Va., stopped in Colby on their way home with a \$300,000 canary-yellow 1914 Norwalk Underslung Six from Longmont, Colo. The car reportedly is the last of 75 manu-

factured, and one of 25 which had an electric shift. On the retrieval crew were Secretary Dianna Gantt (left), President Freddy Gantt (right side of car) and Shelly and Vic McFillan.

## K-State grad joins paper's staff as sports reporter

Sports fans will be seeing a new face in the stands this fall, as the *Colby Free Press* has hired Andy Heintz to cover high school and college sports.

Heintz, 24, graduated from Kansas State University last December with a bachelor's degree in print journalism.

While attending K-State, he wrote articles for the school's magazine and daily newspaper, "The Collegian." As a reporter, he covered several sports for the school newspaper at Shawnee Mission East High School, including basketball, tennis, gymnastics and track and field, and wrote a sports column.

He arrives at the paper as Editor

Patty Decker is leaving.

"We're glad to have Andy on board," said Publisher Steve Haynes. "Our sports pages have suffered from lack of attention the last couple of months."

"We expect coverage to improve greatly, though while the paper is without a news reporter, Andy will have to spend some time on that side as well. We know Colby sports is a priority to readers."

Heintz describes himself as an avid fan of Kansas State's football and basketball programs. He admits to still being ecstatic about the Wildcat basketball team's 84-75 upset victory over the Kansas Jayhawks last season, which snapped a 24-year home-court

losing streak against KU. He never gets tired of reminiscing about the 2003 football team's 35-7 victory over the then undefeated Oklahoma Sooners in the Big 12 Championship.

Heintz grew up in the Kansas City suburb of Prairie Village, the younger of two children. Most of his youth was spent playing sports and fishing streams and ponds in the Kansas City area. He said he enjoys playing several sports, including basketball, football, table tennis, racket ball, ultimate Frisbee, bowling, softball, baseball and rugby. During his high school years, he played football and basketball and participated in track and field.

While he enjoys many sports, Heintz said basketball is his favorite. He attributes this to the hours he spent watching Michael Jordan on television as a child. He is also passionate about fishing. He blames this on genetics, since his father and brother are both fishing fanatics.

When he isn't playing sports or watching sports on television, Heintz spends most of his time reading and listening to music. His favorite musical artists are James Taylor and Bob Dylan. Although he has spent the majority of his life in suburbia, Heintz said he is ready for a change in scenery and is excited about living in a new area.

Range Ave., Suite 14, Colby, Kan. 67701, noting in the memo section that the check is for the Forever '82 Fund. For information, call 460-9152 or e-mail tccf@st-tel.net.



Andy Heintz

### Free barbecue Saturday

To celebrate September as Recovery Month, the Regional Prevention Center and Central Kansas Foundation are sponsoring a "Band and Barbecue" from 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday at Fike Park downtown. Everyone is invited to enjoy free hot dogs, hamburgers, potato chips and drinks

### College program Oct. 13

Colby Community College will offer a Certified Nurse Aide class beginning Oct. 13 in Colby. Debbie Schwanke, public information officer, said classes will be in the Health Science Building, room 809 and clinicals at the Prairie Senior Living Complex, 1625 S. Franklin. The class, to be taught by Shelly Rodenbeck and Deanna Schmidtberger, both registered nurses, is worth five college credits. For costs, registration and a complete schedule, call Mary Herbel at (785) 460-5427

### Hunter course set for October

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Colby Recreation Department plan to offer a hunter education class

at the Colby Community Building from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 7, and Thursday, Oct. 9, and 8:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 11. The range session will be Saturday afternoon. Students must be 11 by Oct. 11 and must attend all sessions to receive a Hunter Education card, needed to buy a hunting license.

"This is the only scheduled class in Colby this year," said Benny Young, with Wildlife and Parks. Pre-registration is at the Pirates Den, 1115 S. Franklin Ave., Colby. For questions, call the store at (785) 460-6631, Young at (785) 462-7602, or Matt Bain at (785) 462 3367.

### County van won't run Friday

The Thomas County Community Van will be out of service Friday, said Kristi Mann, assistant deputy county clerk.

### Landfill going to winter hours

The Thomas County Landfill and the county household hazardous waste collection site will begin fall and winter hours Monday, said Kristi Mann, assistant deputy county clerk. The hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

### Free watermelon feed Friday

Colby Care Center, 105 E. College, plans a free watermelon feed at 4 p.m. Friday to celebrate the refurbishing of its flag pole, including a flag-raising ceremony by Colby Cub Scouts. A resident will sing the National Anthem as Scouts raise the flag.

### 'Coffee with Coaches' returns

Back by popular demand, said Coach Chris Gardner, "Coffee with the Coaches," begins at 9 a.m. every Saturday during the Colby High football season at the Sports Shoppe, 400 N. Franklin Ave. For questions, call 460-5000.

### Class of '82 collecting fund

The Forever '82 Fund, a new service of the Thomas County Community Foundation, will be used for community betterment in the name of members of the Colby High Class of 1982. The class hopes to accumulate enough money to have a permanent fund so it can have an impact each year forever. Fallen classmates so far include Brenda Drullinger, Joyce Hatfield, Kelly Ellis, David Tangeman, Marty Crampton and Linda (Stoecklein) Holzhueter. Send tax-deductible gifts to the foundation at 350 S.

Range Ave., Suite 14, Colby, Kan. 67701, noting in the memo section that the check is for the Forever '82 Fund. For information, call 460-9152 or e-mail tccf@st-tel.net.

### Program should help parents

Smart Start Northwest Kansas will offer a program called "Nurturing Families" for parents and children beginning Tuesday. The program emphasizes the importance of people learning new parenting skills and all family members learning new and healthier ways to live together, the agency says. The free eight-week program will include a meal, a training session and family interaction time. Contact Smart Start at 465-9103 for information or to register.

### Memory Walk set for Saturday

The annual Alzheimer's Memory Walk and balloon release will be Saturday at Fike Park. Anyone interested in walking should register at 10 a.m., and the walk begins at 10:30. If you want to sponsor or form a team, call Jody Metcalf, 462-3275, or Jada Tubbs, 460-9084. Money raised goes for research into better treatment and a possible cure, organizers said.

