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City to unveil Christmas decorations

Colby's new Christmas decorations will be on display at 10 a.m. next Wednesday at the Thomas County office building parking lot at 350 S. Range. Stop by to see the decorations and have some hot chocolate and cookies.

The new Christmas banners and iron snowflakes were made possible by donations to Project Decorate in '08.

"The Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, with the help of the Diplomats and the City of Colby, have been meeting the past several months," said

Chamber President Ted Hart, "and have developed a plan to revitalize the town's Christmas decorations. And we encourage everyone to come out and see a sample of the new decorations unveiled."

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong agreed.

"I am so excited about the new decorations to celebrate the holiday season in Colby," she said. "Through the generosity of our residents and businesses, we are going to have a beautiful entrance to the community.

"The City wants to thank Executive Director Holly Stephens and the Chamber for all their work on this project and we look forward to Celebrate '09, when we can retire more of our tired holiday decorations."

The City Public Works department will be hanging the decorations for this special sneak peek. Stephens said the Chamber invites everyone to stay after the unveiling for hot chocolate and cookies.

Donors include American Family Insurance, Rita Roe-Peters Agency, Cers-

ovsky Insurance, Chris Gerstner Family, Citizens Medical Center, the City of Colby, the Colby Police, Colby Ag Center, Colby Automotive/Carquest, Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau;

Colby Bowl and Fun Center, Colby Canvas, Colby Diplomats, Colby Wal-Mart Supercenter, Cornerstone Ag, Dave Jennings Memorial, Donelan Jewelry, Dr. Larry Washburn, Farm Bureau Financial Services, Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Farmers and Merchants Bank, Fotogirl Photography, H4 Investments,

Homeland Real Estate, Hairitage (Linda VanHorn), Made of Iron, Midwest Energy Community Grant Fund, Palace Drug Store, Peoples State Bank, Pi Gamma Club, Prairie Design Landscape and Irrigation, Sheila and Ken Frahm, Stephens Construction;

S&T Communications, the City of Colby, Police Special Law Enforcement Fund at the Thomas County Community Foundation, Thomas County Feeders, Unicel, VisionSource of Colby and Western Sprinkler.

City approves rules to cover wind systems

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz @ nwkansas.com

The Colby City Council changed city zoning regulations Tuesday to allow wind energy systems in all zoning classifications by special permit, giving residents and businesses an opportunity to "go green" with their power supply.

Small wind mill energy systems — no bigger than 100 kilowatts — will be permitted in zones where structures of any sort are allowed, the ordinance says.

A small wind energy system could include of a wind turbine, a tower and associated control or conversion electronics, with a rated capacity no more than 100 kilowatts and is intended to reduce on-site use of city-supplied power.

The wind system must be set back a minimum of 110 percent of the maximum height of the structure (including turbine blades) from any property on the site, and no guy wire anchor may extend closer than 10 feet to the property boundary.

The ordinance says the equipment is not to exceed 60 decibels of sound measured at the property line. People applying for a wind energy permit will have to notify all property owners within 200 feet. The notice shall contain the time and date of the public hearing before the Colby/Thomas County Metropolitan Area Planning Com-

mission and a detailed description of the wind system.

The planning commission will have 30 days to put together a report about the effect of the wind system on the "character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, public utility facilities, and other matters....". No wind turbine can be put up until the report of the commission has been filed, but if the customer has not received a report within 30 days, they may assume the commission has approved the application.

Wind turbines are not allowed to cause interference to microwave communications or radio and television transmission or reception in the area. All blades must be made of nonmetallic substances.

Owners will need liability insurance with a combined single limit of no less than \$2 million, with a certificate of insurance attached to the permit application. The insurance policy must contain a clause that it cannot be canceled, reduced, restricted or limited at unless the city clerk is given 10 days written notice.

Owners wind turbines must comply with any federal regulations, including any necessary approval from the Federal Aviation Administration for turbines close to an airport.

If a customer does not use his or her wind system for a year, it will have to be removed at the owner's expense.



Students sound off their talent

Music students from all three Colby schools came downtown Tuesday night to perform in the annual District Concert. On display were bands, choirs and groups from Colby High School, the middle school and the grade school. The clarinet section of the middle school band played a number (above), and a choir used the bleachers as risers for a number.

JASMINE STEWART
Colby Free Press



OPEC cuts production, but oil price tumbles

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — OPEC said at an emergency meeting today that it will slash oil production by 1.5 million barrels to stem the "dramatic collapse" of oil prices, but crude prices plunged 5 percent anyway as financial markets spiraled downward across the globe.

Demand for crude has evaporated and the supply levers held by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries appear to have little influence in the current situation.

Iran and Venezuela pushed for a cut of 2 million barrels a day, but there were concerns

among other OPEC members that a more severe production cut would exacerbate a deteriorating economic crisis and further destroy demand. OPEC officials, however, signaled they were prepared to slice deeper quickly if crude continues its freefall.

Candidates on the spot at free forum Monday

Are you undecided on who should be the next sheriff of Thomas County?

If so, you may want to attend the sheriff candidates forum at 7 p.m. Monday at the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College.

The forum has been planned by students of the college Criminal Justice Association.

"The forum was put together by students, and it will be run by students, except that Rich Epp

will be the forums moderator," said Tyler Anderson, president of the group.

Both incumbent Sheriff Mike Baughn, running as a write-in candidate, and Republican candidate Rod Taylor, who beat Baughn in the August primary, will attend. Both will have a chance to answer 20 questions put together by members of the association, Anderson said.

The free forum is open to the public.

Briefly

Still time to vote in advance

Next Friday is the last day for voters to apply for advance ballots to be mailed to them. Advance voting will continue until the day before the election. Noon, Monday, Nov. 3, is the last day to cast an advance ballot at the courthouse. All mailed ballots must be received by the county clerk by Tuesday, Nov. 4, to be counted. For information, call the county clerk's office at (785) 460-4500.

Kiwanis plans feed Saturday

The Colby Kiwanis Club will hold a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall, 220 N. Lake St. The cost of \$4 per person, with proceeds going to Christmas, youth and other community projects. Advance tickets are,



available from any Kiwanis member.

Club to hold dance Saturday

The Colby Golden Buckle Square Dance Club will hold a dance from 8 to 10 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building. Grab your gal, and come on down.

Center plans Halloween bash

The Colby Care Center at 105 E. College Drive plans a Halloween carnival from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday. There will be games, candy and a costume contest with prizes. Everyone is welcome.

Church auction is Saturday

Sacred Heart Catholic Church and School will hold its annual auction Saturday at City Limits Convention Center. Doors will open at 5 p.m.

for the silent auction. A live auction will start at 7:15 p.m. Call Kim Brier at the rectory, (785) 462-2179, for information.

Bingo Saturday in Rexford

The Rexford Royal Neighbors plan a fund-raising bingo party from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday at the Community Hall. Prizes will be given, cake and ice cream served and an offering taken for the museum.

Coffee with Coaches Saturday

"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. Come talk football with Coach Chris Gardner. For questions, call 460-5000.

Scouts out selling popcorn

Colby Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts are selling pop-

corn door-to-door until Sunday. Choose from microwave popcorn, popping kernels and tins filled with caramel, chocolate or cheese popcorn. Anyone who isn't contacted by a Scout should call Gary Schuette, pack leader, at 460-0003.

Learn how to burn grass safely

Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development plans a school on how to burn off Conservation Reserve grass from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday at the 4-H Building in Colby. For information, call the Thomas County Extension office at (785) 460-4582.

Meeting will explain benefits

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System plans a briefing for active and retired employees interested in understanding their benefits at 5:30 p.m. Monday at the Colby Community Building.