

# FREE PRESS

#### Wednesday

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## Former principal returns to lead high school

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press

A former Colby High School principal Rocky Robbins, whose contract was terminated on Dec. 1, said Rhonda Cropp, board clerk at Colby public schools. Robbins was put on leave with pay from Nov.

10 to Dec. 1.

Krebs is no stranger to the high school. aheintz@nwkansas.com He was the Eagles' principal from 1995 to 1999 and served as the school's assistant principal and activities director from has been named to lead the school until a 1993 to 1994, said Jo DeYoung, busipermanent replacement can be found for ness manager for Colby Public Schools. He left Colby to work at Tabor College, where had several jobs including director of student success initiatives.

Krebs also worked at Colby Community College, where he served as vice The hiring of Donald E. Krebs was president and dean of community servicunanimously approved at a special school es from 1971 to 1975, she said.

has worked for as an administrator or a senior season. teacher include Garden City Junior High School, Scott County Community High School, Plainville High School, Osawatomie High School, Garden City Community College, Marymount College, Kansas State University (graduate assistant getting comfortable at his new job. and assistant director of intramurals) and Tabor College.

DeYoung said Krebs has 40 years of education experience, starting in 1964. He was born in Scott County and attended K-State on an athletic scholarship,

Other educational institutions he lettering in football during his junior and

Krebs also is an insurance agent and a farmer. He has three sons, Andy, Matt and Daniel, and three daughters, Anna, Beth and Abi, and 10 grandchildren.

Krebs, who started Dec. 1, said he is

students and faculties, I knew it felt like being home again," he said. "We won't change much. The current executive policies and procedures are excellent."

"You can't ask for a better person to pal's job in March.

work with than (activities director) Larry Gabel. Why fix something that ain't broke?

Gabel, who also is assistant principal, was named acting principal after Robbins was removed.

Krebs said he thinks the school's job is to make sure the students are success-"It took a little while, but after meeting ful. He will serve as principal for the rest of the school year, Gabel said. DeYoung said the school district will begin sending out applications in January and they will start interviewing people for the princi-

## County keeps deputy

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press aheintz @nwkansas.com

A former Thomas County sheriff's deputy didn't stay unemployed. After being fired by Sheriff Mike Baughn on Nov. 13, Mark Finley was transferred to work for the county Emergency Management Department the same day. The county commissioners and Emergency Management Director Susan

He will be making \$13.58 an hour. County sheriff Mike Baughn said the firing was a personnel matter. Finley said Baughn told him to turn in the his dog, a 7 or 8-year-old Belgian shepherd, or malinois, he had

McMahan decided to hire Finley.

trained, to the kennel to be sold. However, the commissioners told Baughn the dog was county property and couldn't be sold without their permission. The dog was placed under Finley's care for 60 days.

Finley will be filling in for Mc-Mahan this month while she is on vacation, McMahan said. He will return to the sheriff's department as the undersheriff when Taylor begins his term on Jan. 12. The dog will also be returning to work.

McMahan said Finley will be helping her fill out end of the year reports. He will also attend training.

He will be working on a project for next year involving resource typing, she said. Resource typing, McMahan explained, is when public and private agencies with heavy equipment provide information about the equipment they have. If they are willing to provide the equipment during an emergency, then the emergency management director will draw up a memorandum of understanding, she said.

The next step is to match the equipment description with what the Federal Emergency Management calls that piece of equipment, McMahan said.

"It's going to be a time-consuming project and Mark is going to help me get started," she said, adding that Finley has been a tremendous help already.

"As a one-person department, it's good management to have someone else know how your department works and due dates of projects, " she said.'

This has been a good learning experience for him on why departments need to cross train and understand one another's duties, Finley said.





CYNTHIA HAYNES/Colby Free Press

## offers lap, presents

Santa Claus offered his lap to more than 80 children on Friday, his first day to visit Santa City in Fike Park. Youngsters got candy canes and stuffed animals after walking through a magical maze of trees and lights. After visiting the jolly old elf, youngsters and their parents could visit Mrs. Claus and enjoy Christmas cookies baked especially for the occasion.

## Nebraska may tax landowners for water bill

By Nate Jenkins

Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) \_ The Nebraska Supreme Court will soon settle whether additional property taxes can be imposed on landowners in the Republican River basin to help ensure Nebraska's compliance with a three-state water compact.

On Wednesday, Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning is scheduled to argue that a lower court was wrong to nix part of a state law that gave local irrigation boards in the heavily irrigated basin the ability to levy property

In May, Lancaster County District Judge Paul Merritt ruled that the property tax authority amounted to unconstitutional "special privileges" because it allowed just three of the state's Natural Resources Districts - all in the Republican basin — to set property taxes, and not other districts.

Merritt agreed with plaintiffs' that the state would ever again enter into a compact similar to the one with Kansas and Colorado that would allow other Natural Resources Districts to set property taxes.

The state argues that Merritt's ruling improperly relied on state- See "WATER," Page 3

ments made at the time the water law was being considered by the Legislature in 2007. Statements made during legislative proceedings, Bruning's office argues, don't predetermine actions that future legislative bodies take.

"A slippery slope toward unreliability begins when a court converts an opinion from a single senator, or a statement made during committee hearings, into a reliable forecast of the actions the current Legislature may take," Bruning's office wrote in court briefs.

Bruning's office goes on to say that the 2007 law, commonly known as LB701, doesn't forever exclude other districts from gaining taxing authority. And "additional NRDs, with jurisdiction that includes parts of the South Platte, the North Platte, Missouri or Niobrara rivers, may at some point enter the challenged class," now made up of the NRD's in the Republican River basin.

But attorney Rodney Confer, who represents the landowners, assertions that it was improbable argues there's no way another NRD will gain taxing authority.

> "The events that would have to coincide before another basin's NRD would be given taxing authority under LB701 ... will never occur, and artful drafting cannot

### Educator named 'Principal of Year'

Colby Middle School Principal Rob Ross has been recognized as Area 5 Principal of the Year by the Kansas Secondary School Princi-

The organization represents more than 500 school leaders from across the state. Ross was nominated and selected by his fellow principals.

Candidates are evaluated on their school leadership, school improvement, dedication, professionalism and service to students.

"It's good to be recognized", said Ross, "but the award actually goes to the building, to the school and to the people and students who help to make my job easier".

Area 5 comprises the western part of the state.



**Rob Ross** 

#### **Briefly**

#### College concert Thursday

The Colby Community College vocal music department will hold its Winter Vocal Concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center in the southeast corner of the campus. The free concert will feature the concert choir, Sunflower Singers, soloists and ensembles directed by Dr. Phillip Shuman. For information, call Public Information Director Debbie Schwanke at (785) 460-5411.

#### Women's League offers brunch Gem Lions offer pancakes

The Colby Women's League will hold its annual hol-Colby United Methodist Church.

Donations will go to support the Thomas County Historical Society and the High Plains Museum. For information or questions, call



Sandy Harper, 462-3759, or any of the league members: Pat Criss, Jo Booth, Anita Hills, Sandy Kriss, Melany Shalz, Sidney Strait, Carol Jo Sweat, Becky White or Esther Woofter.

#### Lions plan pancake feed

The Colby High Plains Lions will hold a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Community Building. A \$4-per-person donation is suggested.

The Gem Lions will hold their annual pancake feed from iday brunch from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday at the 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. next Wednesday at the Gem Community

Building. Donations, which go to community betterment, sight programs and eduction will be taken for at the door for pancakes, sausage, eggs and pie.

#### Poker fund raiser Saturday

A poker tournament Saturday at Twisters Bar and Grill will raise money for the Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Thomas County. The \$250 pot will be winner take all. Registration will begin at 1 p.m. and play starts at 2 p.m. Registration will be a \$25 donation in advance, or \$30 at the door. Call 460-9125 for information.

#### Homes to be toured Sunday

The United Methodist Women's 2008 Christmas Homes Tour will be visiting four homes from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday. Lon Frahm's carriage house and pond retreat and the homes of Janice and Lynn Kreider, Tanya and Brian Staats and Judy and Jim Withers will be on display. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$3 for children 5-12 from any group member, at the church office or at the door.

#### Soup supper planned

The Colby High School Dance Team is sponsoring a soup supper from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Colby Community Building. They will have chili, cream of potato, chicken noodle and cream of broccoli soups; beverages, brownies and crispy rice treats. Donations will be accepted.

#### Top lights will win cash prizes

The annual Christmas Lighting Contest, sponsored by the Colby Promotions Committee, will give a \$100 first place prize and a \$75 second for the residential winners and \$75 for first and \$50 for second for the commercial winners. Nominations are due by Friday, Dec. 12, at the Chamber of Commerce office at 350 S. Range Ave. or by calling (785) 460-3401. Judging will take place that weekend.

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