



Two kids return from Wichita hospital

By Vera Sloan

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Two children from a Winona family who were flown to a Wichita hospital after a car crash last week are recuperating at home, but their sister and a friend remain in hospitals here and in Denver.

Police said a 13-year-old boy walked nearly half a mile in freezing cold to get help, only to find no one home at the farm house. An officer looking for the children found him walking back to the car despite injuries which sent him to the hospital.

In a telephone conversation, Rachael Smith, 17, said she was driving home about 8:30 p.m. last Wednesday, Jan. 14, when the car hit a patch of ice on K-25 about 16 miles south of Colby and went out of control.

The ice was left from a brief storm which dropped about 2 1/2 inches of snow in the area, accompanied by extremely cold temperatures.

Relatives said Rachael Smith had two fractured vertebrae and a broken collar bone. She was flown to St. Francis Hospital in Wichita the night of the wreck, but

now is home.

Smith's brother Seth, 13, was flown to St. Francis later that same night, where his injuries were determined to be a broken rib, a severe blow on the chin and a concussion. Reports of a punctured lung and broken jaw were not accurate, the family said. Seth is also home.

Rebecca Smith, 16, was taken by ambulance to Citizens Medical Center with a dislocated leg. Doctors placed the leg back into the hip socket, but she remains in the Colby hospital in traction. Estimates are that she will be there about three weeks.

She also suffered cuts, requiring stitches in her mouth.

Heather Martin, 16, a friend of the family, was flown to Swedish Medical in Denver, where she is being treated for crushed vertebrae. She did not require surgery, but is in a brace. She may be released from the hospital some time this week but is expected to be in the brace for up to eight weeks.

The three girls were wearing seat belts, but no one could say if Seth had one on. The youths were on their way home after shopping for basketball shoes for Seth

in Colby. On their way home, they had stopped to say hello to their brother Sam, a student at Colby Community College.

When the kids didn't return home at the expected time, the parents called Sam, who called 911. The officer searching for the car came upon Seth, who had walked half a mile in freezing cold temperatures to find help.

Rachel was taken by ambulance to the Logan County Hospital in Oakley, while Rebecca and Heather went to Citizens. Seth also wound up at Logan County before going to Wichita.

Director resigns development job

By Andy Heintz

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Gerry Fulwider has resigned as director of the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance after 10 years.

"I think it's time for me to do something else," he said. "I will miss all the friends I worked with over the years."

Fulwider said some of his fondest memories included working on projects with Holly Stephens, executive director at the Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, and Leilani Thomas, director of the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau. All three agencies have offices in the Thomas County Office Complex on Range Avenue.

Thomas said she helped with a wind-energy conference Fulwider held in April. She said they also worked together on a tour of Colby for the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance, a coalition of economic development directors.

Fulwider said he also enjoyed the time he spent working to help bring the McCarty Dairy to Rexford. He said the family operation has really helped Thomas County economically.

"They pay \$50,000 in property tax and the workers they

hire have brought students to the Golden Plains High School," he said. "Golden Plains has been one of the only schools in Northwest Kansas to increase enrollment."

One of the things Fulwider said he is most proud of was recruiting S&T Communications to come to Colby.

Fulwider said he also played a role in getting Embark Health Care to come to Colby.

"We had to call on state and local funds to get them to come here," he said.

The director said he is optimistic about Colby's economic future.

"Colby has more opportunity for growth than most other places in rural America," he said. "We have a top-level public school and the community college."

He said alliance needs public and private investment in order for the city to continue to grow.

The director did not discuss any of his future plans.

Junelle Hills, chairman of the alliance board, said the organization is looking for a new director.

She said the director's main responsibility is to encourage new businesses to come to Colby and to help retain businesses that are here. She said the director is responsible for the loan program portfolio. The program provides loans for new businesses in Thomas County, she said.

President ready to close island jail

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration circulated a draft executive order today that calls for closing the controversial detention center at Guantanamo Bay within a year and halting war crimes trials in the meantime.

Closing the facility in Cuba "would further the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States and the interests of justice," said the draft prepared for the new president's signature.

While some of the detainees currently held at Guantanamo would be released, others would be transferred and later put on trial under terms to be determined.

It was not known when Obama intended to issue the order. He has been a longtime critic of the Bush administration's decision to maintain the detention facility, opened

after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the draft.

There are an estimated 245 detainees currently held at Guantanamo, out of some 800 who were sent there during the Bush administration.

The order circulated as the judge in one war crimes case agreed to Obama's request to suspend proceedings pending a 120-day review.

Army Col. Stephen Henley issued the ruling today after a brief hearing at the U.S. base in Cuba.

The defendants opposed the delay. All have said they want to plead guilty to charges that carry a potential death sentence.

The draft order calls for a systematic review of all cases.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

"Overwhelming" was how Sheila Frahm described the chore of unpacking boxes from her move back to Colby from Topeka after 30 years of public service.

Frahm unpacks 30 years

By Vera Sloan

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For Sheila Frahm, farm girl from Colby, Kansas, graduate of Colby High School and Fort Hays State University, becoming a United States Senator was probably the farthest thing from her mind when she first tested the waters of public service in 1976.

She and her husband Ken, with their two young daughters, had just moved back to Thomas County from Wichita where Ken was working in the business office of Newman University. The girls had started school and Sheila wanted to be involved. She said that got her interested in running for the school board.

She lost the election, but not the desire. She made a second try, in 1978, and won a seat.

Many changes took place during her years on the board. She recalls it as an era of excellence, "a time of good change." She got involved with efforts to support the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center in Colby, a 19-district cooperative that provides services to school districts including special education.

Determined to fulfill her interest in special education, she said, she prepared a speech to the other board members on why she should represent the district on the service center's board.

"Before I could finish my speech," Frahm recalled, "the other members on the board, not wanting to do it, told me I was a shoo in, and that was

probably the beginning of the Senate campaign, although it was absolutely never, ever in the back of my mind.

"Being a member of the service center's board, I got acquainted with everyone from the 13-county service area, and by association with Ann Keener, a state Board of Education member. I was named to fill her position when she resigned mid-term. And then I was elected to the state board in 1986."

"Later, I was over at the Capitol one day, and it was suggested I run for the (state) Senate," she said.

She said her reply was, "You've got to be crazy." But she talked with legislators and with Gov. Bill Graves about it. Frahm said Graves told her he would help her, since the incumbent, Richard Gannon, would not be running again.

Frahm won the election for the Kansas Senate in November 1988.

She said the transition to the Senate flowed easily, even though she had to balance her life with the farm, the Legislature and a newly adopted daughter with special needs.

"My move to Senate majority leader after only four years in the Senate happened rather quickly," she said. "Sometimes it helps to be at the right place at the right time, but I can't think of anything more satisfying than being elected by your peers."

Frahm was the first woman to serve as majority leader in Kansas.

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School money unsure

Once guaranteed, budgets in danger

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — The debate over education funding seemed settled two years ago, with public schools as the decisive winner.

Now, though, the recession and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' budget proposals are making school finance the biggest issue of this year's legislative session, which began last week.

Yes, the most pressing tasks for Sebelius and legislators are closing a projected \$186 million deficit in the current budget and preventing a \$1 billion shortfall for fiscal year 2010, which begins July 1.

But the key question in tackling those problems is how much pain public schools face. Sebelius tried to spare them as much as possible; educators don't feel particularly lucky, but Republican leaders want to go farther than the Democratic governor.

The debate is likely to reinforce two eternal truths about state government: Education funding is always the biggest spending issue, and aid to public schools is favored above other parts of the budget.

"The bulk of new money we've received over the past few years has all gone into K-through-12," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman Kevin Yoder, an Overland Park Republican. "We are starving the rest of government for the sake of keeping K-through-12 harmless."

Yoder and other GOP leaders favor across-the-board cuts to close the deficit in the current budget and prevent a shortfall in fiscal 2010. Sebelius instead offered a mix of targeted spending cuts and accounting changes.

She argues the budget crisis prevents schools from receiving increases in aid they were promised by a 2006 law — an extra \$18 million before June 30 and an additional \$165 million in fiscal 2010. But, she said, the state can try to hold them harmless.

Her budget doesn't quite do it. She'd freeze aid for the current

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Briefly

City offices to close Thursday

Colby City Hall will be closed Thursday for staff training. Report any utility emergency that day to the Police Department by calling 460-4460.

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has one dog, a medium-size, fairly young female, maybe a spaniel or border collie-mix with a nice temperament, available for adoption. Lost or strayed animals are also brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. For questions, call 460-8621.

Event will help fight cancer

Friends of Reid Atkins, a long time resident of Thomas County, plan a fund raiser to help with his medical costs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday after church ser-



VICES at the Little Theater in the Colby Community Building. Sloppy joes, chips, relishes and desserts will be offered for a donation. Raffle tickets will be available for \$1. Atkins, who has nonhodgkins lymphoma, is a patient at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, awaiting a bone marrow transplant.

Girls out hawking cookies

If you're on a diet, you may not want to answer the door. But who can resist Girl Scout cookies? Sales began Saturday and run through Sunday, Feb. 1, said Scout leader Penny Cline. Cinna-Spins have been renamed Daisy Go Rounds in honor of the littlest Scouts. If you miss the knock on the door, call Mint Culver at 460-6005 or Cline (after 6 p.m. only) at 460-2929 to order.

Sealant, fluoride clinic Feb. 6

Students in the dental hygienist program at Colby Community College will hold a sealant and fluoride clinic for kids 6 to 12 from 1-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6, in the Health Sciences Building on campus. Cost is \$7 per sealant for the first four sealants. Parents can make an appointment by calling (785) 460-5438, but walk-ins will be accepted.

Churches to protest decision

Some area churches plan a noon-hour prayer gathering at Fourth Street and Range Avenue from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. Thursday to mark the 35th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision. The 1973 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court overturned all state laws banning abortion.

Museum offers kids' program

To mark Kansas Day, the anniversary of statehood

on Jan. 29, the Prairie Museum of Art and History plans a free art workshop for kids in grades three to five from 2-4 p.m. Saturday Jan. 31. Participants will make colorful oil pastel sunflower designs in honor of the Kansas state flower. Registration is limited to 20 participants; deadline is Thursday, Jan. 22. Call Rosanne Dougherty at the museum (785) 460-4590.

Woman to detail range wars

Edna Hoyt Ward will talk about range wars between ranchers and homesteaders from noon to 1 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Prairie Museum of Art and History.

The talk is a part of the Food for Thought program, which features a soup lunch and history program on the third Thursday of this month and next. A different presentation will be offered March 19. Call the museum at (785) 460-4590 for details.