



COLBY FREE PRESS



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Chad Applebury (in the hole above), supervisor at the city wastewater treatment plant, helped the Colby city crew replace a fire-hydrant shutoff valve Friday at College Drive and Range

Avenue after a pickup knocked it over. Before that could happen, street supervisor Ron Kogler (bottom) pumped water out of the hole, across from Colby Bowl Fun Center.

Police seek truck that broke valve

By Andy Heintz

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Police are looking for a black-colored pickup that struck a fire hydrant on southeast corner of Range Avenue and College Drive, forcing Colby Community College and several businesses along Range to close.

Police Chief Randy Jones said the truck hit the hydrant at 9:57 a.m. on Friday morning, causing water to gush out into the street and the ditch along range.

The truck knocked off the shut-off valve and the top of the hydrant, said Chris Bieker, city public works director.

To stop the flow so the shut-off could be replaced, he said, the crew had to shut off water to Colby Community College and several stores on Range Av-

enue to get the shut-off replaced, Bieker said.

This forced the college to close at noon, said Debbie Schwanke, director of public information. Classes were cancelled, offices shut down and students sent home.

"They called us at 11 a.m. and told us they needed to shut off the water supply in order to repair the water line," she said.

Bieker said all the water from the fire hydrant was draining down into the Villa High Park pond east of Range Avenue and a pond west of Range.

A new valve was put on the hydrant and the water stopped gushing out of the hydrant about 4 p.m.

Jones said the driver of the pickup did not stop or report the accident. Police are looking for the truck and the driver.



Irrigation sessions here for farmers next week

The Central Plains Irrigation Conference and Exposition this year will feature presentations by industry professionals, as well as university researchers and government officials, next week in Colby.

The event begins at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, with registration and the expo displays at the City Limits Convention Center.

Technical sessions begin at 10 a.m., and the event continues Wednesday, Feb. 25.

Mark Lawson of Monsanto will give an "Outlook on Agriculture's Potential" and Robert Johnson of Sunflower Electric Power Corp. will discuss "The Role of Wind Energy in Agriculture."

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Leadership wants state to cut 10 percent

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Some top legislators have set a goal of slashing spending by \$625 million in the next state budget to shore up Kansas' recession-battered finances.

The cuts would represent 10 percent of the spending financed with general tax revenues, and the push is coming from leaders of the Republican majority in the Senate. Legislators and Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius are required by the state constitution to avoid a deficit in the budget for the state's 2010 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Leaders of the House's GOP majority haven't been as specific about their plans but agree that deep cuts will be necessary. Democratic leaders are resisting the idea because Sebelius already has proposed some accounting changes and tax policies to lessen the pain for public schools, social services and other state programs.

Legislators start their work on the 2010 budget without knowing how well revenue projections will hold up in coming months. And state officials still aren't sure how much the federal economic stimulus — which promises about \$1.7 billion for Kansas — will help.

Chairman Jay Emler created a stir last week

by circulating a memo to fellow Senate Ways and Means Committee members directing their subcommittees to look for cuts of 10 percent — and to press for information from state agencies about what even deeper cuts would mean.

"You may not have to have the 10 percent," Emler said during an interview. "I think it's pretty realistic, and for some of them, it could be a little more than that. Ten is a number they need to keep in mind."

Democratic leaders said Emler's memo spread fear unnecessarily and suggested GOP

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Briefly

Court offices to close for class

Thomas County District Court offices at the courthouse will close from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday for training. For information, call the court clerk's office at 460-4540.

Chamber to gather After 5

S&T Communications will host the monthly Business After Five mixer for the Colby Chamber of Commerce at 5 p.m. Wednesday at their office at 755 Davis Ave., west of Colby High School. Chamber members should stop by for refreshments and conversation. For information, call 460-3401.

Historian to detail range wars

Evelyn Hoyt Ward of Goodland will talk about range wars between ranchers and homesteaders from noon to 1 p.m. Thursday 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 (785) 460-4590 for details.

Orchestra to play in Oberlin

Western Plains Arts Association is sponsoring "Celebrate the Love of Sound," a winter concert by Pride of the Prairie Orchestra, at 3 p.m. Sunday at The Gateway civic center in Oberlin. Admission is by season ticket, Friends of the Orchestra membership or at the door. The concert, conducted by Burlington High School Band Director Andrew Salvador, will feature pianist Sharon Kriss of Colby performing Grieg's "Piano Concerto in A minor," selections from "The Wizard of Oz," "Comedy Tonight," "Summon the Heroes" and other numbers. For infor-

mation, call For information, call Pat Ziegelmeier at (785) 462-7808 or 460-5518.

Annual Spelling Bee next week

Among upcoming events for Colby fourth and fifth graders will be the annual Spelling Bee at 1:15 p.m. next Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 23 and Feb. 24, in the grade-school auditorium. Seven contestants have been chosen from each classroom, with one alternate. Medals will be given to the top three spellers in each grade. The public is invited.

Benefit will help girl's family

Friends and family plan a benefit soup supper for Trinity Pfeifer, a second grader at Colby Grade School, who needs hip surgery. She is the daughter of Jason and Angie Stegeman of Colby. Come in for broccoli-cheese or chicken-noodle soup, chili and

drinks from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27, at the Community Building basement. Donations will be accepted. For information, call her mom at (785) 460-0227.

Cancer group selling daffodils

Once again, the American Cancer Society is selling flowers for its Daffodil Days fund raiser. Colby project leader Kim Barnett will be taking orders at home, 462-2997, at work, 460-2761, or by e-mail at umcolby@st-tel.net. Prices include a flower bunch for \$10, a "sunshine bouquet" for \$15 or a bear and a bunch for \$25. Deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 1.

