



COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

City weighs in on college wind turbine

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A consultant gave a report to the city about the effect wind energy would have on the city's electrical system if a turbine is installed at the college at the City Council meeting Tuesday evening.

Colby Community College officials have been in discussions with NexGen, a renewable energy distribution company, about installing a 400-kilowatt wind turbine on campus. The project would have

to have the city's approval.

The meeting drew several people interested in the proposed wind project, including John M. Brown, president of NexGen; Lynn Kreider, president of the college; and several college trustees, including Chairman Kenton Krehbiel and member Cindy Black.

Joe Herz, vice president of Sawvel and Associates, an expert on utility systems, said the turbine would fall under the "parallel generation" rules enforced by the state, which limit the size of a customer-owned wind turbine to 200 kilowatts.

Since the college is not planning to own the turbine, he said, they would have needed the city's approval even if the turbine was under 200 kilowatts.

Brown said the college is asking for an exemption from the city to become a self-generator of wind energy. He said the same safety regulations that are applied to wind energy for turbines between 100 and 200 kilowatts will also be applied to a turbine rated at 400 kilowatts.

"If it (wind turbine) doesn't have a great value to the community, we will pull out of the deal," Brown said.

"We can do lots and lots of tests," said Kreider, "but if we drag it out for another four or five months, Colby Community College will be behind in wind energy."

Herz said adding customer-generated wind energy is not likely to reduce the city's infrastructure costs but might increase power-purchase costs because the college would be buying less power.

"You in essence are charging some customers the same rate as today while raising the costs on other customers," he said.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said

NexGen has said if purchase costs increase because the city can't use power during periods of low demand, the college would reimburse the city for excess costs. That would negate any possible increases for ratepayers. She said she would like to see this in writing.

Kreider said the city would be hedging its bets by using wind energy because electric prices are expected to continue to rise, while wind energy prices will eventually flatten out. He said the city should

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Levant fire sends smoke across freeway

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It took firemen almost two hours Monday to put out a field fire two miles south of Levant that burned 300 acres of no-till corn stubble, sending smoke across Interstate 70.

Ross Carney, a fire service officer for the Colby Fire Department, said the blaze began a mile south of the Interstate and it was put out as it reached the highway.

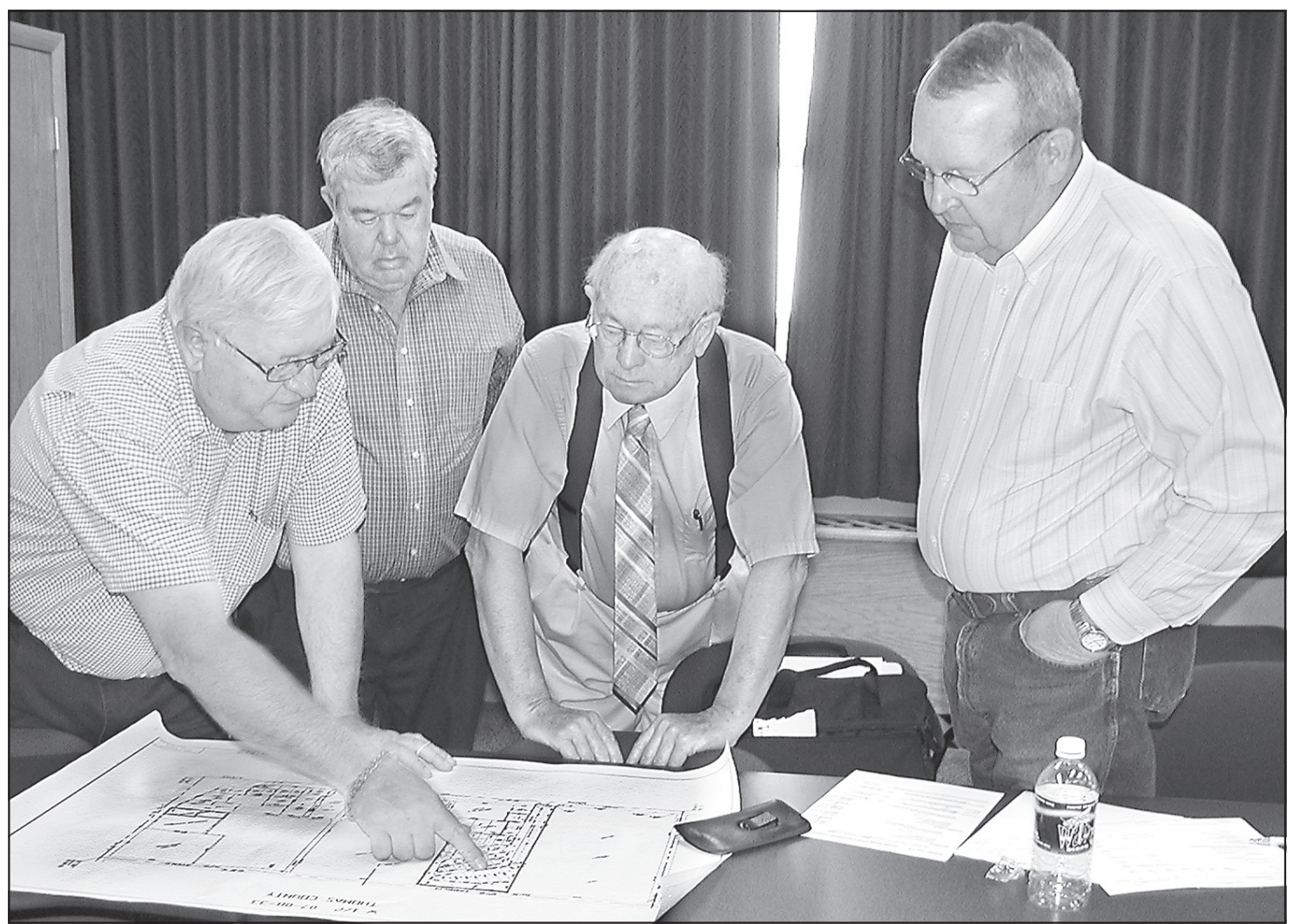
The fire department dispatched three trucks to extinguish the fire. Carney said two trucks moved down the flanks and put out the edges of the fire while the third truck stood by to make sure the department had enough water to douse the flames. After the trucks had extinguished the two flanks, he said, they moved to the head, where the fire was moving fastest toward the highway. After putting out the head of the fire, Carney said, the men on the third fire truck

helped the other two crews mop up small fires that flared up after the main fire had been put out.

Carney said fire fighters contacted the sheriff's department to come out because smoke was blowing across the Interstate. He said two officers stationed themselves on either side of the blaze to warn people about the smoke. Traffic never had to be stopped, said Carney.

Fire trucks arrived at the scene at 6 p.m. and the men had the job finished by 8:15 p.m. Carney said they had to fill their tanks with water at Bartlett Grain in Levant in the midst of fighting the fire. He said the department didn't know how the fire started.

The department had put out a grass fire in the medium of I-70 at mile marker 49 west of Colby last Tuesday afternoon, May 12. Carney said the fire was put out before the trucks arrived. He said no one knows what started that fire, either.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Elmer Zerr of Zerr Engineering and county commissioners (from left) Byron Sowers, Paul Steele and Ken Christensen got an explanation of the plat map of the undeveloped Davis

Addition III, south of Colby Community College, where the county owns platted streets by law.

County looks at vacant lot replat

By Vera Sloan
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A Colby engineer came to the Thomas County commissioners Monday with a request for the county to approve replatting an undeveloped subdivision south of Colby Community College so the owners can sell the land as one parcel.

Elmer Zerr of Zerr Engineering showed commissioners a plat map of the Davis No. III subdivision, which is north of Colby High

School, south of the college and east of the Quilt Cabin to Franklin Ave. Zerr said the county owns the rights of way for three or four streets in the land.

The Davis Revocable Trust wants to sell, he said, but can't get a legitimate buyer until it is re-platted as a single parcel. Zerr said as a matter of legality, he needed to inform the commissioners of the intent to replat the area back to single tract.

Commissioner Paul Steele asked if the commissioners were getting into the middle of a conflict. Zerr told him they were prob-

ably going to get out of a potential liability, because once it is re-platted, the county is out of the loop. Steele said he would like for the Planning Commission to put the map on public display so area property holders could look at it.

The commissioners agreed, without a formal vote, to send their request to the planning board.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Voted to increase rental rates for the

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

The Colby High School Band held an end-of-the-year concert at Fike Park on Tuesday. The program included percussion and flute ensembles that earned the highest rating at the state contest in April. Pictured are Ashley Klippert (front row, from left), Braden Sager, Harley Washa, Brock Waggoner, and (back) Jared Bixenman.

Hospital applies for tax credit program

By Kevin Bottrell
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Thanks to a recently resurrected state program, people looking to make donations this year may be able to help out Colby's hospital and get a tax credit at the same time.

Citizen's Medical Center is applying for an allocation from the Kansas Community Service Tax Credit Program, said Tama Unger, director of fund development and

community relations at the hospital. If approved, the program will reward donations with a credit on state taxes from a pool of \$4.1 million.

The program was started in 1994 under the Kansas Department of Commerce as a way to help nonprofit community service, crime prevention or health care organizations pay for large capital projects. Former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius had recommended that the program be terminated as part of budget cuts this year,

Unger said, but under new Gov. Mark Parkinson, the program was renewed with a 10 percent reduction. Individual organizations can apply for up to \$250,000 in credits based on their project.

The program encourages contribution from individuals, groups and companies. Since Colby is considered a rural area - fewer than 15,000 people - contributors are eligible for a 70 percent tax credit on their income tax. Unger said the credit can end up being more than a taxpayer might owe

in a given year. "It can be a break-even prospect for many people," she said.

Contributions have a minimum of \$250.

Unger said the donations will be used to help pay for the Medical Records/Financial Services Annex currently under construction. The hospital is applying for the full \$250,000, she said.

Unger said the hospital will know in September whether it has been approved for the program.

Briefly

Survivor's reception tonight

Thomas County Relay for Life plans a Survivor's Reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. tonight at the Citizens Medical Center cafeteria. All survivors and their caregivers are invited. For questions, call Carla Sharp at 460-4881.

Teams are needed for the 2009 Relay, sponsored by the Colby chapter of the American Cancer Society, on Friday, May 29, in Fike Park. To find a spot on a team, or register a new team, call Tiffany Moeder at 460-2383.

FFA to hold awards banquet

The Colby High FFA Awards Banquet will be at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Ag Shop, 240 N. Copeland. All family and friends are welcome. The greenhouse will be open for the end-of-the-year sale, which ends that night. Prices on all items are reduced for quick sale. Everyone gets a free bird feeder with a purchase as a thank-you for supporting the Ag Education pro-

gram. For questions, call teacher Shawna Howell-Hoffman at 460-5320 or showell@colbyeagles.org.

Camp registration Thursday

Thursday is the deadline to register for the Treasure Chest of Fun day camp, sponsored by the Thomas County Extension Office. The camp will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Fike Park next Thursday, May 28. Register at the extension office in the County Office Complex or online at thomas.ksu.edu. The "pirate fun" camp will include games, crafts and lots of fun for kids age 7 to 10. Cost is \$5, which includes lunch. For information, call Diann Gerstner at 460-4582.

Ball league sign-up due soon

Registration for adult softball leagues is due by Friday, and swim lesson sign up is due by Wednesday, May 27. Girls summer-league basketball registration is due Wednesday. Players and parents should double check their information on summer activities to get kids and teams signed up on time, says Colby

Recreation Director Stacy Lee, and pay close attention to late registration policies. For questions, call the Recreation Department at 460-4440.

Library book sale this weekend

The Pioneer Memorial Library will hold its Memorable Book Sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday in the basement of the library. For information, call the library at 460-4470.

Groups raise money for Relay

Citizen's Medical Center team members will have a Relay for Life fund-raising car wash from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday in the hospital's front parking lot. Donations will be accepted. For information, call Carla Sharp at 460-4881.

The Colby Community College nursing students' Relay team will hold a fund raiser at Wal-Mart from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 23. The students will be performing vital signs checks, which include

blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory and temperature checks. For information, call Ron Redick at 269-7174.

City, county close for holiday

The Thomas County Landfill will close at noon on Saturday for Memorial Day weekend, and reopen on Tuesday. The Thomas County Courthouse and Health Department will be closed on Monday, and the community transit van will not run.

Colby city offices will be closed, and trash service will not run Monday. Residential customers on Monday's route will be picked up on Tuesday. Please have your trash and grass out to the curb by 8 a.m. For information, call the Public Works office 460-4420.

