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COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

July 8, 2009

Volume 120, Number 105
Serving Thomas County since 1888



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Gov. Mark Parkinson spoke with Levi Anderson, Scott Anderson, Mike Brown, Jeanene Brown, Cassie Brown and Tanner Brown during his visit to one of the Browns' wheat fields in

southern Thomas County on Monday. The governor took the opportunity to highlight the importance of agriculture in the area.

Governor checks up on area wheat

By Kevin Bottrell

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Gov. Mark Parkinson visited rural Thomas County on Monday, meeting with farmers Mike and Jeanene Brown on one of their wheat fields nine miles south of Levant.

Parkinson talked with the Browns about their harvest and farming, then rode along in a combine on a pass through the field with their son, Tanner Brown. He was accompanied by his son Sam and outgoing state Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky, who has been tapped by the Obama Administration as head of the state office of the U.S. Farm Service Agency. Parkinson said he planned to have a meeting Tuesday to discuss potential replacements.

The governor said he spent time on his grandfather's farm when he was growing up in Scott City.

"I didn't grow up on a farm, but I grew up around farms," he said.

One of the reasons agriculture is important, he said, because it helps diversify the Kansas econ-

omy, making depend less on the manufacturing and aviation industries that have been hit hard by the recession. Parkinson said this year's excellent wheat crop would come as a boon to a state weighed down by budget cuts.

"Kansas needs some good news," he said.

Lisa Taylor, director of communications for the state Department of Agriculture, said the Browns volunteered their fields for the visit after the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers had asked which members' harvest times would likely fit into the governor's schedule. Jeanene Brown said she was pleased their farm had been chosen for the trip.

"We were honored to have the governor visit our operation and highlight the importance of ag producers in our area," she said.

Parkinson had led a state Finance Council meeting in Topeka that morning, planned a visit with the Scott City Chamber of Commerce in the afternoon and was to speak at the Kansas Bureau of Investigation 70th Anniversary Banquet back in Topeka in the evening, all on Monday.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Tanner Brown (left) took the governor on a pass through his family's wheat field on his combine. Parkinson said that, while he did not grow up on a farm, he spent time on his grandfather's farm near Scott City when he was a boy.

Thomas County wheat harvest in full swing

By Vera Sloan

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About a million bushels of wheat had come into Cornerstone Ag's Colby elevators by Monday afternoon, with farmers still waiting on evening show-

ers to subside before hitting the fields in full swing.

"We anticipate about 20 to 25 percent of the wheat is already cut, but farmers are still struggling with moisture issues," said Eric Scott, operations manager for the grain terminal. He said

test weights are all coming in above average.

Scott said he anticipates their biggest three to four days of harvest will start today, and the end of that time, barring rain, should see 50 to 60 percent of the crop harvested. Probably close to 75-

80 percent should be done by the week's end, he said.

"There probably won't be much left by the end of the week, except lagoons and terrace channels," Scott said.

Music fest next weekend

By Vera Sloan

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What began in 1985 with a few friends who enjoyed sharing tunes has grown from a "Pickin' Picnic" gathering of 50 people into a musical affair that attracts fans from as far away as California, just to attend Colby's Pickin' on the Plains festival.

An estimated 1,200 to 1,500 people or more will gather at the Thomas County Fairgrounds on Friday to Sunday next weekend,

July 17, 18 and 19, for some of the best Bluegrass, Newgrass, Western Swing, Gospel and just plain great music with big-name performers, said co-organizer Susan McLemore.

"Bluegrass has its own following, and it's growing," said McLemore, who also will perform with her family. "We attract people regularly from a large area. We have had people from Switzerland, Canada, Florida, California, Colo-

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Four-year-old killed in weekend accident

A 4-year-old Colby boy was killed Friday in an accident at his family's farm home west of town.

Trooper Cody Honas of Colby reported that Justin Schroeder was injured just after noon Friday. He was taken to Citizens Medical Center about 12:10 p.m., where he was declared dead by Dr. Darren Matchell. The farm is about three-quarters of a mile north of U.S. 24 at 255 Washington Ave., or County Road 17, just over a mile west of Colby.

Justin was riding on a fork-

lift with his father, Daniel Kriss Schroeder, when he fell off the right side of the forklift and was run over by the back right tire, the trooper reported.

Justin was born July 24, 2004, in Hays. He is survived by his parents, 11 brothers and sisters of Colby, and one sister in Wichita.

A funeral mass was Tuesday, July 7, 2009, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Colby. No other obituary information was available as of this morning.

New college student wins *Free Press* Cointest

It didn't take long Saturday to give away 233 shiny new dollars in the *Colby Free Press*' annual Cointest, just five or six tosses of a new 50-cent piece. No one, it seems, had time to count.

But it was long enough for Anthony Grable, 19, a freshman just starting out at Colby Community College. When he came up a winner on the last toss, Grable shot two clenched fists into the air. The

coins he got represent America's 233rd birthday.

For the contest, at the Thomas County Fairgrounds, people chose sides of the room at a bag of 4-H Building, right or left, head or tails. The losing side had to sit down and the remaining contestants chose again. It came down to Grable and two young girls.

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Colby Free Press Publisher Steve Haynes had a bag with 233 new dollar coins for Anthony Grable, winner of the Fourth of July Cointest on Saturday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

Briefly

Hospital offers birthing classes

Citizens Medical Center plans a four-week series of childbirth education classes from 7 to 10 p.m. beginning Thursday and continuing on the next three Thursdays. Women in their last trimester, or who are due to deliver before November, are encouraged to attend, along with the support partner who will be with the mother in labor. Classes will be held on the hospital campus. The next set of classes will be in October. For information or to register, contact Jeanene Brown in the center's education department at (785) 460-4850.

County van to take a holiday

The Thomas County transportation van will not run Thursday for driver training or on Thursday, July 16, because the driver will be at a required meeting. Please make other travel arrangements. For information, call the county clerk's office at 460-4500.

Mormons plan open house

The Colby Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will hold an open house from 3:30 to 6 p.m. Friday to celebrate its new addition and remodeling. Special guests will be introduced at 3 p.m., followed by the open house. The church is at 1145 S. Franklin Ave.. For information, call 460-6605.

Nursing home plans dog show

The Colby Care Center will hold a doggie fashion show at 2 p.m. Saturday. Dress up your dogs and bring them by, along with a \$5 donation for the Residents Activity Fund. Veterinarian Tammy Swarts will judge the entries and award prizes, and give some free advice for dog owners. For information, call Amanda Hillis at 462-6721.

Massage school plans event

The Therapeutic Massage department at Colby Community College will hold an open house and in-

formational session from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in room 804 of the Health Sciences Building. For information, contact program Director Debra Waites at (785) 460-4797 or debra.waites@colbycc.edu.

Food sign up this week

Prairie Land Food sign up will be open through Friday at the State Farm Insurance office, 905 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be from 10 to 10:30 p.m. Saturday, July 25, at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 W. Sixth St. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Groups offer free shoot

The Colby Trap Hunting Heritage Group and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will hold another free shooting program for youths and inexperienced shooters at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, July 19. Shooters will learn weapons handling and range safety. Shotguns and shells will be provided at the Colby

Trap Club at County Road R (West College Drive) and County Road 14, one mile south of U.S. 24 west of Colby. For information, call Wildlife Conservation Officer Benny Young at 462-7602.

College pool open weekdays

The Colby Community College indoor swimming pool is open to the public for lap swimming from 5 to 7 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Open swimming is 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Cost for general admission is \$3. Monthly and yearly passes are available. Call Kipp Nelson at 460-5476 for information.



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