



COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢
Friday
July 17, 2009
Volume 120, Number 111
Serving Thomas County since 1888



Bluegrass musicians (from left) Jimmy Campbell, Blake McLemore, Jake Workman, Rodney Durst and Brandon McLemore jammed after dinner at the Pickin' on the Plains potluck Thursday.

Music festival gets off to a delicious start

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

About 40-50 people came laden with fruit, dessert and sloppy joes to kick off the Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass festival Thursday night.

A potluck dinner was held in the 4-H building. Everyone brought a dish as well, as their own plates and silverware. A few folks stayed after supper to listen to some of the performers, including Brandon and Blake McLemore, jam outside.

The festival itself will begin at 6 p.m. this evening at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Besides the music, there will be make-and-take arts and crafts and pony rides for the kids, along with wagon and buggy rides. Tickets are available at the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau office in the county office complex and at the gate.

And remember to bring a couple of cans or boxes of food, or a check, for Genesis-Thomas



Colby resident and frequent Pickin' on the Plains attendee Tim Adrian (left) chatted with festival camp host Duane Burns of Wichita about a guitar that is being raffled off.

County Food Bank. Collection boxes will be out at the entrance during the festival.

Festival event schedule:

Friday, July 17: 6 p.m., the McLemores; 6:35 p.m., Larry Booth; 7:15 p.m., Sappa Strings;

7:55 p.m., the New Old Timers; 8:35 p.m., the Martins; 9:25 p.m., Sons and Brothers; 10:15 p.m., Kenny and Amanda Smith Band.

Saturday, July 18: 9:30 a.m., open stage; 11:30 a.m., Larry Booth; 12:05 p.m., Sappa

Strings; 12:45 p.m., the Martins; 1:35 p.m., Ozark Alliance; 2:25 p.m., Sons and Brothers; 3:15 p.m., New Old Timers; 4:05 p.m., Driven; 4:55 p.m., Kenny and Amanda Smith; 6:10 p.m., Ozark Alliance; 7 p.m., McLemores; 7:50 p.m., the Martins; 8:40 p.m., Sons and Brothers; 9:30 p.m., Driven; 10:20 p.m., Kenny and Amanda Smith.

Sunday July 19: 9:30 a.m., Cowboy Church and gospel sing; 11:10 a.m., Sappa Strings; 12:05 p.m., Driven; 1 p.m. Ozark Alliance; 1:55 p.m., McLemores.

Saturday Workshops: 11 a.m.: 4-H building: lead/rhythm guitar, Jake Workman, Dale Martin, Alex Vaughn. Shed: fiddle – Jimmy and Jordan Vincent.

Noon: 4-H building: mandolin, Jenny Vaughn and Joe Wolking. Shed: banjo, Jimmy Campbell, Dennis Vaughn, Suzie McLemore.

1 p.m.: 4-H building: band, Sons and Brothers;

2 p.m.: 4-H building: bass, Blake McLemore. Shed: finger-pick guitar, J.F. Stover.



A good crowd brought out their forks and knives for the potluck dinner which kicked off the Pickin' on the Plains bluegrass festival. The music begins at 6 p.m. tonight with a performance by Colby group the McLemores.

Lab error misidentifies swine flu case

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment did some backpedaling Thursday as a reported case of the swine flu in Sherman County was found to be due to a laboratory error.

Still, the illness continued a steady advance across the state, with cases now reported in about a third of the 105 Kansas counties.

The Goodland case was reported Wednesday, and Sherman County health officials were notified. State officials said Thursday that the specimen had been re-tested and found to be negative. In a notice Thursday, the department said it regretted the error, adding that new procedures are in place to prevent further mistakes.

As of Friday, there were 185 confirmed cases of swine flu in 34 Kansas counties. There are now six cases in Thomas County, one confirmed as a child. There has also

been a case confirmed in Rawlins County reported this week.

In response to these cases, both the Colby and Goodland hospitals have changed their procedures to prevent people from bringing the illness to patients. Citizens Medical Center is asking patients with possible swine flu symptoms to stay home and call a doctor by phone first to decide whether a trip to the hospital is advisable. The hospitals have posted signs on their doors to this effect.

According to Tina Goodwin, director of marketing and volunteer services for the Goodland Regional Medical Center, flu patients or visitors with the symptoms are being asked to enter through the Family Health Center entrance, rather than the main entrance. Goodwin said the hospital is asking that people limit their visits as much as possible.

Swine flu symptoms include a fever of more than 100 degrees,

See "SWINE FLU," Page 3

College gets \$2 million grant

Colby Community College has won a grant of nearly \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Education to develop a "distance learning" network, allowing students to take more classes from their home computers.

"Being awarded the Title III grant signals the U.S. Department of Education's belief that CCC is essential to the economic well-being of northwest Kansas," said President Lynn Kreider. "The grant will assist in achieving our goals of improving and strengthening academic quality, institutional management and fiscal stability of the college."

As high school enrollments in the area have declined, said Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs, the college realizes the need to expand its vision, reaching students from a wider geographic area and those who, for whatever the rea-

son, can't attend classes as full-time, on-campus students.

A distance learning network can help serve those needs, he said, and the program in Colby has just received a big boost. The college will get \$1,971,695 over the next five years for developing a network to reach students who can't get to traditional classes.

Kaaz said the college has been pursuing the Title III grant for some time. Today, he said, distance learning through the college centers on the EduKan network, which links six community colleges that offer basic courses online.

The federal money will be used to pursue four avenues of development, Kaaz said.

First and most obvious is to offer more courses online, he said.

See "GRANT," Page 3

State Fair may test livestock for DNA

HUTCHINSON (AP) — Kansas State Fair officials may begin using a plan to allow DNA testing of livestock during the annual 10-day fair, starting next year.

Fair board members approved a plan Wednesday that could start for the 2010 fair. The testing is designed to prevent cheating during livestock competitions.

Hair follicles taken from beef cattle, sheep and swine by their handlers months before the com-

petition will be used to verify that the same animal is competing for ribbons and money in September.

The board of the Kansas Junior Livestock Show in Wichita plans to vote on whether to use the same system.

Sharon Breiner, Kansas State University's youth livestock coordinator, says the current system of checking nose prints from animals often is not reliable.

Briefly

Step right up; help needed

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and the Thomas County Amusement Association are looking for about 60 volunteers to man game booths at the carnival Tuesday to Saturday, July 28 to Aug. 1. Shifts will be from 6:45 to 9 p.m. and 9 to 11 p.m. Volunteers will be taking tickets and running the games. For information or to volunteer, call Holly Stephens at 460-3401.

Salvation Army has fans

The Thomas County Salvation Army representative has box fans available for anyone who needs them. Call Sue at 460-4842 if you need a fan.

Alumni planning 2020 reunion

The Colby High School Alumni Reunion planning committee will meet to discuss the 2010 reunion at 5

p.m. Sunday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. All alumni are invited. For information, call Amanda Wahlmeier at 460-9145.

Groups offer shooting classes

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. 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.

Bus driver at meeting Thursday

The Thomas County transportation van will not

run Thursday because the driver will be attending meetings. For questions, call the Thomas County clerk's office at 460-4500.

College bus will haul vets

Colby Community College is making its bus available to veterans who're not able to walk in the Fair Parade later this month. The bus will leave from the American Legion Hall at 1850 W. Fourth St. at 5 p.m. Tuesday, July 28, and return to the Legion when the parade is over. For information, call the college information office at 460-7836.

Picnic in the Park Wednesday

Next week's entertainment at Picnic in the Park will be the Dan Keller. The series continues at noon every Wednesday through July 29 in Fike Park. For information, call the Colby/Thomas County Cham-

ber of Commerce at 460-3401 or the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643.

Camp set for Tuesdays

The Colby Wesleyan Church is offering "Tuesdays @ 10," a free summer day camp for children 4 to 12. Kids are invited to participate in the food, fun, games and God's love from 10 a.m. to noon every Tuesday through July 28. This year's "Son Rock Camp" will include nature hikes and outdoor activities with lunch. To register, or for questions, call the church office at 462-8391.

