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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press



New drop-off zones working as planned

The first few cars of the afternoon (above) began lining up Friday to pick up first and second graders from Colby Grade School at the new pick-up and drop-off zone in the parking lot between Garfield and Grant Avenues. At the same time, the kindergartners (left) were led from the grade school to their parents' vehicles along Grant Avenue. Superintendent Terrel Harrison said the new zones, which also include a zone for third through eighth graders behind the middle school, are turning out well so far. The afternoon pick-up in the first and second grade parking lot has been very busy and may need some revision, she said. Some Colby parents had expressed concerns over the new zones prior to the start of school after the announcement that in-town bussing had been cut.

Hospital gets large gift from memorial

By Vera Sloan

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Citizens Medical Center and the Citizens Foundation have received a \$1.3 million bequest from the estate of a retired Gem-area farm couple, Leonard P. and Twila M. Harrison, with more to come.

The hospital received a check for \$1 million on Aug. 17 as a gift from the Harrisons' trust.

"We are so thankful to the Harrison family and to Gene Criss and Larry Higerd, trustees of the trust," said hospital President Janice McCart. "Health care is an important part of the backbone of the community and is constantly evolving. I believe the Harrisons understood this."

"As we grow into the future, the impact of this very impressive gift will be felt for many many years to come."

The gift, one of the largest ever for the private, nonprofit hospital, came at a good time.

"We are in the process of initiating the first phase of the master plan of improvement, which is a \$3 million project to replace the mechanical portion of the hospi-

tal," said Kevan Trenkle, chief financial officer. "The new mechanical improvements will support the current facility plus the additions which are planned for Phase II."

"This gift will be held in a restricted fund for Phase II, with a starting date to be determined."

The Harrisons also gave \$300,000 to the foundation. An endowed scholarship fund of \$100,000 will be established to pay for an annual scholarship for students interested in a medical career.

Another \$100,000 will be placed in an endowment fund. Interest from the fund will help the foundation fulfill its mission of supporting the hospital.

The remaining \$100,000 will be used at the discretion of the foundation board. Criss and Higerd said additional gifts will go to the foundation as the remaining investments of the trust mature.

"I'm still trying to get my head around the impact these funds will have on health care and the community as a whole," said Tama Unger, director of fund develop-

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Colby boy unhurt after Saturday accident

A 7-year old boy from Colby escaped serious injury Saturday morning when he was struck by a pick-up truck driven going east through the intersection at Fourth Street and Grant Avenue.

Police Chief Randy Jones said luckily the truck, driven by Darrell Leh of Rexford, was not moving very fast so the child was able to get up and off the street. He checked into Citizens Medical

Center where he was kept overnight for observations.

Officer Jerad Lang investigated the case with assistance from Thomas County Undersheriff Mark Finley. Jones said the boys was directly behind another pick-up truck in the east lane that had just passed Leh's vehicle. He said the child may have been in the Leh's blind spot.

Scouts plan week-long membership drive

By Kevin Bottrell

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This week is National Join Scouting Week. Local Scouts, mainly Cub Scout packs will be holding a sign up drive in schools throughout the northwest Kansas, including Colby.

Buffalo Bill District Executive Mark Scheopner said he is hoping to get to most of the elementary schools in the district, which covers six counties in northwest Kansas, to help recruit new Scouts.

"The goal is to give every kid a chance to join Scouts," he said.

And it isn't just boys who will be given that chance. The district also has two Venture Scout troops, which allow both boys and girls as members, in Atwood and Colby.

The Boy Scout troops, he said, will be mostly on their own for recruiting.

Scheopner is new to the position, having recently been hired after months of fund raising and weeks of searching.

Scheopner, an Eagle Scout from Atchison who has previously

worked in construction and tax preparation, said he became interested in the position after seeing an ad in the Colby Free Press. He has lived in Goodland for 25 years.

Scheopner will work from his home in Goodland and will serve six counties in northwestern Kansas.

Matt Stuchlik, district executive for the Coronado Council said the council has spent the last six months raising the money to hire someone for the position.

Scheopner said his focus will

be on recruiting new Scouts and volunteers and helping with public relations. He hopes to improve the program, help existing troops keep stable and expand into areas not being served. Recently, he said, the council has started a Boy Scout troop in Bird City, and almost has a Cub Scout pack going as well.

"We have the kids and interest," Stuchlik said. "We just need to recruit leaders."

Scheopner said he is looking for adults to volunteer to be Scout leaders.

Jobless rate high but slowing, labor department says

TOPEKA (AP) — Unemployment in Kansas jumped to 7.7 percent in July, the seventh consecutive month in which the total number of non-farm jobs was lower than during the previous year.

But in a monthly employment report released Friday, the state Department of Labor noted that the overall pace of job losses slowed in July after accelerating in previous months.

"It remains to be seen if July will begin a new trend of slowing job loss or if we will return to the more rapid pace of job loss we were experiencing in the months prior to July," said Tyler Tenbrink, a department labor economist.

The department said the revised unemployment rate for June was 7.1 percent and only 4.9 percent for July 2008. Last month's rate was the highest for Kansas since January 1983, the department said.

In the four-county Wichita metropolitan area, the unemployment rate reached 9.9 percent in July, more than double what it was the year before. The metro area — Butler, Harvey, Sedgwick and Sumner counties — has been hit hard by layoffs in aviation.

Bryan Derreberry, president and chief executive officer of the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, said as credit tightened, demand

for aircraft fell. Some 40,000 jobs in south-central Kansas were tied to aircraft makers and their supply chain, he said.

Alison Felix, an economist with the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, Mo., said of aviation: "It will probably continue to be weak in the coming months."

Kansas lost more than 22,200 manufacturing jobs, or 11.7 percent of the total, from July 2008 to July 2009, the department reported. Overall non-farm employment was down by 48,500 jobs, or about 3.5 percent.

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Offices closed for Labor Day

The Thomas County courthouse, office complex and landfill will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7, for Labor Day. The county transportation van will not run that day. For information, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at 460-4500.

Lions' hog roast Wednesday

The Gem Lions Club will hold its annual hog roast from 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at the Gem Community Building. Entertainment will feature the Jeff Wagner Family, the Bugbee Sisters and other area entertainers. Donations will be accepted for the meal, with the proceeds used for community projects. The Lions also will be collecting used eyeglasses and hearing aids. For information, call Ken Poland at 462-7809.

School calendars offered for \$5

Colby Public Schools pocket calendars will be

available at the Colby High School volleyball and football scrimmage on Friday. The calendars, which cost \$5, are a fund raiser for the Colby Music Boosters. For information, call Kris Lemman at 460-6586, Elaine Bremenkamp at 462-7860 or any Colby music teacher.

Western artist's work at museum

The work of nationally known artist Keith Avery is on display at the Prairie Museum through next Monday. Avery's realistic items include detailed paintings and drawings of horses and cowboy life. The exhibition is open during regular hours. Call (785) 460-4590 for information.

City picking up grass clippings

City crews continue to pick up grass clippings. Clippings must be at curbside by 8 a.m. on your regular trash day in a separate tipper can from house-

hold trash. Put clippings in the tipper loose, not in plastic bags. For questions, call the Public Works office at 460-4420.

Logo needed for 125th bash

The Prairie Museum of Art and History and the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring a logo contest for Thomas County's 125th Anniversary. Entries should include the theme for the celebration: "The Spirit of the Prairie Lives On." They may be submitted on an 8 1/2-by-11 inch sheet of paper to the museum or the Chamber office by mail or in person by Tuesday, Sept. 15. For information, call the museum at 460-4590 or the Chamber at 460-3401.

Crew needs Eagles' T-shirts

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services is looking for new and old Colby Eagles T-shirts for a

fund raiser. Shirts can be dropped off at the ambulance building on South Franklin, near the hospital, or someone will come get them. For information or a pickup, call Dawnelle Umberger at 443-0176.

Sheriff can check vehicles

The Thomas County Sheriff's Office is now checking vehicle identification numbers for cars, light trucks and motorcycles. The office is open 8 a.m., to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call Sheriff Rod Taylor for information or to set up an appointment at 460-4570. Taylor said trailer inspections still have to go through the Kansas Highway Patrol office in Hays. The fee is \$10.

End of the day fun



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Fourth grade students from Colby Grade School were treated to a little end-of-the-school-day fun Friday afternoon, being let outside to blow some bubbles. The students took turns seeing how high they could get the bubbles to float.



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