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# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

September 2, 2009  
Volume 120, Number 137  
Serving Thomas County since 1888

## Commission gets briefing on new census

By Vera Sloan

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Lech Wisniewski, a partnership specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau, told Thomas County commissioners Monday that the government has issued a call for everyone to be counted in the 2010 census.

"I'm here to tell you that it will make a difference in how tax dollars are distributed to your county, according to the numbers of census questionnaires your citizens mail back in to the census bureau," he said.

Thomas County residents had a 74 percent return in 2000, which he said is a decent average.

However, Wisniewski said, the county could be better. People not returning census forms costs the county in federal dollars for infrastructure, and grants, he said.

Wisniewski said it can cost \$3,285 for each "no return" form, and if you multiply that by 25 percent of the population and multiply it by 10 years, it adds up to a lot of money.

He said the government has hired about 1.2 million people to work — they are in a stand-down mode right now. From Jewell County west in Kansas, they will hire around 2,200 more for this region, or about 24 people per county.

He said one in eight persons will receive the long form, and the rest will get the short form, which will be 10 questions and take about 10 minutes to fill it out.

Wisniewski asked the commis-

sioners if the county clerk could be a point of contact for Thomas County. The commissioners suggested he contact the economic development director. Wisniewski said about 60 counties are sharing the duties between the county clerk and the economic development director.

Later, Road Supervisor Clair Schrock asked commissioners for a new drill press, jet mill and clamping kit for the county shop. He said the department had never had an actual drill press, and couldn't find bits for the make-shift one they have been using for years. He said it would save having to hire out all their metal work.

The commissioners gave him the go-ahead to buy the tools for \$1,479, from S&W Supply.

Schrock told the commissioners the county's old steel water wagon has been the inventory since 1956. It is so rusted out it is losing nearly half the water out before they get to a work site, he said.

He said Glen Kersenbrock had approached him about a 7,000 gallon aluminum water trailer he has for sale for \$7,500.

"We need to know if we can justify two water trucks," Commissioner Byron Sowers said. Schrock assured him they could, especially when they are a long ways out of town, and can get only three loads of water a day with just one trailer.

Schrock was told to check and see what was on the market and get back with the commissioners

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## Governor comes out for state smoking ban

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Mark Parkinson said he will push next year for a statewide ban on smoking indoors in public places and he may work to raise the state's tax on cigarettes to boost revenue and improve health.

A similar ban passed in the state Senate earlier this year but failed in the House. Parkinson said Tuesday he'll try to get support from some House members for the proposal when the Legislature convenes in January.

"We are going to put our full effort behind it," Parkinson said during a meeting of the Governor's Council on Fitness.

Many cities in Kansas already ban smoking in indoor public places, such as restaurants and businesses.

"All the research shows this will have a very positive impact on the overall health of Kansans and, over the long term, it will reduce health care costs," said Andrew Allison, acting director of the Kansas Health Policy Authority.

According to state health agency statistics, nearly 4,000 Kansas

residents die annually from smoking-related diseases, including 290 from diseases related to secondhand smoke. Residents spend nearly \$1 billion on treatment related to smoking, including some \$200 million in Medicaid funds.

Parkinson said he may throw his support behind raising cigarette taxes, but that the decision would hinge on whether the state needs more revenue to balance the budget.

Legislative staff have projected a budget shortfall of more than \$500 million in the coming fiscal year. Parkinson has said it's too early to tell how big the gap may be. Legislators have rejected numerous attempts in recent years to increase tobacco taxes.

Kansas imposes a 79-cent tax on a pack of cigarettes — well below the national average of \$1.32.

Former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius failed to garner enough support among lawmakers to increase cigarette taxes by as much as 50 cents a pack to fund expanded health care programs.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

The "Honor Run" bikers rolled into Fike Park on Monday evening, where they were greeted by about 400 people from the Thomas County area. The bikers are raising money on behalf

of wounded veterans during their coast-to-coast motorcycle ride. They stayed overnight in Colby and left Tuesday morning, heading west to Denver.

## Honor Run draws big crowd Monday

By Andy Heintz

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Motorcycles roared, cameras flashed, pictures and American flags waved in the wind as Dave Barr, a double amputee, Vietnam veteran and *Guinness Book of World Records* holder, led a group of bikers into Fike Park on Monday evening.

They riders, on a cross-country fund-raising mission, were warmly greeted by people from Colby and throughout the Thomas County area. Counting the bikers, said Jim Oliver, owner of Oliver and Associates estimated there were between 300 and 400 people in the park.

The riders are taking part in a coast-to-coast tour in honor of military wounded, dubbed the Honor Run. They have been getting donations to build a Fisher House near a Veterans Affairs or military medical center on the West Coast.

A Fisher House is a comfort home located near a hospital where soldiers' families can stay so they can be close to their loved ones. The group says part of the money will go to the 1st Marine Division Association Scholarship Fund, which provides a free education to children of disabled or deceased.

Staff Sgt. Billy J. Hackworth, Army recruiter in Colby, allowed the Bronze Star medal he earned for heroic actions in Iraq to be donated at an auction held in the park that evening to help raise money for the Honor Run. Hackworth earned the medal when he and two other soldiers saved the lives of two members of his brigade who were trapped inside the an Iraqi home with insurgents. Despite being outmanned eight

to three, the Army said, Hackworth and company killed all the insurgents and saved the two soldiers inside.

The medal went for \$2,200.

Colby Fire Department members helped the honor run by passing out buckets where people could give donations to the cause. The Gems Lions Club showed gave the group a check for \$500.

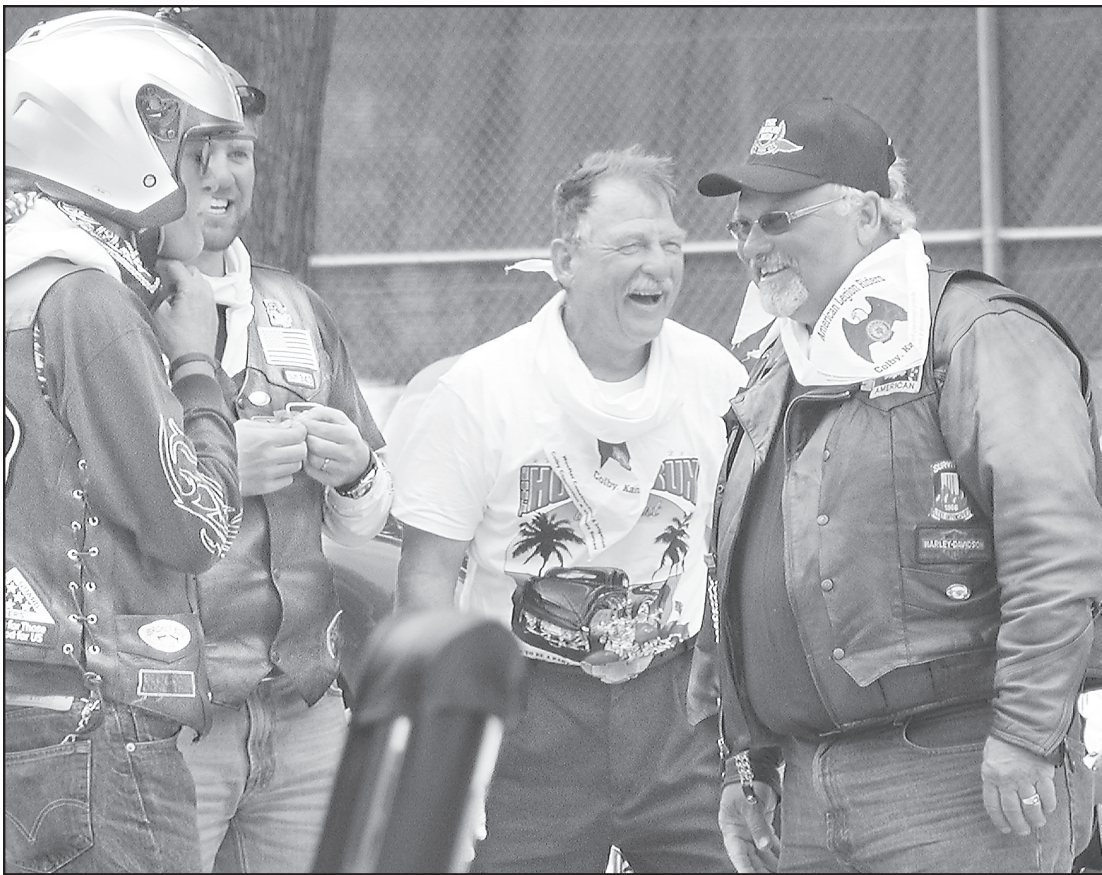
The event ended with inspirational speeches from Barr and New Zealand war veteran Dave Barker.

Barr spoke about serving in

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Jim Oliver, owner of Oliver and Associates and captain of the Honor Run in Colby, spoke to the crowd gathered at the park. He estimated that between 300 and 400 people attended.



Dave Barr (in white), double amputee and two-time *Guinness Book of World Records* holder, talked to some bikers involved in the Honor Run at Fike Park. Barr also spoke at the event.

## Briefly

### Community building dance Friday

A singles and couples dance is planned from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. Friday at the Colby Community Building. Music will be provided by The Calhouns. For information, call Lue Duffey at 855-2341.

### Coaches offer coffee, talk

Join the Colby High School football staff for "Coffee with the Coaches" at 9 a.m. Saturday and every Saturday after home and away football games at the Sports Shoppe, Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue. For information, call Eagles' Coach Chris Gardener at 460-1390.

### No trash pickup on Monday

Colby city sanitation trucks will not run next Monday because of the Labor Day holiday. Monday's route will be picked up on Tuesday, said Public

Works Director Chris Bieker. Have your tipper cans to the curb by 8 a.m. For information, call the Public Works Department at 460-4420.

### Offices closed for Labor Day

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

### Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has a 5-year-old female shepherd mix, a neutered male dachshund/yorkie cross — a dorkie — and two white, fluffy kittens available for adoption. The kittens are not yet old enough to take home. Lost or strayed ani-

mals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

### Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. The building is handicapped accessible with an elevator by the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

### 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.

### Church to hold kids' Bible club

The Awana program, an interdenominational children's Bible club, will be meeting at 7 p.m. each Wednesday starting Sept. 16 at the Colby Berean Church. Colby-area children age 3 through fifth grade are invited to attend. For information, call James Claassen at (785) 694-1677 or the church at 460-2763.



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