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Obama speech to be delayed at area schools

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Amid a flurry of national controversy, President Barack Obama spoke directly to students across the country Tuesday, urging them to stay in school.

Colby students, however, did not see the speech live. Superintendent Terrell Harrison said the district decided that scheduling would be too difficult to show the speech live to all the students. The three schools recorded it and made plans to offer it later in the week.

The 18-minute talk was broadcast over the Internet and cable television at 11 a.m. (Central Time). Harrison said since the district staggers lunch times across all the buildings, and it would have been too difficult to bring all the students together without disrupting the schedule.

Harrison said it was up to the building administrators to decide how and when to show the speech.

High school Principal Don Krebs said the school has archived the speech and will show it on Friday during seminar time – when the high school often has guest speakers – to any student who wants to see it.

Krebs said he has gotten several calls from parents who did not

want the speech shown to their children. One parent, he said, expressed appreciation for how the school had made it optional. Krebs said he will be sending permission slips home today.

Middle school Principal Rob Ross said they will show the speech today to students who want to watch it. The middle school will be showing the speech during team time, and students who do not want to watch the speech will have their normal individual reading programs.

Grade school Principal Lance Krannawitter said he felt the speech may not be too interesting to students in kindergarten and first grade, but he will be showing it to fourth and fifth graders.

“We just felt it wouldn’t hold their interest,” he said of the younger kids.

Krannawitter said the school will show the speech at 1 p.m. Monday for fifth graders and at 2 p.m. for fourth graders. The school will send permission slips home, he said, and have an alternative activity planned for students who didn’t have permission. Krannawitter said the school has received six calls from parents, evenly split between those in favor of showing the speech and those opposed to it.

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Mowing season not quite over



STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

It was a beautiful morning, and Dean Anderson was out today mowing in front of the Quality Inn and the Village Inn restaurant on Range Avenue south of I-70. Anderson, of Colby, said he has an annual contract to mow around several of Mike

Woofter’s businesses, a couple of homes and some other properties. With the sky mostly sunny and blue, and the temperature around 70, he allowed, it wasn’t a bad time to be working outdoors.

Landfill budget cuts came from employee salaries

By Andy Heintz
Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Landfill Supervisor Larry Jumper questioned the Thomas County commissioners Tuesday about a \$25,000 cut in salaries the county made in the 2010 landfill budget, and the commissioners said they’d see what they could do.

The county reduced the department’s budget by a total of \$40,000, but \$25,000 came in salary cuts, Jumper said.

Commissioners Ken Christiansen and Byron Sowers both said they were unaware the reduction in the department’s budget came in the form of salary cuts.

“I knew we were reducing the budget, but I didn’t know it was taken out of salaries,” said Christiansen.

He told Jumper they would get the situation adjusted. Jumper said he wouldn’t be able to pay his workers if the salary cuts remained in place.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved the landfill department buy-

ing a 1999 Chevrolet pickup from Motor Town of Colby for \$3,495. The county had two bids; the other was \$5,850 for a 1998 Ford from Tubbs & Sons.

The Ford has 30,000 less miles on and has four wheel drive. The money will come from the department’s capital outlay fund.

- Decided to give \$8,000 to the department to finish the project to enlarge the pit now in use at the landfill. The money will pay for wages and fuel costs, said Jumper. He said it will come out of the

building, grounds, maintenance and pit excavation funds.

- Nominated Commissioner Ralph Unger of Decatur County to be the northwest Kansas representative on the board of the Kansas Workers Risk Cooperative for Counties. The group will meet Monday, Nov. 16, in Overland Park.

- Decided to approve a bid of \$7,000 for a 1977 tanker from Colby Fertilizer for the road department.

The money will come from the department’s special equipment fund, said Su-

pervisor Clair Schrock. The tanker will replace a 1956 tanker that Schrock said had rusted out.

- Approved a deal between Thomas County and Morgan Township for repair of township roads that might be required as a result of construction activities of a wind farm being built by Acciona Energy. The Spanish firm plans a wind farm near Mingo in southeast Thomas County.

Acciona will reimburse the county for any road costs, said Christiansen.



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Even though the buses going to Colby Grade School and Middle School now have to wait for first grade parents to pick up their students, grade school Principal Lance Krannawitter told the school board Tuesday that pick-up has gone about 10 minutes faster than at the beginning of school, when both first and second grades were picked up in the parking lot on Grant Avenue.

District presents swine flu action plan

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

The Colby School District will keep schools open unless a major outbreak of the H1N1 “swine” flu forces another course, administrators told the school board on Tuesday.

Colby Middle School Principal Rob Ross presented the district’s proposed flu plan, saying classes would be cancelled only if an outbreak was so prevalent that the school couldn’t function, such as if enough substitute teachers can’t be found.

Superintendent Terrell Harrison said Ross, grade school Principal Lance Krannawitter and health nurse Amy Hutfles have been working on the plan since the beginning of the school year.

The plan calls for the district’s medical staff to monitor whether students going home sick have flu symptoms. Ross said the parents shouldn’t send a child to school who has flu

symptoms.

“Even if it’s just seasonal flu, we’ve dodged that bullet, too,” he said.

The district has set up “sick rooms” in every building, where students who have flu symptoms can wait away from other students for their parents to pick them up. The custodial staff, Ross said, is taking time to disinfect in vulnerable areas, especially door handles and shared computer labs.

“The biggest thing is basic hygiene,” Ross said, adding that teachers are encouraging students to wash their hands and bring hand sanitizer for classrooms and computer labs.

Superintendent Terrell Harrison said the district is waiting to hear when it will receive the H1N1 vaccine, which will likely be in November. A team from the Thomas County Health Department and Citizens Medical Center will bring the vaccine to the school for any student with a signed permission slip.

At the meeting, the board also discussed setting a property tax levy to replenish the capital

outlay fund. The district has made purchases out of other funds, since there was no levy for capital outlay. The board discussed the issue at a meeting in June, but did not take any action then.

Vice President Tracy Rogers said the district needs the money to keep the schools at their present quality.

“If we don’t get some money coming in, we can’t start on anything,” he said. “If there’s another way, I’m all for it, but we can’t sit and wait for a bond (issue) to be paid off in four more years before we do anything.”

Board member Omar Weber said he understood that with the state budget cuts, keeping the schools functioning is a problem, but that economically it is not a good time to be gathering money.

“We could hold off for a while, see what the state does,” he said. “If it does get worse, they’ll have made that choice for us.”

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Briefly

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.

Car seat safety checks coming

Certified technicians will do free car-seat inspections in the Walmart parking lot from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday to kick off National Safety Seat Check Week. An estimated 90 percent of all children’s car seats are used incorrectly and possibly dangerous. Technicians will check for recalls, proper fit for the child and vehicle and correct installation. Safety and other exhibits will be nearby. The event is sponsored by Smart Start Northwest Kansas, which has car

seats for families who meet income requirements. For information, call Karen Merryman at 465-9103.

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has a 2-year-old red male dachshund and two 8-week-old white female kittens available for adoption. Lost or strayed animals 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.

RC Club to hold Sunday races

The First Baptist Church RC Club will hold its first September races at 2 p.m. Sunday. Kids 10 or older and adults are welcome; the church can provide cars. For information, call 462-2867.

Orchestra to begin rehearsals

Rehearsals for the Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will be from 7:30 to 9 p.m. every Monday beginning next week in the Colby Community College band room, at the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center, Room 309. Musicians from northwest Kansas and northeast Colorado are free to join; no auditions are necessary. For information, call Mary Shoaff at 462-2159.

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. For information, call the museum at 460-4590 or the Chamber at 460-3401.

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 next week 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.

