



12 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Friday

September 11, 2009

Volume 120, Number 142

Serving Thomas County since 1888

Hospital awarded tax credits for donors

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On Aug. 28, The Kansas Department of Revenue awarded \$250,000 in tax credits to Citizens Medical Center. The hospital can give these credits to individual, business or organization donors to support their planned expansions.

Tama Unger, director of fund development and community relations, said that anyone with a Kansas state tax liability or who pays a Kansas state income tax is eligible to donate and get a tax credit. Be-

cause Colby is designated a rural area, donors will get 70 percent of the donation against their tax liability. For example, if a person donated \$1,000, they would get a \$700 tax credit. The minimum donation to receive the credit is \$250.

"Through the credit people can decide that they would like the local hospital to improve," Unger said. "It helps to keep those tax dollars local."

The donations will go to pay for phase one of the hospital's new annex, part of which is under construction now. This part,

a new building to the south of the ambulance building, will house the medical records and financial departments. Unger said these two departments are currently in very cramped quarters in the interior of the main hospital. Moving them would both give them better facilities and free up office space for other departments.

The second part of phase one will be an expansion at the northwest corner of the existing hospital, which will be expanded forward to meet the current drive-

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Health department advises caution for businesses during fall flu season

Some Kansas businesses may have felt the effects of the H1N1 virus this spring and summer, and now they're being asked to prepare for the potential impact the virus may have as we move into the fall and winter flu season.

Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and Director of Health for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment released a letter to Kansas businesses providing guidance and asking for their assistance in limiting the spread of the 2009 H1N1 virus this fall and winter.

"Businesses across Kansas will play an important

role in helping us limit the spread of the virus in the state," said Dr. Eberhart-Phillips. "We can't say for sure what will happen in Kansas, but as we move into the fall and winter flu season it is time for businesses and employers to prepare. We are fortunate that so far the disease has been relatively mild, but the number of cases of disease in the southern hemisphere has far exceeded normal seasonal flu levels."

Recommended actions for businesses will depend upon the severity of disease in coming months. The

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JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School

Heroes in unlikely places

While celebrating homecoming this week, students at Golden Plains found creative ways to dress up for Hero Day. Juniors Randi Cressler (above, left) and Avery Spresser (right) name custodian Gary Hibbs (center) as their hero. Senior Karly Miller (right), dressed up like her hero, Travis Smith, social studies teacher, administrative assistant, activities director for Golden Plains Middle/High School and high school football coach.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Kansas Gov. Mark Parkinson ordered all flags, including this one at Colby Community College, to half-mast today, honoring the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Parkinson also recognized the day as a "National Day of Service and Remembrance."

Nation remembers attacks on eight-year anniversary

NEW YORK (AP) — With familiar rituals of grief and a new purpose to honor those who rushed into danger to help, the nation marked eight years since the Sept. 11 terror attacks Friday, with volunteers reading the names of the World Trade Center lost.

Memorials in New York, at the Pentagon and at the crash site of United Airlines Flight 93 in Pennsylvania all took place under gray skies, and those reading names at ground zero spoke under tents to protect against rain.

President Barack Obama, observing his first Sept. 11 as president, had signed an order declaring it a day of service. He had first lady Michelle Obama marked a moment of silence outside the White House as a bugler played taps.

The president said the nation came together after the attacks, "united not only in our grief but in our resolve to stand up for the country we love."

George W. Bush, whose presidency was defined in part by that day, had no appearances planned. A spokesman said he would be working in his office. In a statement, he said he and his wife, Laura, were thinking of the victims and their families.

He also honored members of the armed forces and law enforcement. "Their courage, service, and sacrifice is a fitting tribute to all those who gave their lives on Sept. 11, 2001. On this day, let us renew our determination to prevent evil from returning to our shores."

In Shanksville, Pa., bells tolled for the 40 victims of the fourth hijacked jetliner that crashed there eight years ago.

At the trade center site, volunteers — from soup kitchens, advocacy groups, the Red Cross, the United Way — joined relatives of the lost to read the names of those killed in the twin towers.

"I ask that you honor my son and all those who perished eight years ago ... by volunteering, by making some kind of act of kindness in their memory," said Gloria Russin, whose son, Steven Harris Russin, was killed on 9/11.

Around the country, Americans packed up care packages for soldiers, planted gardens for low-income families and painted abandoned, boarded-up homes. The anniversary was declared a day of service for the first time this year.

State budget woes may affect pensions

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Mark Parkinson said Thursday that funding problems for the state pension fund may force changes in its benefit plans.

Parkinson said he's looking at all options for closing a long-term funding shortfall for the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System. However, spokeswoman Beth Martino later said he's not advocating cuts in benefits paid to current retirees.

The fund has said that at the end of 2008, there was an \$8.3 billion gap between its projected income and what it would have to pay in benefits over the next 25 years. The retirement fund has assets of about \$10 billion.

"The underfunding is so significant, in my view, everything has to be looked at," Parkinson said after a Statehouse event.

Officials generally have argued that the state legally can't adjust

benefits or change eligibility requirements for current participants, only for people entering the system.

Parkinson said he's willing to consider changes in eligibility requirements for current participants. He was not more specific.

Martino said: "He is not advocating cutting benefits for current retirees, but he does believe that all other options should be carefully evaluated."

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.



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