



10 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Thursday

October 8, 2009
Volume 120, Number 157
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Embark plans to start hiring in November

By Andy Heintz

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Embark Healthcare, a Florida-based firm that plans to establish an electronic records operation here for people's "advance directives" on medical decisions, hopes to begin hiring its first employees next month.

Chief Executive Officer Michael Brouthers said the firm will hire someone who will be in charge of the service center in Colby.

"This person will be in charge of hiring, training and managing people in Colby," he added.

Brouthers said the firm is looking to hire one or two customer service representatives, who will be flown to Daytona Beach, Fla., where the company is based, for training. Brouthers said when the

training is over, they will return to Colby, where they will train other employees. He said he expects his company will hire 30 to 50 people in the next year.

The company's website should be ready for public viewing by Jan. 1, said Brouthers. He said people will also be able to buy services from the Advance Directive Clearing House on the website.

He said the clearinghouse will offer:

- A team of trained staff, available at all hours of the day to help people in completing their directives, telling family and doctors what they want to happen to them if they are no longer able to speak for themselves.

- Online storage of directives, available at all hours.

See "EMBARK," Page 3

4-H to celebrate year at banquet

By Vera Sloan

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With over a hundred 4-H'ers in Thomas County, the kids will have a lot to celebrate at the annual Achievement Banquet at 6:30 p.m. Friday at the 4-H Building at the fair grounds.

Ninety-two winners will receive duffle bags with "2009 Thomas County Fair Champion" stamped on the side. The bags take the place of the normal trophies given at the fair each year.

The bags serve as an award that

can be used by the members, said Diann Gerstner, Extension Family and Consumer Sciences director here, and a way of promoting the program.

One of the most important duties of the year for 4-H Clubs is completing the record book with an accounting of the year's activities. This achievement will be recognized at the banquet.

Opportunities offered through 4-H have been available in Kansas for 105 years, Gerstner said, and untold numbers of leaders got

See "4-H," Page 3



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Basketball team, Rotary pitch in on Range cleanup

Colby Community College women's basketball players (above) Jessica Mitchell, Tamara Williams, Courtney Bradley and Alicia Seay mug the camera before cleaning up trash along Range Avenue from College Drive to Interstate 70 on Tuesday afternoon. Seay (right), a freshman, picked up

trash near the corner of Range and College. The Lady Trojans were helping the Colby Rotary Club with its annual highway clean-up project. Member Mike Tubbs of Tubbs and Sons Ford said the club made a deal with the state to be responsible for keeping the area along Range clean.



Fall colors



SHEILA FRAHM

A few cold, wet days aren't the only signs that fall is in the air. In many places around Colby, the leaves have just begun to change, while a few have already produced spectacular splashes of red and yellow mixed in with the fading green.

Interior Department may move wild horses east

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of mustangs that now roam the West would be moved to preserves in the Midwest and East under a new Interior Department plan to protect wild horse herds and the rangelands that support them.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said Wednesday the plan would not require killing any horses. Interior Department officials had warned in recent months that slaughtering some of the 69,000 wild horses and burros under federal control might be necessary to combat rising costs of maintaining them.

Nearly 37,000 wild horses and burros roam in Nevada, California, Wyoming and other Western states, and another 32,000 are cared for in corrals and pastures in Kansas, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Salazar said the current program is not sustainable for the animals, the environment or taxpayers.

The program, run by the Bureau of Land Management, cost about \$50 million this year, officials said, up from \$36 million last year. Costs are expected to rise to at least \$85 million by 2012.

The bureau rounds up thousands of the animals each year but has had a hard time finding buyers.

In a conference call with reporters, Salazar and bureau director Bob Abbey urged Congress to authorize

seven wild horse preserves — including two owned and operated by the bureau. The agency would work with private groups on the remaining reserves, which would be in the Midwest and East.

Water and forage are limited in the West, Salazar said, and drought and wildfires threaten both rangeland and animal health in many states.

"Unfortunately, arid western lands and watersheds cannot support a population this large without significant damage to the environment," he said.

Salazar did not say where the preserves would be located, but said the two federally owned operations would cost about \$92 million to buy and build. The preserves would reduce taxpayer costs for care of wild horses in the long term, Salazar said.

"It also will be better for the horses," he added.

The seven preserves would hold about 25,000 horses. Many of those remaining on the range would be neutered, the secretary said, and reproduction in Western herds would be limited.

Some ranchers, Native American groups and Western lawmakers have proposed reversing a decades-old ban on selling wild horses for slaughter, but Salazar

See "HORSES," Page 3

Briefly

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has a 3- to 4-year-old female chocolate lab 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.

City to drop clipping collection

Friday is the last day Colby city sanitation crews will pick up grass clipping as a separate route this year. Jo Strange at the city office said as of Monday, people can start putting their clippings out with the regular trash. Separate collections will resume in the spring. For questions, call the Public Works office at 460-4420.

Flu vaccine supply spent

The Thomas County Health Department has run

out of adult seasonal flu vaccine. There are still a few doses available for children 6 months to age 18, said Finance Administrator Kasiah Rothchild, but none for adults. The department expects its next shipment in November. For information, call the agency at 460-4596.

Learning Center in new digs

The Thomas County Learning Center plans an open house from 3-6 p.m. Monday at its new location, 485 N. Chickamauga Ave. Refreshments will be served and door prizes given, said Instructor Donna Finley. For information, call the center at 465-7900.

Publisher will talk about debt

Dr. Larry Bates, an economist and publisher of the *Monetary and Economic Review*, will speak at 6:30 p.m. next Wednesday at the Brewster Community

Church about the debt-based economy and how it affects the country. For information, call Mike Pinkelman (785) 694-2720.

Sign up for food package

Prairie Land Food sign up for October will be through Friday at the State Farm Insurance office, 95 E. Fourth St. Delivery will be 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, at the Sacred Heart School Gym, 1150 W. Sixth. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Book fair continues on Friday

Sacred Heart School's Scholastic Book Fair will continue from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday in the gym. For information, call Sister Loretta at the school at 460-2813.

County van off for half a day

The Thomas County transportation van will run

from only from 12:30 to 4 p.m. on Friday because the driver will be off. For information, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at 460-4500.

Kiwanis plans pancake feed

The Colby Kiwanis Club will hold a pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, 220 N. Lake Ave. The cost will be \$4 per person for all you can eat. Tickets are available from any Kiwanian. For information, call Kenton Krehbiel at 462-7904.



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