



8 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## County ends budget year up \$300,000

By Vera Sloan  
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The Thomas County commissioners had big smiles on their faces Thursday when they learned the county had underspent the 2009 budget by slightly over \$300,000. County Clerk Shelly Harms had prepared an end-of-year report for to show commissioners where the savings had come from. Showing up big on the report were the interest received from delinquent taxes, savings in the sheriff's budget, motor-vehicle tax, fees taken in by various county offices and the county sales tax.

"This is great," said Commissioner Paul Steele, "We're in the black and had absolutely no room in the 2010 budget for a new boiler for the courthouse because we had to spend it on new software, and now it looks like we'll be able to have some money set aside to help with the upgrades we've been needing."

Commissioner Byron Sowers

suggested \$110,000 be transferred to a reserve fund for the boiler, which met with unanimous approval.

The commissioners also reserved \$20,000 for the sheriff's department, \$25,000 to pay the December bills and will roll over the rest, about \$155,000, into the general fund for the 2010 budget.

The commissioners praised the departments, noting that they were able to reduce the levy for the landfill and didn't levy anything for the ambulance department because it was holding its own, and it looked like there would be money in the fund when the time comes to buy a new ambulance.

The sheriff underspent his budget by more than \$162,000 in spite of some outcry from the public earlier this year about overtime.

"I've worked on this budget and still have more to do," said Sheriff Rod Taylor. "There is more grumbling going on right now about overtime, and I'd be glad to sit

See "BUDGET," Page 3

## A hill made for sledding



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Even though a lot of the snow on the ground in Colby melted by the weekend, there was more than enough of the giant snow mountain in Buffalo Park, east of South Franklin Ave., for kids

to go sledding. The city uses the site as a dumping ground for the snow plowed off the streets.

## Wellness campaign to start Monday

By Vera Sloan  
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Sponsors say last year's family wellness project, "Wise Up, Count Down Thomas County," was so well received they are offering a repeat.

Each participant in Wise Up, Count Down will pay a \$30 fee to cover costs of the program, according to information from the Thomas County Extension office, plus \$30 for a comprehensive blood profile at the beginning and end of the eight-week program.

Friday is the deadline for registration, followed by weigh in next Monday and blood

testing beginning on Tuesday, Jan. 12.

Participants are urged to form teams of four. Individuals can register, organizers say, but results usually are better for teams. Team members help each other succeed, they say.

Registration forms and information packets are available at the Extension office at 350 S. Range Ave. or the City Recreation Department office in the Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. Applications also also available at [www.thomas.ksu.edu](http://www.thomas.ksu.edu).

No late registrations will be accepted, the Extension office says.

Blood draws will be taken in the front lobby of Citizens Medical Center from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. from Tuesday, Jan 12, through Saturday,

Jan. 16. A 12-hour fast is required prior to the draw.

The wellness committee says improved blood scores can show improved health, along with reduced weight. Before and after testing can show a "count down" of cholesterol and/or blood sugar. Tests include a complete blood count, lipid profile, glucose (blood sugar) and other chemistry.

Other tests being offered include thyroid, \$20; prostate, \$25; and diabetes management (hemoglobin A1c), \$20. People can do the blood tests only, said Pat Erickson of the Wellness Committee. A second round of tests at the

See "WELLNESS," Page 3

## Police, sheriff make pot bust

Late Tuesday evening, the Thomas County Sheriff's Office and the Colby Police Department arrested three Colby residents for possession of marijuana with intent to sell.

Sheriff Rod Taylor said that a combined investigation by the departments led them to the house at 690 N. Cleveland. A warrant was issued and three officers started to search the house about 9 p.m.

Taylor said they found 212 grams — about half of a pound — of marijuana, along with \$2,649 in cash in a bedroom.

Dustin Lane Stiner, 27, and Amanda Marie Hanley, 20, were arrested at the house for possession of marijuana with intent to sell or distribute. Copelen Kyle Justice, 18, was later arrested at his home at 1155 Summer Sun Ave.

Taylor said the search took several hours, and it was 1 a.m. by the time Hanley and Justice were booked. None of the three had been released on bond as of this morning.

Taylor said he thought the three would have a first appearance in District Court today.

## Making good progress



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

The new Hampton Inn on Willow Drive next to Bosselman's truck stop is going right up. Construction began in September, not long before work began on a second new hotel, a Sleep

Inn near Walmart. On Sunday, a crew was hard at work on the Hampton Inn's roof.

## Heavy snowfall expensive for state

TOPEKA (AP) — The White Christmas much of Kansas awoke to came with a big cost, made bigger by overtime and holiday pay for road workers.

The state Department of Transportation is still tallying the expense of clearing roads after a winter storm hit Kansas during the long holiday weekend.

Department spokesman Steve Swartz said a snowstorm of the duration the state experienced typically would cost about \$2.2 million. "

But since this storm took place over a holiday, pay rates and labor cost will be greater," he said.

Swartz said it will take a few weeks before officials know precisely how much the storm cost because most of the expenses relate to payroll, and some won't be processed until mid-January.

Snow began falling early in the morning of Dec. 24 and continued on and off until Dec. 27, making travel difficult over the whole weekend. Parts of Interstate 70 and other roads were closed at times.

Accumulations ranged from trace amounts in the southwestern part of the state to between 6

See "SNOWFALL," Page 3

## Briefly

### Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has a 1-year-old male beagle, a 1- to 2-year-old male black-and-tan dachshund mix and a 3- to 4-month-old female black lab mix 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.

### Fatherhood program to start soon

The Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center's "24/7 Dad" fatherhood program will be offered again starting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church in Colby. For information, call the center at 460-8177.

### Test Thursday for Census jobs

The 2010 Census employment test will be given

at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The multiple-choice test is the first step in being hired as a Census taker. Anyone may take the free test. For information, call (866) 861-2010.

### Hospital plans birthing classes

Citizens Medical Center will hold a four-week series of childbirth education classes from 7 to 10 p.m. Thursdays beginning this week for women due to deliver before May. The partner who will be with the mother during labor should attend. The next classes will begin April 1. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown in the Education Department at (785) 460-4850.

### Seniors plan potluck Jan. 12

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, Jan. 12, 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.

### Conservation meeting Jan. 15

The annual meeting of the Thomas County Conservation District will be at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Make reservations by Friday, Jan. 15, with district manager Debbie Potter at 462-7482, extension 303.

### For latest flu info, call 460-4599

A hot line for questions on seasonal influenza and the H1N1 flu strain will be available throughout the flu season at (785) 460-4599. The Thomas County Health Department posts information about the status and availability of vaccines and priority.

### Medical class to begin in February

An Emergency Medical Technician class will begin Thursday, Feb. 4, and run Wednesdays and Thursdays plus two Saturdays each month until May 15. Registration is due by Thursday, Jan. 21. State grants cover the cost. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

### Hospital auxiliary needs help

The Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary is looking for volunteers to greet visitors, operate the gift shop and help patients and their families, among other things. If you'd like to get involved, call Tama Unger at 460-1214 or Mary Smith at 462-3387.



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