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College hires Colby man to build net

By Vera Sloan
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Derek Reilley, a telecommunications instructor at the Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland for the past 12 years, has been named as Title III director and on-line developer for Colby Community College.



Derek Reilley

Reilley will develop a distance learning network using a \$1.97 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, said college President Dr. Lynn Kreider.

Chris Ellison, Title III program administrator, said the goal is to increase online enrollment. She said the college is interviewing for two more positions, a faculty/staff specialist and a Title III information technician. She also said they are just starting to develop the program and have yet to decide what the fees will be.

"This grant will be used to

strengthen our organization and is geared to online programing," said Paula Davis, vice president of academic affairs at the college. "It will help build a system to market services at a distance to students so that they can take any course on line that we offer.

"We will be able to offer courses in a traditional or lecture format; hybrid, which is a combination of lecture and online; and a regular online distance learning network, and it will allow us to have a better web presence. Derek Reilley is just a wonderful addition to our college and to our staff."

Reilley said he is interested in online learning and began developing and teaching online courses for the technical college. He said he has taught more than 50 online and web-enhanced courses.

He served as Internet Tech-

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

A student from the Colby Community College Physical Therapy Assistant program measured Linda Pabst for flexibility on Monday for the start of the "Wise Up Count Down" wellness

program in Thomas County. The Wellness Committee enlisted the students to take blood pressure, stamina, flexibility and strength readings.

Hundreds begin wellness campaign

By Vera Sloan
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Moans and groans came from nearly everyone who braved the weigh-in and measurement portion of the 2010 "Wise Up Count Down, Thomas County" wellness program, which began on Monday and runs through March 8.

One hundred eight adults and nine children came to the Little Theater at the Community Building on Monday afternoon and evening

to be weighed and measured for strength, fitness and body mass index, to begin the year's wellness push, said Diann Gerstner of the Thomas County Extension office.

As a part of the Wise Up Count Down program, participants can get blood work done at the Citizens Medical Center lab and will be able to repeat the tests at the end of the eight-week period. The discounted blood work continues through Saturday morning and from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. in the lobby of the hospital.

"The number of people who signed up is

down a little this year," said Gerstner, "but we're still excited about (this program)."

She said next week Tina Harris of Tina Harris Physical Therapy, Pat Erickson, director of the Physical Therapy program at Colby Community College, and Courtney Albers, dietician at Citizens, will discuss what the measurements taken at the weigh-in mean, strategies on how to improve them and how they got there in the first place.

They will talk from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday in the Little Theater.



COLBY POLICE DEPARTMENT

An unknown person (lower left) was caught by a police camera taking five wooden lambs from the nativity scene in Fike Park on Dec. 28. Police believe the thief is a woman, but have not yet been able to identify her.

Lamb rustler caught on camera

By Kevin Bottrell
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Lamb rustling isn't a common crime in Colby, but at 11:56 p.m. Dec. 28, someone stole five wooden lambs from the nativity scene in Fike Park. Unfortunately for them, they were caught by a police surveillance camera.

Police Chief Randy Jones said one thief, who police think is a woman, was caught on a camera that had been set up in Fike Park. The camera had been installed three years ago, he said, because

there had been some other vandalism incidents with the nativity scene. Parts of the display have been rearranged, taken or damaged.

Jones said that Holly Whitaker, executive director of the Colby Chamber of Commerce, was the first to report the missing lambs. Whitaker had gone to the park to take down some of the other Christmas decorations when she noticed the empty stakes where the lambs had been.

Jones went to check the camera,

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Dropout prevention meeting Friday

By Kevin Bottrell
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Kansas Drop-Ins, an organization working to lower the dropout rate in Kansas schools, will hold a "post-summit" meeting from 9 a.m. to noon Friday in room 108 of the student union at Colby Community College.

The session is one of several regional meetings being held across the state to follow up on the Drop-

Ins Summit held in Wichita in October. The audience, along with a moderator, will go over the ideas that came out of the summit and brainstorm some ways to implement them. The meeting will be free and people are encouraged to bring their kids.

Jessica Noble, Kansas Drop-Ins coordinator, said that only one person has signed up to attend the post-summit meeting so far, and that the organization may have to cancel the event.

At its events, she said, the group has tried to address the issues that each region of Kansas has with keeping students in school. The group held a pre-summit in Colby in September, which included school administrators and area citizens. At that meeting, Noble said that while the dropout rate in the northwest is consistently below the state average, it is still a problem. There were 3,640 dropouts in Kansas in 2007, she said, which was estimated to account for \$946

million in lost lifetime earnings.

During the discussion, the attendees said they did not know exactly what caused many of the youths to drop out, but many fall under common causes such as bad events in the student's life, a feeling that the student is being pushed out, lack of academic success or a fading desire to stay in school.

At the statewide summit in October, the attendees divided into

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City hard at work replacing aging pipes

By Vera Sloan
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City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said today the city crew was working to replace part of a water main that broke over the weekend in Fifth Street in front of the Colby Free Press.

She said a break wasn't totally unexpected, because the city is dealing with an aging un-

derground infrastructure. She said the city has had problems especially on Fifth and Sixth Streets and on Webster, where another main broke Friday, for some time.

"Part of the reason to raise the water rates is to help with the cost of replacing an aging system," she said. "Right now, we don't know the cost of this job, but we do know it will be expensive because of the overtime."

Plus, adding to the expense of fixing the line, was that all the water being pumped

down the storm drain was treated water.

She said the main is back together now, but the crew ran into other problems. In the process of doing the repairs, workmen discovered that many years ago when the floor was poured for the storm sewer, it was poured right over the taps for two of the downtown businesses.

"We couldn't shut the water off if we want-

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Briefly

Hospital offers cut-rate tests

The Citizens Medical Center Laboratory, the Thomas County Wellness Committee and Thomas County Extension are offering blood draws for discounted lab tests from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. through Saturday at the hospital's specialty clinic. Tests will include comprehensive metabolic profile, thyroid stimulating hormone, prostate specific antigen and hemoglobin A1C for diabetics. Participants should fast for 10-12 hours. Results will be available at 5:30 and 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25. For information, call Jeanene Brown at 460-4850 or Diann Gerstner at 460-4582.

High school reports cards out

Colby High School sent report cards home with students on Friday, said Activities Secretary Tanya Staats. For information, call her at 460-5302.

St. Jude's needs used cards

Don't throw those used Christmas cards away. The Colby Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary has a drop-off box at the Pioneer Memorial Library for them. Cards will go to kids at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis for projects. For information, call Hazel Duffey at 462-3476.

Conservation meeting Jan. 25

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 with district manager Debbie Potter at 462-7482, extension 303.

Students offer Monday massages

Physical Therapist Assistant students at Colby Community College will hold a massage clinic from

4 to 7:30 p.m. on Mondays Jan. 18 and 25 and Feb. 1 in the Pierre Henry Allied Health Building, room 804. Cost for the 30-minute massages is \$12. Make appointments by calling Trudy Wildeman at 460-4797. Walk-ins are also available. For information, call Wildeman at 460-4797.

Girl Scout cookies on sale here

Girl Scout cookies will be on sale from Saturday through Sunday, March 7. If you don't want to buy cookies for yourself, you can mark on the order form for Scouts to deliver them to Genesis Food Bank, Kansas National Guard families or McConnell Air Force Base families. This year, the Scouts will not have a booth at the Home and Garden Show. If you have not been asked to buy cookies by Feb. 1, you may call Mint Culver at 460-6005 or Penny Cline at 460-2929.

Hearing set on emergency plan

Thomas County Emergency Management and E-Fm Consulting will hold the final public meeting for the Thomas County Hazard Mitigation Plan at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, at the Thomas County Office Complex. The plan, being developed by the county and its cities, aims to help reduce the damage done by disasters. A public comment period will run from Jan. 21 to Feb. 4, after which the plan will be set. Drafts of the plan can be viewed at the emergency management office or the Pioneer Memorial Library. For information, call Director Susan McMahan at 460-4516.

