



36 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS



75¢

Friday

January 15, 2010

Volume 121, Number 8

Serving Thomas County since 1888

County gets grant for new radio equipment

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
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The Thomas County Emergency Management Department received a grant in late December for \$235,316 to replace radio equipment and the console in the dispatch office.

Among other things, the new equipment will show dispatchers exactly where

a mobile call comes from even if it comes from a computer.

Susan McMahan, emergency management director, said the grant came from the Kansas Wireless Enhanced 911 fund, which comes from fees on cell phones.

The money will be used to replace radio equipment in the dispatch console in the Law Enforcement Center, which was destroyed by a lightning strike last May. Dispatchers had to move to a backup set

of equipment in the Emergency Operations Center in the Thomas County Office Complex until it was repaired.

The grant will pay for 100 percent of the Next Generation E911, an advanced version of the county's current 911 system which allows dispatchers to pinpoint with the global positioning system a 911 call from a computer using voice over internet technology.

The grant also paid for 74 percent of the

radio consoles, 91 percent of the maintenance agreements and 100 percent of the power supply equipment. McMahan said she got four out of five of her requests; the county did not get any money for extra training on the new console.

McMahan said that if Senate Bill 48 does not go to the floor of the House this year, there will be no more E911 funds, and that her department was really fortunate to get the money. She also said state

officials complimented the department on how well the grant was written.

"We shot for the moon, and got 86 percent of it, and now all we need is your permission to accept the grant," she said.

The commissioners approved accepting the grant and appointed McMahan to be the county's representative to the Regional Emergency Management Council.

Area student safe after quake

By Erica Bradley

The Norton Telegram
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Thousands of people are presumed dead following the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that hit

the island nation of Haiti on Tuesday, and as officials sift through the damage, one Norton family is relieved to know their daughter was not hurt.

When the earthquake hit, 21 mission-team members were at Centre for Children International Lifeline Haiti Orphanage in Croix-des-Bouquets. With them was Naomi Streck, a native of Norton and a senior at Wichita State University on her second mission trip to the Caribbean country.

John Reimer, a board member of the group, said all of the team members and children were un-

hurt, but their safety remained a concern due to looters looking for a food and water.

He said the orphanage has a four-acre compound surrounded by a security wall.

"Obviously, when you have a 9-foot wall with razor wire, it is there for a reason," he said.

The orphanage's structures were not damaged, although Reimer reported two holes in the security wall.

By yesterday afternoon, he said, security officers had been hired to protect the property.

"We feel OK about their safety, but they will be out of food and water by the end of the week," he said.

Reimer said the orphanage is 7 miles from the airport, and the team members were expected to

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Naomi Streck of Norton went on a mission trip to Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. She did a second trip this year and was in Haiti when the earthquake hit on Tuesday, but her mission team did not suffer any injuries.

Playing games at the library



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

There was something for everyone Thursday at the Business After Five, when members of the Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce got together at the Pioneer Memo-

rial Library on Wednesday. Annie Morris, 3, got to have some "mommy time" with mom Michelle Morris at the controls of a video game.

'Lifenight' at Sacred Heart



KIMBERLY SHIRLEY/Sacred Heart Parish

Kate Ostmeier, Anna Taylor, Rachel Juenemann and Katera Harter wrote down their "Faith Journey" New Year resolutions at a "Lifenight," event held by the Lifeteen group at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in December. Kids from Brewster, Hoxie and Colby joined the core team to learn about Advent. Father Steve Folorunso from the Sacred Heart parish in Atwood talked with the group. The team is planning another Lifenight this month.

Farm Credit Services shows off new building

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
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Clear skies and a bright, sunny day brought over 250 people to an open house Wednesday at the new Farm Credit Services office at College Driver and Range Avenue to tour the \$4 million facility, which opened for business last month.

The cost includes everything

from land to the furniture, down to the concrete parking lot, said President Larry Maxwell.

The 14,500-square-foot building was designed by Gibson, Mancini, Carmichael and Nelson, an architectural firm from Garden City, he said. Builder was Woofert Construction of Colby. Woodwork was by Craig Myers of Mingo Woods.

Farm Credit Services came

about through a merger 10 years ago between two farm banks, Maxwell said, the old Production Credit Association, a short-term commercial lender for livestock, crops and machinery, and the Federal Land Bank, which made mortgage loans on real estate.

"The merger made it more convenient for the borrowers to be

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Colby nurse opens chicken wing joint

By Vera Sloan

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After being a licensed practical nurse for 20 years, a registered nurse for 19 years, and pleasing her family with her cooking for more, Juanita Dewey's dream finally came true today when Mamma D's Chicken Wings opened in the Southwind Plaza.

"Whenever my family came to my house, they'd always say, 'hey, Mamma D, fix us some chicken

wings,' so I always did," she said, "and for the past five years, it's been a dream of mine to have a place to have chicken wings for sale. Now it's finally happening."

She said getting the restaurant off the ground hasn't been easy. She applied for a grant, and got turned down, she said, so she started saving and being a "scrooge" and finally got enough together to get going."

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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.

Students offer Monday massages

Physical Therapist Assistant students at Colby Community College will offer a massage clinic from 4 to 7:30 p.m. on Mondays the next three weeks,

through 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 OK. For information, call Wildeman at 460-4797.

Girl Scout cookies on sale here

Girl Scout cookies are 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, or Kansas military units and 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, at the Thomas County Office Complex. A public comment period will run from Jan. 21 to Feb. 4, after which the plan will be set. Drafts can be viewed at the county emergency management office or the Pioneer Memorial Library. For information, call Director Susan McMahan at 460-4516.

Meeting set for medical class

An enrollment meeting for the Emergency Medical Technician class will be 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 27 at the Ambulance Building. Anyone who wants to enroll must attend. The class will begin Thursday, Feb. 4, and run Wednesdays and Thursdays, plus two Saturdays each month, until May 15. Registration is due by next Thursday. State grants cover the cost. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

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 groups.

St. Jude's needs greeting cards

Don't throw your used greeting 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.



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