



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Monday

January 25, 2010
Volume 121, Number 13
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Early release policy puts a dent in tardies

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

In December, the Colby School Board decided to try and do something about the number of students late to class at Colby High School, and so far it seems to be working. High school Principal Don Krebs told the board last week that tardies were down for the first hour and overall compared with the fall semester. The board had allowed Krebs to offer early release on the third Friday of every month, instead of the 45-minute

long seminar, to students who are on time for their classes and do not have D's or F's. Krebs said that for the first three weeks of the fall semester, the school had 136 tardies, 83 of them for the first class of the day. In the first three weeks of the spring semester, after the new policy was put in place, there were 82 tardies, 48 for the first class. The early release policy is a temporary one for the spring semester. In other business: • Colby High School student Ashley Standage presented her se-

mester English and history project on the life of George Eastman, a high school dropout who went on to found the Eastman-Kodak Co. English teacher Nancy Rundel said the semester projects are done jointly by her junior English class and Aaron Lamble's history class. The students do research, create a visual project and put together an oral presentations. Rundel said she looks at the composition and public speaking for her class while Lamble looks at the research and historical accuracy. The presen-

See "TARDIES," Page 3

Norton, Lenora schools to combine their districts

By Erica Bradley

The Norton Telegram
ebradley@nwkansas.com

The West Solomon Valley School District in Lenora, which has only 17 students in its elementary school, plans to disorganize at the end of the school year and merge with the nearby Norton district. The agreement to disorganize West Solomon Valley and attach it to the Norton Community Schools will mean the students at Lenora Elementary School will attend Norton schools. The school in Lenora will be closed, and the districts will combine their budgets. That move will increase Norton's school budget by an estimated \$400,000 a year, as well as protect it from further state cuts under a state law meant to encourage consolidation of districts. Norton Superintendent Greg Mann said the state Board of Education approved the agreement during

its Jan. 12 meeting. Both boards had approved the agreement during their December meetings. Mann said school district budgets which are combined due to disorganization, consolidation or another issue are protected from cuts for a specified time period, three years in this case. Further state budget cuts this year are a possibility, he said, but might require a two-thirds majority vote in the Legislature because the governor is threatening to veto any more education cuts. Mann said there still is discussion about cuts for the 2010-11 budget to make up an expected budget deficit. "The cut being 'rumored' for 2010-11 is an additional \$289 per student, which is the amount of reduction needed to pay for 52 percent of the projected \$400 million budget deficit in 2010-11," Mann said.

See "SCHOOLS," Page 3

Teachers put on halftime show



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

In what has become a yearly tradition, teachers from Colby High School provided a half-time dance show at the Orange and Black Classic during the Saturday boys' game against the Goodland Cowboys.



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Mike Hake of Colby (left), a claims adjuster for Farm Bureau Insurance, was in Levant on Monday morning to begin estimating damage from a house fire Wednesday as owner Dale Deaver watched. Hake said he was just starting his work and might have to visit the scene again.

Husband is arrested; Levant fire ruled arson

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

A fire that damaged the inside of a house in Levant on Wednesday appears to have been started on purpose, investigators say, and the husband of the family that rented the house has been arrested for arson. The house, owned by Dale Deaver, was being rented to Stacey Allen and Danyelle DeuFriend. Taylor said Stacey DeuFriend had been arrested for arson Thursday, held for 24 hours and released Friday on his own recognizance. Investigators continued working on the case Monday. A claims adjuster and an investigator from Farm Bureau Insurance were at the house doing their own inspection. Meanwhile, friends said, Danyelle DeuFriend and her three children, Tim, 5; Hayden, 3 or 4; and an 8-month-old baby,



A house fire in Levant on Wednesday left the kitchen and front of the house a shambles.

were staying at a motel. Danyelle DeuFriend works at Dillons in Colby, they said, and employees there were planning a campaign to help the family. The fire, in a house that once provided space for the town's post office at 505 N. Main, was reported about 2:40 p.m. Wednesday. The Colby Fire Department sent two tankers, an engine and a support truck to the blaze. The nearby Bartlett Grain elevator sent a water truck.

See "ARSON," Page 3

Briefly

Meeting set for medical class

Want to be an ambulance crew member? An enrollment meeting for an emergency medical technician class will be at 6 p.m. Wednesday at the ambulance building on South Franklin Avenue. The class will begin Thursday, Feb. 4, and run Wednesdays and Thursdays, plus two Saturdays each month, until May 15. State grants cover the cost. For information, call Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

Food delivery set for Saturday

Prairie Land food delivery will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Sacred Heart School gym, 1150 W. Sixth St. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Heartland to hold barbecue

Heartland Christian School will hold its annual barbecue from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday at the

school, 1995 W. Fourth St., with barbecue pork, corn, salad, baked potatoes and dessert. Donations will be accepted. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

County to start testing sirens

Thomas County will test the tornado sirens at noon on the first Monday of each month beginning next week, said Emergency Management Director Susan McMahan. The tests will continue all year if weather permits. For information, call McMahan at 460-4516.

County van to run half days

The Thomas County transportation van will run from only from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 2, and Wednesday, Feb. 3, because the driver requested time off. For information, call Kristi Mann at the county clerk's office, 460-4500.

Rotary to serve soup at game

The Colby Rotary Club will hold its annual soup supper from 5 to 7:30 Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the Colby Community Building during the high school basketball games with Goodland. The cost will be \$4 for adults and \$2 for children 12 and under. For information, call Sara Bryan at (308) 530-8363.

Girl Scout cookies on sale here

Girl Scout cookies are on sale through Sunday, March 7. If you don't want to buy cookies for yourself, you can ask Scouts to deliver them to Genesis Food Bank or Kansas military units and families. If you have not been offered cookies by Feb. 1, call Mint Culver at 460-6005 or Penny Cline at 460-2929.

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, priority groups and the like.

St. Jude's needs old cards

Don't throw those 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.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3