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City, county lock horns over landfill

By Andy Heintz

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City Manager Carolyn Armstrong told the City Council last week she fears the Thomas County commissioners are treating the city of Colby as a “money tree,” “without any regard for what’s fair and equitable.”

She discussed some of her concerns when the council met last Tuesday.

After a discussion, the city voted to approve paying half the costs it had been billed for the Northwest Kansas Recycling Center, on city land by the water tower, until July 1 and negotiate with county commissioners about who will pay the rest.

Armstrong said if the council had approved paying all of the costs as assessed, the city would have had to pay \$10,900 and the county \$5,460 based on population in the city and in the rural areas. She also said the city may be billed for another \$5,450 in July

and October to cover recycling costs.

Armstrong said she thought the county should split the recycling fee 50-50 with the city based on the way the county charges the city for the household hazardous waste facility. The city pays \$175 a month for rent at the facility and it also paid half the utilities and disposal costs

Armstrong said the council invited county commissioners to meet with them at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9, at City Hall. Commissioner Paul Steele said the \$10,900 charged to the city stems from the county raising prices for all municipalities when the Northwest Kansas Recycling Center was having trouble selling its recyclables during the recession. Steele said the hike in the city prices provided the center with a small subsidy so they could get by until the economy improved.

“The recycling folks couldn’t cover the expenses at the time,”

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DENITA RODGER/Colby High dance team

The Colby High School dance team practiced along with 1,400 other students from dance teams, cheer and flag squads and marching bands before their halftime performance at the Liberty Bowl on Jan. 2 in Memphis, Tenn. The girls spent 10 hours learning the routine.

Colby High School dance team rocks halftime, parade in Memphis

By Andy Heintz

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The Colby High dance team is used to performing in front of crowds, but doing a show in front of 75,000 is another story.

But that is exactly what the girls had to do when they performed during halftime at the 51st annual Auto Zone Liberty Bowl on Jan. 2 in Memphis, Tenn., featuring the University of Arkansas and East Carolina.

The Lady Eagles performed with 12 other high school dance teams, eight marching bands, flag teams and musician Eddie Money. Harold Graeter, associate executive director of the Liberty Bowl, said about 1,400 kids took part in all.

“It was surreal,” said Colby freshman Cameron McLaughlin.

Coach Denita Rodgers said the girls performed well.

“They worked hard,” she said. “I was really proud of them. We were excited to get to do what we had been working for.”

Members of this year’s dance team include Lacy O’Neal, Kayla Skiles, Brittany Bange and Taranie Touslee. McLaughlin, Jennifer Schwanke, Haley Stickel, Katera Harter and Gabby Browne, Keesa Wright, Audra Fleming, Christina Ostmeyer and Tera Raymond. Kathi Wright, Keesa’s mom, Rhonda McLaughlin, Cameron’s mom, and Terrilyn Fleming, Audra’s mom, all went to Memphis with the team.

Rodgers said the halftime show was organized by Bowl Games of America, a business that gives dance, drill, cheer and band teams a chance to perform in bowl games. The firm sets dance squads up with hotel reservations and show costumes. It’s an arm of World-Strides, a business in the student travel industry. Graeter said the business has produced performances at the Major League All-Star

Baseball game, the World Series and the Orange Bowl, Sugar Bowl and other bowls.

The girls arrived in Memphis early Wednesday morning on Dec. 30, Rodgers said, and got to go to the Liberty Bowl Rodeo that day.

They spent 10 hours working on their halftime routine with a choreographer on Thursday. Rodgers said most of the time was spent revising and staging the routine. The dance the girls did at halftime was called the Memphis Rumble, she said.

The team participated in the Beale Street Parade on Friday. McLaughlin said the routines they did during the parade depended on what crowd was closest to them. She said some were East Carolina fans dressed in the school’s purple colors and others were Arkansas fans decked out in red.

“We had to change cheers depending on

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Roping lessons



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Sophomore Meka Melvin from the Colby Community College rodeo team taught Sacred Heart preschooler Riley Philip how to use a lasso a plastic-pipe calf Tuesday. The school brought the team in as part of Kansas Day activities.

Foundation sets up school endowment

By Kevin Bottrell

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While state legislators argue over how much to cut or how much to tax, help for public schools here will be coming from a local source.

People want a way to donate money to schools, said Melinda Olson, executive director of the Thomas County Community Foundation, and many want to give to a specific program, such as the arts or a sport. That’s why the foundation started the Colby Public Schools Endowment Fund.

Olson said money from in-

vestments will go directly to the schools, and the fund is broken into categories, including agriculture education, athletics, art, music and teacher mini-grants, so donors can give to any of these or specify a something special to them.

“We can have as many subcategories as we need,” Olson said.

The fund is set up so that grants don’t come from the donations themselves, but rather the earnings from investing them, she said. That way, Olson said, the fund will never be exhausted.

The foundation isn’t ready to offer the grants just yet, she said, but once the fund is built up, the earnings will be given to Colby

Public Schools, where administrators will distribute it. Teachers will be able to apply for mini-grants through the district for things like classroom supplies.

Olson said she will report to the district twice a year on how much money is in the fund and how much it has for each category.

The fund was started by an anonymous donation to the school district in the fall of 2008. Olson said she had been talking with school officials about a fund to help with their budget problems, and the donation presented an opportunity to make one.

Olson said people can donate any amount they want to the

fund.

“You gotta start somewhere in building this up for the future,” Olson said.

Anyone interested in donating can come to the foundation office in the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range, or send a check with a note in the memo section that it is for the Colby Public Schools Endowment Fund. Donations can be anonymous, she said.

“You can donate a dollar; you can donate \$100,000,” Olson said. “That’s the beauty of the community foundation; everyone can get involved.”

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.

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.

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. For information, call McMahan at 460-4516.

Grade school to offer book fair

The Colby Grade School Parent-Teacher Organization plans a “spring” book fair with the theme “Book Fair Diner – All You Can Read” from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. next Wednesday and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4, at the school. The event will offer new releases, children’s classics, cookbooks and bestsellers for sale. Money raised will go back into the classroom for things like textbooks and teacher projects. For information, call the school office at (785) 460-5100.

Transit van to run short days

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

Students offer Monday massages

Physical therapist assistant students at Colby Community College will have their last massage clinic from 4 to 7:30 p.m. Monday in the Pierre Henry Allied Health Building, room 804. Cost for a 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.

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 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 Monday, 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.



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