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## Inmates graduate thanks to Colby College

By Erica Bradley

The Norton Telegram  
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In a small ceremony at Norton Correctional Facility on Tuesday, family, friends and teachers gathered to see nine inmates graduate from a business program run by Colby Community College.

The prison partnered with the college and Kansas Workforce to allow 20 inmates to enroll in the program. It was paid for by a \$30,000 KAN-GO grant, which covered tuition and books for the inmates.

A second group is currently in

the program and expected to graduate in May.

Colby Community College Director of Adult Education Nance Munderloh said they are looking at two options for the rest of the grant. Either a third group may participate, or twice as many inmates will enroll for six credits and continue during the next fiscal year. If they pursue the second option, the inmates would be responsible for part of their tuition.

Education has not been an option for many people who are incarcerated, and the chance to attend school, either through a General Education Development

(GED) program or by taking college courses, gives the inmates a chance at a future.

"The grant offers an opportunity for those with the least ability to succeed. The prison is in our service area and seemed to be a prime place for this grant," Munderloh said.

Of the nine who graduated, several expressed an interest in continuing their education.

Munderloh has researched prison statistics, which show 97 percent of all inmates are released from prison. Many end up returning.

"We can either educate them

prior to release so they won't return, or we can wait until they are out and then return to the institution and pay through tax dollars," Munderloh said.

Some of the graduates, like Esquire McNair, Curtis Farr, Jarold Dorsch and Michael Thornton, said they were interested in continuing their education after release.

"This is a good course that we can use to better ourselves, society and our families," Farr said.

McNair and Farr both plan to continue their education.

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ERICA BRADLEY/The Norton Telegram

Inmate Esquire McNair was congratulated by Colby Community College President Lynn Kreider at the graduation ceremony Tuesday at the Norton Correctional Facility.

## Colby girl named Miss Teen Rodeo

By Vera Sloan

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The coronation ceremony for 16-year-old Jade Kruse will be at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday Feb. 13, at the American Legion, 1840 W. Fourth in Colby, to officially crown her Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas

Kruse, a sophomore at Heartland Christian School, earned the honor at the pageant in Dodge City in August and has been functioning as a "lady in waiting" until her official crowning in February.

"The pageant was a three-day competition, and I was judged on horsemanship, speech, personal interview, modeling, group interview, photogenic contest, congeniality, rodeo knowledge, reining pattern, flag run and a Queen's run," she said. "And I even had to make a horseshoe. After the farrier held it in the fire, I shaped it."

She said she won all categories

except rodeo knowledge and congeniality. The congeniality portion of the competition included the older queen contestants.

The 16-year-old says she believes she was born to ride, saying her mother held her up on a horse when she was only a week old. She took over the reins herself as a three-year-old, and has loved every minute of it since.

Her successes in the past include Thomas County Princess, Thomas County Jr. Princess, Finney County Beef Empire Days Princess and Kansas Western Horseman Association Jr. Queen.

Besides school work, doing chores around the farm and riding on most Saturdays when she's not doing school sports, you'll find the busy teenager working at the Oakley Sale Barn, penning cattle.

"Sometimes the cattle sale runs from 10:30 until midnight," she



Jade Kruse

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KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Colby Grade School students (from left) Conrad Heer, Isaih Smith and Carson Torrance had breakfast before their full schedule of Kansas Day activities. Heer and Torrance were two of the many students that dressed up as cowboys or Native Americans.

## Area students celebrate Kansas Day

By Vera Sloan

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Students around town celebrated Kansas Day today, mixing fun activities with historical lessons.

Students at Colby Grade School came to school dressed as pioneers and got to have a hand in churning butter. Diann Gerstner, Thomas County extension agent, gave a demonstration on making bread and Nancy Saddler showed students how to quilt.

The students got to participate in pioneer games, and hear Judy Kleinsorge tell Kansas stories from the past. They took part in a tin punch session with grade school art instructor Trish Starbuck, and listened to Sheila Frahm, a former Kansas senator and lieutenant governor, tell about the Kansas capitol in Topeka.

Other activities included Linda Davis Stephens talking to the students about Indian artifacts. Scott Brown about told about cowboys, and Jeff Terrel demonstrated how to husk corn. The Colby Community College Equestrian team was there to tell about horses, and farming information was presented by Colby Implement.

"We do this all-day event every three



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press  
Chance Andrews dressed and acted the part of a Native American before school started this morning.

years," said Starbuck, chairman of the school's Kansas Day committee.

The presentations and information sessions were on a 30-minute rotation from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sacred Heart School also got into the Kan-

sas Day spirit. Sharon Shirley's preschool classes got to help churn butter and made bread, homemade bandanas and vests, all to experienced what life would be like on the trail out on the lone prairie.

Shirley said the students have also been learning more about patriotism. They have sent mail to Staff Sgt. Eric Ohlrogge, a Colby soldier currently deployed to Kuwait, and have his picture displayed in their room at school.

The class was thrilled to get a personal visit from him when he was home on leave for 10 days earlier in January.

He shared with the students that since Kuwait is such an oil rich country, everyone gets about \$40,000 a year, but doesn't have to work. He said most of them hire people from India and Ethiopia to do their work for them. And because the American dollar is worth only 29 cents in Kuwait, he said he can't afford to buy anything.

Ohlrogge said his job as a soldier is to be a security machine-gunner for convoys while he's stationed there with his National Guard Unit from Wyoming. He will finish his tour of duty in April.

He thanked the kids and community for all the packages he has received while being stationed in Kuwait.

## Briefly

### Piano concerts Saturday

Musicians and teachers from around the area will be coming to Colby for the Northwest Kansas Piano Clinic on Saturday. There will be a free Young People's Concert and Multi-Keyboard Concert at 3:15 p.m. at the Cultural Arts Center at Community College. Everyone is invited to the concerts. For information, call Pat Ziegelmeier at (785) 460-5518.

### 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.

### Low income tax help at library

The AARP will have a tax help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday from Feb. 2 to April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The seminar is designed to help low- and middle-income people with

special emphasis on those age 60 or older. For more information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

### 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 run from only from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday and Wednes-

day because the driver asked for time off. For information, call Kristi Mann at the county clerk's office, 460-4500.

### Commodities distribution here

U.S. Department of Agriculture commodity distribution will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8, at the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Any eligible person can get these commodities, which will include peanut butter, corn flakes, vegetable mix, apricots, instant milk, orange juice and cherries. Participants are asked to bring a sack or box. For information, call the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office at 462-6744.

