



10 pages

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Officer Ron Alexander pointed out the stump of one of three trees and a sign that had been ripped out of the ground at West-side Park sometime Sunday night or Monday morning. Alexander said the trees were chopped down with a hatchet or an axe.

Although no one heard chopping that night, a nearby resident reported hearing someone driving around in the park's dirt parking lot.

## Police, sheriff offer reward for crime tip

By Kevin Bottrell  
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A wave of vandalism and illegal dumping has prompted the Colby Police Department and Thomas County Sheriff's Office to offer a \$500 reward for information leading to arrests.

In a letter to the *Colby Free Press*, Chief Randy Jones and Sheriff Rod Taylor cited several times over the last few weeks when mailboxes have been damaged, trash has been dumped in roads and ditches, road signs have been knocked over and trees have cut down at West Side Park. The incidents have happened both out in the county and within the city limits, the latest being vandalism to the restrooms at Dennen Field sometime Tuesday night.

Jones said asking for tips like this can be hit or miss. The police and sheriff's office have offered

rewards before, and lots of times when they follow up on a tip, they have to go through many people before they find where the information originated.

"It can be six or seven people down the line," he said.

The police and sheriff are both offering \$500 for tips leading to the arrest and conviction of the vandals. Anyone with information can call the police at (785) 460-4460 or the sheriff at (785) 460-4570.

Jones said there have been five days when mailbox damage was reported since Jan. 23. Three damaged mailboxes were reported on Monday, Feb. 8, two in Colby and one out in the county.

Jones said some of the mailboxes appear to have been tipped over by cars while some have been hit by a pipe or similar heavy object.

On four days in February, trash

See "REWARD," Page 3

## City Council considers new generators for wells

By Kevin Bottrell  
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The Colby City Council is looking adding backup generators at the city's two biggest wells to keep water flowing if the city happens to suffer a power failure, but put off a decision until the staff can gather more information.

At their meeting Tuesday, the council heard a proposal from Public Works Director Chris Bieker to buy generators for two of the city's wells, which would allow them to operate independently of the city's power. One well is behind the city power plant on the west side and the other is by the water tower on the east side of town.

The generators would be a backup, allowing the city to get water from these two wells in the case of a blackout.

"They should provide enough water for our town in pretty much any situation," said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

The generators would also allow the city to start the wells remotely by computer.

The city received two bids for generators, one from Central Power Systems for \$75,333 and one from Cummins Central Power for \$92,250, Armstrong said.

Bieker also got a bid from Western Sprinklers to retrofit the wells, placing a radiator outside the buildings and smaller radiators inside to serve the chlorine pumps. The cost for this system is much less, \$8,850 per well, but it would be a manual system, he said.

Councilman Omar Weber said the bigger bids seemed expensive, but he wondered if the quick fix offered by Western Sprinkler would be enough in the

See "WELLS," Page 3

## Colby students excel at contests

By Kevin Bottrell  
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The past few weeks have been good ones for Colby and Colby students, school board members heard Monday.

The Colby High forensics team placed first at the Norton competition Saturday, the 41-member team's first top finish of the year. The team got three seconds, at Oberlin, Hill City and Dighton. The members will be heading to a competition in Nickerson next Friday and Saturday, Feb. 26 and 27, and will put on a tournament in Colby on Thursday, March 11.

Coach Nancy Rundel said 15

students have already qualified for the state championships.

The Northwest Kansas League Middle School Music Festival was last Wednesday. At the board meeting Monday, music teacher Stacy Williams said the seventh- and eighth-grade bands earned scores of 2, 2 and 1 from the three judges. The sixth-grade band had the same score. The middle-school choir scored straight 2s. The judges use a scale of 1-3 with 1 being the highest.

Soloists and ensembles also were judged at the festival.

"The judging was really hard this year," Williams said, "but it's a good opportunity for the kids to get up there and get feedback."

Colby Community College was the site, she said, and Goodland Middle School was the organizing school. Williams said the festival should work the same way next year even though Colby is joining a new league.

Activities Director Larry Gabel said the Colby High School Scholars Bowl team finished fifth in Class 4A at the state competition last weekend.

In other business:

• Grade school art teacher Trish Starbuck reported on the Kansas Day event. Starbuck described it as very positive. The kids spent the day rotating between rooms at the

See "STUDENTS," Page 3

## Congressman visits school

By Kevin Bottrell  
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Rep. Jerry Moran, congressman from the Kansas 1st District and candidate for the U.S. Senate, stopped at Heartland Christian School on Thursday to speak to the students.

It's something he likes to do, even though it unnerves him.

"Kids are one of my most intimidating audiences," Moran said.

The congressman spoke briefly about his views and positions on issues and then took questions from students and teachers. One student said he was finding it difficult to respect a president who wasn't his choice.

Moran responded by saying that anyone who is trying to make a difference in government is worthy of respect. He said he had met with President Barack Obama personally and felt that he means well.

"The goals are the same; we just disagree on how to get there," he said. "None of us do things the way everyone would like."

Moran talked about his opposition to several recent bills the president has championed including health-care reform, "cap and trade" controls on greenhouse emissions and economic stimulus payments.

"While I certainly didn't go to Washington to vote no on everything," he said, "in the past sev-

See "SCHOOL," Page 3



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Rep. Jerry Moran spoke to students and teachers at Heartland Christian School on Thursday. Moran said he hoped some of the students would be interested in being an intern with his office, which was how he got his start in politics.

## Briefly

### Gaithers concerts set for Sunday

The Colby Berean Church will offer a free Gaithers Homecoming video concert at 6 p.m. Sunday at the church. Everyone is invited; refreshments will be served. For information, call the church at 460-2763.

### Schools to explain budget cuts

The Colby School District plans a community meeting on budget issues at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Colby High School commons. District administrators will discuss past and future budget cuts. A list of the possible upcoming cuts is posted at [www.colbyeagles.org](http://www.colbyeagles.org). For information, call the district office at 460-5000.

### Brown Bag session next week

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will sponsor the *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* program

at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent. Speakers will be Carol Rahn this week, First Presbyterian Church; March 3, Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ. Come to the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 545 W. Fourth St. Bring your own lunch; beverage and dessert will be provided. Call 462-6342 for information.

### Food for Thought coming up

"Notable Events and People in Northwest Kansas" will be the topic for the next *Food for Thought* program at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. Evelyn Hoyt Ward, a Brewster native who retired to northwest Kansas, will talk at noon Thursday. The program is free, including a light lunch. For questions, call the museum at 460-4590.

### Youth soccer looking for players

Signups for the American Youth Soccer Organiza-

tion's spring season are open until next Friday. The cost is \$40; kids must be around 6 to participate. The organization is also looking for parents to coach or referee. For information or to sign up, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.

### Sacred Heart carnival Feb. 28

Sacred Heart Catholic School's annual carnival will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, featuring food, games and a raffle drawing at 3. Sacred Heart students are out selling raffle tickets right now, and the top sellers in each grade get prizes. For information, call the school at 460-2813.

### Orchestra to play next weekend

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will hold a "Jeans and T-shirts" concert at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College. The orchestra will perform a variety of

music from "Symphony in G Minor" to selections from "Star Wars." Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children. For information, call Carol McGuire at (785) 672-2380.

### Professor to speak here

Dr. Ron Green, a professor of religion at Dartmouth University, will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at the Cultural Arts Center at Colby Community College as part of the Max Pickerill Lecture Series. Sue Evans will give a review of Green's book, "Babies by Design," at noon Wednesday, March 3, at the Pioneer Memorial Library. For information, call Linda Davis-Stephens at (785) 460-5528.

