



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Thursday

March 11, 2010
Volume 121, Number 39
Serving Thomas County since 1888

County hears green heat proposition

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkansas.com

A Garden City heating and cooling expert told Thomas County commissioners Monday they could get grant money to upgrade or replace the county's boilers and chillers with renewable energy systems.

Bob Kreutzer of Tatro Plumbing said the state has \$9 million to spend and Dodge City had just been approved for a \$250,000 grant. The Dodge City project is a geothermal operation where wells are drilled and pipe is put into the holes. Water is pumped through the ground, used to warm or cool the air through compressors, then recirculated back through the pipes. He said a system big enough to handle the Thomas County Courthouse could probably pay for itself in lower utility bills over five to seven years.

Forty well holes would need to be drilled to accommodate the equivalent of a 40-ton air conditioning system, he said, but that would eliminate all the cumbersome boiler equipment taking up space in the courthouse.

"If something like this would be

a possibility," asked Commissioner Paul Steele, "is there a chance we could use these units here in the courthouse now and make them work at the office complex?"

Kreutzer said that might be a possibility, but it would take an engineer to actually evaluate the systems first. It would save money if they used the county crew to remove the equipment, he added.

The commissioners said they have a little money saved to upgrade the antique boiler system.

"With what the county has put back and grant money," said Steele, "the project is about half-way there if this thing comes close to costing a half a million dollars. I'm sure geothermal is the way to go, but we have to ask the question: how are we going to get the money?"

"One thing we have to get our mind around is that we're looking 30 to 50 years down the road."

Lora Volk, register of deeds, asked the commissioners why her employee wasn't considered for a pay raise when the clerk and treasurer got permission to give a raise to their nexts in command.

"It was purely an oversight, and

See "HEAT," Page 5

Head shaved for team spirit



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Toni Atkinson, mother of Brewster senior Seth Atkinson, had her head shaved by members of the Brewster High basketball team at a pep rally Friday in the Brewster gymnasium. Atkinson had promised to shave her head if the team made it to the substate tournament this season.

Foundation sets up fund for Brewster School District

Inspired by the Colby Public Schools Endowment, four donors have set up an endowment for the Brewster School District with the Thomas County Community Foundation.

Chad and Rosemary Briney of CB Heating, Air Conditioning and Plumbing made the first donation, with Lyman and JoAnne Goetch providing additional money, said Melinda Olson, executive di-

rector of the foundation. The fund has not yet reached the minimum amount needed to start giving to the school, she said. Once it reaches \$2,500, the foundation can start making grants.

"The foundation is thrilled to start a fund for Brewster Public Schools," Olson said, "but we now have to reach out to the community to help bring this fund to fruition. During these difficult economic

times, we have to rely on ourselves to provide educational and extra-curricular opportunities for our children."

Christina Schmid, public relations coordinator for the agency, said the fund will work the same as the Colby endowment. Donors can specify an area of education they want their money to go to, such as music, art, faculty training, agriculture or many more.

"The possibilities are endless," Olson said. "This flexibility allows people to give their tax-deductible contributions to the specific area or program that means the most to them."

Schmid said the fund is set up so that grants will come from interest. That way, the principal from people's donations will never be exhausted.

Olson said the foundation hopes to have

a similar fund for each Thomas County school some day.

To donate to the Brewster Schools Endowment Fund, make checks payable to the Thomas County Community Foundation and include the name of the fund and any special area in the memo line. Send checks or stop in at the foundation office, 350 S. Range, Suite 14. For information, call the office at (785) 460-9152.

Cats and dogs make peace



AUBREY SPENCER/Colby Free Press

A cast of cats and dogs came together to tell about "The Unity Tree" at the Colby Grade School first-grade music program Tuesday. Jennifer Koel conducted the play and Cindy Cersovsky accompanied on piano.

Legion national commander against cuts to Veterans Affairs

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Gene Schumacher told Colby American Legion members to pressure the governor and their state senator against making further cuts in the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs budget.

Schumacher, national vice commander of the Legion, spoke at a special dinner held by the Colby post Tuesday at the club hall.

Phillip Finley, financial officer for the post, said the agency has reduced the number of veterans service officers over the last four years due to budget cuts. The officers help ex-soldiers get the as-

sistance they are entitled to, he said, including help dealing with things such as physical and mental disabilities.

Finley said there were 14 veterans service officers in Kansas about four years ago, but cuts have reduced that by half. Finley said the newest cuts, which will be implemented on July 1, will cut the number to four.

Dave Thomas, department commander of the Legion for Kansas, also spoke at the dinner. He said the average ratio between service officers and soldiers nationwide is one for every 3,500 soldiers. He said in Kansas, the ratio is one for every 13,000.

Finley called the state cuts deplo-

plorable.

"It says we don't really value their service," said Finley. "We have too many guys needing paperwork done. The state Legislature has abandoned the veterans."

Thomas encouraged his fellow members to flood the governor's and senator's offices with e-mails, phone calls and letters asking them to not make any more cuts into the Veterans Affairs budget.

"When they start getting a lot of calls," Thomas said, "they will start listening, because they can be replaced."

Finley said if the Legislature continues to show no interest in veterans' issues, veterans groups should come together to make sure they are not re-elected. He said he knows the state is out of money, but it doesn't excuse cut-

See "VETERANS," Page 5

Briefly

Sign up for clinic by Friday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce is taking registrations for the Mini March Madness basketball clinic on April 9 at the Colby Grade and Middle School gyms. Sing-up sheets went home with students this week and are due back by Friday. The clinic is for kids in grades 2 to 5. For information or to sign up, call the Chamber office at (785) 460-3401.

Church plans canned-beef feed

The Brewster Community Church will hold its annual canned-beef fund-raising dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday at the church. Donations will be accepted for the Water for Life project, which helps people drill wells in third-world countries. For information, call Janet Pinkleman at (785) 694-2720.

Smoky Hills board coming here

The board of Smoky Hills Public Television will meet at 1 p.m. next Thursday at the Thomas County office complex, 250 S. Range. The board travels around the western part of the state to make it easier for members to attend. The public is invited to sit in. For information, call (785) 483-6990.

Series highlights Lent season

The Thomas County Ministerial Association will sponsor the *Lenten Brown Bags and Bibles* program at noon each Wednesday throughout Lent with the theme, "The Prodigal Son." Speakers will be W.G. Romine, Redeeming Love Ministries, on Wednesday; Larry Booth, March 24; and Jarrod Spencer, Church of Christ, March 31. 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.

Barbershop event next week

The Tumbleweed Barbershop Chorus will perform two shows at 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 27, in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College. The show will include the Acoustix quartet and the Prairie Rose Harmony ladies' chorus. For information, call Tom McNutt at 462-2936.

Low-income tax help at library

The American Association of Retired Persons will offer a tax help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday until April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The seminar is designed for low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those 60

or older. For information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

Grant deadline is March 31

The Thomas County Community Foundation is accepting grant applications for the first quarter. Public Relations Coordinator Christina Schmid said proposals can be for any type of project, as long as it is not to benefit an individual, political activity or operating expenses. Nonprofit organizations, public agencies and religious institutions may apply. The deadline is Wednesday, March 31. For information or applications, call (785) 460-9152.

