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City and golf course 'close to agreement'

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

The Colby City Council and Meadow Lake Golf Course may be close to signing a new lease, but the council voted Tuesday to tack lawyer's fees onto the first year's fee.

Seventy percent of the course is on city land, which the city leases to the club. The golf club's board rejected a lease agreement in July and proposed some changes, such as changing the default period from 15 to 30 days, but the council rejected the changes.

The council met in a closed-door session Tuesday – for attorney-client privilege – to discuss the lease. After the session, the council vot-

ed to add the legal fees that city attorney John Gatz is charging for his work on the lease onto the first year, making the payment \$2,362 for that year, then reverting back to \$150 a year after that. Mayor Ken Bieber said that was the only change from what the city offered the golf course in July.

Kerry Turner, representing the board, requested a meeting with the council and the course board to go over the lease, but Bieber declined.

"We feel that this is our lease," Bieber said. "If you wish to sign it that's fine; if not, that's fine too."

Despite that, Turner said that the golf club and the council are close to an agreement.

"I'm sure we can get onto common ground and get this signed,"

he said.

Gatz reminded the council that they had instructed him to begin eviction proceedings against the golf course by Sept. 20.

"I understood those to be my marching orders," he said.

Gatz said he could delay that until Sept. 21. That way, if the golf course board signs the lease, the council would have time to approve it at the Sept. 20 meeting before he starts eviction. The council instructed him to hold off.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong asked the council for some direction on the large amount of hail-damage repairs need to the roofs of city buildings.

She proposed splitting the jobs

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Health Department says everyone needs a flu shot

By John Milburn
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA – As the cold and flu season approaches, the top health official in Kansas is urging everyone to get a flu shot to fight off another outbreak of the H1N1 virus.

Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, state health officer for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, said the agency is following federal recommendations by urging all Kansans to get vaccinated, not just those with chronic or diminished health conditions.

"The guidance has been expanding every year," Eberhart-Phillips said. "There's going to be enough, so protect yourself, protect the ones around you."

The department is making a push to get all health care workers vaccinated to help prevent the spread of

this virus, commonly known as swine flu. Eberhart-Phillips said a new study shows that despite 12,000 deaths in the U.S. related to H1N1, only 37 percent of the nation's health care professionals said they got the vaccination last year.

He said a new department campaign will encourage residents to ask their physicians and nurses if they got a flu shot.

"It's a little edgy," Eberhart-Phillips said. "This is a critical patient-safety issue, a matter that goes to the heart of every health care professional's obligation to do no harm."

The H1N1 virus was first reported in Kansas in April 2009, and Eberhart-Phillips said the state learned many lessons from last year's flu season. Among the improvements are better disease and ill-

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Dressed up for 'twin day'



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Even the teachers got in on Spirit Week in preparation for the Colby High School homecoming game Friday. Business and health teacher Lesley Wagoner (left) and math teacher Roni Dietz were dressed in their look-alike dresses, socks and shoes, and were having a pretty good time getting in the mood for "twin day."



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

This sick-looking sharp-shinned hawk was taken in for the night on Wednesday to keep it safe from predators and released back into the wild Thursday.

Colby man takes in hawk for the night

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

What do you do with a hawk in your bathroom? Not much until you can get him back to the wild.

Evan Barnum, systems administrator at the Colby Free Press, said he and his wife Regina were out for an evening walk last Wednesday when they spotted a small hawk on the ground by School Street. It didn't fly away when they walked up.

"That was the first clue something was wrong," Barnum said.

Barnum said he saw a cat eying the bird from across the street and decided to take the hawk in for the night to keep it safe and warm. It was not hurt that he could see, Barnum said; it shuffled along the ground as he approached and at one point flew about three feet, but it was quiet and eventually let him pick it up and take it home.

Barnum put the hawk in his basement bathroom for the night. The bird was alert but not hostile.

"He always kept his eye on you," Barnum said.

Barnum called biologist Matt Bain, with the state Department of Wildlife and Parks, who identified the bird as a sharp-shinned hawk, probably 5 to 6 months old.

Sharp-shinned hawks are the smallest hawk native to North America. Barnum's hawk measured 10 1/2 inches long and had a three-foot wingspan. Their summer range covers much of the northern United States and Canada, and they migrate as far south as Central America in the fall. Some live in one place year-round, however.

Bain said the hawks are common in Colby this time of year. They like trees to roost in, he said, and because they attract songbirds, their main food source.

Bain said he thinks the hawk might have been sick or eaten something that was bad for

it. "Animals get sick just like people do," he said.

Barnum said he took the bird and placed him on a branch north of town Thursday, and when he checked back Friday morning it was gone. It's illegal to keep migratory birds, including hawks, as pets, Bain said, and the nearest licensed rehabilitator is in Hays.

"We certainly weren't about to keep him for a pet," Barnum said.

Bain said that anyone who sees an injured animal or sick animal should report it to the department at 462-3367. The best idea, he said, is to leave the animal be. Being taken in by humans can stress the animal, or it can come to depend on humans to survive.

In some cases, he said, injured or sick animals can be sent to rehabilitation centers. There are several in Kansas that help raptors, including the Raptor Center of Great Bend and the Eagle Valley Raptor Center in Cheney.

Gem residents and parents start new 4-H club for eastern Thomas County

By Marian Ballard
Colby Free Press
mballard@nwkansas.com

After several years without, Gem will once again have a 4-H club, starting at 7 p.m. Monday at the Gem Community Building.

When both young people and parents began expressing interest in having a club, Helen Poland and Carmen Cornell said, they got busy. 4-H is not new to either of them, but they learned that the program has changed a lot.

After turning in application forms to the Thomas County Extension office,

they were reviewed and forwarded to the state 4-H office, said Extension Agent Diann Gerstner.

Each of the leaders had to pass a background check. That's new, said Poland, who said she was a leader for her own children but has been out of 4H for a lot of years. Now her 18-year-old grandson

Danny Poland, a senior at Colby High School this year, will be a part of the new Gem 4-H Club.

"It's fun working with the younger kids," she said, contrasting it to her job as a nursing home ombudsman.

To get a charter for a new club, a group needs to have three community leaders,

officers and at least five kids. Danny Poland will start as president, since he is the oldest of the interested students, and the leaders will be Poland and Cornell, along with Estelle Bugbee, another experienced leader.

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Briefly

Coalition offers chance for lunch

Come join the Thomas County Coalition at noon Thursday at El Dos De Oros restaurant. You will have a chance to win lunch and become a partner in building a healthy community. For information, call 460-8177.

Convoy kickoff features concert

Special Olympics Kansas will hold a kick-off party for the World's Largest Convoy fund raiser from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds with a barbecue and live concert, followed by fireworks. Donations will be accepted to help with medals, ribbons, equipment and meals for athletes. The convoy will parade through town at 11 a.m. Saturday. For information, call Jane Mentlick at 443-1682.

Outdoor skills day on Friday

The Northwest Kansas Youth Outdoor Skills Day

and Outdoor Expo runs from 9 to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday at Colby Community College and the Colby Trap Club. Activities include shotgunning, archery, compass and map reading, fishing and more, sponsored by the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department and the college. Register at Colby Lumber by Wednesday. For information, call regional Biologist Matt Bain at 462-3367.

Hunter ed tests, field day coming

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks hunter education course, required for most people to buy a license, is online this year. Registration is required. Online instruction is available now, with classroom instruction and the test from 5:30 to 10 p.m. Friday at Colby Community College and a field day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Trap Club. For information or to register, call Wildlife Biologist Matt Bain at 462-7993 or 462-3367.

Sign up for food by Monday

Prairie Land Food sign up is open until Monday at State Farm Insurance, 905 E. Fifth St. Delivery will be Saturday, Sept. 25, at the Sacred Heart School gym. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Walk, run for Recovery Month

The Thomas County Coalition will hold a 5K Awareness Walk/Run for Celebrate Recovery Month at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building. The coalition will provide hot dogs, chips and soda afterward. For information, call Melany Wilks at 460-4470.

Foundation plans fun shoot

The Citizens Foundation will hold a benefit fun shoot at 9 a.m. Sunday, at the Colby Gun Club, four

miles west on U.S. 24, one mile south and one mile west. There will be help for novice shooters. Registration is \$50. Proceeds will go for medical equipment and education at the hospital. For information, call Tama Unger at the foundation, (785) 460-1214.

Orchestra looking for players

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra plans a meeting for new and returning members at 7 p.m. Monday in the Colby Community College band room, with a rehearsal will be from 7:30 to 9 p.m. New musicians are not required to audition; just show up. For information, call President Mary Shoaff at 462-2159 or e-mail comments@prairieorchestra.com.



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