



# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Thursday

September 9, 2010

Volume 121, Number 140

Serving Thomas County since 1888

10 pages

## County awarded \$97,000 from state

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press  
vsloan@nwkansas.com

Thomas County Commissioners were a little surprised Monday to learn that the county may get nearly \$97,000 from a federal grant for new heating and cooling systems for the courthouse.

That was good news; they weren't holding their breath that they'd even get the grant, and it was way more than they expected.

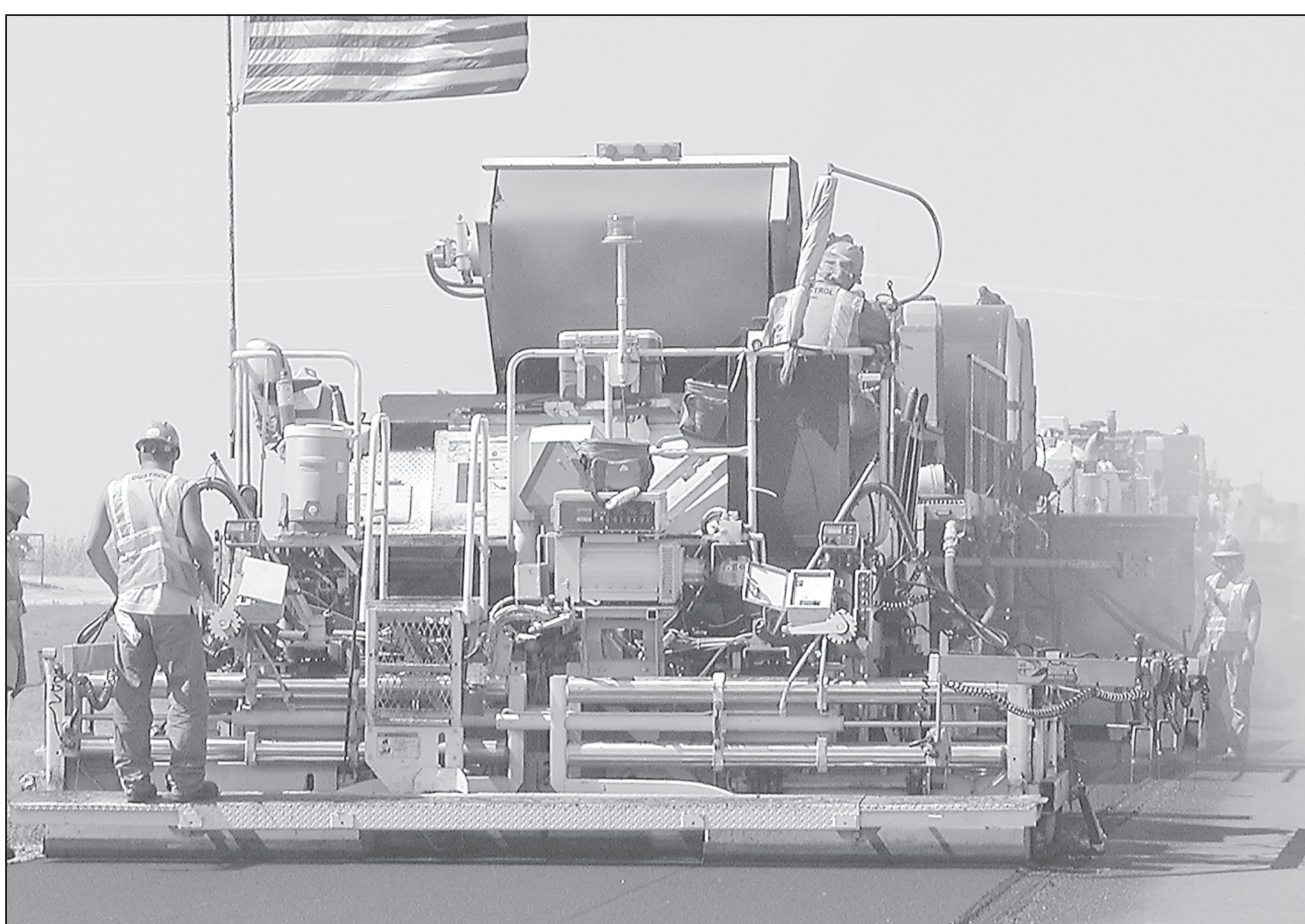
The commissioners had been hoping the grant would cover 40 percent of a \$150,000-plus project, but were awarded up to 60 percent by the Kansas Corporation Commission. Commissioner Paul Steele said this means the county could get a maximum of \$96,969. However, the grant is only for 60 percent of qualifying expenses, he said, which have to meet certain requirements.

Two of the requirements are to comply with the Davis-Bacon Act, which has to do with paying workers the prevailing wage – based on federal surveys of regional construction pay – and a Buy American requirement, meaning all components must be assembled in the U.S. There are some exceptions, Steele said, such as for products that can only be bought from overseas manufacturers.

Paul Pfannenstiel of P and M Contracting Inc. of Kansas City, Kan., arrived after lunch for a walk through to look at the boiler and air conditioning equipment in the courthouse. The commissioners accepted a suggestion to change the chillers from Carrier brand to Trane. Trane meets the Buy American requirement, Steele said.

Installation won't begin until equipment is on site, Steele said, and a dumpster is in place for construction debris, which should be sometime before heating seasons.

Commissioners discussed at length contracting for mowing the county's road ditches for next year.



STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

## Crews work fast on U.S. 83 recycle

Workers from Dustrol of Towanda (above) used propane heaters to do a "hot in-place" recycling job on U.S. 83 on Wednesday near Breton. Eight burners heat the old pavement, which is plowed up and then relaid by a paving machine. Workers then roll the old pavement smooth so it can be covered by a layer of new asphalt. Crews are using flag cars to guide one-lane traffic around the area (right). At one point a line of trucks and other vehicles waited behind a flagman Wednesday near Breton on U.S. 83 while a semi rig led a fleet going north. APAC Shears out of Salina is the general contractor for the Kansas Department of Transportation, but Dustrol is doing the recycle work. The crew is working south from Gem to the U.S. 24 junction, then will head back to Rexford. Paving will take place later this month.



See "GRANT," Page 3

## County gets first figures from higher state sales tax

Thomas County received its first disbursement of sales tax money last week since the 1-cent increase passed by the state Legislature went into effect July 1.

According to the state Treasury Department, Thomas County received a \$70,589 distribution at end of August for July, and \$56,601 the end of July for June. Monthly figures have hovered in the \$50,000 to \$65,000 range since January, except for the April payment, which came in at \$44,467.

The city of Colby gets its own distribution, which showed a similar trend.

"I think the low figure (in April) is normal for that time of year," said Debbie Zerr, financial director for the City of Colby, "and is indicative of the

usual dead of winter sales."

The increase in the state sales tax from 5.3 percent to 6.3 percent became effective July 1, to help with a \$500 million shortfall and hopefully keep the state from having to make further state budget cuts. The hike was about 19 percent on the state levy.

The state increase came on the heels of Colby's voter-approved 1-cent sales tax, which is paying off bonds used to borrow money for city's new fire station and swimming pool. That tax was approved at a special election in November and went into effect in April.

The combined sales tax in the city stands at 8.3 percent, up almost one-third from 6.3 percent a year ago.

## Schools plan homecoming events

Colby and Brewster High Schools both will celebrate homecoming this weekend.

All this week is Spirit Week for Colby High. Tuesday was workout day; students dressed down to their workout cloths. Wednesday was twin day, today is nerd day and Friday is Orange and Black day.

The student council is selling jerseys in a silent auction

throughout the week. Senior jerseys will be auctioned at 8 p.m. tonight at Dennen Field before the bonfire. The bonfire will begin at 8:30 p.m. The students will have a parade in downtown Colby at 2:30 p.m. Friday with a pep rally afterward at Dennen Field.

The Colby Eagles square off against the Eagles from Hugoton at 7 p.m. that night. Home-

coming royalty will be crowned at the end of the game, and the dance will start at 8 p.m. Saturday at the high school.

Brewster will begin celebrating Homecoming with a pep rally and bonfire at 8 p.m. tonight at the football field. Festivities will continue Friday with a parade and pep rally at 3:15 p.m. in downtown Brewster and a sloppy-joe sup-

per at 5:30 p.m. at the football field.

The Brewster-Triplains Titans will face the Palco High School Fighting Roosters at 7 p.m. Homecoming royalty will be crowned at half time.

In place of a dance, the students are planning a bowling party from 7 to 10 p.m. Saturday at Colby Bowl.

## Nation sees fewer fatal car accidents in 2010

By Ken Thomas

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) – The number of people dying on the nation's roads has fallen to its lowest level in six decades, helped by a combination of seat belts, safer

cars and tougher enforcement of drunk-driving laws.

The U.S. Department of Transportation said late Wednesday that traffic deaths fell 9.7 percent in 2009 to 33,808, the lowest number since 1950. In 2008, an estimated 37,423 people died on the highways.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the annual report "shows that America's roads are the safest they've ever been. But they must be safer. And we will not rest until they are."

See "FATALITIES," Page 3

## Briefly

### 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 featuring country singer-songwriter John Juenemann of Oberlin and cowboy poet Dan Fields of Atwood. The convoy will parade through town at 11 a.m. Saturday down Range Avenue, Fourth Street, Franklin Avenue and Davis Avenue before heading to the fairgrounds. For information, call Jane Mentlick at 443-1682.

### Outdoor skills day on Sept. 10

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. 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 and quizzes are 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.

### Church plans fish fry Sunday

Trinity Lutheran Church plans a fish feed to benefit the Orphan Grain Train charity from noon to 1:30

p.m. Sunday at the church. The Christian volunteer organization gathers food, clothing and medical supplies for people around the world. For information, call the church office at 462-3497.

### 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 have 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 equip-

ment 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.

