



Wind firm expects power contract soon

By Vera Sloan

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When the time comes for a resolution that will finalize the county's agreement with Solomon Forks Wind Energy, the Thomas County Commissioners will be ready.

County Attorney Bruce Flipse brought a rough draft of the resolution to Monday's commission meeting that will give Solomon Forks the final nod of approval. The county's only involvement in the project is to make sure the roads are protected and are put back in the same condition or better after the construction of the wind towers is completed. The resolution will mean all the ducks are in a row, as far as the county is concerned, for the wind energy company to proceed.

Tiff Thompson, project manager for Solomon Forks, told the commissioners over the phone that her company has three active bidders for the energy produced by the farm. She said she expects an announcement sometime in October that Solomon Forks has made it onto the bidders' "short lists."

She said there are lots of plans in the works, and she is optimistic. She will attend a power meeting in October in Wichita, and be in Thomas County later that month.

Clair Schrock and Pete Schlageck of the county road department told the commissioners the welder their department had purchased with drug seizure money several years ago is totally shot. They said they had scouted out a new one and had four bids to compare.

See "WIND," Page 3

Thomas County 4-Hers head to state livestock show

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Auction premiums and scholarships will be on the line as youth from 86 Kansas counties exhibit livestock at the annual Kansas Junior Livestock Show this weekend in Wichita.

Seth and Kortney Bredemeier, Thomas County 4-H members, will be among the 678 4-H and FFA members who have entered a total of 1,424 head of livestock in the show this year. The show begins Friday and runs until Monday.

"This is the fourth or fifth year the kids have shown at the Wichita show," said Carrie Bredemeier, mother of Seth and Kortney. "The kids are undecided about selling their animals, because they want to show this year at the National Western in Denver in January."

Seth and Kortney will show market lambs and commercial ewes. Carrie said this will be Seth's last year since he has turned 18, but Kortney, at 15, has a few years yet to be in the show ring.



K-State Research and Extension Courtney (above) and Seth Bredemeier (right), seen here at the Thomas County Fair in August, will be showing market lambs and commercial ewes at the Kansas Junior Livestock Show this weekend.



Vera Sloan/Colby Free Press

Show entries are up this year, and include entries of 134 market steers; 295 breeding heifers, 352 market hogs, 247 market lambs, 49 purebred ewes, 158 commercial ewes and 189 meat goats.

When the show concludes, the grand and reserve champion steers, hogs, lambs and goats will sell at 7 p.m. on Monday, at the shows' Auction of Champions.

The Kansas Junior Livestock Show is open to all 4-H members and FFA across the state. The public is welcome to attend.

Committee considers cover, slides for Colby Community College pool

Members of the newly organized advisory board named to develop plans for the future of the Colby Community College learned what a cover would do for energy costs associated with operating the swimming pool at their meeting Tuesday.

Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs, said an automated cover, costing around \$30,000, would pay for itself in under three years.

Kaaz was added to the marketing and funding committee after Dr. Keegan Nichols, committee chairwoman, combined the two groups into one.

Brad Bennett, business and marketing instructor at the college, said that to start with he favored the board coming up with a three-year plan. He suggested a birthday party for the pool as a good way to renew interest in it, and said a slogan might be a good thing.

The board learned that the pool is going to be open more hours through a generous donation for more life guards.

Cleaning and maintenance policies and rules, immediate needs, and a wish list for the pool were discussed. Wish list items included an automated pool cleaner for \$3,000; a rock slide/climbing apparatus for about \$1,800; an underwater treadmill for \$1,200; a basketball goal or volleyball conversion for basketball for \$400; and a vortex full-tube slide with staircase for \$16,000.

Nichols said she was encouraged that the group is off to a good start, and that the college board is pleased with the interest taken by the committee.

She said the college is working on making a web site available for the public so they will be able to read the minutes of the advisory board meetings. It will allow them to add comments and ideas.

The advisory board continues to encourage the public to come forward with ideas for the pool. Nichols or pool manager Kipp Nelson can be reached by phone at (785) 462-3984.

Still a little green



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Combines are in the fields this week as moisture levels in some Thomas County corn fields dropped as low as 14 percent, but some plants, such as this one in a field east of Colby, are still green and not quite ready for harvest.

Governor says economy good despite rise in unemployment

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA – Unemployment in Kansas rose slightly in August, but Gov. Mark Parkinson said Tuesday that a modest gain in jobs over the previous year showed that the state's economy is improving.

The state Department of Labor reported that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.6 percent last month, compared with 6.5 percent in July. The rate was 7.2 percent in August 2009.

The adjusted rate takes seasonal fluctuations in employment into account. For example, Kansas lost about 1,100 jobs in August, but state officials say some losses are normal. Had the data not been adjusted, the state's unemployment rate would have dropped slightly from July to August.

Department of Labor officials

were focusing most on a gain of 6,900 jobs in August compared with the same month in 2009. The employment growth was about 0.5 percent.

"This month's labor report is another indication that Kansas continues on the road to recovery," Parkinson said in a statement. "For the second straight month, Kansas businesses are seeing job growth during the course of the year, and our unemployment rate remains one of the lowest in the country."

In July, employment was 0.1 percent higher than it had been in July 2009, the first time since October 2008 that Kansas hadn't seen a lower figure.

Just hours before Parkinson released his statement and the Department of Labor released its employment report for August, Cessna Aircraft announced a new round of layoffs because of what

its chief executive officer called the "lackluster" economy. Cessna said it would cut 700 jobs, in addition to the 8,000 lost since 2008.

Construction and mining were the brightest sectors of the state's economy in terms of percentage job growth in August, compared with August 2009. The mining industry saw its employment jump 12.5 percent, adding 1,000 new jobs. Construction companies' employment was about 7.2 percent higher, with 4,300 more people employed in August than in the same month a year ago.

The largest sector of the economy – trade, transportation and utilities – also saw modest unemployment growth of 1.3 percent, adding 3,200 jobs.

But the state wouldn't have seen a net gain in jobs over the year had

See "ECONOMY," Page 3

Briefly

Flu shots available today

The Thomas County Health Department will have a flu immunization clinic until 7 p.m. today at the 4-H building on the Thomas County Fairgrounds. For information, call 460-4599.

Foundation plans reception

Thomas County Community Foundation is sponsoring a "Business After 5" reception at 5 p.m. Thursday at The Loft, 700 Horton Ave., second floor of the Oasis Travel. For information, call the foundation at 460-9152.

Gymnasts to wash cars

The Tumbleweed Tumblers gymnastics team will be washing cars to raise money for activities and a gymnastics camp from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday at the corner of Pine Street and Franklin Avenue. For information Jennifer Thompson at 443-0946.

Picnic for families at the park

Experts say the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs, so the Thomas County Coalition plans a Family Day picnic from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Monday at Fike Park. The celebration will include the Jazz Band and Sunflower Singers from Colby Community College. Cake, popcorn, drinks and child car safety seat checks will be provided. Bring a picnic supper and a blanket for you and your family. For information, call 460-8177.

County band looking for players

Anyone who plays an instrument is welcome to join the Colby Community College band for a performance at the Thomas County 125th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, Oct. 9. The rehearsal schedule will be announced. For information, call Tony Schroer at 460-5519.

You could help sing out 125th

Singers from all over Thomas County can join the Thomas County 125th Anniversary choir, which will perform at the celebration at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 9, at the Colby Community Building. Practices will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday and Sept. 28 and Oct. 5 at the Colby United Methodist Church. For information, call Jan Wolf at 460-3535.

Church plans mission auction

The Colby United Methodist Church will hold a dinner and auction to raise money for missions at noon Sunday at the church. The church is looking for items to auction. These can be dropped off from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the church, 950 S. Franklin Ave. For information, call the office at 460-2761.

Animal Clinic has stray

The Colby Animal Clinic has a stray male, black

and white 4-year-old spaniel mix. For questions, call 460-8621.

Food distribution in October

U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities will be distributed from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, Oct. 4, at the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program office in the Senior Progress Center. Anyone who's eligible may come and get commodities first-come, first-served. Items will include salmon, northern beans, cheese soup, peanut butter, applesauce, canned pork and rotini. For information, call the volunteer program office at 462-6744.

