



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

December 22, 2010
Volume 121, Number 198
Serving Thomas County since 1888

City to shut down for Christmas Day

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

There may not be much opportunity to eat out, but you can still go bowling, get a cup of coffee or see a movie on Christmas Day.

Don't look for a newspaper under the Christmas tree, however. The *Colby Free Press* will be closed Friday so employees can have Christmas Eve off, and there'll be no paper that day.

Colby Bowl will be open from 4 p.m. until late Saturday, and Colby Cinema will be closed Friday, but will show "True Grit," and "Little

Fockers" on Saturday.

Starbucks will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday. Most Colby restaurants, however, will close early Friday and be closed all day Saturday.

J&B Meat Market, Village Inn and Subway will close at 2 p.m. Friday; Taco John's, 3 p.m.; Arby's, 4 p.m.; Sonic Drive-In, 5 p.m.; Pizza Hut and Quiznos, 6 p.m.; and Montana Mike's and McDonald's, 8 p.m. El Dos De Oros will be open regular hours, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and close Saturday.

City Limits and Bamboo Gar-

den will be closed all day Friday and Saturday.

Banks will all be closed Saturday. Farmer's and Merchant's Bank and People's State Bank will close Friday. Bankwest will close at noon Friday; First National, 1 p.m.; Sunflower Bank, noon; and The Bank, 12:30 p.m.

Walmart will be open until 8 p.m., with the pharmacy open until 2 p.m. Friday and close all day Saturday. Dillon's will remain open until 6 p.m. Friday, with the pharmacy open until then also, and close all day Saturday. Palace

See "CHRISTMAS," Page 3

Salvation Army needs help

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

The Thomas County Salvation Army is looking for more volunteers in its drive to raise money to help people in this area.

Volunteer Sue Draper said collections for the nonprofit organization are lagging behind last year. Draper said army has only raised a little over \$2,000 in Thomas County thus far. She said the organization raised around \$4,000 last year for the season.

Draper said the agency provides services based on need. She said it has helped people pay in emergencies for food, utilities, rent, eyeglasses and medications.

She said there have received some donations through the mail, but they need more people to volunteer as bell ringers at Walmart.

Draper said bell ringers can work whenever they have the time. Counter kettles are available to take donations in Dollar General and Palace Drug Store. To volunteer, call Draper at Citizens Medical Center, 460-7511.



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Colby students come through for food bank

Colby students had the spirit of giving this month. Students (above) from Robin Schwanke's fifth-grade class at Colby Grade School sorted canned food after the Parent-Teacher Organization's food drive earlier this month. Students collected 1,340 items for Genesis-Thomas County food bank. The organization offered a pizza party for the class that collected the most items; Schwanke's fifth graders won with 295 boxes and cans. Bryant Weideman (left) helped deliver food to Genesis from the Sacred Heart Catholic School's early childhood class' food drive. The drive garnered more than 400 items.

Away in a Manger



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Stacia Oren (standing, from left), Morgan Voss, Madison Zimmerman, Patyn Pfeifer and Landon Reiley (sitting) played "Away in a Manger" at Sacred Heart Catholic School's Christmas program Monday. The program featured several small groups and soloists as well as large choirs.

Decatur County dog kennel must stay closed for six months

By Kimberly Davis

The Oberlin Herald
k.davis@nwkansas.com

A kennel north of Oberlin which was cleared out because of a distemper outbreak won't have dogs at it for the next six months, a top state official says, and after that will only be able to have 50 animals.

Dr. Bill Brown, a veterinarian and state livestock commissioner, said Jeff Fortin, owner of Beaver Creek Kennels in Cedar Bluff, has been told he can have no dogs at the facility or on the premises for the next six months. The Kansas Animal Health Department, which Dr. Brown heads, has asked for that time, he said.

While it's six months without animals on the premises, Dr. Brown added, Mr. Fortin actually has 30 to 45 days to completely clean and disinfect everything.

Dr. Brown said his department first found out about distemper in September when contacted by Wyoming officials about 20 to 25 infected puppies that had shown up in pet shops in Casper and Cheyenne. The shops could trace the dogs back to Mr. Fortin, he said.

That's when Beaver Creek Kennels was first placed under quarantine. Dr. Brown said the department took the quarantine off because the state didn't have any proof the disease had started there, although Wyoming officials believed it did. There was some questions whether the puppies had become infected once they got to the shops.

It wasn't too much later that Mr. Fortin took some puppies to a vet in Nebraska, he said, and the dogs were tested and had come back positive.

The kennel then was placed back under quarantine in October. Dr. Brown said the tests were sent to the diagnostic lab at Kansas State University.

At that point, he said, three veterinarians had positive results for distemper at the facility. Dr. Brown added that state officials are working on a timeline showing all the events.

There is a vaccine for distemper, said Dr. Brown. Actually, when someone vaccinates a puppy, he said, distemper is probably the No. 1 component of the shot.

The adult dogs at the kennel, he said, did receive the shots, and so did the puppies. There were, how-

ever, a lot of questions about the vaccine and how it was handled. When the vaccine is mixed, said Dr. Brown, it is supposed to be used right away. Officials questioned whether that was done. Another question is whether the puppies were vaccinated at the right age. If puppies are vaccinated too early, he said, their maternal antibodies will basically reject the vaccine.

It's possible that these two things precipitated the distemper outbreak, Dr. Brown added.

Dr. Brown said everyone agonized over the whole thing. There were a lot of people involved from all areas. The decision to put down nearly 1,200 dogs was well thought out, he said, and the consensus was that humanely euthanizing the animals was the best thing.

He said the department worked with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to dispose of the carcasses. A contractor was hired to dig a trench on Mr. Fortin's land for burial.

Dr. Brown said he joined one of three teams working for a day and a half at the kennel. All of the dogs

See "KENNEL," Page 3

Briefly

Lost Yorkie being held at clinic

The Colby Animal Clinic has a stray elderly, neutered Yorkshire terrier to return to its owner. Lost or strayed animals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Trash crews to take 'eves' off

The Colby Sanitation Department will not pick up residential trash Friday on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve, Friday, Dec. 31. Routes will be picked up the day before both weeks. Have your tipper cans to the curb by 8 a.m. The department will not pick up commercial trash Friday and Saturday this week or next. For information, call the Public Works office at 460-4420.

Landfill to close for the holidays

The Thomas County Landfill will close two days this week and two next week for the holidays, but will remain open on Sundays. The landfill will close Friday and Saturday for Christmas and be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. It will close again Monday. The landfill will close down again Saturday, Jan. 1, and Monday, Jan. 3, for New Years, but will be open Sunday, Jan. 2. For information, call 462-8139.

Smart Start looking for kids

Smart Start, a tuition-free preschool, is accepting applications for its 2011-2012 school year. The school accepts applications all year long for kids aged 3 and 4. For information, or to get an application, call 460-6067.

Courthouse elevator needs repair

The elevator at the Thomas County Courthouse will be out of service Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 28 and 29, so a new motor starter can be installed. For information, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at 460-4500.

Courts to close early for New Year's

The Thomas County District Court office will close at noon Friday, Dec. 31, so the staff can complete end-of-the-year accounting. The office will open again on Tuesday, Jan. 4. For information, call 460-4540.

Hill City artist featured at museum

Works by Hill City artist and teacher David Chalfant are on exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art and

History through the end the month. His sculptures and paintings have been shown in regional and national shows. For information, contact the museum at 460-4590 or museumed@st-tel.net.

Youth league to meet next month

A parent-player meeting for Youth League Basketball will begin at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 5, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Coach Matt Ludwig said the cost is \$20 per player, and games will start the following weekend. For information, call the church at 462-2761.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3