

# Conservation District to give out two awards

Two Thomas County residents have been selected for this year's Conservation Awards.

The awards are given out each year by the county Conservation District to recognize landowners who develop, implement and maintain conservation plans. The winners can be individuals, partnerships or corporations.

Conservation districts in each Kansas county give out their own awards, said Debbie Potter, Thomas County district manager. The district relies on the community to nominate landowners for the awards. Some years, such as 2010, there are three or more winners, while others there are no nominations or winners.

The awards will be given at a banquet at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Colby United Methodist Church. The banquet includes a meal and a general meeting of the conservation district.

There are two award categories this year, and the criteria varies by category.

• For the soil conservation award, a landowner must use the land according to its capabilities. They must have a complete conservation plan and balance that with the business needs of their farm. They are judged on the quality of the conservation work completed as

well as any special practices such as grassland development, forestry, pollution abatement, riparian management, water quality and residue management.

• For the windbreak award, a landowner must provide protection from damaging winds for residential areas, livestock or fields. The original windbreak must be planted trees or shrubs while volunteer shrubs may be used to add density or fill gaps. The plants have to be healthy with no significant gaps, and the windbreak has to adequately cover the area that needs shelter. Windbreaks have to have been in place for three or more years.

In 2010, the district gave out a grassland conservation award for quality management of grasslands, including pasture lands. Criteria include good grazing, fencing and water management practices, but not this year.

The district also runs a coloring contest each year at area elementary schools. Finalists are published in this section and put on display at the banquet. Fifth graders at Sacred Heart Catholic School also created computer presentations on conservation. The winners were Caitlin Tinkham, Calley Burr and Landon Reilly.

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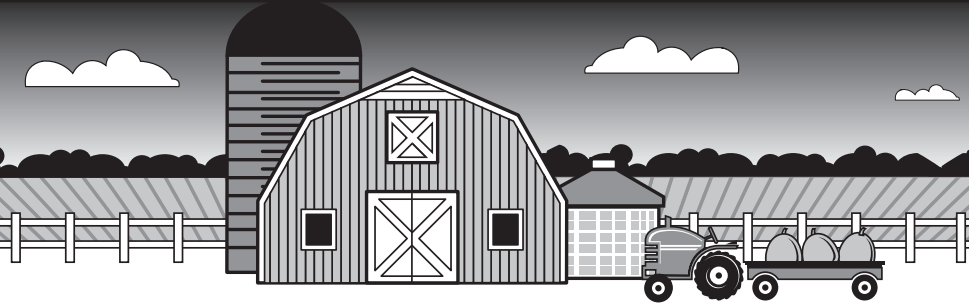
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*Congratulations to the 2010 Soil Conservation Winners!  
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