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Colby debate duo beats top team at state

Colby High School's top debate duo knocked off the No. 1 seed from Tonganoxie and went on to finish fourth at the state Two-Man Debate Tournament last weekend.

The Colby debate squad sent four two-man teams to the state tournament at Blue Valley Northwest High School in Overland Park on Friday and Saturday. The Colby squad placed fifth overall.

The Eagles debated in six preliminary

rounds Friday and Saturday, with the schedule for rounds two through six based on win-loss records. After the six preliminary rounds, the top 16 teams moved into octofinals Saturday afternoon.

"Debate is an exhausting activity," said coach Nancy Rundel. "The Eagles debated 9 hours in preliminary rounds."

Juniors Michael Tubbs and Christina Ostmeier got into the octofinals with 4-2 record and 27 speaker points. They went

up against the No. 1 seed from Tonganoxie — which had a 6-0 record — and won 3 to 0.

Tubbs and Ostmeier advanced onto the quarterfinal round to face a 5-2 team from Independence. The competition was close, but ended in a 2-1 loss to Independence. They ended the day in fourth place.

Sophomores Cameron McLaughlin and Tomi Miller finished the preliminaries with a 4-2 record and 29 speaker points,

which left them two points out of octofinals.

Juniors Madison Gawith and Hannah Matchell closed their season with 3 wins and 3 losses, as did freshmen Ian Koerperich and Colton Rundel.

"I feel like we had a great tournament," Rundel said. "Everyone came out with a 50 percent win/loss record, which is what it takes to qualify for the tournament to begin with."

Rundel said the squad learned a lot over the season about debating, their abilities and how they measure up against the other 4A schools.

"Beating Tonganoxie's team was a milestone event, because they have a powerhouse debate program," Rundel said. "I received lots of compliments from other coaches about our debaters and their abilities. Let's just say, we're on the map."

Good weather helps construction



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Workers from Paul-Wertenberger Construction of Hays took advantage of the unusual shirt-sleeve January weather Monday to continue work on the elevator and restroom addition at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Brian Thorell, job superintendent,

said his company is adding 1,500 square feet that will house the elevator and restrooms on the basement and first floor of the church, 1065 W. Fifth St.

Superintendent talks future cuts

By Kevin Bottrell
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Superintendent Terrel Harrison painted a bleak picture of the future of school budgets and state funding for the Colby School Board on Monday.

The state faces an \$88.5 million deficit this fiscal year, she said. New Gov. Sam Brownback has been attempting to balance the budget, proposing cost cuts and consolidation. That includes an across-the-board 6 percent spending cut to help deal with the end of

federal "stimulus" money.

In his "State of the State" address last Wednesday, Brownback told legislators that he would not replace all of the stimulus money going to schools, but spending in a few some would be increased.

Brownback's budget would cut \$75 per student from base state aid, Harrison said, reducing base aid from \$4,012 to \$3,937 for the current school year. She said this could cost the Colby district as much as \$100,000.

For the 2011-2012 fiscal year

See "CUTS," Page 3

Board to interview presidential candidates

By Andy Heintz
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The Colby Community College board set dates next month to interview four candidates for president at a meeting Monday at Thomas Hall.

The interviews will take place on Thursday and Friday, Feb. 3 and 4, and Monday and Tuesday,

Feb. 7 and 8, all at 7 a.m. at Thomas Hall. The board set an alternate date on Tuesday, Feb. 1, if a candidate can't make any of the others.

The meetings will be open to the public, said Debbie Schwanke, college public information director.

Interim President Max Heim said when the presidential search closed Friday, the college had 19 applications. Heim and Jim

Stringer, a former president of Hutchinson Community College who has been interim president at other colleges, have been hired go through the applications and pick the top four. Stringer is being paid \$450 a day.

Schwanke said Stringer had worked less than five days for the college so far. She said the money going into the presidential search is not much when compared to

other community colleges. She said Dodge City spent around \$80,000 on its presidential search. Heim said he will announce the four finalists at a board meeting at noon Friday, Jan. 28, at Thomas Hall.

The board has not established a timetable to hire a new president.

In other news, the board:

See "CANDIDATES," Page 3

Legislators, critics wary of voter fraud proposal

By John Hanna
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach is raising some critics' eyebrows by seeking new power for his office to prosecute election fraud, and even legislators receptive to his ideas wonder how much his initiatives would cost the state.

Kobach's proposed Secure and Fair Elections Act includes his long-promised proposals to require voters to show photo identification at the polls and to mandate that anyone registering to vote for the first time in Kansas provide proof of citizenship. His legislation, which he outlined during a news conference

Tuesday, also would increase penalties for election crimes.

But he also wants to give the secretary of state's office the power to prosecute election fraud cases in court, rather than just investigate them and turn the evidence over to the attorney general or county prosecutors. Democratic legislators questioned why the new Republican secretary of state needs such authority.

Money is an issue because Kobach proposes to have the state provide free IDs and birth certificates to prospective voters who can't afford them. The state faces a projected budget shortfall of \$550 million for the fiscal year beginning July 1, and Kobach has no estimate for how much the free IDs and birth certificates

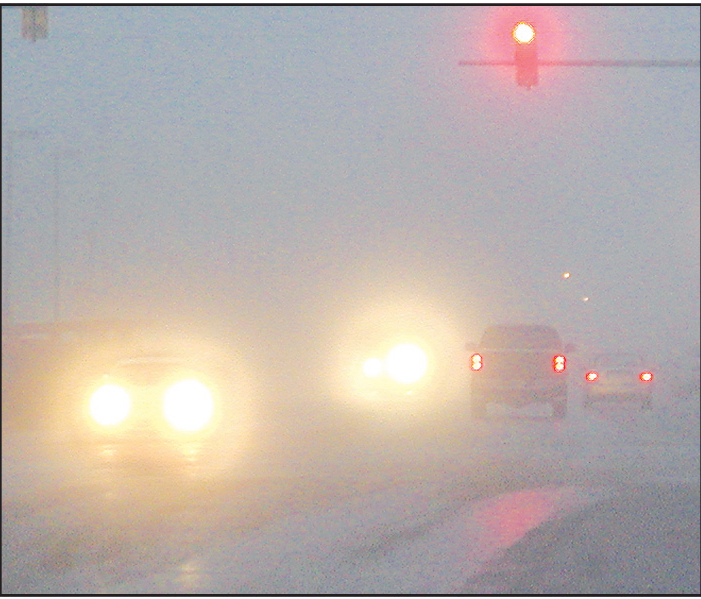
would cost.

"Is that something our state can afford at this time?" said Senate Ethics and Elections Committee Chairwoman Terrie Huntington, a Prairie Village Republican. "I think we'll have to look at that."

Kobach said his goal is to give Kansas the toughest laws on election fraud of any state. Eight states require a photo ID at the polls, and Oklahoma joins them when its law takes effect on July 1, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

"The bill ensures what I think should be the perfect model for any state. It should be easy

See "FRAUD," Page 3



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

After a few days of good weather, Colby woke up to freezing fog and slippery roads this morning.

Frozen roads cause numerous wrecks

Roads and sidewalks were slick and dangerous today as fog and light rain froze to streets, trees, signs, bridges, steps, pretty much any surface they could.

Police, sheriff's deputies and Highway Patrol troopers reported numerous accidents, including a jackknifed semitrailer rig on U.S. 83 near mile marker 183, another that rolled at the Country Club Drive exit to I-70, a DirecTV van that slid off U.S. 24 two miles east of Colby and several other slide offs and rollovers.

A Grainfiled school bus, lost control on ice on K-23 two miles south of Gove and rolled into a ditch. One student was in-

jured and taken to Gove County Medical Center.

Roads all around the are were listed as icy by the Kansas Department of Transportation. Visibility was down to as little as one-fourth of a mile early in the morning. U.S. 83 was closed to truck traffic in Thomas County after the accident.

The National Weather Service in Goodland is predicting light snow starting in the afternoon and continuing into the evening. Northwest Kansas, eastern Colorado and southwest Nebraska were under a Winter Weather Advisory, which the service issues when the weather makes travel difficult or dangerous.

Briefly

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has a 1-year-old female, black-and-white lab mix available for adoption. 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.

Commodities available Monday

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will distribute commodities from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program office at the Senior Progress Center in Fike Park. Commodities are given out first come, first served according to income guideline. Don't arrive before 12:30 p.m. Items include canned pork, peanut butter, rice cereal, mixed vegetables, corn, juice, rotini, milk and fig pieces. For information, call the program office at 462-6744.

Conservation group to meet

The Local Work Group, experts who provide guidance to Kansas Technical Committee of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, will meet at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 27, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center, 915 W. Walnut St. For information, call Debbie Potter at the Thomas County Conservation District at 462-7482.

Heartland plans annual barbecue

Heartland Christian School will hold its annual barbecue from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 30, at the school. The meal will include barbecue pork, corn, salad, baked potatoes and dessert. Donations will be accepted. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Scrapbook day Feb. 5 at school

Heartland Christian School will hold a scrapbook-

ing party on from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at the school. The cost is \$30 for adults and \$15 for students for a full day, and \$15 for adults and \$8 for students for half a day. Meals are included. To make a reservation, call Lucy Wood at (785) 460 2721 or the school at 460-6419. To preorder supplies, please call Sally Runnalls in the evenings at (785) 672 4910.

Hospital offers blood-sugar class

Because of the snow, Citizens Medical Center has postponed Journey for Control, a free class on monitoring blood sugar for diabetics, until Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the hospital. For information or to register, call dietitian Courtney McCarty at (785) 460-4849 or education co-ordinator Jeanene Brown at (785) 460-4850.

Head Start looking for kids

Head Start, a tuition-free preschool, is accept-

ing 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.

Sheriff can check vehicles

The Thomas County Sheriff's Office can check vehicle identification numbers for cars, light trucks and motorcycles. The office is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call Sheriff Rod Taylor at 460-4570 for information or to set up an appointment. The fee is \$10; the inspection is required to get tags on many vehicles.

