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State senator files for 2012 election

By Kevin Bottrell

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State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer has filed for re-election in 2012.

Ostmeyer, a Republican serving his second term, said he filed now because people had been asking whether or not he would run, and he wanted people to

know he was in the race. Ostmeyer said when he was first elected, he told people he wanted to serve two terms and then evaluate where he and the state were at before he decided to run for a third.

"The state's not in good shape," he said, referring to the economy. "If we can't turn it around, none of us are going back."

Beyond growing the state's economy, Ostmeyer said he didn't want to make a

laundry list of campaign promises, but said people can look at his voting record on education, agriculture and business issues to see where his priorities are.

"I'll just do what I've been doing," he said.

Ostmeyer, a farmer and rancher from Grinnell, serves on several committees in the Senate, including natural resources, agriculture, federal and state affairs, local

government and reapportionment. Ostmeyer's 40th district covers 18 counties – the largest in Kansas – including Thomas County. The district may pick up more territory during the redistricting process.

Norton County Commissioner John Miller filed in May, challenging Ostmeyer for the Republican nomination. Ostmeyer said he and Miller are acquainted, and said the two are on the same page on

a lot of issues. However, he said, Miller doesn't have a voting record the way he does, so it is hard to gauge how he'll vote in the future.

"You don't really know a person's issues until they get there," he said.

Ostmeyer said that if he doesn't win, he plans to stay involved in the issues and to enjoy spending more time with his wife, Kay, and their 18 grandkids.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

City projects making progress

Three big Colby construction projects saw a lot of progress this week. One project is the rebuilding of Willow (above). Crews have been compacting dirt and pouring concrete along the road while traffic is detoured to a temporary road to the north. City workers (right) were putting the finishing touches on a textured ramp on the sidewalk at Franklin Avenue and College Drive. This new section of sidewalk is part of the new walking trail. Crews from McCormick Paving have also nearly completed the repaving project on Range Avenue.



Group donates money, time to community garden

By Christina Beringer

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Youth members of the Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial group in Colby presented a \$100 donation to the community garden Aug. 27 during an afternoon of gardening.

"There were nine elementary and middle schoolers who came and learned how to garden," said Orvella Romine, Thomas County Coalition member and community garden volunteer. "We were so appreciative when they presented us with a donation. It will be used to help purchase needed supplies for the garden."

The two hour training session was the brainchild of Modern Woodmen representative Shawn Carney,

who asked Romine to teach the kids how to have a healthy lifestyle through growing their own produce.

Romine explained the importance of having the soil tested for the right nutrients, the benefits of water conservation and about different types of mulching to conserve the water and reduce weeds.

"They were very interested," commented Romine, "and asked a lot of questions. The kids were especially interested in learning about the importance of a soaker hoses versus regular sprinkler systems and why we have flowers in the garden."

Romine said flowers in the garden help keep certain bugs away and also help with pollination. She said that the soaker system better directs water flow

See "GARDEN," Page 2



Shawn Carney (right) and youth volunteers from the Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial group helped out in the community garden this summer.

Remembering Sept. 11 By Marian Ballard

and I started going down that mental list of family, all I knew was that he had been working in New York two or three months before. Tried his home phone – no answer. Began to get worried. Finally sent him an e-mail with two quick questions – where are you and are you OK – figuring he would get it eventually. Within a day he called. He was in Philadelphia, as it happened, and not planning to travel very soon. Which was good, as by that time we could tell a lot of travelers had been stranded.

My cousin. I hadn't hear anything about him in years, a combination of youthful wanderings and the end of obligatory all-family gatherings when my grandmother and then my parents died. Somebody did know some-

thing, though, because a family member let me know that "Billy no longer works in the Pentagon, and the section where he did work wasn't the one hit." Though I haven't seen him since high school – and I'm quite sure no one still calls him Billy – it's good to know the family wasn't wounded in that way.

My community. Most of us waited for the dust to settle, in shock because of the attack, in horror as the details began to come out, in awe of the heroism of firefighters and rescue workers, of just plain people reaching out a helping hand – and of the passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 as they discovered what the plan was and acted to serve their country. The earthshaking events of our days somehow shrank in significance as we faced an attack many compared to Pearl Harbor.

And, like Pearl Harbor, September 11, 2011, is "a day that will live in infamy" and a day that changed the way we look at the world around us forever.

The Colby Free Press would like to encourage readers to share their memories of Sept. 11, 2001. Letters may be sent to 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701; hand-carried to that address or e-mailed to colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Please include your name, address and phone number.

Highway Patrol records show a safer Labor Day weekend

The Kansas Highway Patrol found fewer crashes, drunk drivers and speeding motorists on the roads this Labor Day weekend.

Labor Day weekend is a time when many Americans hit the road, whether for vacations or family get-togethers. The American Auto Association estimated that 31.5 million Americans would likely travel more than 50 miles over the weekend, with top destinations being Branson, Mount Rushmore and Kansas City.

Patrol kept a record from 6 p.m. last Friday to 11:59 p.m. Monday and then compares that record to last year.

The Patrol worked only one fatal crash last weekend, compared to two last year. It also investigat-

ed two alcohol-related crashes and made 37 drunk driving arrests, compared to five and 48 last year.

The Patrol worked two injury crashes in Gove County on Saturday and Sunday and another injury crash Tuesday in Thomas County, which was not within the Labor Day reporting period.

The Patrol issued 1,149 speeding tickets and 973 warnings during the three-day period as well as 322 adult seat belt tickets and 25 child restraint tickets, all decreases from last year. However, the patrol issued more warnings to teens who weren't wearing seat belts than last year.



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