



Winter storm falls short of Colby

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

A storm that left thousands without power in parts of Colorado on Wednesday barely let go of a few snowflakes in Colby. While Greeley, Colo., residents were shoveling out from under a foot of wet, heavy snow, Thomas County's only snowfall came about 6 p.m. and wasn't enough to stick to the ground. Rainfall

was steady all day, however, and weather gauges in Colby registered .14 to .15 inches of moisture. The National Weather Service had predicted snowfall up to two inches west of Levant. In Goodland, a light dusting - less than .1 inch - wasn't enough to completely cover the ground in most places. Observers in Wray, Colo., reported 3 inches, while Colorado's Front Range got anywhere from 9 inches to more than 12. About 150,000 homes lost power in Greeley, Boulder and Loveland, some for

more than 11 hours. Fittingly, the service's Goodland office has set next Thursday as Tri-State Winter Weather Awareness Day. Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist, said he will place a number of winter weather education stories and videos on the office's website, weather.gov/goodland. Floyd also provides definitions of some of the warnings the office issues during the winter: A Winter Weather Advisory means that 3 to 5 inches of snow or .5 inches of

sleet is imminent. An advisory may also be issued if blowing snow may reduce visibility to less than a mile or if there may be .25 inches of freezing rain. A Winter Storm Watch is issued when a storm is predicted within 12 to 48 hours. A Winter Storm Warning means heavy snow, 6 inches or more in 12 hours, sleet or blowing snow. A Wind Chill Warning is when the wind has lowered the temperature enough to be hazardous within several minutes of

exposure, -25 degrees or lower. The weather service issued a winter outlook last Thursday, saying the central United States, including northwest Kansas, would have an average winter. Southern Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas are expected to see a 33 to 40 percent warmer and drier winter, while the northern U.S. is expected to be cooler. The service's Climate Prediction Center reports that La Nina, unusually cold

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'Temples and Tombs'



Colby second grader Alizah Schielke led her classmates in a song about King Tut at the second grade musical on Tuesday. The musical's theme was ancient Egypt, with songs about pharaohs and mummies.

KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

College board to allow refunds of scholarships

By Kayla Cornett
Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansas.com

In an attempt to clear up confusion and frustration, the Colby Community College board decided to vacate an anti-scholarship stacking policy that had been passed in the spring during its monthly meeting on Oct. 17.

Before the policy was passed, students were able to receive refunds for scholarship money that was not used for their college fees.

For example, if a student received three separate scholarships that each awarded \$1,000, the student was able to stack these scholarships together to equal \$3,000 that can be used to pay for college fees. If the student only owed \$2,000 in fees, he or she would receive a refund of \$1,000 from the college.

When the anti-stacking policy was enacted, students would not receive direct payment for unused scholarship money. The main reason the board decided to pass this policy was because the refunds were coming out of the college's budget.

"We were technically paying out institutional money as refunds rather than using that money inherently towards our costs and

also spreading out to help more students, which we didn't want to do," said Dr. Steven Vacik, college president.

A few of the board members said they had been receiving calls from students and parents about how upset they were with the new policy.

Vacik said the college ran into some problems this fall because some students had already been told some things about their financial aid and/or maybe didn't necessarily understand some things about the college's anti-stacking policy and so they had some students and parents that were very disgruntled.

"I still think that our stacking policy is something that we need to go forward with in some way, form or fashion," Vacik said. "I also think we need to continue to look at the Thomas County tuition grant as well and make sure that that is being used as best as it possibly can."

Vacik then said what he thought the board should do about this problem.

"I think for the sake of our credibility and also to make sure that we're not doing anything to hurt our students, I will entertain a motion to vacate that decision for this

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Debate team takes third place

The Colby High School debate team placed third in the Scott City tournament Saturday.

Colby had five teams entered in the tournament. Juniors Cameron McLaughlin and Tomi Miller finished fourth place in the Open Division and freshmen Brooklyn Bange and Kelly Sloan earned a fifth place medal in the Novice Division.

The Eagles finished in third place behind Hays

High and Dodge City. There were seven schools competing with 18 entries in each division.

The team will be in action with both varsity and junior varsity Saturday at Liberal. The team's home meet will be Saturday, Nov. 19. Anyone interested in judging should contact coach Nancy Rundel at 460-5300.

Farm operator donates \$10,000 to foundation to encourage giving

By Christina Beringer
Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

Employees of agricultural producer Lon Frahm have been given a rare opportunity to support Thomas County through an endowed fund at the Thomas County Community Foundation.

Foundation director Melinda Olson announced Monday that Frahm donated \$10,000 to establish the Frahm Farmland Employee Advised Fund to promote community giving among his em-

ployees. Olson said the fund is a donor-advised fund, meaning that grant recipients are recommended by each of the five employees. Each employee gets to choose how 20 percent of the fund's proceeds will be disbursed, barring approval by the foundation's board of directors.

She said there are specific guidelines the foundation must follow when awarding grants and they must ensure that the fund is distributed within those policies.

"We are excited to welcome

Lon's fund to our family of funds and look forward to helping his employees give back to their charities of choice," Olson said. "He is known for his charitable service throughout the county and state and serves on numerous boards. He is passionate about not only preserving, but also building our rural community for the future and we are hopeful that this fund will inspire others to give back, too."

Frahm said he wanted to do something to give back to the

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Non-lethal take down



DEBBIE SCHWANKE/Colby Community College

Colby Community College Dean of External Affairs demonstrates Orcutt Police Nunchaku techniques to members of Michael Thompson's criminal justice class. The device is a non-lethal control method for law enforcement and corrections. Students pictured are (from left) Kristen Mitchell, Lindsey Campbell, Odasie Wright and Mikaela Reiff.

Pension commission to consider moving public retirement to 401(k) style

By John Hanna
The Associated Press

TOPEKA - A commission agreed Wednesday to consider proposing that Kansas start a 401(k)-style pension plan for new teachers and government workers, but members also expect to mull over

a less aggressive alternative that creates such a plan only for higher-wage employees.

The pension study commission also promised to discuss other ideas for improving the future financial stability of Kansas' public pension system. The possibilities include issuing up to \$5 billion in bonds to close a long-term gap in the system's funding and additional increases in the state's contributions to retirement benefits.

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System projects a gap of nearly \$8.3 billion between anticipated revenues and the benefits promised to retirees through 2033. Earlier this year, legislators committed the state to increasing the tax dollars it contributes to the pension system and approved changes to force public employees to choose between contributing more of their paychecks to their pensions or accepting lower future benefits. Many legislators presumed the pen-

sions study commission would draft a proposal for a 401(k)-style plan or a hybrid system when lawmakers created the group earlier this year. The state's current plans guarantee benefits up front, based on a worker's salary and years of service, rather than basing retirement checks on the pension system's investment earnings, something common with businesses.

The debate pits Gov. Sam Brownback and his Republican legislative allies pushing for a 401(k)-style plan for

new employees against public employee groups, which oppose the idea. Critics fear a 401(k)-style plan or even a less aggressive alternative will provide less generous and less secure retirement benefits for new hires, without making a dent in the funding gap.

"On the discussions we've seen so far, we haven't seen them address the gap," said Terry Forsyth, lobbyist for Kansas-

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