



8 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS

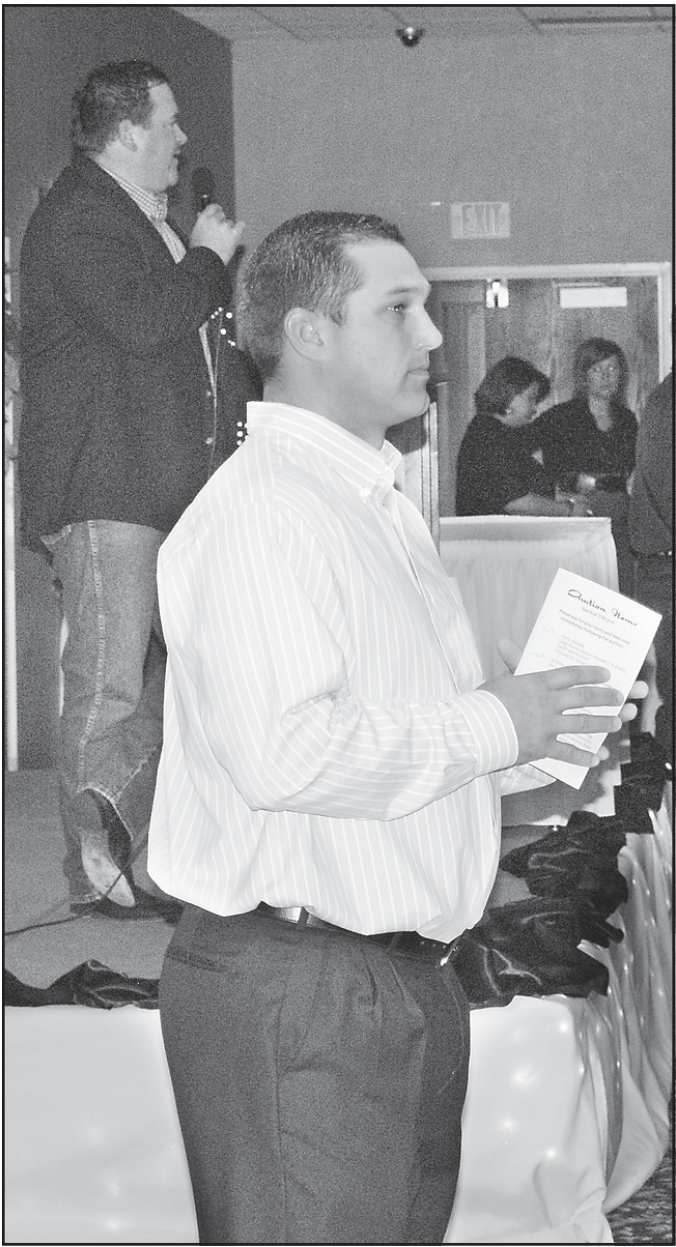
75¢

Monday

November 7, 2011  
Volume 122, Number 174  
Serving Thomas County since 1888



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press



## 250-plus attend Hospice banquet

Jason Woofter (above) won the drawing at the Hospice Services Banquet on Saturday. In addition to the Snuggie, he won a 42-inch television, a recliner and one free pizza a month for a year. The main event of the evening was the live auction fund raiser. Chris Soehner (left) acted as the auctioneer for the part of the auction with Gabe Stanley and several others assisting. The auction items (below), which included paintings, jewelry and a John Deere mini four-wheeler, were on display during the social hour and banquet. The evening also included a silent auction and dance. More than 250 people attended.



## Service says 5-7 inches of snow likely

Thomas County is in for some winter weather today and tomorrow, with storms predicted to drop 5 to 7 inches of snow.

The National Weather Service office in Goodland has issued a Winter Storm Watch for northwest Kansas, southwest Nebraska and northeast Colorado. A Pacific storm moved into the area this morning, with rain starting about 10:20 a.m. It is expected to switch to snow in the evening. The office will issue a Winter Storm Warning at 6 p.m. tonight, lasting until midnight Tuesday.

A watch is issued when a storm is predicted within 12 to 48 hours. A warning means heavy snow, 6 inches or more in 12 hours, sleet

or blowing snow.

The service is predicting the highest amounts of snow will accumulate north of a line from Cheyenne Wells, Colo., to Hill City. Anywhere north of that line could see 5 to 7 inches by the end of the day Tuesday. Snowfall will be less south of that line, anywhere between 3 to 5 inches.

The real problem will be wind. The service is predicting wind speeds up to 30 mph Tuesday, which blow the snow around, reducing visibility. The service is encouraging anyone with travel plans to prepare for winter driving conditions. This means low visibility, slick roads and cold temperatures.

## Representative files to keep seat

Rep. Rick Billinger (R-Goodland) announced Wednesday he has filed for election to the Kansas House of Representatives' 121st District.

Billinger was appointed by the District Republican Central Committee in December to fill the unexpired term of Rep. Jim Morrison, who died in November. Billinger was sworn in when the legislature opened in January.

"It's truly an honor to serve the 121st District," Rep. Billinger said. "I am very proud of the progress we have made on behalf of the district and the State of Kansas. It is my hope the voters in the 121st District will grant me the privilege of representing them again in the Kansas House of Representatives."

"Our state finds itself at a critical juncture, and I remain committed to finding the right solutions to ensure the livelihood of the citizens in my district, and our continued growth as a state."

Since joining the Legislature in January, Rep. Billinger said he has worked on a number of issues important to the 121st District including balancing the budget and limiting government spending; protecting the unborn; unemploy-

ment; and workers compensation.

The Goodland representative serves on the House Insurance Committee, House Local Government Committee, House Education Committee, House Commerce and Economic Development Committee and the Special Committee on KAN-ED. Billinger has been selected to serve on the State and Local Government Committee for the Council of State Governments – a nonpartisan, regionally-based, national organization promoting excellence in state government.

House Majority Leader Arlen Siegfried (R-Olathe) highlighted the importance of Rep. Billinger's service while in the legislature.

"Rep. Billinger brings a credible voice to many issues, including unemployment and workers compensation, to the Kansas Legislature," she said. "Not only has he been a tireless advocate for his district but Rep. Billinger's hard work and dedication has been an incredible asset to our chamber. This is a member who belongs in the Kansas House of Representatives."

The 121st House District includes Thomas, Sherman, Sheridan and Graham Counties.

## College president at event to promote K-State program

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press  
kbottrell@nwkanas.com

Colby Community College President Dr. Stephen Vacik was in Barton County today to promote a cooperative program with Kansas State University that allows students to get a degree without moving to Manhattan.

The 2+2 program is a cooperative program that K-State operates with community and technical colleges around Kansas. Students do two years at the community or technical college and then two years

of online courses through K-State. At the end, students have their associate and bachelor's degrees. K-State had a reception this afternoon at Barton County Community College to promote the general business 2+2 program. Vacik and several other community college presidents attended.

Melinda Sinn, director of marketing and communication services at K-State, said the university has been promoting the general business 2+2 program, since all 19 community colleges offer it. There are many other similar programs, but they differ be-

See "COLLEGE," Page 2

## Rising costs mean higher poverty

By Hope Yen

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON – The ranks of America's poor are greater than previously known, reaching a new level of 49.1 million – or 16 percent – due to rising medical costs and other expenses that make it harder for people to stay afloat, according to new census estimates.

The numbers released Monday are part of a first-ever supplement

tal poverty measure aimed at providing a fuller picture of poverty. It is considered experimental and does not replace the Census Bureau's official poverty formula, which continues to determine eligibility and distribution of billions of dollars in federal aid for the poor.

Based on the revised formula, the number of poor people exceeds the record 46.2 million, or 15.1 percent, that was officially reported in September.

Broken down by groups, Americans 65 or older sustained the largest increases in poverty under the revised poverty formula – nearly

doubling to 15.9 percent, or 1 in 6 – because of medical expenses that are not accounted for in the official rate. Those include rising Medicare premiums, deductibles and expenses for prescription drugs.

Working-age adults ages 18-64 also saw increases in poverty – from 13.7 percent to 15.2 percent – due mostly to commuting and child care costs.

For the first time, the share of Hispanics living in poverty surpassed that of African-Americans, 28.2 percent to 25.4 percent. That

See "POVERTY," Page 2

## Number one fan



KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

Ron Boller shook hands with Colby Community College basketball coaches at Friday's game at the Community Building. The Colby Berean Church had a fund raiser for Boller – an avid Trojan basketball fan – during the game to help with his medical expenses. Anyone wishing to donate may send money to the church at 1125 S. Franklin or call Shelly Myers at 443-1898.



8 04879 13898 3