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## Debt reduction could hurt colleges

### Fort Hays State president worried about loss of funding

By Kevin Bottrell  
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Fort Hays State University President Ed Hammond stopped in Colby on Friday to share his concerns about the legislative session in January and what effect it could have on higher education.

Hammond was on a five-day tour of Kansas from east to west, talking to newspapers, clubs and citizens. He said he is particularly concerned about the upcoming legislative session because it will come after important federal budget decisions. If the debt supercommittee doesn't come up with a deal on \$1.5 trillion in

spending cuts by Thanksgiving, the government will have to make across-the-board cuts to reach that amount. Hammond said that scenario could lead to reductions for higher education, some from unlikely areas. If this is the case, he said, the Department of Defense could get cut by as much as \$600 million. If the department doesn't want to reduce troop numbers or equipment, they would have to cut from "soft" areas such as education benefits offered to soldiers.

Hammond said Fort Hays has already received notice from the Marine Corps that they may cut education benefits by 75 percent. This poses problems for the university since many students are veterans who have tuition paid for by the military. Hammond said about 12 percent of the credit hours being taken online right now are being paid for by military benefits. Budget cuts could also impact Pell grants and other need-based aid, he said, and hurt in other

ways. If the federal government decides to take away highway improvement money, for example, states may have to pick up the bill and transfer money from higher education. "We'll know by Christmas," he said. "We'll know before the legislative session starts." This year, Hammond will go to the Legislature to ask for several increases. He will ask the Legislature to fully fund the Kansas Academy of Math and Science, a program where juniors and se-

niors spend their last two years of high school at Fort Hays taking advanced math and science classes and doing research projects. When they graduate they already have 68 college credits. Hammond said the academy was only given enough money last year to support half the number of students it could have, and next year he will ask for enough money to have 40 students. Hammond will also be asking

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### Repealer talks forms, prairie dogs

By Kayla Cornett  
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Kansas Office of the Repealer Secretary Dennis Taylor spoke with people from around northwest Kansas about prairie dogs, tax forms and vehicle tags at Pioneer Memorial Library on Tuesday.

Taylor has been touring the state to hear from residents about issues of repealing, revising, or questions about regulations among other issues. Colby was his 26th city in five weeks and was the last stop of the tour.

He began the meeting by describing the purpose of the Office of the Repealer. Gov. Sam Brownback created the office by executive order in January, placing it in the Department of Administration.

"Basically, what my job is to oversee about 600 people in Topeka who are working with all the agencies of state government," Taylor said. "... We're the support agency for the rest of state government."

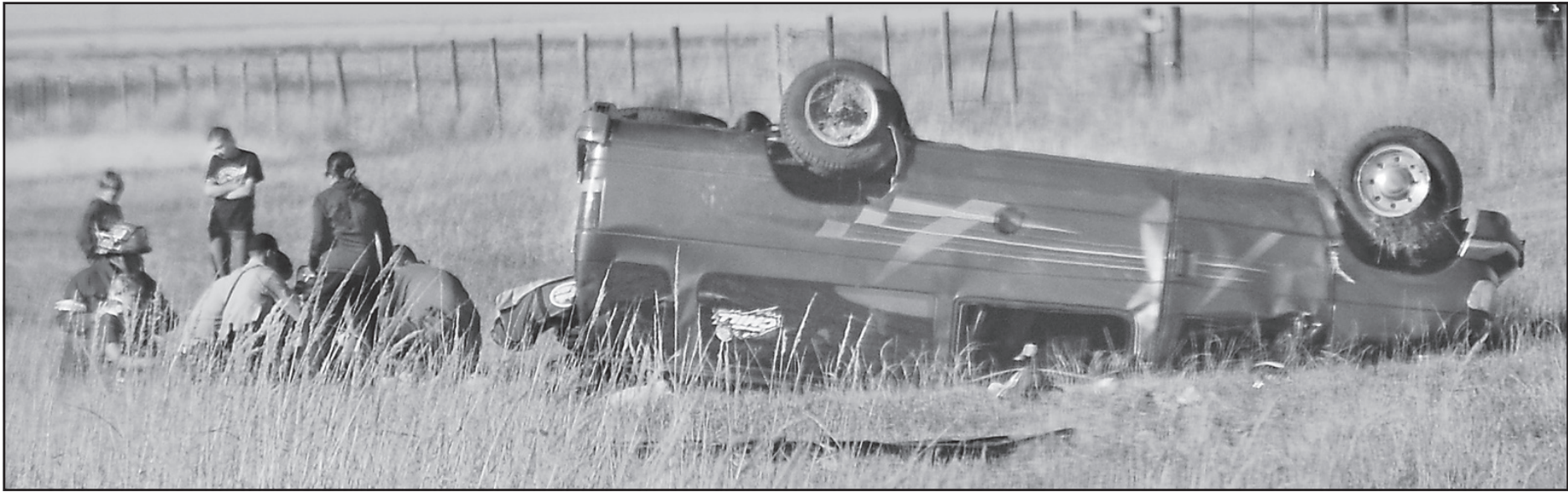
Taylor said the Office of the Repealer has also already received about 250 to 300 suggestions on its website, <http://repealer.ks.gov/>. He will make recommendations to the governor based on the what he's heard from the public.

Taylor mentioned a couple of other issues that came up throughout the tour, including a law about people 18 years and younger not being able to ride motorcycles, why Kansas should have medical marijuana legalized and eliminating sodomy laws because of a recent Supreme Court decision.

Taylor then opened up the meeting to anyone who wanted to discuss an issue.

The main discussion throughout the meeting dealt with making sure one specific law would not be repealed: the law that allows

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Paramedics worked on a patient (above) after a sport utility vehicle carrying coaches and players from a Colorado softball club rolled on I-70 northwest of Oakley on Sunday. The driver and six passengers were all taken to Citizens Medical Center. The Kansas Highway Patrol investigated the crash (below).

## Colorado softball team crashes southeast of Colby

Several members of a Colorado girls' softball club were injured when their sport utility vehicle rolled into a ditch northwest of Oakley on Sunday.

The sport utility vehicle, carrying members of the Triple Crown Stars, a girls' softball club based in Fort Collins, was traveling northwest on I-70, returning from a tournament in Wichita. A tire went flat at mile post 66 near Oakley, causing the driver to lose control. The vehicle rolled into the east ditch.

Driver Stephanie Klaviter, 34, of Windsor and passengers Brit-

tany Younan, 16, Maci Stouffer, 18, Kate Harris, 17, Kayla Rodriguez, 17, Pauline Tufi, 16, and Erica Judge, 29, all of Fort Collins, were taken to Citizens Medical Center. Several had to be taken from the scene by stretcher while others were able to walk to the ambulances. Klaviter, Younan and Judge had been wearing seatbelts.

Other members of the club in a second van stopped and provided first aid while they waited for ambulances from Colby.

The Triple Crown Stars is a youth softball club for girls in

high school sponsored by Triple Crown Sports in Fort Collins. The club includes several teams with girls from all over Colorado.

Manager Dave King told 9 News in Denver that Judge, one of the team's coaches, and Younan were flown to Swedish Medical Center in Denver. Judge has lacerations on her head and Younan has three cracked vertebrae, but none of the injuries were life-threatening. King said the other five should be released from Citizens Medical Center today.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

## Earthquake readiness not high on state priority list

By John Milburn  
Associated Press

TOPEKA — When it comes to the threat of damage and chaos from disasters in Kansas, earthquakes rank nearly at the bottom of the state's list of concerns.

Earthquakes rank 21st out of 22 potential hazards listed in the official state response plan by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. Only fog is a lower threat

than earthquakes, though the misty shrouds are more frequently found in Kansas.

The recent spate of earthquakes in Oklahoma was felt throughout southern Kansas and as far north as the Kansas City metro area with little or no damage reported.

Maj. Gen. Lee Tafari, state adjutant general, said the state's frequent tornadoes and flooding — the top two hazards in the state — give Kansas ample opportunity to train, equip and plan for the types of dam-

age and injuries that could be caused by strong seismic activity.

"Many of the functions are the same," Tafari said. "There's no prevention to it."

According to the state response plan, Kansas ranks 45th among states in the amount of damage caused by earthquakes each year, with the Kansas City, Mo., metropolitan area ranking 35th among 35 major metro areas in the country.

Kansas is bisected by the Humboldt fault zone running from north of Oklahoma City into southern Nebraska. It passes east of Manhattan where the biggest earthquakes ever recorded in occurred. There have been more than 210 earthquakes felt in Kansas since 1867, with the strongest coming in April 1867, when a magnitude 5.5 quake hit near Wamego, causing structural damage in

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### Recognizing service



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Veterans, including Colby Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander Paul Ohlogge and State Commander Bob Cox, carried an American flag down Franklin Avenue in the Veterans Day

Parade on Friday. The parade ended at the Thomas County Courthouse, where Cox spoke about honoring the sacrifice of veterans and active duty military personnel.

## U.S. Senator pushes for gas site inspections

WICHITA (AP) — Republican and Democratic legislators in Kansas are joining ranks to support an effort to restore the state's oversight of natural gas storage.

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, a Republican from Kansas, plans to introduce a measure in the U.S. Senate to return control over the inspection of storage facilities within Kansas to the state. Federal courts have ruled that states don't have the authority to inspect the storage sites, but the federal government has declined to accept the responsibility.

The storage sites have not been inspected for 19 months.

The *Wichita Eagle* reports Monday that state officials will push for a legislative resolution in early 2012 supporting Roberts' efforts.

Roberts wants to give Kansas the authority to conduct safety inspections on 11 underground storage facilities that can hold more than 270 billion cubic feet of gas.

Kansas companies hold the natural gas for passed through pipelines to out-of-state markets. The federal Department of Transportation, the lead agency in interstate gas safety, has opted not to inspect the sites.

The natural gas is housed in depleted oil and gas fields in Kansas. Companies pump the gas into huge caverns for storage until it is needed by utility companies.

Safety is a concern following the 2001 incidents in Hutchinson that left two people dead.

Natural gas escaped from an underground salt formation, migrated seven miles, rose to the surface through abandoned water wells and exploded. The two deaths occurred when a mobile home exploded. Half a city block of businesses were also destroyed.

