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Area ‘ham’ clubs gather for contest

Amateur radio operators from the area gathered Friday and through the snow on Saturday at the National Weather Service office in Goodland for the 13th Annual Skywarn Recognition Day. The program – originated by the Goodland National Weather Service office – honors the amateur radio operators who help as storm spotters and provide communications in emergencies. This year the snow storm and six and one-half inches of snow helped and hindered the hams, said Tom Betz (K0JEI). He said it was nice to have a warm place to play on the airwaves, but the snow did keep a few of the hams from Colby and Stratton, Colo., who have helped in previous years from being able to attend. The 24-hour contest is co-

sponsored by the American Radio Relay League and the National Weather Service, and the radio operators work as a team to contact other hams across the world throughout the event. Members of the Sherman County Amateur Radio Enthusiasts Club and Trojan Amateur Radio Club of Thomas County set up radios and antennas at the weather service office, and for most of the 24-hour contest, two different radio systems, a computer based system and two other digital radio system were making contacts around the country. Among the possible stations hams were trying to contact as many of the more than 100 weather offices who were participating in

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Be careful on those roads



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Fear not, there will be milk to go along with Santa’s cookies for Christmas. A semi loaded with milk was pulled out of the ditch near the Colby Municipal Airport Monday night after the driver lost control during the snow storm on Saturday. Thomas County Undersheriff Marc Finley said they had to wait until road conditions cleared before the semi could safely be pulled out. The highway was closed for about an hour from 5 to 6 p.m. Monday while two wreckers pulled the semi out after its contents were unloaded.

Scrap metal dealers now required by state to register

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkanas.com

Starting Jan. 1, scrap metal dealers will have to register with their city or county governments. The Colby City Council established a \$100 fee for scrap metal dealer registration at their meeting Tuesday. City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said a new state law taking effect Jan. 1 requires scrap metal dealers to register with the city or county, depending on where they are located. Registration is for 10 years.

The state has left it up to cities and counties to establish a fee of not less than \$100 and not more than \$400, with a renewal fee of not less than \$25 and not more than \$50. The council voted to go with the minimum fee. Armstrong said the state Attorney General’s Office has not completed the registration form yet, so in the mean time the city can take the payment and send out the form when it becomes available. Councilman Mark Beringer said the law would likely only affect one or two businesses in town. One of these is already planning to submit an application

at the Dec. 20 meeting. Armstrong and the council agreed that it shouldn’t be the city’s place to enforce that law or pursue businesses to register. In other business, the council: • Reviewed the 2012 health insurance renewal from Blue Cross Blue Shield. Council President Dave Voss, who sits on the council’s insurance committee, said costs are increasing. “Health insurance continues to go up and is one of the major factors of our personnel costs,” he said. Some of the increase is due to anticipated changes from the federal health

care reform law, Armstrong said, but the expected increase was built into the city’s budget for next year. Councilman Tim Huffles said other towns and businesses are facing the same problem. • Granted Larry Horinek a waiver for a city ordinance that requires insurance companies to deposit money with the city for cleanup on a destroyed house. Horinek lost his home in a fire Nov. 5. The ordinance says that on any property that is more than 75 percent destroyed, the insurance company must deposit 15 percent of the payout to ensure that the property gets cleaned up.

Horinek, however, has sold the property to someone who wants to rebuild and wanted the waiver to get that 15 percent back to help pay the mortgage holder. • Amended the 2011 budget to add \$146,736 to the water fund to cover a line replacement project, \$103,505 to the sewer fund to cover the final payment to Miller and Associates for engineering on the sewer plant and \$25,000 to the Law Enforcement Trust to account for money seized. A public hearing was held for the additions, but no one from the public

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It won’t hurt a bit



Student Council President Katrina Griggs lent her support to first time Blood Donor Sandra Galvan during the Red Cross Blood Drive at Golden Plains this fall. Nineteen donors contributed to the drive.

New family doctor coming to Colby

A new family practice physician will be coming to Colby in August. Citizens Medical Center announced today that Dr. John Dygert will join the staff at the Family Center for Health and Wellness. He and his family will make the move to Colby in the summer. “We are extremely pleased to recruit such an excellent trained physician and a very personable individual,” said Kevan Trenkle, the hospital’s chief executive officer. “Dr. Dygert’s signing is just one more step towards insuring that the residents of our community and northwest Kansas have access to quality physician services for many years to come.” Dygert received his undergraduate degree in biology with a chemistry minor, and attended

medical school at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences in Kansas City, Mo. For the past 2 1/2 years, Dygert has been training at his family practice residency in Fort Wayne, Ind. He will be fully trained in all aspects of family practice along with obstetrics and c-sections. He and his wife, Jilinda, are anxious to be closer to home and have their children spend more quality time with their grandparents. Both Dygert (Woodland Park, Colo.) and Jilinda (Beloit) grew up in small towns and look forward to raising their children in that environment. “Good health is an important part of having a great life,” Dygert said. “I love helping people



Dr. J. Dygert

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Supreme court hears smoking ban arguments

By John Milburn
The Associated Press

TOPEKA – Kansas Supreme Court justices were asked Wednesday to reverse a lower-court’s temporary injunction blocking enforcement of a narrow portion of the state’s 2010 smoking ban on grounds legislators had a rational basis for its provisions. But justices and Mike Merriam, attorney for Downtown Bar and Grill in Tonganoxie, said to do so would leave little reason for the northeast Kansas club’s case to move forward. “From a practical matter, Mr. Chief Justice, we’ll be dead in the water,” Merriam said. “We can’t just litigate for the sake of litigating.”

At issue is whether a deadline that legislators said bars like Downtown Bar and Grill had to have switched their liquor license to be exempt from the 2010 smoking ban. Legislators set that cutoff at Jan. 1, 2009, while the bar got its license in May 2009. Merriam argues that the date was arbitrary and had no rational basis. The law prohibits indoor smoking in most public places, including bars, restaurants, bingo parlors and some private clubs. The gambling areas of state-owned casinos are exempted. Legislators rejected

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Better Business Bureau warns of e-mail scam

The Better Business Bureau is issuing an urgent scam alert, cautioning businesses and consumers about an e-mail that appears to be from bureau, with the subject line “Complaint from your customers.” This e-mail is fraudulent, officials from the bureau of Kansas office in Wichita said, and people should ignore its contents and delete it immediately. If you have already clicked on a link in the e-mail, run a full virus scan of your computer.

The Colby Free Press received one of these e-mails this morning. The e-mails have return addresses the bureau does not use (one example is riskmanager@bureau.org) and it is signed with the address of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the national office of the bureau system. The e-mail also contains a link to a non-bureau web site, which should not be clicked. The bureau is working with law enforcement to determine its source and stop the fraudulent

campaign. All complaints from the bureau of Kansas are five-digit case numbers. The bureau is requesting that anyone who gets one of the e-mails forward it to phishing@council.bureau.org. For information, contact the Better Business Bureau of Kansas at 345 Riverview 720, Wichita, Kan., 67203, at (316) 263-8576 or on the web site at www.kansasplains.bureau.org.

