

# Happy Holidays

Check out Letters to Santa written by local children in today's paper



16 pages

## COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Old pool demolition moving ahead

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press

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The city of Colby will soon go out for bids on demolishing the old pool, bathhouse and sewer treatment plant.

The city council reviewed bid specifications at Tuesday's meeting. The council had decided at a meeting earlier in December to allow companies to bid for all three projects as a group or individually. The specifications also include higher compaction on the last three feet of material at the pool and bathhouse, so that the city can use it to either build a parking lot or a structure.

The city received notice in late October that it's request to have the pool and bathhouse taken off the historic register was success-

ful, and the demolition could go ahead.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said she received a letter from Colby High School senior Morgan Bell, who requested the city consider adding onto the Community Building. Mayor Gary Adrian said it is great to see a young person getting involved in the future of the community.

In other business:

- Received an update on the property at 245 N. School Ave. The city officially found the property to be unsafe and dangerous in September and gave the owner 90 days to make cleanup and repairs. That 90 days was set to expire Tuesday, but the property sold at a Thomas County Sheriff's auction on Dec. 15. Armstrong said the

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## High school eyes agriculture grant

By Kevin Bottrell

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Colby High School students may soon have four acres of farmland to study how food goes from seeds to the dinner table if it is selected for a grant.

Agriculture teacher Tom Rundel has submitted an abstract for a \$75,000 grant, and if Colby is one of the three selected, he will submit a full application.

Curriculum Director Diana Weiland told the Colby School Board on Monday that Rundel's plan is to have four acres of farmland for the students to grow crops, which they will harvest and process into

food. Rundel is partnering with Colby Community College and Colby Implement on the project.

Weiland said the school should know if they are selected for the next application phase by February.

In other business:

- Superintendent Terrel Harrison said she participated in a webinar about Gov. Sam Brownback's school funding proposal.

The plan would put base state aid back at \$4,492 per student and would count kindergartners as full-time rather than half-time, she said, however it would also eliminate the weightings and lock in

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KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

Ronda Faber and her son gave a gift to a resident Deseret Care Center on Wednesday. Faber and other volunteers were part of the Adopt-a-Grandparent program, in which they hand out gifts to residents of Colby nursing homes.

## Local volunteers bring gifts to elderly

By Kayla Cornett

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Ronda Faber wished the residents of Deseret Health and Rehab, formerly Colby Care Center, a Merry Christmas on Wednesday as she and several volunteers handed out Christmas gifts as a part of the Adopt-a-Grandparent program.

Faber began this tradition of handing out Christmas gifts at the nursing homes in Colby last year. The other volunteers helping her this year were her children, John, Aaron, Mark and Jack, Melissa Stramel and her children, Nathan, Anna and Emily, and

Luke Wessell.

Local businesses sponsor one or more residents and Faber uses the money to create the exact same gift for all the recipients. This year, she said she had a business sponsor 20 residents.

The gifts she handed out Wednesday consisted of two Mary Kay products, a Fragrance-Free Satin Hands hand cream and a Mint Bliss Energizing Lotion for Feet and Legs. Faber said the latter is very popular with the residents. Also, residents that use walkers received decorative pouches made by Stramel.

"It's really nice this time of year and it's really fun," Faber said. "Some residents don't

receive any gifts besides this one."

The businesses that sponsored residents this Christmas were Farm and Ranch Realty, Cornerstone Ag, John Gatz Attorney, Great Plains Spraying, Gordon Company, Great Western Tire, Red River Commodities, Son-ic, Wal-Mart, John Tweed Insurance, Tina Harris Physical Therapy, Tarbit Redi-Mix, Tails-A-Waggin Pet Grooming, T.O. Haas Tire Co., Strait Associates, Todd Stramel Attorney and family, Farmers and Merchants Bank, Family Center for Health Care, Colby Implement, Franz Chiropractic, Jerome and Jean Mazanec and family, Stan and Verda Wancura, Wade and Sherry Taylor and Josh and Ronda Faber and family.

## Checking out the Toys for Tots



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School

Seniors Jackie Armstrong and Katrina Griggs boxed up the more than 100 toys that were donated by students and staff at Golden Plains High School for donation to the Toys for Tots program of Thomas County. This drive was sponsored by the high school Student Council as part of their holiday celebrations.

## Oakley chamber hires director

By Christina Beringer

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A former Colby Wal-Mart employee has recently been hired as the new executive director for the Oakley Area Chamber of Commerce. She began her duties on Nov. 28.

Amy Thrasher of Oakley has over 14 years of retail experience. She spent 11 of those years as the department manager of the sporting goods and automotive sections at Wal-Mart, followed by three years as a retail representative for merchandising locations in Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado.

She said her experience in customer service and networking in the retail arena will be an asset to her while assisting Oakley area en-

trepreneurs and attracting tourists. She also explained a few goals she hopes to accomplish.

"Right now we are working on our membership drive, which I hope to increase," said Thrasher. "There are 77 registered members, most of which are in Oakley but we also have one in Winona and a few Colby businesses, as well. I hope to add at least 25 members next year."

In addition to the membership drive, she said plans are being worked out for their annual meeting, which will take place in January.

"We are doing it different this year," Thrasher explained. "In the past, they have had it coincide with the annual banquet but decided low attendance at the meeting was due to people not wanting to

sit in on the business portion. So this year, we are splitting the two events so hopefully more people will come."

The annual banquet, she said, will be held on Monday, Feb. 20. She said it is an evening fund raising event with entertainment and dining.

Throughout the year, she said the chamber will be involved with many more events, including ones that they don't directly host, but do help with. The Consumer Extravaganza, formerly the Home and Garden Show, is set for Friday, March 16, and Saturday, March 17. During the Logan County Fair in July, they plan to sell concessions and have a free barbecue meal at the grand stands.

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## NORAD standing by to track Santa

DENVER (AP) – Santa already is piling up big numbers on social networking sites this season, so the volunteer Santa-trackers at NORAD are bracing for tens of thousands of calls and e-mails when their operations center goes live on Christmas Eve.

"We expect our numbers to be very high this year," said Joyce Creech, project leader for NORAD Tracks Santa at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Last year, NORAD Tracks Santa volunteers answered 80,000 phone calls on Christmas Eve, Creech said. They also answered 7,000 e-mails.

NORAD's Santa updates are just about everywhere — on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, www.noradsanta.org and television. And this year, there's a new Santa-tracking app for smart phones, built by visionbox, a Colorado Springs software developer.

The app was downloaded more than 234,000 times from Android Market and iTunes by mid-December.



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