

Colby hotel wins award

The Sleep Inn & Suites hotel of Colby has received the 2012 Gold Hospitality Award from Choice Hotels International, franchisor of the Sleep Inn brand.

"The Sleep Inn & Suites Colby hotel's commitment to excellence and outstanding guest service has earned it this well-deserved recognition as one of the best hotels among the Sleep Inn brand," said Steve

Joyce, president and chief executive officer.

As a top-performing property among the company's more than 4,900 U.S. hotels, the hotel has demonstrated a focus on guest satisfaction and providing superior service. Additional award criteria are evaluated by the company through its property ranking reports.

These birds yellow-bellied

Tree trunks can acquire a horizontal, strangely regular-looking row(s) of shallow holes during spring. The vandalism can show up on almost any species, but the likely victims are pines, maples, birches, apples and pears.

Typically, tree owners worry that wood-boring insects are at work.

With rows, however, borers aren't the problem, said Ward Upham, K-State Research and Extension horticulturist. Instead, it's a woodpecker whose name — yellow-bellied sapsucker — many Americans think is a made-up, Looney Tunes-type insult.

"It really is a bird that has a yellowish breast, as well as a red cap," Upham said. "It makes holes so it can feed on the sap those wounds release, plus on the insects the sap attracts."

The yellow-bellied sapsucker is the same territory-protecting woodpecker that's notorious for repeatedly banging its beak on metal — roof flashing, street sign, whatever resounds loudly.

"Its clanging a vent pipe on your roof can be better than an alarm clock — plus coffee," he said.

The woodpecker also is well-known for ambitious migrations. It spends summer as far north as

Alaska and winter as far south as Central America. Also, it's more likely to fly through the East Coast than the Midwest.

"In Kansas, we usually have a few around from October to April, with moderate peaks during spring and fall," Upham said. "They typically don't do enough damage to threaten mature trees. At worst, they might girdle a sapling."

However, yellow-bellied sapsuckers seem to find certain trees fascinating, he said, even ignoring nearby trees of the same species. So, he said, if homeowners are worried about more damage in October, they can prepare a deterrent in September and keep it in place for several months, but no longer. Options include wrapping the damaged trunk area in wire mesh or keeping it coated with Tanglefoot.

Rexford goes to competition

By Jacquelyn Armstrong

Golden Plains Middle School

On April 4, Golden Plains' students got up early and went to Logan for the Middle School Music Contest.

The girls from Golden Plains performed a vocal ensemble and received a 1- rating. The mixed choir received a 2, and the band earned a 1-.

Vocal soloists included Koi Wessel, 1-; Tayler Petersen, 1-; Madison Walz, 1; Kaitlyn Steadman, 2+; and Tayler Lobato, 2+.

Instrumental soloists included Jennifer Esparza, flute, 1-; Kade Wessel, snare drum, 2+; Nicholas Brown, trumpet, 2+; Kynndra



Kynndra Rush

Rush, flute, 1-; Dawson Spresser, flute, 2+; Cole Ziegelmeier, tuba, 1; and Kami Miller, French horn, 1.

"The large-group ensemble was my favorite because we performed very well," said Kade Wessel.

Leadership team wins event

Five Fort Hays State University organizational leadership majors attended the recent Leadership Challenge Event at Washburn University, and Fort Hays came away with the victory in the seven-team collegiate division.

Laura Dougherty, Colby senior, Tyson Miller, Colby junior, Jason Dreiling, Great Bend senior, Jill Moeder, Hays senior, and Levi Unruh, Hays sophomore, engaged in a leadership simulation that challenged students to work together

to solve a problem. Each team member assumed a particular role through three different rounds.

Throughout the day, students participated in individual and team scenarios, culminating with a presentation of their comprehensive plan with their findings and recommendations. All events and activities were evaluated by a team of judges.

The faculty advisors are John Montgomery and Brett Whitaker.

And baby makes six — generations



BECKY BOND

Becky Bond of Colby, grandmother to the youngest of six generations, caught this rare moment as her family gathered around its newest addition. Carson Owen, born Sunday, April 8, 2012, was being held by family matriarch Ellen Palmer, 96, his great-great-great-grandmother. Around them from left were Carson's great-great-grandmother, Merle Wolf of Colby; grandfather Kyle Bond of Colby; great-grandmother Kay Morris of Stockton; and Carson's mother, Amber Bond of Colby.

Air Force cuts back on air show demonstrations

By Brock Vergakis

Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — The Air Force says it is scaling back its participation in dozens of air shows this year in an effort to cut costs and ensure its combat pilots are getting the training hours they need in a time of shrinking budgets.

The cutbacks won't affect the service's premier demonstration team, the Thunderbirds, but will mean fewer fighter planes performing for scores of crowds around the country.

Officials at Air Combat Command eliminated the solo performances of five of its crews based in Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Utah.

Eliminating solo performances by the A-10, which provides air support for ground forces, and the F-16 and F-15E, which are capable of air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, is expected to save the Air Force \$15.5 million and allow about 970 training flights that otherwise would have been canceled. The cost savings include fuel and travel costs for the pilots and their maintenance crews, among other things. It's unclear if the teams will perform next year.

"The goal of the commander of Air Combat Command is to maintain mission ready pilots, and in order to do that we had to cut some money. And being able to save 900 some odd sorties — that's quite a few pilots that we can maintain," said Lt. Col. Mike Brazelton,

branch chief of Air Combat Command's aerial events staff.

The only combat plane that will conduct solo performances this year is the F-22 Raptor, which is based at Air Combat Command's headquarters at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va. Brazelton said the F-22 was chosen as the remaining demonstration plane because, as the world's only fifth generation fighter plane, it is capable of maneuvers that other planes are not and it is the plane most frequently requested for performances.

The Air Force uses its demonstration teams to showcase the precision maneuvers its planes are capable of during combat, to help with recruiting and to help build goodwill in the U.S. and abroad. The air show season typically starts in the spring and lasts through the fall. The F-22's next performance is Saturday in Louisville, Ky.

"Some people look at the demonstration and go 'Hey, why are we doing it?'" said Maj. Henry "Shadow" Schantz, the F-22 Demonstration Team pilot. "Overall, this is a way to meet real people on the road and demonstrate what our Air Force airmen are doing."

The past two years, jets assigned to Air Combat Command Aerial Events performed at 131 air shows each year. That includes a heritage program where modern fighter planes such as the A-10 and F-16 fly alongside vintage jets flown by civilians in aircraft such as the World War II-era P-51 Mustang. This year, Air Com-

bat Command plans to only send its jets to 61 shows, which includes those performing in the heritage program. The F-22 was scheduled to fly at 20 of those shows.

In a statement, Air Combat Command officials said eliminating the solo demonstrations would result in an increase of more than 25 combat-ready fighter pilots.

"That's a very good thing for our nation and wise stewardship of our limited resources," the command said in the statement.

Although it's difficult to gauge exactly how many performances the other five teams would have participated in this year, Air Force biographies show they range from 30 performances a year by an A-10C Thunderbolt pilot to 65 performances a year by the F-15E Strike Eagle Demo Team.

Those biographies say the teams performed for between 3 million and 7 million people each year.

The Air Force says Schantz performs for more than 10 million spectators around the world each year. Schantz said he and his crew also spend countless hours interacting with crowds, which can include children who want to be pilots when they grow up and family members of veterans who are moved by his performances.

Schantz said that while he's always honored to represent the Air Force, he doesn't feel any additional pressure as the lone demonstration team pilot performing this year.

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