



Pastor Alan Gurupira

## Preacher from Zimbabwe visits Colby

By Kayla Cornett

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A preacher from Zimbabwe visited Colby over the weekend as part of an effort by United Methodist churches in Kansas and the African nation to cultivate a mutual relationship of helping one another and doing good for their communities.

The Rev. Alan Masimba Gurupira spent the weekend here along with seven others as part of a partnership between the Zimbabwe West Conference and the Kansas West Conference of the church, which was started by bishops of both conferences.

The bishops created a covenant, he said, where each of the conferences would re-

late with each other and share their joys, sorrows and ministry. Gurupira said his conference also has a covenant with the Baltimore-Washington Conference in Maryland.

Gurupira said he and the other Methodist from Zimbabwe follow a philosophy called "chabadza," which he said is an idea that involves people helping each other out in tough situations and having a mutual relationship for doing good.

Gurupira said the Zimbabwe West Conference has been working with Kansas West for a while now. The partnership involves groups from each conference traveling to the other country to practice chabadza.

He said a group from Kansas visited Zimbabwe a couple of years ago and

helped with some development projects, including construction of parsonages and sanctuaries and helping at mission centers the church runs.

Gurupira said the Zimbabwe church tries to help the Kansas conference whenever it can, praying for people here when Kansas is hit by tornadoes and helping with projects just like the Kansas group did.

Gurupira said he and the other visitors were here to preach and share with Kansans about life in Zimbabwe. He was the preacher at the Colby United Methodist Church on Sunday.

Before the group came to Kansas, he said, it attended the general conference of Methodist churches in Tampa, Fla.

On Monday, the group left Colby. They

went to Atwood and Bird City that afternoon and were then headed to Wichita.

Gurupira said they will also go to the Kansas West annual conference, from Monday to Friday, May 25, in Hutchinson.

He said his time in Colby was very nice and the group had been treated well.

"We've had wonderful hospitality during our visit here," Gurupira said, "and the welcome of all the churches we visited and all the families that have been our host have been wonderful, especially the Frahms (Ken and Sheila) here."

For more about Gurupira or the partnership, e-mail Gurupira at alokuta@yahoo.com or alokutag@gmail.com.

## County accepts plan resolution, sets a hearing

By Christina Beringer

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Thomas County commissioners Monday approved a resolution prepared by Economic Development Alliance director Christy Rocca and a notice of a public hearing to adopt the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the county.

The hearing will be at 9 a.m. Thursday, May 31, in the commissioner's room at the courthouse. Rocca said the proposed plan is available for review at the Economic Development office during the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range, in Colby.

For the Revitalization Plan to take effect, it has to be approved by commissioners after the public has had an opportunity to review and make comments, she said.

Rocca has been enlisted to help educate people and coordinate public meetings in most of the 37 tax-levying public districts and cities throughout the county where boards must vote to allow people to receive the plan's property tax rebate incentives.

For information about the plan,

call Rocca at (785) 460-4511. For information about the public hearing, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at (785) 460-4500.

In other business:

• Commissioners reviewed the Conservation District's budget.

"We have a great program with lots of producers who depend on us," said district board member John Starns.

The district is asking for \$30,000 from the county; the same amount requested in previous years.

"We thank you for your participation and appreciate the support you've given us," added district board President Ben Hoeting.

Because of uncertainty in the state's budget this year, the district expects a budget cut, said district manager Debra Potter.

The group introduced new board member Shea Baird before leaving. Then, resident Alvin Depe arrived to show his support, saying the program is a benefit to farmers and area youths alike.

Depe added that he's has concerns about musk thistle already starting to bloom and asked that the noxious weed department

See "COUNTY," Page 2

## Budget negotiations settle on arts funding

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas legislators negotiating the final version of a proposed state budget have decided to include \$700,000 for a new Creative Arts Industry Commission.

The commission will be formed in July by the merger of the state's Arts and Film Services commissions under legislation signed last week by Gov. Sam Brownback.

The commission will part of the Department of Commerce, focusing on creating arts-related jobs.

Brownback proposed the merger and the appropriation of \$200,000 for the commission for the fiscal year that starts in July.

In their versions of the budget, both chambers included \$700,000 and authorized the new agency to hire three staffers.

## Interstate 70 road work to alter traffic pattern

Travelers on Interstate 70 will find traffic patterns changed today through the construction zone between Brewster and Edson as crews shift lanes on one project and begin a repaving effort that together will result in one-lane traffic day and night.

Crews working for APAC Kansas out of Hays will put traffic head-to-head in the west-bound lanes at the Sherman County line. The road will be reduced to one lane in each direction for about a mile while workers rebuild the curve to current standards and lower the road to increase clearance under the bridge.

West of the curve to Edson,

crews will mill two inches of the existing asphalt and then place 3.5 inches of new asphalt over driving lanes and 1.5 inches on shoulders through the eight-mile section of road.

I-70 traffic will be reduced to one lane near milling and overlay crews during daylight hours, said Kristen Brands, public involvement co-ordinator for the Kansas Department of Transportation in Norton.

She said APAC has a \$7 million contract for the entire project, financed by T-Works, the transportation program passed by the Kansas Legislature in May 2010.



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press



## Students play music in the park

Band teacher Joey Nickols (above) conducted the Colby High School band Tuesday evening during an outdoor concert in Fike Park. The band set up in the center of the park, behind the Senior Progress Center, facing south. Several dozen people, including families and seniors, sat in folding chairs or on blankets on the ground for the outdoor concert. Though the evening got a little chilly, the crowd seemed to enjoy the music.

## Court asked to settle redistricting

By John Hannna

AP Statehouse Correspondent

TOPEKA (AP) - Secretary of State Kris Kobach asked a federal court today to settle redistricting issues for the Kansas Legislature, arguing that an impasse among lawmakers makes drawing new political boundaries "fit for judicial resolution."

The request came in Kobach's response to a lawsuit that was filed earlier this month in U.S. District Court by Robyn Renee Essex, a Republican precinct committee

member from Olathe. Kobach, the state's chief elections official, is the only defendant in the case.

Kobach asked that the court have a panel of three judges either impose new lines for state Senate, state House, State Board of Education and congressional districts, saying his office "stands ready to submit valid plans." Kobach, a former law professor, is a conservative Republican.

Conservative and moderate Republicans in the GOP-controlled Senate are feuding over proposals to redraw the chamber's districts

to account for shifts in population over the past decade. Their dispute has prevented passage of plans for redrawing any of the state's other political boundaries, and the impasse threatens to delay the state's Aug. 7 primary election.

Kobach's filing came shortly before a news conference he scheduled to discuss redistricting issues and just hours before the Senate was to debate a bill for redrawing members' districts favored by moderate Republicans and most Democrats.

In the filing today, Ryan Krieg-

shauser, Kobach's attorney and a deputy assistant secretary of state, said the Kansas Constitution gives the state Supreme Court the power only to review plans approved by legislators, meaning justices can't draw them. But, Kobach's attorney said, the U.S. Supreme Court has said in past decisions that federal courts can actually draw boundaries.

See "COURT," Page 2

