



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Colby lawyer withdraws from election

By Kayla Cornett

Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansas.com

Republican Todd Stramel, a lawyer in Colby, announced today that he will withdraw as a candidate for district court judge for the Thomas County election. "It's just not the right time," he said. Stramel's name will still appear on the

ballot, however, because the withdrawal deadline has already passed.

"Because the deadline to officially withdraw passed more than a month ago," Stramel said in a release, "my name will still appear on the ballot. Nevertheless, I ask that you instead support Glenn Schiffner for re-election.

"He has served this district for twenty years and deserves to continue for an-

other term."

Stramel said he cares about his clients and advocating for their causes, so he decided it wasn't the right time to walk away from their cases.

He has been a lawyer since 1996 and was a prosecutor for the district attorney in Wichita for a year after receiving his law degree.

Stramel worked for a private law firm

in Hays for four years before opening his practice in Colby in the fall of 2000.

"About a year ago, I decided to run for the position when I found out that Judge Schiffner wasn't going to run for re-election," Stramel told the *Colby Free Press* in June. "Then he changed his mind. I've since talked to him and have been assured that he won't hold anything against me."

Stramel said he may consider seeking

the judge position upon Schiffner's retirement, but it will be based on what is best for his clients and for his family.

"Until then, I look forward to continuing to serve you as an advocate," he said. "Your support for my election was truly overwhelming, and I cannot express how appreciative I am."



College plans to plant grass on south land

By Kayla Cornett

Colby Free Press
kcornett@nwkansas.com

The Colby Community College trustees decided Monday during their regular meeting to plant grass on about 20 acres of land south of the campus.

Nick Wells, board treasurer and college endowment foundation director, said he spoke with Brock Ketzner, an alumnus he knows who works for a forage-turf-seed company in Burlington, Colo., about what to do with the land, and he liked the idea of putting grass in.

"This is a hybrid fescue grass," Wells said. "It's permanent and it will regrow every year. You don't have to do much to it as far as re-seeding."

He said Ketzner told him the college could expect four to six tons of hay per acre, figuring the average rainfall here, and hay is selling for about \$200 a ton right now.

He said he thinks they can get the planting and harvesting done by a custom operator and that he can get some support from the foundation.

Trustee Bill Shields asked when is the best time to seed the grass,

and Wells said in the fall.

The board approved a motion for Wells to move forward with the project, rather than approving purchase of the grass seed, because Wells said he wants to try other avenues first.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from President Stephen Vacik that the college's nursing program in Goodland will no longer be able to use the armory for classes. He said they have until the end of the year to find another space. Vacik added that they may want to leave the armory sooner rather than later.

- Approved athletic insurance and catastrophic coverage from Dissinger Reed. Athletic Director Ryan Sturdy said their premiums actually went down \$12,672 from last year for a policy which includes both types of coverage. He said, the catastrophic premiums did go up, costing a little over \$900, but the regular premiums went down.

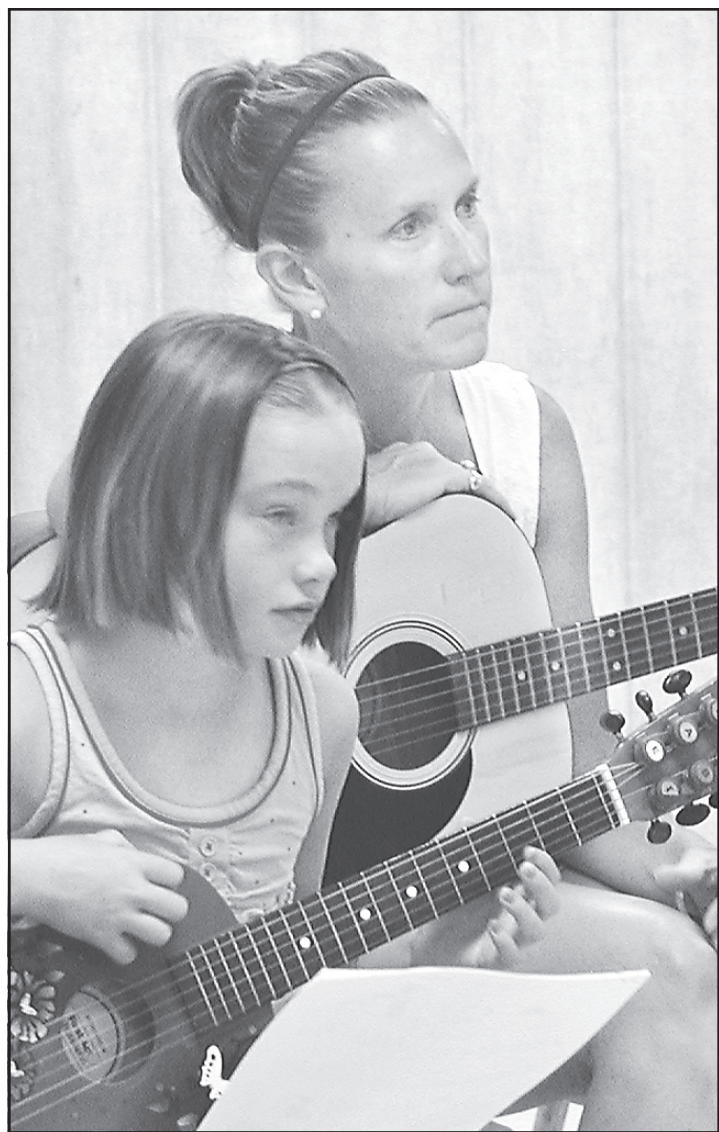
Shields asked what catastrophic coverage is. Sturdy said it is used to cover potential large claims for the wrestling and rodeo teams. Shields then asked if any claims were filed under that last year.

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Pros, amateurs play at Pickin' on the Plains

Len Miller (above left) performed with his wife Amy and son Lance Saturday afternoon during the Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass and Folk Festival at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Their band, Triple L, came to the festival for the first time this year. Lara Murdock (right) sat next to her mother Suzanne as they both learned the basics of guitar playing at a workshop in the 4-H Building Saturday afternoon. Bob Readle (below) of Norton and his mother, Kay Stivers of Otis, Colo., performed onstage during the junior showcase portion of the festival on Saturday morning.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Governor to visit Hoxie on Tuesday

Gov. Sam Brownback has added several stops on his drought tour, including one at the Hoxie Feedyard on Tuesday afternoon.

A tour of western counties will begin at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Cedar Bluff Reservoir near WaKeeney. Joining the governor will be Tracy Streeter, director of the Kansas Water Office; Kim Christenson with the Kansas Department of Agriculture; and other state and local officials.

From there, the group will view the effects of drought on a Trego

County farm. Following a meeting with area farmers and agribusiness leaders at a Hill City restaurant, at 1:45 p.m. the governor will tour the feed yard, 3522 N. Road 70 West, Hoxie, to discuss the drought's effect on the cattle-feeding industry.

These visits are a part of a tour that began last week with two stops in Saline County in central Kansas, followed by a trip to Allen and Neosho counties in southeast Kansas.

Study: loans parallel subprime

By Daniel Wagner

AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Risky lending caused private student loan debt to balloon in the past decade, leaving many Americans struggling to pay off loans that they can't afford, a government study says.

Private lenders gave out money without considering whether borrowers would repay, then bundled and resold the loans to investors to avoid losing money when students defaulted, according to the study, which was released Friday.

Those practices are closely associated with subprime mortgage lending, which inflated the housing bubble and helped bring about

the 2008 financial crisis.

"Subprime-style lending went to college, and now students are paying the price," said Education Secretary Arne Duncan, whose department produced the report with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Duncan said the government must do more to ensure that people who received private loans enjoy the same protections as those who borrow from the federal government.

Student loans fall into two main categories: Loans directly from the government and those offered by banks and other private financial companies. The report focused on private student loans, which spiked from \$5 billion in loans originated in 2001 to more than \$20 billion in 2008. After the financial crisis, as lending stan-

dards tightened, the market shrank to \$6 billion in 2011.

American consumers still owe more than \$150 billion in private student loan debt, the study said. Including federal loans, Americans now owe more than \$1 trillion in student loan debt, according to the bureau. It has surpassed credit card debt as the biggest source of unsecured debt for U.S. consumers.

Private student loans are riskier than federal loans, the study said. They often carry variable interest rates, which can cause monthly payments to rise unexpectedly. Federal loans offer fixed interest rates.

In many cases, if a borrower is unable to repay, federal loans can be postponed or reduced. Those

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City plans to replace lights on two main streets with grant

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkansas.com

Armed with a grant from the state, the City of Colby plans to replace street lights on two of its main streets with newer LED lights.

Interim City Manager Randy Jones said officials plan to replace the lights on South Franklin Avenue from Willow Street, just north of Interstate 70, to the railroad tracks south of downtown, and on Range Avenue from I-70 to Fourth Avenue (U.S. 24), and might be able to add some lights north of there.

Public Works Director Omar Weber said that the city will replace the 250-watt bulbs used to light Range with 144-watt LED lights. The 150-watt bulbs currently used along Franklin will be replaced with 74-watt LED lights.

The LED lights, one of three kinds tested this spring, will cost just over half as much to operate as the old lights, Weber said.

"They're comparable as far as brightness," Weber said, "but they will have more of a white tint to them."

Stanion Wholesale, one of seven bidders on the project, won the contract with an offer to

sell the 144-watt LED lights for \$413 each and the 74-watt lights for \$385 each, Jones said.

"Because of the price we got, we were able to get additional lights," Jones said.

The city decided to buy 128 of the 144-watt bulbs and 89 of the 74-watt bulbs, a total of 217 lights, he said. The purchase was paid for by a \$100,000 grant from the state.

Weber said the bidder has 30 days to deliver the lights, then the city electric crew can start putting them up.

"We won the Take Charge

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