



City weighs new budget for next year

By Sam Dieter
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During a meeting last Tuesday, Finance Director Debbie Zerr went over the proposed 2013 budget with the Colby City Council, including an increase in the property tax levy of about 1 mill.

"We're going to keep our mill levy constant," Zerr said, but after some discussion, the council asked her to decrease the levy by another mill.

This means that she had to cut the budget by about \$44,000, Zerr said, which brought the total down to \$20,408,022.

This reduction also brought the proposed tax rate down about one mill to 33.205 mills, Zerr said. She said that she tried to propose the same tax rate last year, but when

the city receives the assessed valuation from the county appraiser in November, it could change the proposed tax rate. Last year's actual tax rate was 32.280.

Even with the levy held down, the proposed budget is up about 7 1/2 percent from \$18,996,619 this year. The estimated property tax revenue for the budget is \$1,391,715, up from \$1,374,425 this year.

The proposed 2013 budget was published Monday in the *Colby Free Press*. The City Council set a public hearing for this budget at its meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 7.

Zerr said that the reductions she made came from street budget, part of the city's general fund. Before the meeting, Public Works Director Omar Weber had already

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4-H kids model clothing

Caitlyn Comfort (above) of the Solomon Valley 4-H Club and Alex Zimmerman (left) of the Colby Comets 4-H Club each modeled an outfit Tuesday during the 4-H Public Fashion Revue at Colby Methodist Church. Dr. Keegan Nichols, vice president of student affairs and marketing at Colby Community College, was the emcee for the event and told the crowd what each of the models was wearing.

KAYLA CORNETT
Colby Free Press

Crashes occur over weekend

Two vehicle accidents over the weekend in Thomas County resulted in people being taken to hospitals for injuries.

The first happened on Saturday about a mile east of the Brewster exit on Interstate 70 when a 2007 Ford Explorer rear-ended a semi.

The driver of the Ford, Laraine Hildebrant, and passenger William Hildebrant, both of Warr Acres, Okla., were taken to Colby Medical Center, where they were treated and released. All those involved in the accident were wear-

ing seatbelts.

The second accident happened Sunday on highway K-25 about three and a half miles north of U.S. 40, when a northbound semi entered the ditch east of the highway and overturned on its passenger side.

Driver Amanda Jumar Bagwell of Jasper, Ga., was uninjured. David Leroy Harris Jr. of Moulton, Ala., a passenger who had been riding in the sleeper, was taken to Logan County Hospital with possible injuries.

Fear prompts gun sales, panic after Colorado massacre

By Kristen Wyatt and Mike Baker
Associated Press

DENVER – Firearms sales are surging in the wake of the Colorado movie massacre as buyers express fears about both personal safety and lawmakers who are using the shooting to seek new weapons restrictions.

In Colorado, the site of Friday's shooting that killed 12 and injured dozens of others, gun sales jumped in the three

days that followed. The state approved background checks for 2,887 people who wanted to purchase a firearm – 25 percent more than the average Friday to Sunday period in 2012 and 43 percent more than the same interval the week prior.

Dick Rutan, owner of Gunners Den in suburban Arvada, Colo., said requests for concealed-weapon training certification "are off the hook." His four-hour course in gun safety, required for certification for a concealed-weapons permit in Colorado, has drawn double the interest since Fri-

day. "What they're saying is: They want to have a chance. They want to have the ability to protect themselves and their families if they are in a situation like what happened in the movie theater," Rutan said.

Day-to-day gun sales frequently fluctuate, but the numbers also look strong outside of Colorado, too.

Seattle's home county, King, saw nearly twice as many requests for concealed pistol licenses than the same timeframe

a year ago. Florida recorded 2,386 background checks on Friday, up 14 percent from the week before. Oregon checks on Friday and Saturday were up 11 percent over the month prior. Four days of checks in California were up 10 percent month-to-month.

During the past decade, June and July have consistently been the slowest months for gun sales, according to FBI data.

Jay Wallace, who owns Adventure Outdoors in Smyrna, Ga., found that his sales on Saturday were up 300 percent

from the same day a year ago – making it one of the best Saturdays his business has ever had. He said customers are often afraid when there's a gun-related tragedy that some lawmakers might try and push through an anti-gun agenda.

"We shouldn't let one sick individual make us forget and lose sight of freedoms in this country," Wallace said. A few members of Congress have talked this week about the need for tougher gun

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Gov. Brownback, state officials visit northwest Kansas on tour

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback continued his tour of areas of Kansas hardest hit by drought conditions Tuesday with stops in Trego, Graham and Sheridan counties.

Along with Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter and Kansas Department of Agriculture Chief Counsel Kim Christiansen, the governor met with local officials, farmers, ranchers and business owners to learn how the northwestern part of the state was dealing with the heat and dry weather.

"You can really see the effects of the drought here in northwest Kansas. Despite the brutal heat and dry conditions, I have been impressed at the level of cooperation among communities," Gov. Brownback said. "The tools that were passed this last legisla-

tive session to help Kansans deal with drought conditions like these couldn't have been more timely. I want to thank the local leadership for what they have done to assist farmers and ranchers in this drought."

The tour of western portions of the state began at Cedar Bluff Reservoir near WaKeeney where the group viewed the reduced water levels, followed by a visit to the farm of Larry Hixson to view the impact of the drought on agricultural production.

Following a meeting with area farmers and agribusiness leaders at a Hill City restaurant, the governor toured the Hoxie Feedyard to discuss how the drought is affecting the cattle feeding industry.

"This region of the state is certainly drier than it was last year. I appreciate the work USDA has done to make assistance available to the farmers and ranchers here," said Director Streeter.

"I also want to acknowledge local leadership who sees the benefit of implementing available water management tools, such as the proposed Local Enhanced Management Area for Sheridan County to deal with limited water resources."

"Kansas farmers and ranchers are resilient in their ability to overcome challenges and this drought is no different," Kansas Department of Agriculture Secretary Dale Rodman said. "The Kansas Department of Agriculture continues working to assure our farmers and ranchers have information about all resources they need to adjust and recover from this drought."

Gov. Brownback began his tour of drought-affected areas of the state last week with two stops in Saline County in central Kansas, followed by a trip to Allen and Neosho Counties in southeast Kansas.



KANSAS GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
Gov. Sam Brownback toured low water levels at Cedar Bluff Reservoir. The boat docks are about 15 feet behind the governor.

