

Weather

Meeting held for housing program

From "HOUSING," Page 1

income housing."

Most housing programs that the agency runs target low-income households, Couch said. This leaves out workers in the middle - making ends meet but struggling to do so - out of getting any benefits.

If a city was approved for the program, Couch said, and decided to use the money to build rental property, tenants would have to meet income requirements.

For example, if one person

were to live in a unit, he or she would have to make under \$42,432 a year. This bar is a lot higher than that set for low-income housing, she said, because the corporation is trying to reach another bracket of people who need help.

The money will be given as loans and grants to cities and counties that qualify, Couch said; those who would only be able to use the money for construction of homes, roads and other structures directly related to housing, actual construction or rehabilitation of homes and

buying property.

The program will give priority to cities and counties that can combine the loans or grants with money from other sources.

The deadline to apply for the grant for 2013 is Friday, Aug. 31. Communities accepted into the program will be notified by Oct. 12.

Jones said he spoke to Rocca quite a bit about the program, but the deadline the corporation gave to apply for it was too soon for them to act.

"A project has to be defined (to apply)," he said, "and we

don't have any projects defined right now."

Jones said the city has some projects pending because of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, however none of them could be fully defined by the deadline.

"We just thought things were a little rushed," he said, "and at the time, they didn't have the final applications ready."

As of now, Jones said, he does not know if the corporation has set a deadline to apply for 2014.

Briefly

Clerk's office open for early voters

The Thomas County Clerk's office is open for early voters from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Friday and from 7 a.m. to noon Monday. Tell your co-workers, family and friends. If anyone is ready to vote and doesn't want to wait until Tuesday, they can get it out of the way now. For information, call County Clerk Shelly Harms at 460-4500.

Group plans dance at Meadow Lake

A singles and couples dance is planned for 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday at the Meadow Lake Golf Clubhouse. Ray Gerver will provide music. Everyone welcome. For information, call Lue Duffey in Rexford, (785) 269-7057.

Carnival crew needs help to run games at fair

Help! The Thomas County Amusement Association needs volunteers to help run games during the fair this week. Call the Chamber of Commerce office at 460-3401 and sign up for a shift.

Library plans big book sale this week

The Pioneer Memorial Library's annual Book Sale Blowout runs through Sunday. With lots of children's books, fiction and nonfiction items to choose from, prices go down as the week progresses. Sunday, all remaining books are free. Hours are 9 a.m. to a half hour before closing each day and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday. For information, call Debbie Tittel at 460-4470.

Jean Hutton Memorial to be unveiled Sunday

The Jean Hutton Memorial provided by the Hutton Family Fund at the Dallas Women's Foundation will be unveiled at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Pioneer Memorial Library. The Hutton family of Brewster will attend, and refreshments will be provided. For information, call Librarian Melany Wilks at 460-4470.

Football team to meet at high school auditorium

The Colby High football team will hold an informational meeting for prospective players and their parents at 7 p.m. Monday in the high school auditorium. For information, contact Coach Chris Gardner at (785) 443-3081.

Colby Schools to have enrollment next week

Returning students in the Colby Public Schools will enroll from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. next Wednesday at the high school. New students enroll from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 9. District activity calendars will be available. The district website www.colbyeagles.org is disabled until mid-August. Additional enrollment information is listed on Page 8 of today's issue of the Colby Free Press.

New postmaster starts at Colby office

From "POSTMASTER," Page 3

Great Bend, she started as a city carrier in 1985. She stayed there until 2000, when she moved to Fremont, Neb.

She started working as a postmaster in Logan, Iowa, in March of 2004, then in 2006 worked as a postmaster in Kennard, Neb. She held this job, working part time for other post offices in that state, until moving to Colby this summer.

"The location's ideal, and I think Colby's a really nice community," Johnson said, "and I look forward to living here and becoming a part of the community."

Johnson said that she moved because of changes in her job, and "I didn't feel ready for early retirement."

She interviewed for several post office jobs, turning them down when she was offered the postmaster position in Colby. Living closer to family in Kansas was a big part

of her decision.

"I wanted to keep working and I had for the last 18 months or so been trying to get back to Kansas," she said.

Colby had been without a postmaster for about 6 months after the old postmaster, Kenton Krehbiel, retired.

The postmaster in this position takes charge of all postal codes starting with "677" in northern Kansas.

House heading toward election tax showdown

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The GOP-controlled House today took up competing Democratic and Republican plans to forestall tax hikes looming in January, though expected passage of a GOP plan extending all Bush-era tax cuts won't resolve an election-year standoff.

Democrats countered with a plan backed by President Barack Obama to extend the tax cuts for all but the highest-earning Americans.

The dueling votes were more about political messaging three months before Election Day than a genuine attempt to resolve the

longstanding differences. If the deadlock persists past the start of the new year, everybody's taxes will go up.

The Bush-era tax cuts - renewed in their entirety with the support of Obama and many Democrats two years ago - expire again Dec. 31. Obama signed the previous renewal, saying he did not want to raise taxes in a weak economy. In the bargain, he also won extensions of a Social Security payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits.

Now, the White House promises Obama will veto the extension if it includes the highest earners. Obama instead supports a plan that passed the Democrat-

ic-controlled Senate last week by a near party-line 51-48 vote.

Many economists believe allowing all tax rates to snap back to higher, 1990s Clinton-era levels could drive the economy back into recession, especially if automatic federal spending cuts designed as punishment for Washington's failure to enact another deficit-cutting bargain strike at the same time.

The common assumption in Washington is that the outcome will be determined by whether Obama wins another term or Republican Mitt Romney takes his place in the White House.

Republicans say Obama's insistence on raising taxes on

wealthier earners will sting small-business owners who create jobs. Democrats counter that the taxes only apply to the earnings of individuals exceeding \$200,000 yearly and couples surpassing \$250,000 - exempting 98 percent of taxpayers and all but the top 3.5 percent of taxpayers with business income.

Obama has made what he calls evident tax fairness - which includes tax increases on the rich - a big theme of his re-election campaign.

Republicans have made resolute opposition to any tax increases - especially as the economy is weak - a major element of their election-year platform.

Medicare fraud busters unveil command center

By Kelli Kennedy and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldívar

Associated Press

BALTIMORE - Medicare's war on fraud is going high-tech with the opening of a \$3.6 million command center that features a giant screen and the latest computer and communications gear. That's raising expectations, as well as some misgivings.

The carpeting still smells new at the facility, which went live a week ago in a nondescript commercial office park on Baltimore's outskirts. A couple dozen computer workstations are arrayed in concentric semicircles in front of a giant screen that can display data and photos, and also enable face-to-face communication with investigators around the country.

Medicare fraud is estimated to cost more than \$60 billion annually, and for years the

government has been losing a game of "pay and chase," trying to recoup losses after scam artists have already cashed in.

Fraud czar Peter Budetti told reporters on a tour this week that the command center could be a turning point. It brings together in real time the geeks running Medicare's new computerized fraud detection system with gumshoes deployed around the country. Imagine a kind of NCIS-Medicare, except Budetti says it's not make-believe.

"This is not an ivory-tower exercise," Budetti said. "It is very much a real-world one."

But two Republican senators say they already smell a boondoggle.

Utah's Orrin Hatch and Oklahoma's Tom Coburn say Medicare's new computerized fraud detection system, a \$77-million investment that went into operation last year, is not working all that well. In a letter to

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, they questioned spending millions more on a command center, at least until the bugs get worked out.

"Institutionalizing relationships through establishing a (command) center may be useful, but if huge sums of money have indeed been spent on a video screen while other common-sense recommendations may have not been implemented due to 'resource concerns,' this seems to be a case of misplaced priorities," wrote Hatch and Coburn. Insiders are telling them the screen alone cost several hundred thousand dollars, the senators say.

The two Republicans may have more than congressional oversight in mind. In an election year, Medicare fraud is an issue with older voters because it speaks to the Obama administration's stewardship of the program.

Weather forecast table with columns for Day, High/Low, Precip, and other details.

LOCAL TV Listings sponsored by Colby Free Press

Thursday Evening August 2, 2012. Table with columns for time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and various TV channels.



Friday Evening August 3, 2012. Table with columns for time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and various TV channels.

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