



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Semi rolls over on Interstate 70

High winds and dust helped cause several accidents Thursday on Interstate 70. At 12:12 p.m., wind blew an empty semi-trailer rig (above, below) over near mile marker 37.5, about a mile east of the Brewster exit. The driver, Jesse Blaine of Iowa, was uninjured. At 12:25 p.m., a 2002 Toyota Camry struck the back of a 2001 Ford Expedition at mile marker 62, near Mingo (right) in an accident blamed on poor visibility. The driver of the Camry, Brenda Kenney, Lansing, was taken to Citizens Medical Center. Officials there said they could not talk about her injuries. The other driver, James Chincholl, Parker, Colo., was not hurt. State troopers reported that Chincholl apparently slowed because of thick dust and Kenney's car struck it from behind.

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## Rexford to receive \$400,000 grant

By Sam Dieter

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The City of Rexford could get a \$400,000 grant to improve its housing supply, which has been tight in recent years because employees from a new and growing dairy operation have pretty much filled the town.

The Kansas Housing Resources Corp. says it chose Rexford for a \$400,000 grant to help build five new duplexes.

The money could be awarded at the end of the year, in conjunction with a companion grant from the U.S. Department

of Agriculture's Rural Development program.

"It was just a unique opportunity for us to be able to do something in a really small town," said J.R. Behan, director of operations for the state agency.

The corporation, which handles government assistance money for housing, announced last Friday that it had chosen Rexford as one of eight communities with 60,000 or fewer people to receive a new grant for moderate-income housing in rural areas.

Christy Rocca, Thomas County economic development director, wrote the application for the grant and for an even

larger one from the federal agency, with help from the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission. The two grants were meant to be given in conjunction with each other, she said, adding that she's not sure when she'll find out if Rexford gets the money.

"I would be hopeful that it would be the end of the year," Rocca said.

The McCarty Dairy could double in size again over the next several years, making the housing situation in Rexford and the surround area even tighter, Rocca said. The dairy donated land for the duplexes east of the town's football field, she said.

The federal program could provide another \$1,142,282 through a grant and a loan of \$126,921 for the project. The total cost would be \$1,669,203.

The state grant is contingent on getting the federal money, Behan said. He and others met with federal officials on Oct. 11, he said, and the department should make up its mind in December.

"The local community was going to be able to help support it," Behan said. "We have a hard time, our office does, supporting really small communities."

He said it would not be realistic for his agency to help build a larger project, such as an apartment complex, in a town

the size of Rexford, and most grants are aimed toward lower-income housing. The moderate-income level, Behan said, includes people ranked from 60 to 100 percent of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's non-metro area median income index. A family of four in this income bracket makes between \$32,640 and \$81,600 a year.

"It was hard to evaluate these, because everybody has a story," he added.

A total of 32 applications for the grant were sent to the corporation. The other winners were Norton, Dodge City, Garden City, Larned, Pittsburg, Montgomery County and Osage County.

## U.S. district attorney offers help to officers

By Christina Beringer

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U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom and two aides met with top law enforcement officials and community leaders Tuesday at the Law Enforcement Training Center, offering help on cases that can be transferred to federal courts.

Barry Grissom, who's office covers the entire judicial district of Kansas, was in town for a speech to the Colby Rotary Club. Police Chief Randy Jones, Thomas County Sheriff Rod Taylor, Kansas Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Mark Kendrick and

Thomas County Attorney Kevin Berens gave their views on crime and other issues, and learned how Grissom's office can help in cases here.

"Sometimes, law enforcement feel like no one has their back," the federal prosecutor said. "I'm here to let you know that if you want us and you think your case has federal nexus, then we are here for you.

"We can save the community some heartache and trouble."

He added that his office can allow the county attorney to join a case as a special assistant in federal court.

"A felony is a felony," Grissom

said, adding that a convicted felon caught with a gun, ammunition or a bullet-proof vest can be tried in federal court.

"That's good to know," Berens said. "We do a lot of interdiction on the Interstate, and we've had three cases recently. One of those had a felony."

Jones added that Thomas County is known throughout the state for drug interdictions.

"This building is a result of a five-minute stop," he said, referring to an incident where city officers stopped a man driving a load of cash through the state.

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## Colby school board OKs energy audit for buildings

By Sam Dieter

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The Colby School Board approved an energy audit of district buildings among other business at its monthly meeting Monday night, hiring an engineering firm to find ways to save money.

At the suggestion of Superintendent Terrel Harrison, the board approved an "investment-grade" energy audit with 360 Energy Engineers, while also advertising for bids from other companies. That will allow any needed work to be done during the summer break next year, she said.

The audit will cost \$15,000 and focus on heating and cooling systems for the district's buildings.

If the board chooses to use 360 Energy Engineers, Harrison said, the company could replace the heating and cooling system in the middle

school for \$340,000 to \$380,000 next summer. Harrison said that this project could be paid for out of the capital outlay fund for this year, but additional projects would require another source of money.

At the Sept. 17 board meeting, the company presented findings from an initial free audit and made recommendations for a phased upgrade of the heating and cooling systems in all the district's buildings.

High School Principal Jeff Wallingford was absent Monday because he was at a junior varsity football game. Athletic Director Larry Gabel and board member Brice Barton were at the state golf

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