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City mayor receives trail award

By Sam Dieter
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Newly-elected county Commissioner Mike Baughn of Brewster received the Donna Malsom Memorial Ambassador Award at the sixth annual Smoky Hill Trail Conference in Abilene.

"They gave it to me for leadership and organization and being the president," Baughn said, "and for doing a lot of research on the Smoky Hill Trail."

At the conference Oct. 20, Baughn was also re-elected as president of the association, a position he has held for most of the life of the group.

"I was the first president and then I think I served all but one term since then," or five years total, he said.

Malsom, a founding member of the association, died in early 2011.

"She was a real ambassador for our organization, she was one of our main promoters," Baughn said. "This was kind of an award in her honor."

Baughn received the second of these awards. The first was given to Malsom's family last year.

Founded in 2005, the association is dedicated to gathering in-

formation about the trail through site studies of old stations and trail routes.

"We've got such a knowledgeable group of people, all working towards the same goal," Baughn said, "and we keep adding new people who add new ideas."

The trail led across Kansas from Westport, Mo., now part of Kansas City, to Denver, passing through Hays and Russell Springs in the late 1800s.

The association includes about 186 people, Baughn said, and has board members in Kansas and Colorado. It is headquartered in WaKeeney and has its archives at the Forsyth Library at Fort Hays State University.

The association is trying to have the route designated as a National Historic Trail, which requires an act of Congress.

"That's a long process," Baughn said, adding that a study of the trail must be done through the Department of the Interior.

Baughn, a long-time mayor of Brewster, said he is also a director of the Kansas Historical Foundation and a member of several historical organizations, including the Thomas County Historical Society, the Wild West Historical Foundation and the Western Vistas Historic Byway.

Food bank receives grant

By Christina Beringer
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The Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank has received a \$650 grant from the Midwest Energy Community Fund fall disbursement to build shelves for food storage at the agency's office.

Over 180 organizations submitted applications for the grants, and Genesis is thankful to be one of the recipients, said President Wynn Duffey.

Created in 2005, the Midwest Energy Community Fund distributes grants twice a year ranging from \$50 to \$1,000. Recipients are determined by five committees made up of customers of the cooperative, who direct funds to activities that focus on youth, arts, education, libraries and community

events or other priorities, said Bob Muirhead, director of economic and community development.

Deadlines for applications are March 1 and Sept. 1. They are being accepted now for spring disbursements, he said.

Genesis is preparing for its annual Christmas Basket distribution, Duffey said. Contributions of money, food and volunteer time are still needed.

More than 200 food baskets were prepared last year. Duffey said volunteers are needed to help assemble them Friday, Dec. 7, for pick up Saturday, Dec. 8.

People interested in donating food or money or in working should call (785) 460-7930. Food donations can be delivered to the Genesis office in the Thomas

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Colby honor society will induct 17 kids

By Christina Beringer
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Colby High School's National Honor Society will induct 18 juniors chosen for their scholastic achievements at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the high school auditorium.

Advisor Linda Jones said students who have been invited for membership are Jessi Aufrecht, Andrea Barton, Marc Bremen-kamp, Ashley Coleman, Luke Cox, Matt Dickman, Abby Friesen, Maura Hansen, Jaden Morrison, Victoria Rall, Kaylie Reeh, Michael Schiferl, Connor Schwanke, Haileigh Shull, Andrew Taylor, Madison Tubbs, Walter Vacik and Morgan Vap.

To be eligible for consideration, said Jones, students must have a grade average of 3.75, and meet

high standards of leadership, service and character. Juniors and seniors are recommended for membership after they are screened by the society's faculty council.

"Leadership is based on the student's participation in community and school activities," said Jones. "To meet the service requirement, students must contribute 10 hours of community service per semester, earned through participation in community involvement. Character is measured in terms of integrity, behavior, ethics and co-operation with both students and faculty."

"Because it is based on GPA and teacher recommendation, membership in NHS is a prestigious honor.... All staff and teachers are invited to provide input on the eli-

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Reception held at museum for new movie

Leilani and Chuck Thomas of Colby (above) enjoyed their food Thursday at the "Harvesting on the High Plains" VIP Reception at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. On their table was a clapperboard signed by the filmmakers, Jay Kriss and Sydney Duvall, which Leilani Thomas said was given to the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce to hang in their office. Kriss (left) spoke with guests at the reception before heading off to the movie premiere, which was shown in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College.

KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

Director chairs last response meeting

By Christina Beringer
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Emergency Management Director Susan McMahan chaired her last Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting during the noon hour Wednesday and thanked members for their work in planning for an emergency response.

McMahan announced her resignation to Thomas County commissioners on Oct. 31. She and her family will be moving to the Topeka area, since her husband has accepted a transfer with the Kansas Highway Patrol to the

Turnpike troop in mid-December.

Wednesday, Dec. 5, will be McMahan's final working day.

McMahan said she hoped to recommend Assistant Director Autumn Arasmith for the position, but instead commissioners agreed to open the position up for applications, adding they didn't have time to discuss the job until their meeting Wednesday.

"The commissioners were supposed to be here today, which they are not," said McMahan. "I'm concerned they don't realize how intricately woven my job is, (from) the private sector all the way through to the federal government. So, if you have an opinion or are

concerned about the process for finding a replacement, please express it to them."

"The (Emergency Support Functions committee) gave a suggestion to put together an application review board, which I forwarded ahead, so we'll see what happens with that."

The County Emergency Operations Plan drawn up by the committee was approved at the Oct. 31 commissioner meeting, said McMahan.

"This plan is good for five years, so on the fourth year, you must start reviewing Kansas standards on the state level to ensure our plan

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Feds drop sex abuse case against coach

By John Kekis
The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Federal authorities have dropped their investigation into sexual abuse claims that cost a Syracuse University assistant basketball coach his job, threw a top-ranked team into turmoil and threatened the career of Hall of Fame coach Jim Boeheim.

After a probe spanning nearly a

year, U.S. Attorney Richard Hartunian said today there was not enough evidence to support claims that Bernie Fine had molested a boy in 2002 in a Pittsburgh hotel room.

"The nature and seriousness of these allegations, which involved conduct typically committed in private with individuals who are reluctant to come forward, warranted a thorough federal investigation," Hartunian said.

It wasn't clear yet whether Fine, 66, could get his job back.

His lawyers, Karl Sleight, Donald Martin and David Botsford, said in a statement that they were not surprised by the decision.

"The damage inflicted upon Bernie and his family is simply immeasurable," the lawyers said. "Bernie hopes and prays that the lesson learned and remembered is that a rush to judgment has irreversible consequences."

The investigation erupted in the glare of a spotlight on child abuse shone by the Penn State University scandal that broke shortly beforehand. Two former Syracuse ball-boys, Bobby Davis and Michael Lang, came forward Nov. 17 and accused the longtime assistant of

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