



County approves jail money

By Christina Beringer
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Thomas County Sheriff Rod Taylor got approval from county commissioners last Monday to spend about \$23,000 to install additional security measures at the jail and buy five new radar units. "I know it's a lot of money," said Taylor, "to be spending on this building while looking to spend more on a new building, but we need to keep it safe 24/7 while we are open now."

Commissioners and a building commission have been looking at options to either replace or remodel the current Law Enforcement Center to accommodate a growing inmate population and fix maintenance and security issues. No plans for construction have been

made so far.

Monday, commissioners agreed to spend \$13,000 from the county's building maintenance fund for building modifications.

Bids were sought and Colby Glass won a \$8,493 contract to install bullet-proof glass in windows of the center's lobby and several solid doors with combination locks, bars and block-out windows at strategic entrances that aren't considered safe today.

\$4,614 will be spent at Ntronic in Colby on security cameras and an intercom system, door release, transformer and relay, cables, parts and installation. The added cameras will ensure safety in the lobby and dispatch area, especially at night when most of the staff has gone home, the sheriff said.

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Crashes leave hole in building

A crash early Saturday morning left a hole in the wall of an unoccupied building at Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue, and another car struck a building off Interstate 70 in a crash later in the morning.

The Kansas Highway Patrol, which worked the accident, said that at 2:17 a.m., a 1998 Dodge Ram 2500 driven by Shane Caleb Ohlrogge, 18, Colby, ran a red light at Fourth and Franklin as Ohlrogge was going north.

The truck hit an eastbound 2005

Chevrolet driven by Klint Lee Wessel, 22, of Selden, then struck the side of the old Hot Topics building at the northeast corner of the intersection.

Neither of the men was wearing a seatbelt. Ohlrogge was taken to Citizens Medical Center in Colby, and Wessel was flown to Swedish Hospital in Denver. Neither hospital could comment in time for this story, but Wessel's grandmother,

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Food bank fills up boxes for project

Kris Lemman (above center) and her daughter Madisyn lined up on Dec. 7 in the Thomas County 4-H building to fill a shopping cart with food for the Genesis Thomas County Food Bank's Christmas basket project. Colleen Bixenman, coordinator with the food bank said that the food bank purchased enough food to feed 200 families or 659 people, with each family getting one to three boxes of food, depending on size. She said 172 volunteers and food bank board members helped fill up the boxes, including Joe Friesen (right) who distributed soup and other canned goods.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Extension office might join with another county

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Thomas County commissioners weighed a proposal last Monday to partner the county's Extension office with either Rawlins County or an existing district to the south.

Commissioners said they weren't comfortable with an agreement that would allow a district board to nearly double property taxes for the program, and that met with some hesitation from a state Extension official.

About 10 citizens attended the discussion during a regular meeting of the Thomas County commissioners at the courthouse. Raw-

lins County Commissioners Craig Cox, Charles Walker and Wilbur Henry, Rawlins County Attorney Jared Holste and Mary Holle of the *Rawlins County Square Deal* also attended, saying they hoped Thomas County would partner with the county.

The idea of joining an Extension district was first brought to commissioners in April after Rawlins County proposed the partnership. It was discussed again in May. Former Extension agent Clint Milliman said then that joining a district has been an option for about 10 years and that this wasn't the first time the Thomas County office has been approached.

Thomas County Extension op-

erates as a stand-alone county office and is not part of any district. Commissioners set the tax levy and control the budget. Under a district, an elected board from each member county would pass on these decisions.

Since May, the county's agents and Extension board members have looked into how a district would operate and alternatives with other counties.

Bob Standage, chairman of the Thomas County Extension Council, said one option is joining the Golden Prairie Extension District with Logan, Gove and Trego counties, south and southeast of

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Brewster man arrested Friday

A man who allegedly made threats at the Frontier Ag elevator in Brewster kept a Thomas County sheriff's deputy and several highway patrolmen busy for about two hours Friday afternoon.

Sheriff Rod Taylor said that David Mayer, 52, of Brewster was arrested about 3 p.m. Friday after allegedly making threats and getting into a fight with Bruce Ferguson, 54, also of Brewster, at the

Co-op. "He had an altercation there with another individual," Taylor said, "and we arrested him for battery and disorderly conduct."

He was booked into jail at about 4 p.m. for battery, disorderly conduct and probation violation.

The sheriff's office got the call at about 1 p.m., he said, that someone was making threats as they left the Co-op, possibly in a white Dodge pickup, which officers did not find later.

"I'm assuming he ditched it somewhere and he walked back to his house," Taylor said.

Although they did not find the truck, he said a deputy and two

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Visit from the Claus'



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Santa (Gary Wingard) and Mrs. Claus (Yvonne Wingard) greeted customers Wednesday at Farmers and Merchants Bank's annual Christmas Open House at its main location, 240 W. Fourth St., including Bryant Wiedeman, son of the bank's manager, Brent Wiedeman.

E-mail up and running

The *Colby Free Press*' e-mail system is back up today and the website should be working later today.

The server for both was out

of action Thursday and Friday. E-mail service returned Friday evening, but the web server still needs work.

We thank you for understanding and apologize for the inconvenience. For information or questions, call our office at 462-3963.

