



City Council puts off water contract

By Sam Dieter
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The Colby City Council tabled a vote Tuesday to extend a contract with Siemens for resin to filter chrome out of drinking water at a Superfund site run by the Environmental Protection Agency. The contract, which would have taken effect starting last Friday and lasted until

the end of the year, would have raised the price of the resin from \$155 to \$162 per cubic foot. City Manager Tyson McGreer pointed out that the contract does not require the city to buy any given amount of resin.

McGreer said that the agency, which has been operating a water treatment plant at the site on East Fourth, will reimburse the city for the cost of the resin until Sept. 13, when it plans to stop running the plant.

"We've got a lot of homework to do before we get to the point of continuing on," he said.

The state is negotiating with the city to see which entity, if any, would be responsible for running the plant after the agency stops overseeing it, McGreer said.

"The state really wants to keep the thing running," he told the council. "I'm sure it would if the city keeps writing the checks."

McGreer said later that although the plant might stop operating, it only supplies a small portion of the city's drinking water. The agency sank wells in an area where the chrome had been dumped years ago and built the plant to filter it out of the groundwater.

The agency website says that from 1954 to 1990, Ace Services ran a facility for chrome-plating farm implement parts, which contaminated the drinking water.

Cleanup was started in the 1980s and the plant was finished in 2003.

Public Works Director Omar Weber described the resin used to take the chrome out of the water as looking "like real fine sugar."

In other business, the council:

- Passed an ordinance to change rates for trash pickup at businesses with minimal

See "CITY," Page 2

College board hears from dining services

By Kayla Cornett
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The Colby Community College trustees heard presentations from two dining service companies Monday during a special meeting to try to decide if they were going to change companies.

Currently, the college uses Chartwells Higher Education Dining Services, but the administration and Dr. Stephen Vacik, college president, recommended switching to Great Western Dining Service Inc.

Dan Eusebio, district manager for Chartwells, gave his presentation first. He said the presentation covered highlights of the five-year contract they would have with the college and the things they believe are important to the college.

Eusebio said if chosen, they would create an additional full-time supervisor position. He then told the board what the daily prices

of meal plans would be. With 18 meals a week and \$150 of flex money (for example for a snack bar), the cost would be \$7.81 a day. Three meals are offered by the college dining hall Monday through Thursday, but only two meals are offered Friday through Sunday since the college moved to a four-day week.

The 14-meal plan plus \$100 of flex would be \$7.43 a day, and five meals (no flex) would be \$4.50 a day.

He added that flex money that is not used will roll over to the next semester, but will not roll over to the next academic year.

Chartwells lowered these prices in the two weeks before Eusebio met with the trustees. The 18-meal and 14-meal plans dropped 32 cents and the five-meal plan stayed the same. In all, it gives the college \$19,400 in savings.

He said the investment to the

See "COLLEGE," Page 2

Senators seek deal on gun-sale check

By Alan Fram
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - A bipartisan quartet of senators, including two National Rifle Association members and two with "F" ratings from the potent firearms lobby, are quietly trying to find a compromise on expanding the requirement for gun-sale background checks.

A deal, given a good chance by several participants and lobbyists, could add formidable political momentum to one of the key elements of President Barack Obama's gun control plan. Currently, background checks are required only for sales by the nation's 55,000 federally licensed gun dealers, but not for gun show, person-to-person sales or other private transactions.

The senators' talks have included discussions about ways to encourage states to make more

mental health records available to the national system and the types of transactions that might be exempted from background checks, such as sales among relatives or to those who have permits to carry concealed weapons, said people who spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to describe the negotiations publicly.

The private discussions involve liberal Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, who is the No. 3 Senate Democratic leader; West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, an NRA member and one of the chamber's more moderate Democrats; Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., another NRA member and one of the more conservative lawmakers in Congress; and moderate GOP Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois.

"It will not limit your ability to borrow your Uncle Willie's hunting rifle or share a gun with your

See "GUN," Page 2

Postal Service lost a billion over quarter

By Pauline Jelinek
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Postal Service says it lost \$1.3 billion in the first quarter of the new budget year, following record losses last year.

Officials say that in the three months ending Dec. 31, there was continued growth in the agency's revenue from package delivery,

including during a busy holiday season. And there was growth in political ad mailings due to the November elections.

But it wasn't enough to overcome business lost as customers moved more toward e-mail, online bill paying and other Internet services.

In a move to cut costs, the Postal Service had announced Wednesday that it plans to end Saturday mail deliveries in August, although it will continue six-day-a-week package delivery.



Angela Bates spoke to people who attended the 2012 Author's Roundup at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. She is returning to the museum this month as a speaker at the Food for Thought program.

Local favorite to speak at museum

The Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby will present "African American Women Domestic: The Story of Two Kansans," during a free monthly Food for Thought luncheon. The speaker will be Nicodemus Historical Society Director Angela Bates.

Members of the community are invited to attend the free lunch and featured presentation beginning at noon on Thursday, Feb. 21. Donations are welcome; reservations are not needed.

Bates presents educational programs across the nation covering Nicodemus, Exodusters and black towns in the West, Buffalo Soldiers and black women in the west.

During her Food for Thought presentation, Bates - a local favorite - will discuss the family legacy of domestic work and share mementos of two women from the only remaining western town established by African Americans during the Reconstruction Period.

She'll relate the lives of Ernestine and Charlesetta Williams of Nicodemus, who learned the basics of cleaning and cooking from their mother and grandmother who had been enslaved in Kentucky. When the two young women moved to California in the 1950s, their domestic skills proved beneficial and provided many employment opportunities, even in Hollywood.



Angela Bates dressed up as Nicodemus Annie for fourth graders at the Prairie Fair in May 2009 held at the museum. Nicodemus Annie is the main character in Bates' book "The Adventures of Nicodemus Annie: Getting Mail."

"When I watched the movie 'The Help,' I reflected on my own experiences as a child of a domestic cook," said Bates. "My mother and aunt shared wonderful stories about their experiences with such greats as Walt Disney, John Wayne, Bob Hope and others."

"This rich history makes me proud of their accomplishments and appreciate the skills that I

now possess as a professional cook."

Bates has given presentations at the museum and has become a local favorite for those who have heard her speak. Dressing in period costume as Nicodemus Annie, Bates has portrayed the main character in her book, "The Adventures of Nicodemus Annie: Getting Mail," during the Prairie Museum's Authors Roundup in 2012 and the 2009

Prairie Fair. A hardback edition of the book is available in the museum gift shop.

The program is part of the Kansas Humanities Council's The Way We Worked speakers bureau.

For information about Food for Thought, contact Sue Taylor, director of the Prairie Museum of Art and History, at 460-4590, prairiem@st-tel.net or online at www.prairiemuseum.org.

Supreme Court asked to hear Kansas murder case

TOPEKA (AP) - The U.S. Supreme Court will be asked to review a Kansas Supreme Court decision overturning the capital murder convictions of a Topeka man in the killing of two women in 2003, the Shawnee County District Attorney said in a court filing. Shawnee County District At-

torney Chad Taylor filed a motion late Thursday saying he will appeal the ruling overturning the convictions of Phillip D. Cheatham, who was sentenced to death in 2005.

In the three-page filing with the clerk of the Kansas appellate courts, Taylor also asked the state

Supreme Court to delay issuing a mandate that would allow Cheatham's second trial to start in Shawnee County District Court, *The Topeka Capital-Journal* reported (bit.ly/XVO31C).

The district attorney's office has until April 25 to file the petition with the U.S. Supreme Court,

which accepts only a few cases for appeal.

Cheatham, 40, was convicted in Shawnee County of killing Annette Roberson and Gloria Jones and wounding a third victim, Annetta Thomas, at a Topeka home in December 2003.

