

Weather

Legislators talk with voters here

Briefly

From "VOTERS," Page 1

"I have seven bills in my committee that I now have at the bottom of the desk drawer," he said.

Cassidy said he recently got a chance to testify against a bill that he said could have hurt area landfills by agreeing to hear another bill favored by Rep. Steve Huebert in the Education Budget committee.

As chairman of the Education Budget committee, Cassidy had to present a \$3 billion state education budget. He had 1 1/2 hours to hear what was in the budget, and then had the same amount of time to present it.

"That's one of the scariest things," he said, adding that he had a knowledgeable assistant to help him with the presentation.

Rep. Hineman was late to the meeting because, he explained, he had to drive 100 miles to get here from Leoti.

He talked about the budget,

saying he preferred the income-tax plan Gov. Sam Brownback presented in January 2012 to the one the Legislature passed last spring, which he said did not include extra revenue to offset major tax cuts.

If the Legislature does not find enough revenue, he said, the budget the state is currently working on for fiscal year 2014 will have a hole of \$300 million to \$400 million dollars to fill.

Hineman stressed the need to balance the books. Since education and social services make up such a big part of the budget, he said, it will be difficult to cut taxes without taking money from those areas.

His only prediction on what will happen in Topeka was that legislators will not finish the budget in the 80 days that the leadership wanted to get done.

"We will be here in mid-May when I would rather be on the tractor planting milo," he said.

The audience chimed in later, mainly to tell the legislators about bills they do not want to see passed.

Mayor Gary Adrian had two

bills in mind, one which would have moved local elections to November, along with state and county offices, and would force candidates in those elections to run with a party.

"That just eliminates good, qualified people that know the issues," he said.

Another, Senate Bill 109, would ban the use of public money for lobbying purposes. Adrian said it would exclude counties, cities, school boards and other local governments from participating in statewide organizations such as the Kansas Municipal Energy Association, because those organizations use money from cities to lobby the state.

"Senate Bill 109, I think, is in trouble," Ostmeyer told him. "I don't think it's going to come out of committee."

The original source of the bill, he thought, was that school districts took state money and used it to sue the state several years ago.

Connie Davis, an instructor at the college, mentioned several House bills she heard about from teachers' organizations which she said were disturbing.

"I don't think they always send out accurate information to you," Cassidy, a school counselor and former principal, said. But Davis asserted that she

had heard of disturbing things, even from friends in other states. "They're all saying, 'What's going on in Kansas, what's happening in Kansas,'" she said.

She said later this included House bills requiring "climate change denial" to be taught in schools, and concerning negotiations between teachers' unions and the state.

County Commissioner Mike Baughn voiced his disapproval of House Bill 2085, which fixes the definition of terms concerning labor negotiations with public employees.

"That would adversely affect Thomas County citizens to the tune of about 14 mils (of property tax)," he said.

Rep. Hineman agreed. "That would be a very bad deal," he said, if the bill were passed the way it is.

Ostmeyer represents Senate District 40, which includes 13 counties of northwest Kansas plus about a third of Phillips County. The 118th House District that Hineman represents includes southern and eastern Thomas County. Cassidy's 120th District covers the northwest part of the county, including Colby. Hineman and Cassidy are each on three committees, and Hineman serves as the chair of the House Rural caucus.

Annual dress sale continues this week

The annual formal dress sale, featuring "gently-used" dresses in an array of colors, styles and sizes, continues from 6 to 8 p.m. through Friday in the chapel of the First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. Come find your dream dress. All proceeds go to support the Genesis-Thomas County food bank. For information, call Sue Draper at 460-6332.

Once a Month Lunch coming up on Saturday

Once a Month Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday in the basement of the Colby First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St. No reservation is needed, and the free meal, held the second Saturday of each month, is open to everyone. For questions, call the church office, 462-6342.

High Plains Lions plan ham-and-beans feed

The Colby High Plains Lions invite everyone to a ham-and-beans feed from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at Orscheln Farm and Home in Colby. Donations will pay expenses for two high school band students to attend the Lions' state Band Camp and convention. For information, call Larry Koon at 462-6617.

Community Foundation accepting applications

The Thomas County Community Foundation is accepting scholarship applications for the 2013-14 school year until Sunday and first-quarter grant applications until Sunday, March 31. For information, go to www.thomascounty-communityfoundation.com or call Melinda Olson at 460-9152.

Wrestling awards potluck set for Sunday

The Colby High Wrestling Awards Banquet will be a potluck at 6 p.m. Sunday in the Commons at the high school. Bring a covered dish and your own tableware. For information, call Brandi Wark at 460-5300.

Girl Scouts cookie drive into its last week

Colby Girl Scouts will wind up their annual cookie sale Sunday. Price is \$3.50 per box and the new cookie this year is called "Mango Crème." For information or questions, call leader Penny Cline at 460-5404.

Seniors plan potluck at Presbyterian Church

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday and Tuesday, April 9, at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share; table service and beverages will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

County approves two new medical cots

From "COUNTY," Page 1

said, including buying new or refurbished cots, and whether to buy manual battery-operated models. He recommended two new manual cots. The rebuilt ones would have been about \$6,000, Hickert said, and he'd heard of a deal for a cot with a battery-powered motor, along with a powered-stair chair, costing between \$14,000 and \$15,000.

Commissioners decided the purchase would come out of the ambulance capital outlay budget.

Hickert said paying for the cots would have been easier if his department had gotten a Kraff grant from the state Board of Emergency Medical Services. He said the budget he listed in the grant application had been based on the wrong schedule.

The department will have to replace two more cots by fall, he said, and several ambulances are getting old.

A radiator sprung a leak in one of them to the tune of \$765, and a spring connected to an ammeter in that same ambulance cost about \$500 to replace.

On the other hand, he said, he wrote a let-

ter to Medicare to try to keep from having to pay another \$532.

"I got good news and bad news," he told the commissioners.

Hickert said later that it cost the department \$500 last year to update information with Medicare, which had not been changed since 2004. After completing the updates, he said, he learned that Medicare wanted to charge \$532 for a re-validation.

Hickert had a verbal commitment from a representative not to charge the \$532, but he was still not sure if the county would get a bill.

U.S. schools shift from textbooks to tablets

By Philip Elliott The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Well before the cleanup from Superstorm Sandy was in full swing, students could read about the weather system that slammed the East Coast in their textbooks.

Welcome to the new digital bookcase, where traditional ink-and-paper textbooks have given way to iPads and book bags are getting lighter. Publishers update students' books almost instantly with the latest events or research. Schools are increasingly looking to the hand-held tablets as a way to sustain students' interest, reward

their achievements and, in some cases, actually keep per-student costs down.

News Corp. introduced their Amplify tablet during a breakfast today at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas. Priced at \$299, the 10-inch unit runs on a school's wireless Internet system and comes with software for teachers to watch each student's activities, offer instant polls and provide anonymous quizzes to gauge student understanding.

Orders placed by June 30 will be ready for the start of the school year in the fall, officials at Rupert Murdoch's company said, adding yet another plat-

form for schools to consider.

Putting a device in every student's hand is not a pie-in-the-sky dream. Some 2,000 schools already have partnered with Google to use its lightweight Chromebooks, which start at \$199. Some 20 million students and teachers are already using them, company officials said.

And a study from the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project found that more than 40 percent of students or teachers use some sort of tablet in their Advanced Placement and National Writing Project classrooms.

Christine Quinn, the speaker of the New York City Council,

has suggested replacing textbooks — they cost the city \$100 million a year — with tablets. Schools in Los Angeles last month allocated \$50 million to start buying tablets for every student; the project is expected to cost \$500 million by the time it is completed. Schools in McAllen, Texas, distributed 6,800 Apple tablets last year at a cost of \$20.5 million.

But it's not just the biggest school districts making the shift. The Eanes Independent School District in Austin is distributing more than 2,000 iPads to every student, from kindergarteners to high school seniors. The cost: \$1.2 million.

Monday: High, 45; Low 20
Tuesday: High, 43; Low 21
Precip: Monday 0.02 inches
Tuesday None
Month: 0.02 inches
Year: 0.80 inches
Normal: 2.11 inches
(K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
Thursday 7:08 a.m. 6:43 p.m.
Moon: waning, 20 percent
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

LOCAL TV Listings Sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Table with columns for Thursday Evening March 7, 2013, listing channels, times, and programs like Zero Hour, Grey's Anatomy, Scandal, etc.



Table with columns for Friday Evening March 8, 2013, listing channels, times, and programs like Last Man Standing, Shark Tank, etc.

American Profile: We Celebrate Hometown Life. Stories from hometowns just like yours. Look for us each week in this paper.