



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Renovating old hospital begins soon

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkansas.com

A project to renovate the former St. Thomas Hospital likely will start about a month from now.

"We're hoping to start work at the end of August, but we'll know more in the next couple of weeks as to when we get started," said Brian Hall, project manager for the renovation.

Hall works for Construction Technologies, a subsidiary of Overland Park-based real estate company Cohen-Esery. He said the company hopes to finalize the purchase of the building from the current owner, Brenda Hildyard, by the middle of this month.

At the start of the year Tim Quigley, a development partner for Cohen-Esery, had hoped to purchase the building from Hildyard by the end of March. The company plans to build affordable housing units in the old hospital.

His company helped to get the old hospital on the National Register of Historic Places because that would allow for tax credits to cover construction costs. It was added to the state register and nominated

for the national register on Nov. 3, then added to the national register on Jan. 2. That made the project available for a state tax credit that covers 25 percent of the costs, and a federal credit that covers up to 20 percent.

Cohen-Esery hired the firm Spencer Preservation, which did the paperwork for the nomination, last summer to make the case for adding the hospital to the register. The first half of the building was constructed through the Works Projects Administration in 1941, and the second half, including a chapel and wing for polio patients, was added in 1948. Brenda Spencer, owner of Spencer Preservation, described the building as typical of the time and place where it was built. She said that architect Joseph Radotinsky, who designed the original building, worked on several buildings in west Kansas, including the high school in Oberlin.

Citizens' Medical Center was dedicated in 1982 and replaced the old hospital. The Colby School District used the building for office space in the 1980s and 1990s before it fell out of use.

State bar honors Colby attorney

Colby attorney Calvin Williams was honored with the Kansas Bar Association's Outstanding Service Award last month for service to the statewide bar.

Williams, a solo practitioner, is a criminal defense attorney, with 35 years of experience, the last 20 of which have been in Colby.

He is a 1978 graduate of Washburn University School of Law.

Currently, he serves as a commissioner for the Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program, chairman of the program's foundation and president of the Kansas Bar Association's Solo and Small Firm Section.

Williams is past president of the Kansas Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and he served on Washburn Law's Board of Governors, as an adjunct professor for Washburn's Intensive Trial Advocacy Program and as a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Williams is an active member of numerous national criminal



Calvin Williams

defense bar organizations.

The Outstanding Service Award is given to recognize lawyers and judges for service to the legal profession or the Kansas Bar Association.

Accidents take lives of two Wednesday

Two people died Wednesday in separate accidents on and near K-25 in Logan and Rawlins counties.

The first accident happened when Robert Petersen, 66, of Brewster, was headed south from Colby on K-25 on a 2004 Harley-Davidson Road King. At about 3:25 p.m. he went off the west side of the road into a ditch, landing in a corn field 16 miles south of town at mile marker 177. He

was not wearing a helmet.

In a second accident at 9:59 p.m. Wednesday, Duain L. Hafer, 54, Atwood, was going west on County Road S in Rawlins County when he went off the south side of the road just west of County Road 18 just over two miles northwest of the junction of K-25 and U.S. 36.

Hafer overcorrected the 2006 GMC Sierra 1500 he was driving, went back across the road and into the north ditch. He was not wearing a seatbelt and was thrown from the pickup as it rolled.



Determination highlights the fair



Determination has been the name of the game at the Thomas County Fair this week. A rider tried to hang on to his horse on the second day of the Kansas Professional Rodeo Association rodeo Tuesday night. A day later, kids hauled some not-so-heavy machinery across the finish line at the tractor pull, while people endured a long wait for free food: a barbecue sponsored by the fair board.

SAM DIETER
and HEATHER ALWIN
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