



County passes next budget

By Heather Alwin
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After a months-long process that began this spring, Thomas County commissioners passed a \$7.6 million budget for next year after a hearing Monday.

Three members of the Thomas County Fair Board attended the budget hearing to ask about the amount the board will receive in 2014. No other members of the public showed up to question the budget.

The budget, which was posted at the county clerk's office and published in the *Colby Free Press*, allocates spending among county departments and organizations the county supports.

The county plans to spend \$7,564,056 in 2014, over \$1 million more than the 2013 budget and about \$17,000 more than it spent in 2012.

Nearly every county depart-

ment received an increase to its budget, including over \$140,000 in increases for the general fund.

The amount of tax levied for the health department increased 7.5 times over last year's levied tax even though the overall health department budget decreased by \$38,765.

According to Commissioner Paul Steele, the large increase in levied tax for the department, totaling \$127,746, is due to decreased use of the health department's income-generating services, such as immunizations, along with more medicare write-offs for which the county provides services that are not reimbursed by the state.

The county's estimated valuation has increased by \$7.4 million, from \$95.9 million to \$103.3 million, mainly because of increases in real estate valuation, said Steele.

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Vice president starts at Colby

Dr. George McNulty has been named vice president of student affairs at Colby Community College, replacing Dr. Keegan Nicholls, who resigned in June to accept a job at Fort Hays State University.



G. McNulty

Dr. McNulty comes to Colby from Western Nevada College in Carson City, where he was the interim director of financial assistance. He also had been coordinator of retention and counselor at Western Nevada. He was selected as Academic Advisor of the Year by the college in 2009.

Prior to that, he was an academic advisor and taught online and traditional classes at Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno from 2002-07.

He received an undergraduate degree in physical education from California State University, Chi-

co; a master's degree in counseling and educational psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno; and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Nevada in 2011.

"Dr. McNulty's experience, especially in financial aid, is an extremely valuable asset for our students at Colby Community College," said President Steve Vacik. "He has the knowledge and experience to ensure that (the college) is in compliance

with guidelines and regulations at both the state and federal levels. He is a proven leader who brings a wealth of higher education experience to the school. I am certain that George and his family will be a welcomed addition to our community."

Dr. McNulty began his duties on Monday.

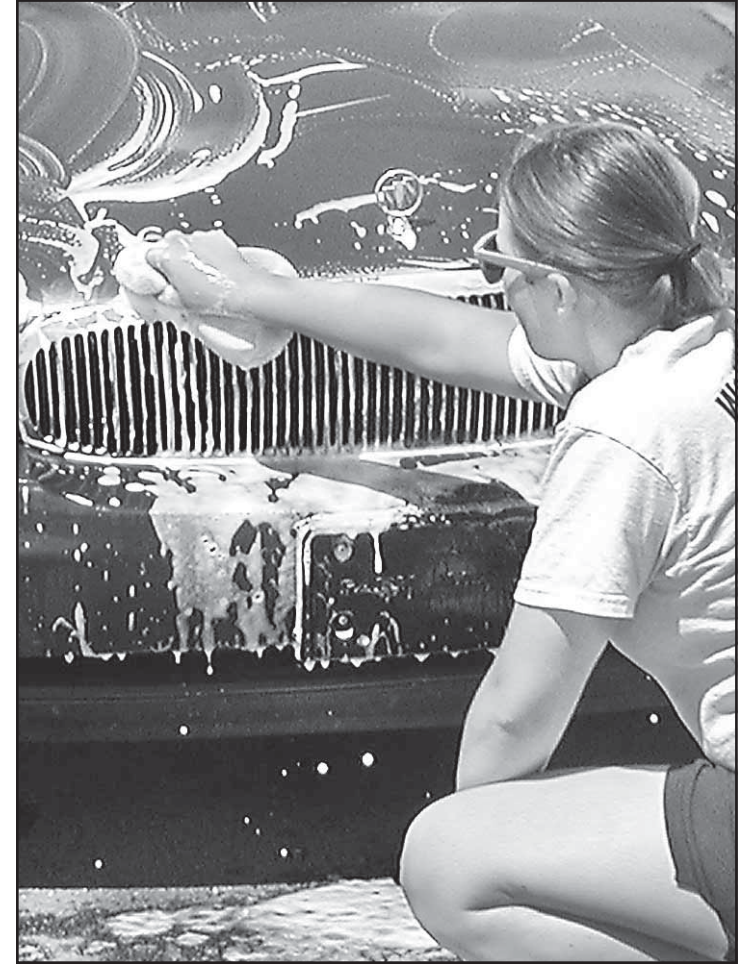
Dance team soaks Colby



HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press

Rachel Urban (left, below) and Lizzy Foster, both juniors at Colby High School and members of the school's dance team, waved signs on Range Avenue Friday to attract attention to the team's car wash in the Dillon's parking lot. Meanwhile,

Brittney Menges (below right) and other teammates scrubbed vehicles in exchange for donations. The team gathered \$457 from the event, which will go to buy new team jackets.



Bank continues support of hospital



SHARON FRIEDLANDER/Colby Free Press

Brent Wiedeman, Kevan Trenkle and Patsy Evans chatted at Farmers and Merchants Bank after Wiedeman presented a \$25,000 check to Trenkle and Evans for Citizens Medical Center. This is the second \$25,000 donation the bank has made to the hospital in the last year, creating a combined total of \$50,000 for its expansion project.

Farm Bureau recognizes leaders in agribusiness

By Sam Dieter

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Area farmers and agribusiness leaders were recognized at the 64th annual meeting of the Thomas County Farm Bureau Association on Tuesday night in the basement of the community building.

About 70 people who attended the meeting heard about national issues that affect farmers here in Thomas County. The group recognized Cory Kistler as this year's Farm Family of the Year, though he is single, and Velma Barnett with the Century Farm Award.

Entertainment was provided by "The Uncalled 4," a singing quartet consisting of tenor Bruce Bandy, Colby; bass Warren Stafford, Hill City; baritone Allen Finkbeiner, Russell; and lead singer Gary Horchem, who lives between WaKeeney and Russell.

Relda Galli, Pete Ziegelmeier and Shellie Intermill were elected to three open positions on the board. Galli, Ziegelmeier and Austin Frantz were approved as voting delegates at the annual state meeting December in Manhattan. The bureau also recognized two new employees, Ashley Wright and Kristin Wiegner.

Vernon Hurd told the farmers that they should do

some careful estate planning this year, since the federal tax code had been changed on Jan. 28. He noted the National Healthcare Reform Act goes into effect in October, and urged the attendees to get more of their friends to come to meetings.

President Ziegelmeier reported on the activities the bureau organizes each year, including a safety-poster contest for local grade-schoolers, the back-to-school barbecue and a carnival ride at the Thomas County Fair that the bureau operates.

Two high school students got a Farm Bureau scholarship this year, which is worth \$250 for four years. Ben Baird and Kaitlyn Flanagan will both go to Fort Hays State University. Baird plans to study history and secondary education and Flanagan plans to study interior design.

Galli said that the Bert Stramel family, which won last year's Farm Family of the Year Award, went on to become the top family in the bureau's District 10. They will be recognized at the state farm bureau meeting. This year, Kistler, a former member of the



Ben Baird



K. Flanagan

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