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SAM DIETER and HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press

Schools around the area started up this week, getting a mixed reception from the students. Colby school kids had their first day of school today, and Ron and Krista Alexander (top) walked with his kids Jacob (from right), a kindergartner, seventh-grader Brooke and second grader Bailee as Eugene Roberts directed traffic. Kids brought a variety of things along, ranging even to the family dog Reuben Hargraves-Alden (left) had with him. Brewster Schools' first day was Tuesday: kindergartner Dane Moore (below right) adjusted to the new school year with the help of cookies and juice at snack time., while teacher Chris Hoyt (below left) refreshed the memory of seventh grader Nick Casper during an algebra lesson.



School Days

Both students and teachers are facing new challenges today as another school year is underway throughout Thomas County.

New staff members in every school are meeting students for the first time, and the *Colby Free Press* would like

you to meet them in turn.

To help everyone get acquainted, today's paper profiles new teachers for Brewster, Heartland, Sacred Heart and Golden Plains. Profiles for Colby Public Schools and Colby Community College will appear tomorrow.



Jail study to be done

By Heather Alwin

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County efforts at building a new jail – and possibly a new courthouse or office complex – moved a small step forward Monday after the Thomas County commissioners agreed to spend an estimated \$19,196 for a jail study. However, no contracts were signed.

The study, proposed by Justice Concepts Inc., includes a demographic study to forecast jail growth and a functional analysis to review the proposed design, drafted by architect Glen Strait.

The commissioners voted to approve the studies after discussions with Strait, who also sought out the proposal from Justice Concepts. The company bills itself as a consultant that helps architectural firms who do not specialize in jail construction compete with other firms who do.

Though other architectural firms include these studies as part of their planning phase of a new jail construction project, Strait's firm does not.

Strait verbally agreed to discount his fees, estimated at \$738,000 or 6.5 percent of the project cost, by \$6,126 to pay for the functional analysis from the company, said Commissioner Paul Steele. The analysis would meet part of the peer review process architects are required to complete.

Though the county does not have such an agreement in writing, Commissioner Baughn said they plan to ask Strait to sign an addendum to his contract.

The commissioners did not actually sign a contract with Justice Concepts at their meeting since the most recent proposal had been lost. Steele plans to sign it on behalf of the commission once the firm sends another copy or the lost copy is found rather than tabling it for the next commissioners' meeting.

"I'm kind of concerned that we continue to table contracts, and I would like to get some movement," he said.

Baughn hesitated to approve a contract without a written proposal in hand, but Steele called Strait on his cell phone. Strait briefed Steele over the phone, recom-

mending the studies the commission ultimately approved.

During the discussion of whether to hire the company, Baughn expressed doubt about the need for a formal jail study.

"I had one (constituent) who thought a demographic study was just throwing your money down a rat hole," Baughn said. "If you had a group of people who could assess how the community has grown and project expectations, you could probably do as good locally as you could by hiring a so-called expert."

Baughn said he does not expect a major shift in the number of inmate spaces needed in Thomas County unless there is a major shift in the county's economic base such as a new major manufacturing component.

"My objection to the whole process is that there should have been a feasibility study done long before we ever came up with the plans," he said. "What we really need to sell to the public is a focus group or team that looks at all the ins and outs."

A community or team approach had been suggested by another architectural firm to involve all the stakeholders in decisions about the building.

The currently proposed building contains a jail plus space for all the offices and courtrooms now contained at the historic county courthouse. But Baughn mentioned other possibilities as well, including constructing only a jail or constructing a larger facility to house the jail, office complex and courthouse functions.

Architectural Services

Although he ultimately voted for the jail study, Baughn said, "I hesitate to incur additional expense on our contract with Mr. Strait. The agreement has expanded far beyond the jail. I think we're getting the cart before the horse."

Strait's contract was part of the discussion at the commissioners' Monday meeting.

The board received an e-mail from Judge Glenn Schiffner earlier this month encouraging them to consider Treanor Architects of Topeka for the project. Schiff-

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Music teacher starts at Brewster

Brewster's Public Schools welcomed new music teacher Derek Best to the school's staff this year.

Best will teach music for kindergarten through high school students, including band and vocal music for fifth grade and higher and music education for fourth grade and under.

Superintendent Janci Mills said Best will teach a new music appreciation class for Brewster's high school

students and a new music session for Brewster's on-site preschool.

Best, who last taught in El Dorado, is a graduate of Wichita High School and Wichita State University. This is his fifth year of teaching.

Best lives in Colby with his wife, Vanessa, and their two small children. Vanessa's grandmother lives in Sharon Springs, so they are

pleased to be closer to family.



Derek Best

Heartland Christian School adds four teachers to lineup

Renee Schmeiser

Heartland Christian School
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Heartland Christian school has four new teachers this year.

Christa Zapfe will be our preschool teacher this year. She has a master's in Christian ministries and has taught preschool, as well as Bible classes for various age groups. Zapfe came to Colby from Greensburg.



Christa Zapfe



Michael Quist



Lisa Delzeit



M. Gundlach

working on his doctorate in education and has taught various levels and courses in the past. Quist moved to Colby from Colorado.

Mark Gundlach will be teaching in sixth through 12th grade. His classes include Bible, science and math; as well as a medical terminology course at Colby Community College. He has his Doctor of Chiropractic and master's in teaching and has taught many secondary math, science and Bible

classes. Gundlach moved to Colby from Flower Mound, Texas.

Lisa Delzeit will be teaching sixth grade this year, as well as seventh and eighth grade history and our high school life skills class. She has her bachelor's degree in interior architecture. She has home schooled three of her children for nine years and has led many leadership classes. Delzeit grew up in Colby, moved away for several years and has re-

cently returned.

We are excited to have each of these wonderful teachers on our staff this year. We look forward to what God has in store for Heartland Christian School.



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