



# COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

## City saves money with meters

By Sam Dieter

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The Colby City Council voted to pay the last of what it owes for a water meter project at its meeting Tuesday night.

The council said yes on a motion to accept a report from Johnson Controls Inc. on the city water meter project, and to pay the remaining balance of \$86,030 to the company. The council voted to approve the project in March 2012.

Cris Christenson, business development manager with Johnson Controls, told the council that the project has recently been completed. It comes with a guarantee that the meters will be 98.5 percent accurate.

Smaller meters have gone from reading water with just under 94 percent accuracy to being 100 percent accurate, Christenson said. Larger meters have gone from being anywhere from 50 to 65 percent to just under 100 percent accurate.

The project was expected to save the city to save around \$25,000 a year, but so far will probably save the city around \$34,000 this year, if factors like water use stay at predicted levels. The project has saved \$18,348 so far this year, he said.

Christenson said he will be back in April to give an official report on the savings. He added that his company will be back for other

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## Suspect spent night in milo

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Two Junction City men are in the Thomas County Jail after an armed robbery at the Quality Inn on Sunday night. One was arrested just a few minutes after the crime, and the other after apparently spending a cold, wet night in milo fields southeast of town.

Shawn Gill, 19, allegedly ran when Colby police stopped the car he was in just 15 minutes after the robbery. The police arrested Christopher Hoyte, also 19, in the vehicle on Interstate 70 a couple of miles east of town. They arrested Gill on Monday morning, after sending out a statement to say they were looking him.

Quality Inn desk clerk Jodi Kobza said a lone robber threatened her with a gun and demanded money at 11:05 p.m. Sunday. Police got a call from Kobza, then pulled over a car when they saw a man inside who matched her description of the robber.

"He walked in the door, and at first I said hi," said Kobza, who

added that she is used to seeing people wearing hooded sweat-shirts come in late at night.

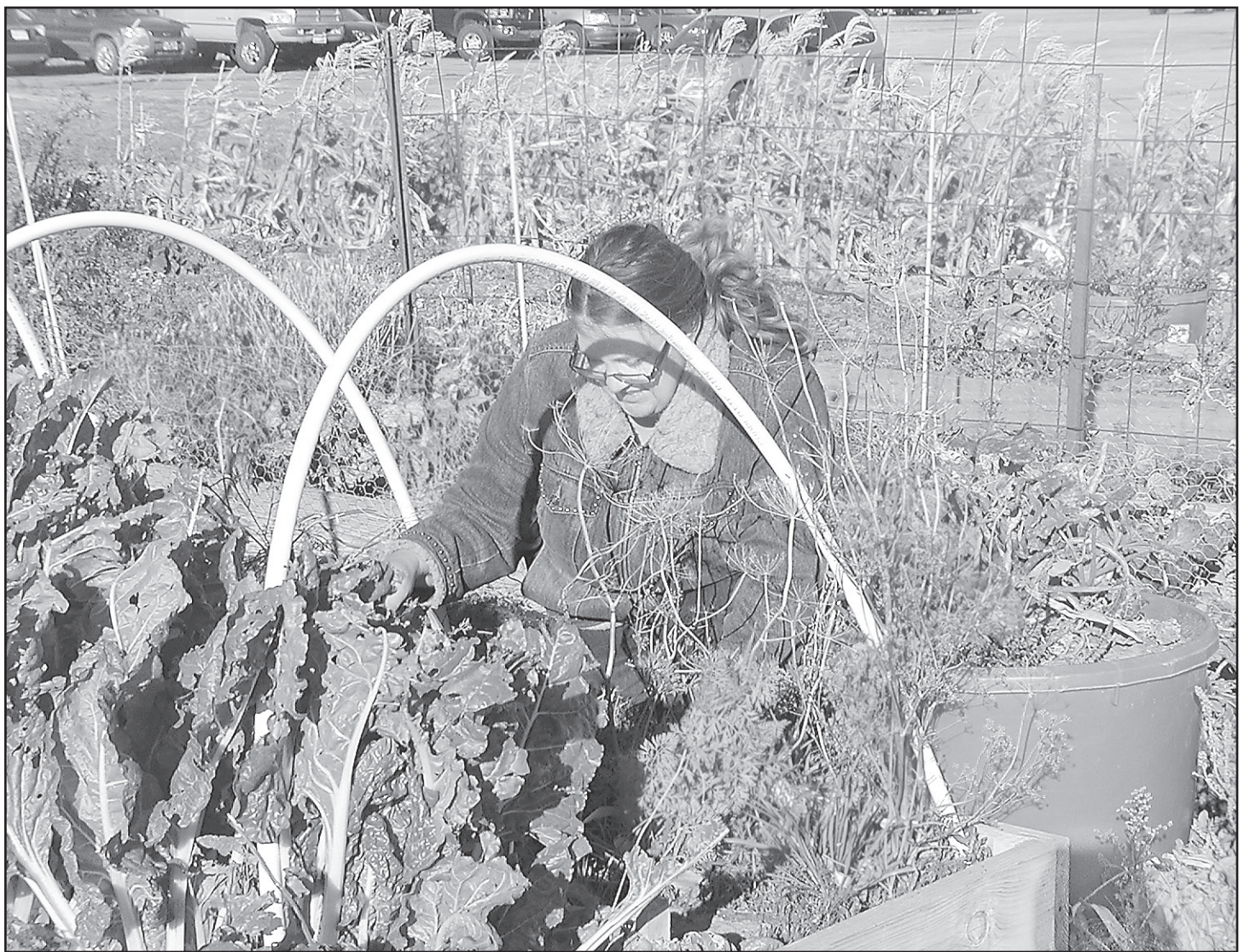
But this time, she said, "he just popped the gun up ... and he said give me your cash."

Kobza said she called the police right after the robber left. She added that there was no car in the parking lot at the time of the robbery. She was alone at the desk because another clerk had gone down the hall to get supplies.

The robber, she said, was wearing a black hoodie and a black bandana. He was white with blue eyes and about her height, 5 feet, 6 inches.

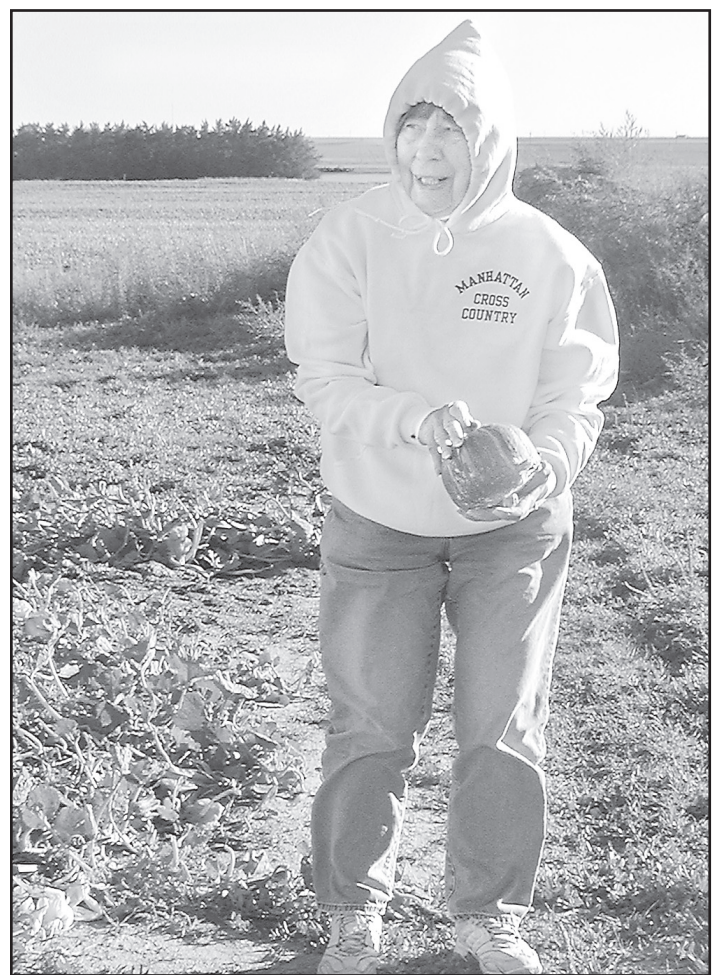
Police Chief Ron Alexander said officers stopped at car at 11:20 p.m. near mile marker 56 east of town because one of the men inside matched the description of the robber. As soon as it stopped, he said, Gill took off running into a milo field north of the highway. Police, sheriff's deputies and state troopers looked for him for several hours before the search was called off.

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Denise Singer pulled carrots out of a garden bed next to some swiss chard on a windy Tuesday afternoon (top). Virginia Hopper found some winter squash in the Thomas County Community Garden (right) and a handful of other produce. Singer (above) and her only volunteer took a bucket of carrots from the garden, along with beets and radishes.



## Chill dampens garden's end

The Thomas County Community Garden is wrapping up the growing season this year, with more volunteers and a better harvest.

Denise Singer, coordinator for the garden, had set up a clean-up day for Tuesday afternoon. But a bitterly cold wind kept everyone home except for volunteer Virginia Hopper. The garden is run through the Thomas

County Coalition.

The two women took home a small portion of carrots, beets, and radishes. Then they went back to the First Presbyterian Church, and sampled garden soup: corn chowder and tomato basil, with carrots.

They left some Swiss chard and a patch of winter squash behind, and plan to dig up

flower bulbs soon. Corn and tomato plants were still standing, along with plenty of flowers.

Singer said later that a total of 260 pounds of produce was harvested for the garden this year, including plenty of corn, cucumbers,

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## Talent show auditions soon

Colby Community College will hold a Community Talent Show as part of Homecoming 2013 festivities beginning at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 5, in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center.

"This is the second year for the Community Talent Show," said organizer Brittney Squire. "Last year, we had contestants who played instruments, vocal soloists, duets and several group participants."

"We hope to increase the number of entries this year and are encouraging anyone who may have a talent to share it during this event. The contest is open to students, employees and community members. Prizes will be awarded to the top performers."

Tryouts are scheduled from 6 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 27, in the Cultural Arts Center.

For information, contact Squire at 460-5495 or brittney.squire@colbycc.edu.



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

This couple was just one of the acts to compete in last year's Talent Show at Colby Community College. Organizers hope to have more entries this year.

## Banners to honor service personnel

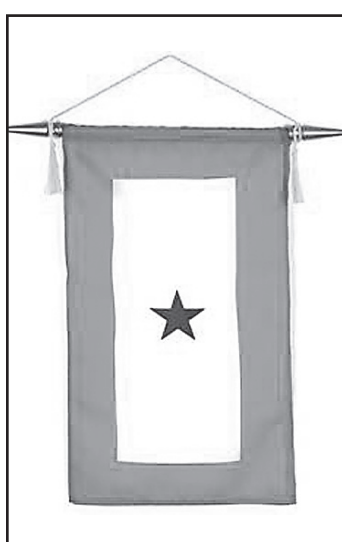
The Goodland Elks Lodge plans to honor active-duty military service personnel with Blue Star Banners distributed to families across northwest Kansas.

These banners, showing a blue star on a white background with a red border, are a traditional symbol for families of active-duty service members to hang on a door or in a window.

This has been an annual tradition for the group, said Zona Price, lodge secretary.

The lodge plans a special Blue Star Banner service Sunday, Dec. 1, to present the banners to area families, but they will mail banners to those who cannot make it to the event.

To nominate your family or another for a banner, call Price at (785) 890-6251.



A Blue Star Banner

