



8 pages

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## Insurance losses high for the county

By Heather Alwin

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Thomas County has a higher insurance loss ratio than the average county, according to a report given to the county commissioners at their meeting Tuesday.

Larry Sharp, a representative of the Kansas County Association Multi-line Pool, also known as KCAMP, told the commissioners the county's loss ratio was 71 percent last year, higher than statewide averages of around 50 percent.

The county's four-year average is 78 percent while the statewide four-year average is 60 percent.

Sharp said the county is highest on property claims

like claims for auto accidents, but he also said a high loss ratio doesn't necessarily increase the county's premiums since the company also considers whether the filed claims were avoidable.

Thomas County's premiums have gone down slightly in recent years, but they increased by about 8 percent in 2013.

"The insurance industry as a whole is pushing out

pretty large increases nationwide," said Sharp.

The commissioners also heard from Clair Schrock, the county's road and bridge supervisor, about the condition of roads around the county.

Schrock said his crews have bladed roads around the county in response to complaints about some

See "LOSSES," Page 2



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Bill Finley (right) helped his friend Dale Hawk Jr. stand Monday afternoon at the Colby American Legion. Hawk was being recognized for fighting in the Army in World War II at a Veterans Day ceremony and was given a plaque in gratitude for his service. Finley served in the Army during the Korean War.

## Veterans Day honored inside

By Sam Dieter

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Local veterans were recognized Monday afternoon for their a service to the United States in a Veterans Day ceremony at the Colby American Legion.

"Gentlemen, thank you all for your service," Post Commander Monte Lewis said to the group seated around two tables in the Legion Hall.

After cold weather put a stop to the yearly parade, about 35 people came to the Legion Hall to watch the Veterans Day ceremony that had been scheduled for the courthouse. The Colby High School marching band crowded into the corner of the room and provided the music for the ceremony.

The veterans in the room stood as the name of the war they served in was called. Lewis gave a plaque to one of the oldest, thanking him for his sacrifice.

Dale Hawk Jr., 92, fought with the 433rd Anti Aircraft Artillery Battalion in World War II. Hawk fought in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, landing on the beach at Anzio. He then went on to serve in France and Germany.

The Sons of the American Legion were in uniform as the honor guard for the event. They stepped outside and fired a 21-gun salute while Makayla DaMoude of Imperial, Neb., played her bugle inside. DaMoude is a part of the group Bugle Across America, which sends musicians to play at

See "VETERANS," Page 2



SAM DIETER  
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The line to eat wrapped around the side of the cafeteria and all the way down a nearby hallway at Colby High School (above) as about 600 people showed up for supper Tuesday night. Shanda Brown, a Colby grade school teacher, talked with Mary Beth Flanagan, a secretary at the grade school. Volunteers wore matching yellow shirts as they served up a soup supper to help Brennan Ostmeyer in his fight against cancer. The son of grade school teachers Jason and Leann Ostmeyer, 20-month-old Brennen is battling a rare form of cancer called rhabdomyosarcoma. The event met the goal of \$10,000.



## College recognizes new hall of fame members



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

This year's inductees to the Colby Community College Alumni Hall of Fame greeted the crowd during the women's basketball game Saturday. They are Darwin Strutt (left) and Joyce and Larry

Washburn. Joyce Hansen and Bruce Siemsen were inducted into the college's Sports Hall of Fame.

By Sam Dieter

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Colby Community College recognized the newest members of its hall of fame Saturday at a luncheon in their honor and again during halftime of the women's basketball game that night.

Darvin Strutt and Larry and Joyce Washburn were inducted into the college's Alumni Hall of Fame, while Joyce Hansen and Bruce Siemsen were inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame.

About 26 people came to the luncheon. Recognition for the hall of famers came at the end of the college's homecoming week, which itself marks the 50-year anniversary of the college.

This was the second year the college recognized alumni in both

halls. At the lunch, Nick Wells, executive director of the college Endowment Foundation, introduced each of the inductees, and recounted the long history each of them has with the college.

For instance, he said, Strutt has been such a strong supporter of the community that you would know of him if you have lived here in the past 30 years. He graduated from Colby Community College in 1977, Fort Hays State University in 1979, and started his insurance career in 1983.

The Washburns both graduated from the college in the 1960s. Lar-

See "HALL," Page 2

