

Survey: Readers prefer community newspapers

Readers in areas served by community newspapers continue to prefer the newspaper as their source of local news and advertising, based on results of an annual survey conducted by the National Newspaper Association and the research arm of the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism.

The survey is in its sixth year. Following consistent trends, the study shows 74 percent of people in communities served by a newspaper with circulations under 15,000 read a local newspaper each week. They prefer the printed copy to the online version, with 48 percent saying they never read the local news online. They prefer to receive advertis-

ing through the newspaper (51 percent) instead of on the Internet (11 percent). And only about a quarter of respondents said they had found local news through a mobile device in the past 30 days. Slightly more (38 percent) said they had received local shopping information by mobile device.

Readers have a strong preference for government accountability through newspaper public notice, with 80 percent saying the government should be required to publish notices in the newspaper.

Since 2005, National Newspaper Association has done research on how people read and what they think about their local newspaper. Results have been consistent over the years.

Meeting on mail in Colby Monday

MAIL, from Page 1A

distance from Colby to Denver is 227 miles.

Like the last consolidation, the service has said retail services at the Colby Post Office will not change. However, it may alter truck departure times for Colby and the outlying post offices that send mail before it goes on to Denver.

The last change moved up truck departure times from Goodland to 1:00 p.m. and those of outlying post offices even earlier. Some businesses, including *The Goodland Star-News* and the *Colby Free Press* and other area newspapers, had to adjust their schedules to meet the new deadline. For *The Goodland Star-News* the deadline had to be moved up two hours to 11 a.m. on Monday and Thursdays.

If the Postal Service makes this next change, trucks will have to go

230 miles instead of 288 to get to the processing facility, which may relax truck departure times a bit.

Currently the west mail truck leaves Burlington at 5 p.m. Mountain Time, and may give the Colby mail deadline a break.

Postal officials have said no decision has been made on these studies, but the information expected to be presented on Monday indicates the intention is to reduce the processing centers from the current 487 to less than 200 over the next year. The Postal Service is studying the closing of 252 processing centers including those in Kansas. In neighboring Colorado the plan would close six processing centers including Pueblo and Colorado Springs where most of southern Colorado's mail has been sorted for more than 20 years. The plan would leave two processing centers in Colorado with the main one in

Denver and one in Grand Junction on the western slope.

These moves have concerned businesses that send out large quantities of mail.

"I fear the Postal Service has embarked on a course that will drive the remaining First Class mail out of its system," said Steve Haynes, owner of Haynes Publishing. "I know our customers are not going to be pleased if their papers are delayed by two to three days. We may have to look elsewhere for answers."

Haynes publishing, which owned the *Star-News*, *Colby Free Press* and four other area newspapers, sends out 20,363 newspapers a week in addition to other mail.

Mail processing isn't the only area where cuts are being made. In what it calls an "Expanded Access Study," the service is looking at closing 3,700 post offices nationwide, including many in Kansas.

On the chopping block in northwest Kansas are Edson, Kanorado, Long Island and Norcatur. Public meetings have been held in each of these towns, but no closing announcements have been made.

Kansas Sen. Jerry Moran introduced an amendment to the 21st Century Postal Service Act, which would halt the closure of any post offices until Postal Service to develop "standards of service." These standards would require the service to look at the time customers have to travel to get to a post office, population density, age demographics and distance to other post offices. It would require the service to serve remote or difficult to reach areas.

Moran's amendment was adopted as part of the committee bill, but the bill has not made it onto the Senate floor and time is running out before the holiday recess.

City commissioners review fire consolidation second draft

CITY, from Page 1A

of the equipment is another concern. He said in the newer draft the city retains the inventory. He wondered if the county could insure the equipment without having ownership.

Gerber said he felt the rural fire board would pay the city back for the insurance premium as long as the equipment remained under the city inventory.

A separate information sheet was handed out with the Goodland Fire Department equipment inventory and values. The sheet was for 2009 and shows the three fire trucks, and airport truck are worth about \$600,000. The total including the Jaws and other equipment brought the total value to about \$947,000.

Garcia said the language is similar to the first draft. He asked if the contract is to be for three years or for 10 years as it said in one spot.

Gerber said he missed that, and it could be either way. He said again this was a draft, and the city attorney has not looked at it.

"I am sure he would keep the substance," Gerber said, "but it could change when the attorney's get hold of it."

Commissioner Gary Farris said

he felt the city maintaining ownership of the fire equipment is a good deal as far as he was concerned.

Gerber said he feels the city has a good thing going in the fire department and feel the city has good fire protection. He said he feels the city and county need to work through all this to have a better system.

Garcia said he feels the city is trying to approach the consolidation from a workable spirit.

"The commission has allegiance to the taxpayers of this community," Garcia said, "and to make decision about the right direction. We need to hold the tax base down."

He said one question is about a future building, and that the city would not have responsibility in that decision.

Zimmerman said he felt the city should go forward. He said he likes what he is seeing about the fire departments working together.

Finley said he feels there is some more give and take when the fire board sees the draft.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she wants to hear what the fire board says and then turn it over to the attorneys.

"I think it is a major improvement," Farris said, "and feel it is

a good step. As long as it doesn't raise our taxes as Sherman County is pretty high."

Farris asked about keeping the equipment and what happens for maintenance and being replaced.

Gerber said in the city keeping the present equipment when a new fire truck has to be purchased it would then belong to the fire board. He said he felt the fire board could use the equity if they were going to trade the truck in.

Finley asked about city representation on the fire board as to whether they would be volunteers or someone from the city commission.

Gerber said he felt the city could ask for volunteers or appoint one or more commissioners.

Chief James said he felt one of the requirements to be on a fire board is to have fire department experience. He said it was tough for a bunch of guy who have no fire fighting experience tell people how to run a fire department.

Mayor Garcia said he can see that if they have fire experience, but feel the commission would have representation for the city.

"I appreciate Brian's opinion," Gerber said, "but I disagree. I feel you need good smart people who

can listen. The city has to have more representation because the city has a bigger stake."

Garcia said it appears the commissioners are ready to have this draft given to the fire board.

In other business commissioners:

- approved cereal malt beverage license renewals for consumption on premises for China Garden, Pizza Hut, Gambino's and Buddy's Barbecue. Renewal for licenses for sale and not for consumption on the premises for Walmart, Presto Convenience Store No. 1612, Casey's General Store, Cowboy Corner Xpress and Travel Shoppe No. 6.
- Approved bid from B&K Pumping for \$4,650 to demolish house at 1613 Colorado Ave. The other bid on the demolition was from Mike Yarger for \$4,935.

The commissioners asked James if anything had been done at the house at 1613 Colorado and if the owner had been contacted. James said he had let the owner know the city was taking bids. He said he expected the owner to be at the meeting, but he was not. James said nothing has been done and no one is living there. He said here is no power and has water leaks.

Finley asked if the owner had contacted him. James said he was told and he told the original owner as the man was supposed to be paying rent to buy the home. James said he was told the man was behind on his rent to the original owner.

- On a related housing question the commissioners praised the efforts of the owner of the home at 322 W. Seventh, for getting the place cleaned up. James said this one has actually been clean up and feels the owner has made good progress. He said the owner of the home has been in contact with him and got everything done he was asked to do with the exception of a new roof that will be done in the spring.

Mayor Garcia said he had received a letter of support for the owner of 322 W. Seventh from Mike and Roberta Bretz for his improvements.

With the improvements no bids were accepted for demolition of this property.

- Gerber said a question about putting power lines underground along Business U.S. 24 was probably an estimated cost of about \$500,000.
- Reported on the successful event with Canadian artist Cameron Cross

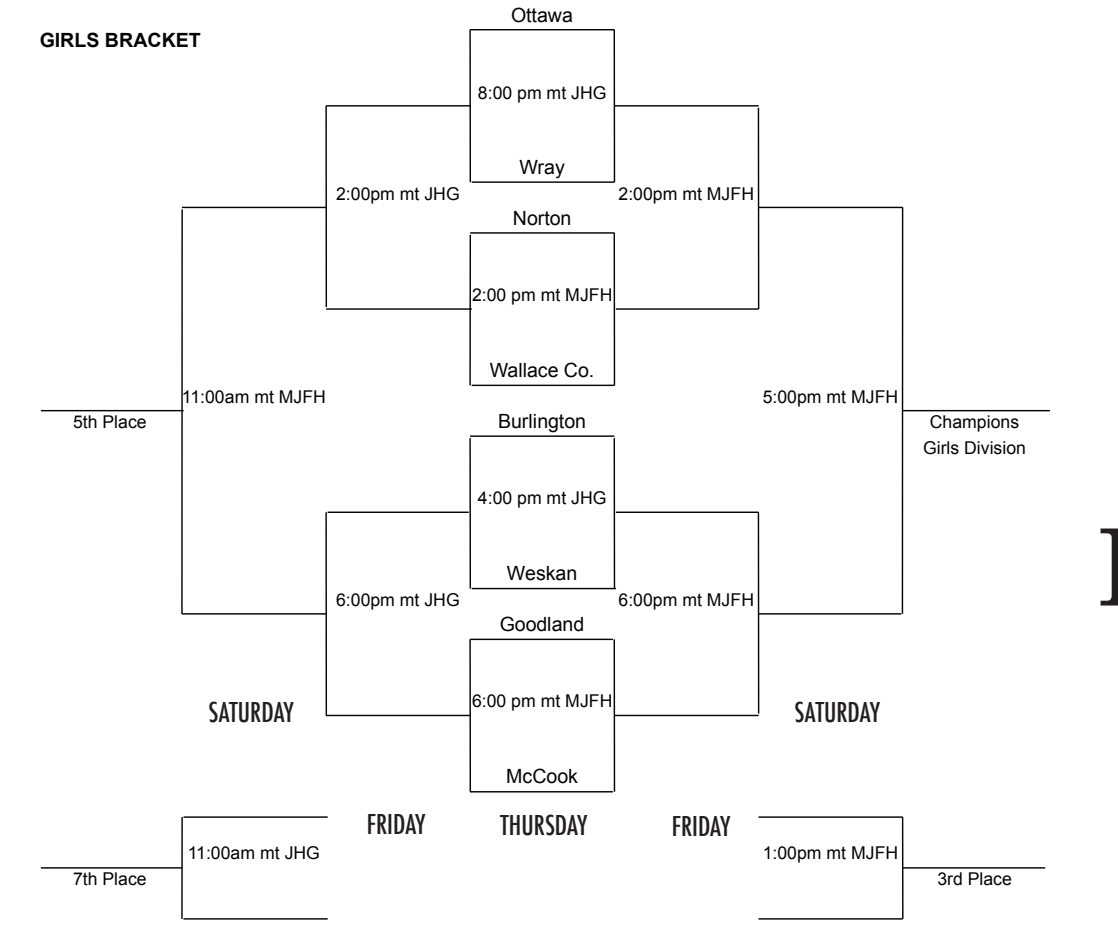
at the High Plains Museum. He said about 50 attended and Cross gave a good talk about how he plans to come back in June for the repair and re-launch of the VanGogh painting.

Gerber said the silent auction raised money for the proposed electronic kiosk project being done by Brooke Lockhart as her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

- City go the long term power contract from Sunflower, and Gerber said the staff is looking at it. Tentatively plan to have Sunflower at the second meeting in January to discuss the contract.
- Gerber said the second meeting in January would be a time to talk about a major water line replacement issue.

Boy Scout leader Gary McClung-boys scouts had three scouts at the meeting to listen as part of a merit badge requirement. The three were Jonah McClung, Austin Kim and Morton Pritchard.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. The next commission meeting will be 5 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 19.



Topside Tip-Off Basketball Tournament

Dec. 8, 9 and 10, 2011

Max Jones Fieldhouse



FRONT ROW, left to right: Donna Price, Sherman Co. Convention & Visitors Bureau; Michelle Douglass, Frontier Ag; Sara Hill, People's State Bank; Roxann Kling, The Insurance Agency; & Don Newell, S & T Communications.

BACK ROW, left to right: Dr. Ed Mills, Northwest Tech; Dan Brenner, Dan Brenner Ford; Ron Lucas, Goodland Greenline; Jack Eklund, Eklund Insurance, LLC; Chuck Wilkens, Wilkens Truck & Trailer; Mike Hamilton, Western State Bank; Mike Short, Short & Son Trucking; and Shelly Angelos, McDonald's Restaurants.

Not pictured: Mark Gillming, First National Bank, and Willie Weems, Kansasland Tire

Topside Tip-off Board of Directors would like to thank these corporate and T-shirt sponsors for their generous donations to help fund this tournament. We would also like to thank everyone else who has helped us by buying an ad or donating supplies. We would also like to thank the fans. Without people like you, we would not be able to have this tournament.

