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Walking trail gets \$25,000 donation

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
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The proposed Colby walking trail took a giant step toward completion today with a \$25,000 donation.

Colby businessman Lon Frahm donated \$25,000 toward the creation of the first phase of the walking trail, which will be an eight-foot wide concrete path around the new aquatic center. Frahm also issued a challenge to the community: raise \$25,000 more by June 1 and he will match it for a total of \$75,000.

At a public meeting last Thursday, contractor Mike Woofler estimated the concrete for the Phase I loop would cost about \$75,000.

Frahm made the donation at a small ceremony this morning. Sue Evans of the Community Coalition said people can donate to the Thomas County Community Foundation, as long as they write "walking trail" in the check memo. Jada Tubbs, foundation president, said the foundation has set up a fund for the trail, which already has \$1,100 in it.

Mayor Gary Adrian, who was at the check-passing ceremony, took the opportunity to make a personal donation.

"It will add to the quality of Colby," he said. "There will be so many pluses with this park."

Ashley Moser, president of the Multipurpose Activity Center, said the trail could eventually connect with the center as well as the college and downtown Colby.

"This is the hub," Evans said. "Everything will go out from here."

Jeanene Brown of the Thomas County Wellness Committee said the committee has put up \$20,000 already for the trail. The city will be providing the land for the Phase I loops and the coalition has secured a \$24,145 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation for planning and additions such as a people counter and "exersite" — a series of exercise stations for children along the path.

Brown said the Wellness Committee has been pushing for the trail for more than 20 years.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Jeanene Brown (from right), representing the Wellness Committee, accepted a \$25,000 donation from Lon Frahm this morning for the walking trail. Representing other organizations involved in the trail were Community Foundation President Jada Tubbs, MAC Center Board President Ashley Moser, Colby Mayor Gary Adrian and Sue Evans (not pictured) of the Thomas County Coalition.

Colby College grad on trial in Norton

By Harriett Gill

The Norton Telegram
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On Friday Ryan Zwegardt, made his first court appearance before Norton County District Magistrate Judge Debra Anderson.

Zwegardt, a Norton police officer and a Colby Community College graduate, was arrested last Thursday. He has been charged with two counts of first person felony of alleged rape, by force or fear. The charges were filed following an investigation by Norton County Sheriff's Department and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

Zwegardt has been a police officer in Norton since July 2010. He is a St. Francis native and graduated from St. Francis High School. He attended Colby Community College and received an associate's degree in criminal justice. Zwegardt had worked in law enforcement in Hays and at the Sherman County Sheriff's Office.

The charges are from incidents

that allegedly occurred on March 19 and April 10. Bail was set by statute at \$500,000.

In his first appearance, Zwegardt was given the opportunity to have the charges read to him along with his rights.

Judge Anderson went over the charges and explained that each count carries 147 to 165 months — 12 1/4 to 13 3/4 years — of imprisonment if found guilty.

"Do you understand the charges and the penalties if found guilty," asked Judge Anderson.

"Yes, ma'am," said Zwegardt.

Zwegardt's attorney, Dan Walter, presented a motion to the court concerning the officer's housing situation.

The Norton County Jail is under construction, making it impossible to segregate Zwegardt from other inmates. He is currently being held in Hill City at the Graham County Jail.

"There is no security issue at the present time and as there is

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State legislators resume budget talks

By John Milburn

The Associated Press

TOPEKA — Legislators returned to the Statehouse on Wednesday still searching for resolution over the 2012 Kansas budget.

The House and Senate passed competing versions of a \$14 billion budget before taking a three-week recess in early April. The plans outline how the state will fund schools, public safety and social services for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

While lawmakers agree in principle on the majority of areas where they would spend about \$6 billion in state tax revenues, differences remain over how deep to reduce aid to public schools, issuing new bonds to complete the Statehouse renovation and the future of the Kansas Arts Commission.

"We have an offer ready to go," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman Marc Rhoades. "My hope is we can meet a couple of times a day" until the budget's settled.

Rhoades, a Newton Republican, said he would like to meet privately with his Senate counterparts and leadership from both chambers to work out differences to expedite a resolution.

"I think the people of Kansas want us to get out of here," he said.

Senate Ways and Means Chairwoman Carolyn McGinn, a Sedgewick Republican and lead negotiator for the Senate, said she was ready to get to work, but didn't have an idea how long it would take the two sides to reach a final product.

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TOMI MILLER/Colby Free Press

Art Walk a success says college teacher

Citizens and visitors got to sample area art work at the Colby Art Walk on Friday. Art was on display downtown (above)



at Colby High School (right) and Colby Community College. The walk also included live entertainment from musicians like Garret Jones (left), a college student who played his saxophone downtown. Colby resident Cindy Duffey won the drawing for an oil painting by local artist Marlene Carpenter. Organizer Rebel Jay said the walk was a great success and she is planning to do another one next year.



Briefly

Tree Board to celebrate Arbor Day

The Colby Tree Board will have an Arbor Day celebration at 1 p.m. Friday on the west side of the Colby Community College campus. The board will have a short talk on Arbor Day, followed by a review of the board's Range Avenue project and a preview of upcoming projects. For information, call Marvin Bickner at 460-6293.

Buy old stuff to help students

A multi-family garage sale will help raise money for the Colby High School forensics team from 7 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday at 405 N. Franklin Ave. The proceeds will help the students, parents and friends traveling to Washington in May for national competition. For information, call Katherine Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer at 443-2479.

Foundation plans fun shoot

The Citizens Foundation will hold a benefit fun

shoot at 11:30 a.m. Sunday at the Colby Trap Club west of town, with competition for all skill levels. Registration includes food, 125 "rocks," prizes and gifts. Proceeds will be split between purchase of medical equipment for Citizens Medical Center and to the club. For information, call Tama Unger at 460-1214 or Bob Luck at 462-0686.

Piano students plan recital

Piano students of Pat Ziegelmeier will present a spring recital at 7 p.m. Sunday in the sanctuary of Colby United Methodist Church. The program will be a variety of piano solos and duets. There is no admission for the program, and everyone is invited. For information, call Ziegelmeier at 462-5518.

County to test sirens early

Thomas County will test its tornado sirens at 10 a.m. Monday instead of noon. Emergency Management Director Susan McMahan said the county will

test the sirens in conjunction with a Colby Community College tornado drill. For information, call McMahan at 460-4516.

Reception to honor retired dean

The public is invited to a reception honoring Gracemary Melvin as the Colby Community College 2011 Honorary Associate Degree recipient at 3 p.m. Monday in the Student Union. Melvin was an instructor and dean of instruction at the college for 35 years. For information, call Debbie Schwanke at (785) 460-5411.

Get together and pray Thursday

There will be a praise and prayer rally for the National Day of Prayer at 7 p.m. next Thursday in the Little Theater at the Colby Community Building. Everyone is invited to the rally, which includes prayer time for local, state and national needs. For information, call Karen Merryman at 443-3715.

Help clean up city and county

Colby and Thomas County are sponsoring a countywide Cleanup Week from Monday to Friday, May 6. Service clubs will clean parks or public places and city garbage crews will be on hand to handle any extra trash. Trash should be boxed or bagged and placed at the street in front of the property for pickup. Electronic waste should be taken to the recycling center. Anyone who wants to volunteer to help the elderly or infirm should call Anita Powell at 460-4420.



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