



COLBY FREE PRESS

6 pages

Fair board dismayed by rumors of negligence

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Innuendoes and rumors faulting the Thomas County Fair Board for the lack of a carnival this year have been circulating around town, but according to Mark Miller, president of the board, these accusations just aren't true.

Miller said on Saturday, there were absolutely no slip ups on the board's part. The fair board, he said, had worked with this particular carnival company, Moore Greater Shows of Hereford, Texas, for the past three years. The procedure was the same each year — in October, the company would send a contract for review and the fair board would make revisions/additions and return it to the owner, Ricky Moore, in January for that year's upcoming fair.

The procedure was always the same with no money exchanging hands and no reason to send the contract by certified mail, said board member Mark Anderson of Rexford. "It also wasn't unusual with this company to not receive the signed contract back until the first part of March," he said.

"When we hadn't gotten the contract back,

Our board spent literally hours and hours on the telephone calling other carnival companies..."

Mark Miller, fair board president

though, we called the carnival company to just to be on the safe side," he said. "The explanation from the company was that the contract had not been received and without a certified receipt that it was sent, it was a matter of their word against ours."

"We were sick about this," Miller said. "Having worked with this company before and to get this kind of response back was really bad."

In fact, the fair board had no other recourse than to just start looking immediately for another carnival company. There was only one positive thing, Miller said, and that was in knowing in March that the carnival wasn't coming — it allowed time to try and remedy the problem.

"Our board members spent literally hours

and hours on the telephone calling other carnival companies suggested by the carnival association," he said. The fair board looked on the Internet, made many inquiries, and the outcome was the same, the dates either didn't work out or the carnival company was already booked somewhere else.

"We called and called looking for any options and it was a nightmare," Miller said. The board mostly involved in the calling included Vera Sloan, Cheryl Baird, Laura Cook, Nancy Rundel and Anderson.

"I called managers and board secretaries at state and county fairs here in Kansas, along with Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, Idaho and Colorado," Anderson said, "and that's not including what the other board members did in

trying to find a carnival."

At one point, the fair board even discussed changing the date of its event in order to accommodate a carnival company. The problem in doing that, Miller said, was with the PRCA Rodeo.

"If we changed the dates of the fair, we wouldn't get the rodeo," he said. "We had coordinated the fair to coincide with the PRCA circuit leaving Cheyenne, Wyo, on the Sunday before our fair Monday, July 30."

The rodeo will arrive here Monday and Tuesday, leave for Phillipsburg on Wednesday and be in Dodge City that following weekend.

"Any changes in our fair dates would have meant losing the rodeo," he said, "and that would have hurt the fair, too."

The fair board had even approached the committees in charge of the home-owned carnivals in Goodland, Hoxie, Oberlin and Oakley. "In Goodland, for instance, many of the rides are down permanently and can't be moved around," he said.

"Another problem would be the liability and insurance for using their rides."

While it's too late to have a carnival company this year, fair board members have two or three good prospects for next year.

"For years, we have looked at carnivals in the south, but many of the people we talked with this year said we might be better off looking at companies in the north and west part of the country," Anderson said.

Another idea Miller and the board have spoken about is in holding a public town meeting after the fair and discussing the option of a home-owned carnival, similar to what Oberlin, Hoxie, Oakley and Goodland are doing now.

"We would need financial commitments to get that done, though, and we would also need a lot of volunteers," he said.

However, Miller said there are concerns though with having a home-owned carnival. "The set-up and take-down would require a lot of time — the easy part would be running the rides during the week of the fair."

"I encourage anyone interested in the idea of a home-owned carnival to give me a call and we can sit down and talk about it," Miller said.

Smoothing things over



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Justin Schwanke, with Parking Lot Maintenance of Colby, sealed cracks in the south parking lot near the Bedker Buiding at Colby Community College on Monday. Workers were busy getting the campus ready for the start of classes on Aug. 21.

Despite carnival's no-show

Fun promised for kids at fair

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Even though the Thomas County Free Fair will not have the "typical" carnival this year, many people and organizations have stepped forward to assist in bringing children some "carnival-like atmosphere" activities, officials said.

"There will be something for the kiddies at this year's Thomas County

Fair and rodeo in spite of the fact that this year's carnival will be a no-show," said Vera Sloan, board member.

Besides game booths with prizes there will also be a "moon walk" in the shape of a dinosaur and a bungee runner, which promises to be great fun for youth weighing 100 pounds and over.

In addition, according to Laura Cook, fair board secretary, the local soccer club is planning a duck pond,

dart throw and soccer ball kick competition.

"The Colby Community College's girls basketball team is sponsoring a baseball and basketball throw with prizes available," she said.

"We are still looking for a dunk tank and encourage anyone or any organization with ideas for alternative carnival-type activities to give us a call," she said.

Buffington could become the county's first paramedic

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Josh Buffington could be the first paramedic in Thomas County, if he passes testing by the State Board of Emergency Medical Services in December.

Buffington, the director of Thomas County Emergency Medical Services, is already an emergency medical technician, but he is seeking a higher level.

"I've been in school for 18 months," said Buffington.

His class is held through Barton County Community College in Great Bend and he commuted for a while, although he was in class when he was hired on Jan. 1.

Buffington took his initial emergency medical training in Colby.

"I followed my wife out here," he said. Originally from Chantute, Buffington and his wife, Holly, came to Colby so she could take the veterinary technician program at Colby Community College.

Josh and Holly took an emergency medical technician class offered through the college by then-ambulance director Jim Cave in 1998.

After waiting the year required by the state board, Buffington enrolled in a paramedic (called mobile intensive care technicians in Kansas) class.

Holly Buffington didn't finish the veterinary technician course, although she did get an associates degree in science.

Holly might consider furthering her education later, but for now she is concentrating on son Andrew 2, and their second child, on the way.

In addition to classroom studies, Buffington has done in-hospital training at Hays Medical Center and with

physician's assistant Brian Unruh in Colby.

He is also getting ready to start 480 hours of field training, working with Ellis County and Ford County paramedics.

Paramedics can administer life-saving drugs, under a doctors' orders, along with using heart monitors and starting intravenous fluids.

Buffington said he would like to see the level of care by Thomas County ambulances raised as much as possible.

"We already have three new EMT-
Ds," he said.

The new training will allow them to use defibrillators manually. All technicians are trained to use them in the automatic mode.

There are also some new abilities available to the technicians qualified for intravenous fluids that he would like to see implemented.

"I would like to see all of us continue to improve our skills," he said.



J. Buffington

Lack of significant rainfall around the state hurts crops

TOPEKA (AP) — The Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service's weekly crop weather report the following on the state's thirsty crops:

— Corn crop was ranked 4 percent in very poor condition and 11 percent in poor condition. Another 31 percent was given a fair ranking. About 45 percent was in good condition, and 9 percent in excellent shape.

— Milo was rated as 5 percent very poor, 16 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 39 percent good and 3 percent excellent.

— Soybeans were ranked as 2 percent very poor, 10 percent poor, 40 percent fair, 42 percent good and 6 percent excellent.

— Sunflowers were rated as 1 percent very poor, 5 percent poor, 27 percent fair, 59 percent good and 8 percent excellent. Third cutting of alfalfa was 48 percent complete.

— About 27 percent of the state's pastures are in poor to very poor condition, with another 42 percent still in fair condition. About 31 percent were ranked as either good or excellent.

Colby, surrounding areas get needed soaking

By TOM (TD) DREILING

Free Press Publisher

It was a little wild again Monday night in the Colby area, but the upside was — it rained!

Wind gusts up to 59.5 miles per hour were reported in Colby, with sustained winds of 40 mph, shaking branches, relocating lawn chairs and causing residents to monitor conditions from doorways.

There were no reports of significant damage coming into the Free Press newsroom, although small

tree branches were scattered hither and yonder.

Wind gusts of 62 mph were reported from the Oakley area and the top gust in northwest Kansas was 68 just west of Goodland.

Colby managed 1.18 inches of rain in the High Plains' version of a mini-hurricane, bringing the month's total to date to 1.81 inches.

One mile southwest of Rexford 1.90 inches was reported.

Here are other northwest Kansas rainfall reports: Atwood 2 miles south-

west 1.17 inches; Norton Dam 1.01; Quinter 0.69; Russell Springs 3 miles north 0.27; Hill City 1 mile east 0.20; Hoxie, 0.98; Brewster 4 miles west 1.33; McDonald 0.54; Dresden 2.11; Lenora 0.72; St. Francis 8 miles northwest 0.19; Selden 11 miles northwest 1.30; and Studley 9 miles northwest 1.20.

The airport at Goodland reported 1.39 inches, Hill City's airport reported 0.16, the McCook (Neb.) airport reported 0.96 and the Burlington (Colo.) airport reported 0.22.

According to Corky Delzeit, director of public power in the city, there were some reports of "very brief" power interruptions in the north central section. The cause of the outages resulted from wind slapping power lines together, he said. Other reports of cable television interruptions also were reported.

The forecast calls for continued threats of thunderstorms with locally heavy rains again possible.

Details are provided in today's Briefly column.

Briefly

Weather: Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms, capable of producing locally heavy rains, continues to highlight the Colby area forecast for tonight and into Wednesday, said the National Weather Service this morning. Tonight, cloudy, 40 percent chance for thunderstorms with locally heavy rains possible, lows 60-65, patchy fog late and light and variable winds. Wednesday, cloudy, 20 percent chance for thunderstorms, highs in the 80s and east winds 5-15 mph. Wednesday night, cloudy, 30 percent chance for thunderstorms and lows around 60. Thursday and Friday, partly cloudy, thunderstorms likely, lows 60-65 and highs in the 80s. Colby's high Monday was 95 and the overnight low this morning was

62. Colby received 1.18 inches of rain during the thunderstorms Monday night, bringing the month's total to 1.81. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth in Colby is averaging 88 degrees, and averaging 69 degrees at Goodland. The records for July 24: 111 in 1936 and 50 in 1911. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Photo contest exhibit planned

Postcards for participants in the photo contest, "A Day In the Life of Thomas County," have been mailed out. For those who have not received their postcard as yet, call the

Pioneer Memorial Library at 462-4470. All participants and winning entries will be displayed in a photo exhibit beginning Sunday, Aug. 19 at the library from 2 to 4 p.m. that is open to the public.

Participants can also buy their photographs during regular library hours, however the contest committee plans to keep all negatives.

Blood drive Thursday

The American Red Cross is again holding a blood drive at the Colby American Legion on Thursday from 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Officials expect to have a summer shortage and all types are needed. Donors must be at least 17 years old,

weigh more than 110 pounds, be in general good health and have photo identification.

Childhood testing offered

Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center, Oakley is offering early childhood intervention testing, including eyesight, hearing and learning disability testing. All test are free. For information, call 785-672-3125.

Office to close for fair week

The Thomas County Extension Office will be closed the week of the fair, July 30-Aug. 3, so employees can help with the activities. Anyone with questions, call 462-4582.

