



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Answers to heat, rain given

Colby has had
53 days of 90+

By TOM (TD) DREILING

Free Press Publisher

It took a bit of research, but we found the answers to the questions, "How many days of 90-degree or hotter weather have we had this summer?" and "What's the story with the precipitation, or lack thereof?"

The answer to the hot days is 53, according to the daily charts the Free Press receives from the Northwest Research-Extension Center in Colby.

In June there were 18 days of 90 or hotter; in July there were 24 days; and so far in August there have been 11 such days.

Breaking that down to the range of 90 to 99 degrees, June had 12 days, July 16 days and August 10 days.

Looking at 100 or hotter readings, June had 6, July had 8 and August 1.

Getting another perspective, Colby has experienced heat of 90 degrees or warmer in 53 of the past 81 days.

And the hottest temperature so far this summer? 105, on two separate dates — June 2 and July 25.

Precipitation, on the other hand, is as scarce as heat is plentiful.

The longtime average precipitation for January through August is 14.92 inches. Since Jan. 1 through Aug. 20, Colby has received only 7.37 inches — 7.55 inches below normal. There is, however, a possibility for additional rainfall before the month ends so that figure could change.

Records dating back to 1893 show Colby's average annual precipitation to be 18.69 inches.

June has provided 1.42 inches of precipitation, July 1.49 and August to date 1.70 for a total of 4.61 inches. The average for those three months is 8.27 inches.

Here are the actual amounts and corresponding longtime averages for each month of the year to date (listed in that order):

- January 0.57, 0.32
- February 0.22, 0.51
- March 0.16, 1.07
- April 0.42, 1.89
- May 1.39, 2.86
- June 1.42, 3.17
- July 1.49, 2.87
- August 1.70, 2.23.

Here are the longtime precipitation averages for the remainder of the year:

- September 1.52 inches
- October 1.12
- November 0.62
- December 0.47.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley areas

The numbers
Tuesday's high, 92
Low this morning, 65
Year ago today, 98 and 63
Temperature at 10:45 a.m. today, 83

Colby's 24-hour rainfall, 0.00
Oakley's 24-hour rainfall, 0.00
Soil temp at the 4-inch depth, 76
Records for Aug. 21, 106 in 1899 and 46 in 1964

The forecast
Today, highs in the middle 90s. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows in the middle 60s, south winds 5-15 mph. Thursday, partly sunny, highs in the upper 80s, east winds 5-10 mph, a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms. Thursday night, partly cloudy, lows in the middle 60s, a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms. Friday, partly sunny, highs in the middle 80s, a 40 percent chance for thunderstorms. Friday night, cloudy, lows in the lower 60s. (Temperatures and precipitation are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center. Forecast is from the National Weather Service.)

Colby Water Usage
• Aug. 20 = 2.659 million gallons
Levels of Concern
Watch Level 3.5 million gallons
Warning Level 4.0 million gallons
Emergency Level 4.5 million

First one off



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

Fourth-grader Paige Thompson was first off of the bus this morning at Colby Grade School as the new school year began. Students, teachers, parents, buses, vehicles of all sorts dotted the landscape at each attendance center. Motorists also got their first test as they passed through electronically controlled school zones.

Statewide economic survey sparks prolonged debate at college meeting Board requests sample, more information

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Much discussion was held at the meeting of the Colby Community College Board of Trustees on Monday night, about the possibilities of participating in a statewide economic survey.

Don Kready, representative for the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, had visited previously with the board at the Aug. 5 meeting about Colby Community College participating in the survey.

Members of the board requested a sample of the survey with more information before a decision was made.

Kready said the idea was proposed to the representatives at the July meeting of conducting the statewide survey. If all 19 community colleges chose to participate, there would be a cut rate price to conduct the survey.

The current cost of the project would be \$6,200, but the cut rate would be between \$3,600 and \$3,800 if all colleges agree to participate.

The purposes of the report would show the economic return to the area, city, and county by college students.

Most of the trustees agreed that the money could be spend more effectively on other areas since the survey could possibly be done internally.

In other business:
• Approval was given to allow the college farm to purchase 1,000 tons of silage.

Current quotes for the silage have been between \$23 and \$24 per ton. The agreement was made for the costs to not exceed \$25,000.

Dr. Mikel Ary, college president, said that this money spent would be "in and out" money. Most of the funds come back in from outside sources throughout the year.

• It was approved to cancel the Sept. 2 meeting. The board will meet again on Sept. 19 at 5 p.m.

• Ary told the trustees that an 18-20 section of water pipe had broken due to the shifting of the dry ground.

• The board approved the resignation of Tonya Milliken. Her resignation is due to the fact her husband is being transferred to Ohio.

Milliken is a 70 percent instructor who commutes to Colby from St. Francis and teaches nursing.

The trustees authorized the committee to meet and assess the liquidated damages according to the Master Agreement.

• The trustees signed a contract for the radio department in the amount of \$742 that will allow the station to receive various songs for broadcast throughout the school year.

• A payment of claims was made in the amount of \$842,968.66.

• Ary reported that the library roof is nearing completion.

• Contracts were signed for Telenet 2 monitors and ITV monitors, and a contract was signed with Rita Billips, the secretary for buildings and grounds, who will be working under Gene Roberts.

Council considers options to restrict private well users

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Colby City council members learned at their meeting Tuesday night that there could be an increase in private and/or irrigation wells being installed within the city limits.

Since the city's water conservation restrictions cannot be enforced on domestic or irrigation wells within the city, council members agreed to consider options that would require those entities or property owners to abide by similar water conservation restrictions as everyone else.

"It just seems wrong that while everyone else is practicing water conservation by not watering outdoors between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. (in the best interest of the community), that those with private wells do not have to follow the same rules," said Carolyn Armstrong, city manager.

She told the council that she has heard some believe the city's concern is based solely on lost revenue with the addition of these wells.

"I am not concerned about the revenue; however, I feel if the citizens of Colby are abiding by water conservation regulations, others within the city should be required to conserve as well," she said.

Armstrong said it was also her understanding that about a week ago, an official within the Colby School District drove to Topeka to file application for the purpose of installing a 15-acre feet irrigation well.

Citing an example relating to the lost revenue comments, Armstrong said that should Colby Public Schools drill an irrigation well with 15 acre feet for their water rights, that would translate to 4,890,000 gallons or \$3,080 in annual revenue using the city's commercial rate structure and out of a total of about \$550,000.

The issue is not about revenue, it's about conserving water for the good of the entire community, said Mayor Warren Hixson.

In researching options, Armstrong said the city could vote to approve the formation of an intensive groundwater use control area or IGUCA.

Armstrong said she spoke with Hank Ernst at the Kansas Water Office in Topeka.

"Ernst said that the City of Hays when faced with being unable to enforce private wells handled the issue by forming an IGUCA.

Following the conversation with Ernst, Armstrong said she spoke with Ray Luhman and Wayne Bossert from

Groundwater Management District #4 in Colby to ask for clarification.

Bossert, who was present at the Tuesday meeting, told the council that there are some ramifications to an IGUCA and he wanted to make sure everyone understood all the options before entering into this type of agreement. One such concern would be in the loss of local control regarding water issues with everything being decided in Topeka.

Offering interpretation of the formation statutes, Bossert said an IGUCA would either require a recommendation by the Groundwater Management District or by petition with 300 voters.

Another way a city could have this type of formation would be to request Dave Pope, the chief engineer of the Division of Water Resources with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, to initiate the IGUCA based on one of five conditions, of which Bossert said Colby would qualify.

Those conditions included water table declining, withdrawals exceeding discharge, preventable waste occurring, water quality deteriorating and addressing public interest.

There would also need to be documentation and oral evidence, he said, requiring again five issue relevant to a hearing.

If the chief engineer finds that many of the conditions exist and that the public interest requires corrective controls, Pope could then order the establishment of the IGUCA.

Another option in the statutes, Bossert said, would be that the chief engineer require any new applicants or existing water right owners to do conservation plans, if it would assure public benefit and promote the public interest. However, in this situation, any water conservation plans that would restrict private wells or irrigation systems within the city would be subject to approval by the Groundwater Management District unless they are part of the district's program adopted by the chief engineer.

"This wording seems to require that the Groundwater Management District approval of plans within Colby even though the district was not involved in the request," he said.

"This is a touchy area when considering regulation on domestic water rights," Bossert told the council.

The council agreed by consensus to continue discussion and consider its options with respect to water conservation regulations applicable to everyone and every entity in the city.

Sees need for funds, training

ABILENE (AP) — State and local agencies lack the equipment, training and funding to effectively prevent and respond to a terrorist attack, officials told a congressional subcommittee.

"We want to know what the federal government can do to help," Rep. Stephen Horn (R-Calif.) told local and state officials at the hearing at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene.

Raymond Williams, chief executive officer of Sumner Regional Medical

Center in Wellington, said rural hospitals need federal funding to purchase water purification equipment, build facilities to effectively isolate patients infected with contagious biological agents, and purchase protective suits and equipment for its workers.

George Teagarden, the state livestock commissioner, said the federal government should fund research to develop a field test that could be used to authoritatively diagnose foot-and-mouth disease at feedlots.

Briefly

Actors sought for fall production

The Colby Community College drama department will be conducting auditions for the fall production of *Scapino!* by Frank Dunlop and Jim Dale on Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 4-5. Auditions will begin at 7 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center on the Colby College campus. The auditions are open to students and the community, said Walter Yuhre, drama instructor, and will consist of reading from the script. "Actors who have prepared monologues are invited to perform their audition pieces," he said. The play will feature roles for both men and women between the ages of 18 to 65 with performance dates of Nov. 7, 8 and 9. Those selected from the audition will begin rehearsing on Tuesday, Sept. 17. For questions or information, call Yuhre at 462-4783.

Democrats invited to meeting

The Thomas County Democratic Central Committee will meet on Thursday, Aug. 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the Thomas County Office Complex. All interested Democrats are invited to attend. This is the re-organization meeting and plans for fund raising will be discussed, said Rosalie Seemann, a coordinator of the event.

'Meet the Teachers' event Sunday

The Parent-Teacher Student Association in Colby is sponsoring a "Meet the New Teachers" in the Colby Public School system. The event is planned from 3 to 5 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 25, at the Comfort Inn Convention Center. Organizers are encouraging everyone to stop by for a "come and go" casual and relaxed atmosphere in and effort to show support for public schools.

Farm meeting planned next week

A farm program training and informational meeting will be held on Monday, Aug. 26, at 1 p.m. and again at 7 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center on the Colby Community College campus. The meeting is sponsored by the Thomas County Farm Service Agency and everyone is invited to attend one of the sessions, coordinators said. For questions, call 462-7671.

Vendors sought for September festival

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce is seeking vendors for the "Celebration on the High Plains Fall Festival," scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 7, at Southwind

Plaza in Colby. All types of booths are welcome to include food booths, various types of exhibitors, along with those wanting to do demonstrations or sell crafts and other items. For questions or details on booth prices for this event, call Jada Johnson, executive secretary at the Chamber office, 462-3401. The deadline for vendors planning to participate is Friday, Aug. 30.

Leadership nominations wanted

Applications are now being accepted for the 2002-03 Leadership Thomas County program, said Leilani Thomas, one of the coordinators. Completed forms must be returned to the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce by Friday, Aug. 23. For questions or an application, call (785) 462-3401.

Floats wanted for parade

The Rexford-Golden Plains Alumni are planning a special celebration on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 30-31 and Sept. 1, said Kathi Hapke, chairman of the association. Hapke is encouraging businesses, individuals and organizations to enter floats for the parade on Saturday. To register, call (785) 687-3340.

