



# COLBY FREE PRESS

6 pages

## The sign says it all



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

This Colorado motorist encountered the "Road Closed" sign at the on ramp of I-70 in Colby on Wednesday and had no choice but to do a u-turn and stay put. Due to winter storm conditions in Colorado, Interstate 70 was shut down from Hays to Denver to allow travelers to find lodging. A portion of U.S. 24 was also closed from

Colby west. Roads reopened today for local travelers who were not heading past the state line. In Colorado, roads are expected to stay closed until sometime Friday. The snowstorm in Colorado is said to be the worst in 90 year, dumping up to 3 feet of snow in Denver.

## Ground fighting begins

By DAVID CRARY  
Associated Press Writer

To the cheers of U.S. infantrymen, the first stage of the ground war opened today with American howitzers and multiple launch rocket systems firing at Iraqi troops.

The U.S. 3rd Infantry Division's artillery opened fire hours after an American airstrike started the hostilities. Maj. Gen. Buford Blount, the division commander, had said the artillery barrage would signal the first phase of the ground war against Iraq.

White light glowed in the sky as dozens of artillery shells were fired. Infantrymen who were between the howitzers and the Iraqi border cheered as the shells screamed overhead.

The ground war was launched about an hour after Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld promised: "the days of the Saddam Hussein regime are numbered."

Rumsfeld, in his first news conference since the war began, said the United States had hit a senior Iraqi leadership position in its initial strikes. He offered no details, saying a damage assessment was pending.

The assault "was the first," he said. "It likely will not be the last."

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a massive assault on Iraq could begin later today.

Iraq responded within hours to the U.S. air attack, firing missiles Thursday toward American troops positioned just across its border with Kuwait. American and British soldiers in the region briefly donned gas masks or protective suits, but officers later said the missiles apparently were not armed with chemical or biological weapons.

None of the Iraqi missiles caused injuries or damage, and one was intercepted by a Patriot missile, according to U.S. officers.

Later, air raid sirens wailed repeatedly in Kuwait as U.S. military officials donned flak vests amid warnings that another volley of Scuds was possible.

As Rumsfeld spoke in Washington, orange flames were visible in the direction of the southern Iraqi oil center of Basra. Associated Press reporter Ross Simpson, embedded with a Marine unit in Kuwait, was told by a battalion commander that "three oil wells have been torched" in Iraq.

Rumsfeld said he had heard similar reports of the Saddam regime setting fire to oil wells.

## Armory no longer available as a disaster shelter

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS  
Colby Free Press

When Mother Nature drops a winter mix on the plains causing roads to close, hotels and motels fill up quickly.

When this happens, the Red Cross prepares short term shelters for the "temporary Colby residents," giving them a place to sleep and eat when other options are not available.

The primary facility used by the Red Cross has been the National Guard Armory on South Range. Since September 11, 2001, however, military facilities, such as the local armory are no longer available for use.

Local Red Cross Chapter and Disaster Chairperson, Molly Oliver, said the armory has been used in the past for a variety of reasons. On one occasion the Colby Community Building was used as a shelter when the armory ran out of room, but Oliver said the amount of activities scheduled at the community building makes it hard to rely on for use as a shelter.

Secondly, she said at a Red Cross shelter, security has to be provided. "In the past, we have worked hand-in-hand with the National Guard to provide security for the shelter when we have had to use the armory," Oliver said.

She said at a public facility such as the 4-H building, the community building or another facility, security would have to be worked out through local law enforcement agencies.

Currently, the 4-H building has been noted in the disaster plan as the location in which a short-term shelter would be established. Oliver said that in situations such as a winter storm where people are only expecting to stay one or two days, the location is suitable. Anything

longer than 48 hours would require a facility with showers.

With the country at war and currently on Orange Alert, the Colby Red Cross Chapter has been working on a plan for shelters which could be used for longer than 72 hours if needed.

Oliver said she and the local chapter manager, Mary Smith, have been working on a couple of possibilities for long-term shelters and are preparing by signing Shelter Site Facility Agreements with the different locations.

"With the nation on high alert," Oliver said, "we are looking at what

changes we need to make in the Disaster Plan."

She encourages people to prepare themselves and their families by being informed and staying calm.

If a shelter, for a storm or any other type of disaster, is established, the Red Cross uses local volunteers to assist Red Cross workers. Oliver said people can become local disaster volunteers and can help in a variety of ways during a crisis. If anyone is interested in helping or is needing further information, contact Oliver or Smith at 462-7161.

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## 'Stay alert,' is the advice of city, county officials

By PATTY DECKER  
Free Press Editor

With the war against Iraq commencing Wednesday night, officials here and elsewhere are warning everybody to stay alert and follow procedures for the heightened status.

Following the orange alert posted Monday prior to the military action, Randy Jones, Colby police chief, said his officers are aware and watching teletype messages carefully.

"If something comes over the teletype that could affect us," he said, "we would act accordingly."

As for people within the city and county, Jones said everyone can help by paying close attention to "things that look out of the ordi-

nary." Areas that will be watched include the power plant, water reserve, airport or places where fertilizer and anhydrous tanks could be exploded, he said.

"Anywhere that will cause disruptions in the infrastructure of the city will be watched and residents can assist us in reporting anything suspicious," he said.

The situation is about the same with the Thomas County Sheriff's department, said Sheriff Tom Jones.

"We have had no specific instructions or particular things to look for at this point," he said. "We are monitoring traffic from the FBI and are closely watching any unusual activities."

An orange alert means that the country is at high risk for terrorist

attacks and while law enforcement authorities are elevating their security measures, individuals can also do things to help themselves, said Molly Oliver, Thomas County American Red Cross disaster chair.

"It's important to have a family plan," she said, "because disasters can strike quickly and without warning."

The key to any alert is eliminating stress by being informed and prepared, she said. Along with stopping by the local Red Cross office in the Thomas County Office Complex, Oliver also suggests people get training on first aid and CPR, build a disaster kit, volunteer time and give blood.

The Red Cross has handouts that can help prepare for the unexpected,

she said, along with information and procedures on disaster supplies, kits, planning and more.

On a statewide basis, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has called on governors to deploy National Guard troops or extra state police to protect bridges and other key public facilities.

In other areas of the country, additional federal security officers are being sent to monitor the borders, airports, seaports, railways, nuclear power plants and even elements of the nation's food supply and distribution system.

In addition, the FBI has stepped up surveillance on certain Iraqis in America and other suspected terrorists or terrorist sympathizers.

Many of the security measures,

named "Operation Liberty Shield," were announced Monday just as President Bush completed his speech giving Saddam Hussein and his two sons 48 hours to leave Iraq or face a U.S.-led invasion.

According to The Associated Press, the Bush administration raised the terror alert from yellow, or elevated, to orange, the second-highest level on a five-color scale. Counterterrorism officials said the decision was based on threats from several quarters: al-Qaida, Iraqi operatives and freelance terrorists.

For questions, call Oliver or Mary Smith, director, at (785) 462-7161 or 462-6133. For those with suspicious reports, call the police at (785) 462-4460, or for unusual activity in the county call 462-4570.

## First lawsuit under Kansas' no-call law filed by attorney general

TOPEKA (AP)—A Texas vacation company has become the first business sued under Kansas' "no-call" telemarketing law.

Attorney General Phill Kline said Wednesday that the lawsuit, filed in Shawnee County District Court, alleges that Grand Vacations International of Dallas made numerous unsolicited telephone calls to Kansans who had placed their phone

numbers on the state's no-call list.

"This action sends a clear message to those wishing to do business in this state that if they choose to violate our laws, they will pay," Kline said in a statement.

The lawsuit seeks more than \$75,000 in damages and fees and a judge's declaration that the company uses unconscionable business practices in violation of the Kansas

Consumer Protection Act.

Kansas' no-call law was adopted last year and took effect last Nov. 1. The no-call list is updated every three months and administered by a private company, GovConnect Inc. of Denver and New York, under contract with the attorney general's office.

Kline's office expects to have collected \$100,000 by the end of

March from companies paying fines to settle alleged violations, spokesman Whitney Watson said.

Those companies include Bankers Life and Casualty of Chicago, \$15,000; Grandvista Vacations of Branson, Mo., \$10,000; and Seniors First Insurance of Dallas, \$3,000.

The law permits unsolicited calls to listed phones from pollsters,

charitable and political organizations and companies with whom a consumer has had a business relationship within the previous three years.

Nearly 500,000 phone numbers have been placed on the list. The next deadline for adding a number is March 24, for a list to be published April 1 and enforceable May 1.



### Warming trend

Tonight...partly cloudy. Lows near 30. North wind 5 to 15 mph. Friday...mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south early in the afternoon. Friday night...cloudy. A chance of rain showers through early morning. Lows in the lower 30s. Chance of rain 30 percent. Saturday...partly sunny. Highs in the lower 60s. Saturday night...mostly cloudy. Lows in the lower 30s. Sunday...partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 60s.

### The numbers

Wednesday's high, 46  
Low this morning, 37  
Soil temperature, 48  
Year ago, 72 and 51  
24-hour precipitation, 0.11  
Month's precipitation, 1.38  
Records, 88 in 1907 and -14 in 1965

## Briefly

### Corn Grower annual meeting set

The annual meeting of the Northwest Kansas Corn Growers Association starts at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 27, at the Quality Inn, 1950 S. Range Ave., Colby. Agenda items include updates on the ethanol plant, water issues, corn and the corn commission. All area agricultural producers are welcome and urged to attend. Refreshments will be served.

### Chamber reservation deadline noted

Reservations for the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet must be made no later than Monday, said Jada Tubbs, executive director. The dinner and meeting begin at 6 p.m., Friday, April 4 and will be held at the Comfort Inn Convention Center. Costs are \$25 for individuals and \$250 for a corporate table.

Judge Tom Webb of Sublette will present the program entitled *Making a Positive Difference*.

For questions or to reserve a place, call Tubbs at 460-3401.

### Turkey permits arrive

Word was received this week that spring turkey permits are now available at the Thomas County Clerk's office, 300 N. Court Ave., Colby.

For questions, call 462-4500.

### Free seminars for job seekers

Job seekers are invited to attend a free employability seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. March 24-28, sponsored by Colby Community College in the Adult Education Center in the basement of the H.F. Davis Library.

Topics to be covered, said Nance Munderloh, at the college, include *How to Look for Employment*, *Filling Out Applications*, *Preparing a Resumé*, *Writing a Cover Letter*, *Interviewing*, and *Employer Work Place Expectations*. "This short, intense seminar is designed to help individuals hone their skills prior to entering the job market," she said.

For questions about the seminar, call Munderloh at 462-3984

### Report cards out next week

Colby Public Schools said report cards for the third nine weeks will be sent home with students in kindergarten through 12th grade on Tuesday, March 25. Students, teachers and staff are currently on spring break this week. For questions, call the administration building at 465-5000.

### 'A Harvest of Grains' scheduled

The Kansas State Research and Extension office will be presenting a special program on Thursday, March 27, "A Harvest of Grains." It will be held at noon at the Thomas County Office Complex meeting room and participants are encouraged to bring a sack lunch. Grains can be a low-fat, nutritious snack that reportedly reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke, obesity, type II diabetes complications and reduce bowel disorders. This program will help people understand labels and the benefits of grains.

For information contact the Extension Center at 462-4582.

