



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Sherman County may have its first case of West Nile

By TOM BETZ

The Goodland Star-News

GOODLAND — An elderly woman from Kanorado may be the first case of West Nile Virus in Sherman County, but the state Health Department has not confirmed the case.

Dr. Robert McCullough, the county health officer, said he had a report last week about a positive blood test for West Nile Virus taken at the Goodland Regional Medical Center.

"I reported the blood test to Dorendo Harrel of the county Health Department and she reported it to the district person," McCullough said.

"No matter whether it is confirmed by the state or not, it is good for the people to know there is a possibility (of contracting West Nile) and to take precautions against mosquitoes."

Dr. Gail Hansen, deputy state epidemiologist, who is in charge of handling West Nile virus reports for the state said, in a phone interview Monday morning, that she was not aware of a specific case from Sherman County.

"We have several we are setting up to test today," she said. "We will not know the results until Tuesday evening or Wednesday, as it takes

two days for the test to be completed.

"We have one confirmed case in a human so far, and that was in a 38-year-old from Gray County. The person first had signs of meningitis July 20. The patient is recovering."

"That a human case was confirmed in Kansas really comes as no surprise since it has been found in birds, horses and mosquitoes already in the state this year and we had 22 human case last year."

"Even if an infected mosquito bites you, your chances of becoming seriously ill are small. Nevertheless, we are urging Kansans — particularly older adults and people with compromised immune systems — to take seriously the precautions against being bitten by mosquitoes and to make these precautions a regular part of their daily activities and lifestyles."

Dr. Hansen said the state has had several commercial blood tests that have been reported positive for West Nile, but that when the state has performed a test based on the system used by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the results have come up negative. She said the difference is that the commercial tests are possibly reading a broader number of viruses and that some are similar to West Nile.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

The Community Full Gospel Church in Oakley lost its steeple and half of its roof during the thunderstorm on Sunday. Today, debris from the roof was not only scattered around the church building, but had also blown into the field nearby.

## Storm man steals people's steeple, roof Oakley church takes the hardest punch

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

OAKLEY - The storm man came a calling.

Sunday morning's rude awakening by Mother Nature inflicted quite a bit of damage to the Community Full Gospel Church which lost its steeple and half of its roof on the west side of the building.

Rose Wessel, Oakley city

clerk, said the church damage was probably the worst suffered in the community.

"Some of that roof) was torn off," Wessel said. "It was pretty bad. That was the major thing."

She had also heard that someone said rides at the home-owned carnival were damaged but she didn't see any (damage). "The Ferris wheel is still standing," she said. This was in reference to earlier re-

ports that a youth-size Ferris wheel was knocked over.

Wessel said other damage around the community was mainly downed tree limbs and some power outages.

"I don't think it brought any whole trees down," she said. The town wasn't out of power, although the east side was powerless for a while and there were spot outages around the rest of the community.

Wessel's own experience with

the storm wasn't so pleasant. She said the storm woke her up by what sounded like hail. "I heard a ping-ping against the storm windows," she said.

Winds generated by the storm in northwest Kansas ranged up to reports of around 80 miles per hour, and rainfall varied from an inch to near two inches. It was a quick mover, disrupting communities around 15 to 20 minutes.

## State's crop outlook good

WICHITA (AP) — Despite the return of drought conditions in recent weeks to Kansas, the first government fall harvest estimate released Tuesday forecasts big production increases for major crops in the state. The state's corn harvest at 334.8 million bushels, up 15 percent from last year's drought-plagued harvest of 290 million bushels.

Corn yields were expected to average 124 bushels per acre, 8 bushels above those last year.

Kansas, the nation's leading sorghum producer, is expected to harvest a sorghum crop that is 23 percent bigger than last year — an estimated 166.6 million bushels.

Soybean production in the state was forecast at 67.6 million bushels, up 16 percent from a year ago.

## School days near



ISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Dana Dempewolf (left) helped parents with filling out forms during enrollment Tuesday at Colby Sacred Heart School. Schools in Thomas County recently completed enrollment for new and returning students; however, for those who have yet to register their children, school officials in Colby, Brewster and Rexford are urging parents to do so as soon as possible.

## Commissioners okay new budget

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Commissioners approved the 2004 budget at their meeting Monday morning.

The budget is \$5,590,648 with a mill levy of 36.511. The mill levy was only increased 1.91 mills and Commissioner Ron Evans said they worked hard to keep the budget as close to last year's as they could.

It also included a one percent raise for employees.

During the public hearing Lloyd Theimer told the commissioners they're doing a good job.

Evans was happy they got positive feedback on the budget.

"We really appreciate your confidence in what we do," Evans said, adding it's always good to get a compliment from the citizens of Thomas County instead of criticism.

"We just worked real hard on it," he said. "We did the best we could." He said he was happy with it but

wished the county hadn't lost \$100,000 in funds from the state.

In other business, the commissioners gave landfill supervisor Larry Jumper permission to start looking for a used trash truck.

The truck will be used to compact trash out of bins set at the front and save trips to the pit and the amount of dirt used to cover loads.

It'll mean they'll only have to cover one or two large loads instead of many small ones.

Commissioner Glen Kersensbrock said the addition of a truck will help save dirt in the long run. "It's something that'll help us," he said.

Duane Dawes, commissioner, said the truck will cost \$35,000-\$40,000.

"It's going to save a lot of traffic out there," he said.

The commissioners also approved an interlocal recycling agreement with Logan, Gove and Cheyenne counties.

## No public comment, Colby College's budget approved

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Colby Community College board of trustees approved its 2003-2004 budget during a special meeting and public hearing on Monday. The hearing failed to attract any

public comment.

The budget is \$11,737,028 which is the maximum amount the college can spend, but it doesn't mean that much money will be spent, the board was told.

The budget includes a mill levy

increase of 5.59 mills, which could raise up to \$400,000 in additional revenue.

Last year the mill levy was 26.86 and with the increase, will go to 32.45 mills.

Dr. Mikel Ary, president, has

stressed that the trustees haven't raised the mill levy over the past two years. However, because of a loss of some state funding, they had to make up for that shortfall.

The school has undertaken many cost-cutting measures in the past

year, Ary said, to try to save money. Some of those changes included cutting departmental spending and travel and deferred capital spending. Tuition has also been raised, including a \$6 increase per credit hour this year, Ary said.

## Briefly

### Field day registration underway

K-State Research and Extension will offer its 2003 Summer Field Day starting at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 27, at the Northwest Research-Extenschool.f the day is "Diversified Cropping Systems. Registration is at 8:30 a.m. and the last session of the day is at 2 p.m. Information topics include sunflower research, dryland crop rotations, crop performance evaluations, summer annual forages, three breakout sessions. For information or to register, drop by the Extension Center at 105 Experiment Farm Road in Colby or call Vicki Brown at (785) 462-6281.

### Volleyball practice begins Monday

Colby High School volleyball practice will start on Monday at the high school gym from 3:30-6:30 p.m. Athletes must have physicals turned into the high school office before they can participate. There will also be a parent/athlete volleyball meeting on Thursday, Aug. 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the high school

gym. If you have any questions, please call Coach Lesley Wagoner at the high school 460-5300.

### Fair premium checks ready

Thomas County Fair premium checks are now available at the Thomas County Extension Office, 350 S. Range Ave., Colby. The checks are for both open class and 4-H and can be picked up Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. until noon and again from 1 to 5 p.m. For questions, call (785) 462-4582.

### Leadership Class seeking applicants

Leadership Thomas County is seeking applicants for its new class, beginning in October. Call 460-3401, 460-7643 or stop by the Chamber office at 350 S. Range for an application. Completed applications are due back to the Chamber office by Aug. 22. The 2003-2004 class will be announced on Sept. 19.

### Recreation pictures available

The Colby Recreation Department team pictures are here and can be picked up at the Colby Community Building, said Ryan Sturdy, director. For questions, call 462-4440 or stop by their office at 285 E. 5th St.

### DivorceCare Classes to begin

A 13-week video series and support sessions on DivorceCare, will begin on Thursday at 7 p.m. at Colby Wesleyan Church, 320 Pine. These free sessions are open to anyone who is going through or has gone through a divorce. To register, call 465-9077.

### Military display ends Sept. 1

There's not much time left to view the military photographs at Colby Photo at 420 N. Franklin. After Monday, Sept. 1, families are asked to pick up the pictures from the display, said Ardat Beringer, owner of the business.



### Pleasant forecast

**Tonight...**Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 50s. Southeast wind 10 to 15 mph.

**Thursday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 80s. South wind 10 to 20 mph. **Thursday night...**Mostly clear. Lows near 60. **Friday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 90s. Friday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 60s.

**By the numbers**  
Monday's high, 87  
Tuesday's high, 86  
Low this morning, 56  
Records for the date, 107 in 1936 and 40 in 1920

Year ago today, 77 and 53  
24-hour precipitation to 8 a.m. today, 0.00

Month's precipitation, 1.88  
Year's precipitation to date, 13.17

2002's precipitation to date, 6.43

**Water Usage/Colby**  
Aug. 8-9-10 = 2.353 million gallons daily average

Aug. 11 = 1.801 million gallons

Aug. 12 = 2.084 million gallons

