



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Charts show: 2003 not good moisture year

By TOM A. DREILING
Free Press Publisher

The year 2003 failed to give Colby and Thomas County the moisture is so badly needed, and the temperature extremes weren't all that extreme, according to the daily charts provided by the Northwest Research-Extension Center in Colby.

For the year, total precipitation amounted to 14.52 inches. The average yearly precipitation is in the neighborhood of 19 inches. Total snowfall was 11.5 inches. The average annual snowfall over the years dating back to 1900 is 27 inches.

The coldest 2003 temperature occurred on Feb. 25 when the mercury fell to minus 4 degrees and the hottest reading was 105 recorded on July 25.

The coldest temperature ever recorded in Colby was minus 32 degrees on Dec. 22, 1989, and the hottest ever was 113 on July 25, 1940.

A study of the 2003 daily charts, shows the following:
January — High 74 on the 27th, low +2 on the 17th. No measurable precipitation, only a few scattered traces of snow.

February — High 78 on the 1st, low -4 on the 25th. Precipitation 0.40 inches, 5.3 inches of snow.

March — High 86 on the 14th, low +2 on the 5th. Precipitation 1.38 inches, no measurable snowfall.

April — High 92 on the 14th, low 20 on the 8th. Precipitation 2.24 inches, 2 inches of snow.

May — High 103 on the 29th, low 30 on the 8th. Precipitation 2.33 inches.

June — High 99 on the 23rd, low 41 on the 7th and 8th. Precipitation 4.52 inches.

July — High 105 on the 25th, low 55 on the 22nd. Precipitation 0.42 inches.

August — High 100 on the 6th, low 53 on the 31st. Precipitation 2.71 inches.

September — High 96 on the 17th, low 32 on the 19th. Precipitation 0.02 inches.

October — High 95 on the 19th, low 21 on the 26th. Precipitation 0.23 inches.

November — High 77 on the 20th, low +3 on the 24th. Precipitation 0.18 inches, 1.2 inches of snow.

December — High 64 on the 30th, low +4 on the 13th. Precipitation 0.09 inches, 3 inches of snow.

Senator arrives in Japan

TOKYO (AP) — Sen. Sam Brownback arrived in Tokyo on Wednesday to speak on North Korean human rights issues and to push Japan to lift its import ban on American beef.

Brownback, R-Kansas, was to deliver a policy speech in the capital on the plight of the North Korean people under the communist regime, then will meet with representatives of Japanese who were abducted to North Korea decades ago, aide Sean Woo said.

North Korea kidnapped Japanese during the 1970s and '80s to train its agents in Japanese language and

customs. Brownback also was expected to deliver a statement on the safety of American beef and push Tokyo to lift the import ban it imposed last month after the first U.S. case of mad cow was discovered.

Japan is the biggest export market for U.S. beef producers, estimated to be worth \$1 billion. Woo said Tokyo's ban had a particularly large impact on Kansas because the state is the second-largest producer of American beef, trailing only Texas. Brownback will visit Japan, Vietnam and Hong Kong, which are among more than 30 countries that have halted U.S. beef imports.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Sean Hankin, firefighter, demonstrated how the Colby Fire Department's newest piece of equipment can be a benefit to everyone concerned with fire safety. The "hazard house," offers a wide variety of unsafe scenarios complete with electric sparks,

smoke and more. The idea is to show unsafe situations along with the safe alternatives using movable parts within the house itself. Bob McLemore, fire chief, said the portable "house" arrived today.

'Hazard House' new safety tool

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

The Colby Fire Department is getting ready to launch a new type of educational program for schools, organizations and others interested in how to prevent fires with its new "hazard house."

The house arrived today, said Bob McLemore, fire chief, and was provided by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

McLemore said the department has been fortunate in getting public education safety grants from FEMA with all but 10 percent paid for through the grant.

The "hazard house," he said cost \$6,355 of which the fire department paid \$635 that it received from donations, pancake feeds, the Christmas stocking giveaway and other events.

The next major educational tool the department is planning to buy under the federal grant will be a safety trailer, he said. Again, 90 percent of the \$37,000 trailer will be paid for through the grant with \$3,700 contributed in donations and fundraising activities.

Rick Dickman, assistant fire chief, said he hopes the "hazard house" can make its debut at the Wellness Fair this month. From

there, the house will travel to schools and other organizations as a way to teach safety, he said.

The house simulates situations where fires can start or where people are careless — in fact the structure is made unsafe for that reason.

Offering an example, in one of the storage rooms, a lawnmower, gasoline can, and other flammable items are located near a furnace area, McLemore said.

Using movable pieces, children can relocate those items to areas of the home that are safer. The "hazard house" also offers a front scenario as well to teach children

neighborhood safety, bike safety, crossing streets, along with answering questions on safety in pools, boats and other locations.

McLemore said he first saw a demonstration of the "hazard house" at a fire chief's meeting and thought it would be a great learning tool in Colby.

"If not for the grant, though," McLemore said, "we wouldn't have been able to afford this type of learning equipment."

For those interested in having the fire department demonstrate how the hazard house can benefit their group, school, office or organization, call 462-4454.

Trustees look at wellness center fund raising ideas

By TISHA COX
Colby Free Press

Fund raising for more than just the wellness center was on the agenda at the Colby Community College board of trustees meeting on Monday.

College president Dr. Mikel Ary said raising money is a question mark. He said the Hansen Foundation is an option and the school also has access to a directory of charitable foundations around the state.

The school still has \$65,000 of the foundation's last gift of \$150,000. Ary said he anticipates approaching the foundation for more money.

Corporate funding for projects is another option, he said.

"I'm not telling you any of this will work," he said. "You never know about this."

He said there are other avenues to explore and he is optimistic.

The board also took a tour of two

classrooms in Thomas Hall.

Ary wanted the board to see some of the improvements.

The first has what is called a "smart classroom cart" equipped with a VCR, DVD player, laptop computer, telephone, scanner and overhead projector.

Ary said the college has five of the carts which cost more than \$5,000 each. Maintenance built the carts to house the equipment.

The room also has a Polycom

video conferencing system with a two-way camera and a large television. Ary said the school used federal Perkins money to purchase the equipment for the classrooms.

The money is partly to be used to buy items for vocational education. "We thought we needed more technology on campus," he said.

He also showed the physical improvements to another classroom.

Ary said they realized the room needed some sprucing up after it

was used for a video teleconference with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. Old chemistry cabinets were pulled from the room and it received new carpeting. Desks were replaced with tables and chairs.

The board also dealt with a resignation. Nursing instructor Laura Tubbs resigned at the last meeting and the board of trustees approved charging her \$500 in liquidated damages, which are assessed when a contract is not fulfilled.

Osteoarthritis presentation planned at Wellness Fair

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

A talk on osteoarthritis will be one of many highlights at this year's Wellness Fair, Saturday, Jan. 17, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Colby College student union, room 106.

Millions of Americans suffer from arthritis every year, said Tracey King, one of the Wellness

Committee members, adding that it was for that reason and others the committee thought it would be an informative subject for fair participants. The guest speaker for the osteoarthritis presentation will be Brad Rea with the Hays Orthopedic Clinic and the subject of his talk will be "Living With Osteoarthritis."

The presentation will be in the student union at 10:30 a.m.

According to information provided by Rea, every day wear and tear on the joints can bring on this condition and although there are no cures for osteoarthritis, there are many treatment options to consider ranging from diet and exercise to braces, medications, injections, and surgery. In order to select the best

treatment plan, Rea said, it is important to understand how a healthy joint works, why a joint wears down, and what can be done to help.

Education and establishing a diagnosis with healthcare providers are the first steps to helping deal with osteoarthritis symptoms, he said.

"While at the Wellness Fair, par-

ticipants are encouraged to stop by for this fun, informal, educational seminar brought to you by Hays Orthopaedic Clinic," King said.

Other educational booths and information will also be available on fair day, King said.

For question about the fair, call King at (785) 462-2602 or Jeanene Brown, (785) 462-7511.

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Briefly

Congressman to stop in Colby

Congressman Jerry Moran will be in Colby from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 12, at the Senior Progress Center, 165 Fike Park. His stop in Colby (and Thomas County) is part of his annual "Big First" Listening Tour. Moran said today that he hopes all area residents will be able to attend the meeting so that he can gather input and answer questions about any federal issues. During his annual tour of the First Congressional District, Moran will travel more than 5,000 miles and meet with thousands of Kansans while visiting all 69 counties in the "Big First," said Aerica Veazey, press secretary in Washington, D.C.

Genesis to hold annual meeting

Genesis - Thomas County, Inc. will hold its annual meet-

ing at 6 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 15 in the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S Range, Colby. The regular meeting will follow the annual meeting. Persons interested in Genesis are encouraged to attend.

Lab work for fair begins Thursday

The 2004 Wellness Fair will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Colby Community College student union. Lab work prior to the fair is scheduled at Citizens Medical Center in Colby with four dates available. Those include Thursday and Saturday of this week from 6 to 9 a.m. and again on Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 12 and 13 also starting at 6 a.m. and concluding at 9 a.m. Those planning to have blood drawn will need to pay the \$5 registration fee at the time of the lab work, which includes TSH (thyroid) at \$12; CBC/Lipid/Glucose (cholesterol and blood sugar levels) at

\$15; and PSA (prostate cancer) at \$18. For questions, call Jeanene Brown, one of the Wellness Committee members at 462-7511.

'Seem-To-Be-Players' to perform

Western Plains Arts Association will present "The Seem-To-Be Players," Sunday, Jan. 11, starting at 3 p.m. in the Oakley High School auditorium. The players are a professional troupe of actors, playwrights, directors, teachers, and musicians who seek to expand the imagination and encourage creative thinking, said Vicky Waldschmidt, media correspondent for the association. Admission at the door will be adults, \$10; students, \$5 or by WPAA season pass. This program is presented in part by the Kansas Touring Program of the Kansas Arts Commission, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



A little warmer

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area
Tonight...Partly cloudy. Not as cool. Lows around 20. Northwest winds 5 to 10 mph.
Thursday...Partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the lower 40s. Northwest winds 15 to 25 mph.
Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. Northwest winds around 10 mph.
Friday...Partly cloudy. Highs around 50. Northwest winds 5 to 10 mph.
Friday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s.
Saturday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 50s.

The numbers

Tuesday's high, 27
Low this morning, -3
Low Tuesday morning, -11
Records for Jan. 7, 73 in 1948 and -19 in 1988
Year ago today, 63 and 17
Month's precipitation, 0.05
Month's snowfall, 1-inch
2003 precipitation to date, trace
Soil temperature, 28

The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119.

