



COLBY FREE PRESS

Who'll give me . . . ?



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

JoAnne Sunderman, director of Pioneer Memorial Library checked out items Thursday morning for the Friends of the Library benefit auction to be held on Saturday at 10 a.m. Items for both the silent and regular auction are on display at the library. TNT Auction is the auctioneer for the event.

Crop specialist says:

Dryland wheat could suffer from big losses

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Prospects for dryland wheat in northwest Kansas are bleak.

Roger Stockton, Northwest Research-Extension Center soil and crop specialist, said even with the rain, conditions still aren't what they could be. He estimated half of the planted dryland wheat crop in the area could be insurance losses or failures.

"That's a major impact," he said. Stockton said the precipitation this week has helped.

"It's better than not getting the rain," he said. "Some areas still haven't gotten enough rain to do any good."

Much of the dryland wheat in the nine-county northwest Kansas area won't have much potential for grain production.

Stockton said wheat that was up and greening up could have some potential. Other fields have no cover, which is a concern because March winds will blow away topsoil from fields that have no protec-

tion.

He said it's anyone's guess how things will turn out and it will take three to four weeks to get a handle on just what the condition will turn out to be.

"It's still going to be pretty variable around the area," Stockton said.

Only a cool, wet spring could make a slight difference but Stockton said the wheat still won't have much of a head on it.

"The majority wasn't planted at a thick enough density to be coming up this late," he said, adding when wheat comes up in the fall, it usually puts out 6-8 tillers which grow into 6-8 heads in the spring.

However, when wheat doesn't come up until spring, like much of the crop this year, it puts out less tillers, losing potential grain heads.

He said if the wheat wasn't up before now, it probably won't come up.

Stockton said irrigated wheat is in "reasonable condition" because producers have kept enough water

on their fields, but with corn and soybean prices up, some farmers might replace their wheat with one of those two crops to take advantage of the higher prices.

Mike Brown, a local wheat grower, said two-thirds of the wheat on his 2,000 acres didn't come up.

"We're all dryland," Brown said. "The conditions are as bad as I've ever seen them."

He said at this point, there isn't much tillering in the wheat. Brown said he doesn't know how much good the moisture will benefit the crop at this point.

Another concern is the lack of root system in the wheat. He said farmers will have to wait and see how much winter kill there was.

John Strecker, manager of Hi-Plains Co-op, said only time will tell how the crop will turn out. He said it's too early to guess how things will turn out because of the recent precipitation.

"Now we'll have to wait and see," he said. "I don't know what this wheat could do that comes up now."

Confident of bill's passage

TOPEKA (AP) — Supporters of a bill allowing Kansans to carry concealed handguns are confident Thursday that the measure would pass the Senate but concede the margin probably will not be veto-proof.

The measure's backers say the proposal would let Kansans protect themselves. Opponents believe it would cause more gun-related violence.

The House approved the bill Thursday on a vote of 78-45 — six fewer votes in favor than would be

needed to override a veto.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has said repeatedly she supports allowing only retired law-enforcement officials to receive concealed carry permits. A spokeswoman said Wednesday that if a broader measure passed, it's doubtful Sebelius would sign it.

In the 40-member Senate, where 27 votes are needed to override a veto, Sen. Phil Journey predicted the bill would receive 21 to 24 votes. Journey, R-Haysville, who is one of its strongest supporters in the

chamber, said the odds of amassing a veto-proof margin were "pretty thin."

In the House, Rep. L. Candy Ruff, D-Leavenworth, said Sebelius' influence with fellow Democrats accounted for the failure to veto-proof the bill in that chamber.

"Democrats are loyal to our governor, and at this point, she's got problems with the bill," said Ruff, who is one of the measure's prime sponsors. "If she changes her mind, I feel many of them will follow her."

Concern voiced over Willow-Franklin project

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

One member of the Colby City Council voiced concern about approving the design phase of an engineering contract for Willow and Franklin during the meeting held earlier this week.

Councilman Jim Tubbs was talking specifically about Willow Street, which is currently the responsibility of Thomas County.

Even though there were some disagreements about the road and a separate issue regarding negotiating proposals brought up by Tubbs, in the end the vote was unanimous

to approve Penco Engineering, the city's engineering firm, to begin the design phase for street improvements. Councilman Herb Sunderman, however, was absent from the meeting.

Initially, the reason for contracting Penco Engineering was to look at Willow and Franklin Streets because of the talks with Wal-Mart representatives in recent weeks and their interest in buying land that is in close proximity to those roads.

Tubbs primary objection to approving the contract with Penco was that Willow Street doesn't belong to the city.

"Why do we want to pay \$125,000 on a street that doesn't belong to us?" Tubbs asked other council members.

Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, explained to Tubbs that at the last meeting, the council approved annexing the land Wal-Mart is interested in buying into the city. However, the annexation did not include Willow Street, although that isn't expected to be a problem between the county and city for improvement responsibilities.

While on the subject of Wal-Mart and its plans to locate a super store here, Tubbs also questioned

Armstrong on who negotiated the agreement for a 52-48 percent split on the street improvements.

Tubbs said his reasons for asking were to clarify whether or not the city manager has the authority to negotiate agreements with developers.

In response, Armstrong said she does not make agreements nor negotiate deals.

"This is what the council does," she said.

As for the percentages, Joel Kriss, city attorney, told Tubbs that the 52-48 percentage split were numbers the Wal-Mart people came

up with and the agreements were all done in their terminology.

Armstrong only brought Wal-Mart's proposal to the council and from there, it would be the council's decision whether to agree or re-negotiate.

Eugene Wieland, council president, said while he doesn't want the road (Willow Street), he did say the council needs to make informed decisions and will need the engineering firm's input for that.

"I do believe we need to spend the money for this, but it can be canceled at any time with adjustments (in the contract)," Wieland said.

Bombs explode in Iraq ahead of interim constitution

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Militants fired mortar rounds at the airport and two roadside bombs exploded Friday, hours ahead of a signing ceremony for the country's interim constitution, a key landmark in U.S. plans to hand over power to Iraqis by June 30. No in-

juries were reported.

The signing of the document, scheduled for Friday afternoon amid tight security, was delayed for nearly a week — first by tough negotiations among members of the Iraqi Governing Council that went beyond a Feb. 28 deadline, then by

a three-day mourning period following two suicide attacks Tuesday that killed scores of Shiite pilgrims on the holy day of Ashoura.

The top U.S. administrator, L. Paul Bremer, and chief British representative Jeremy Greenstock mediated with council members

through the night in a marathon session that sealed the deal around dawn Monday.

Compromises were struck on some of the toughest issues, particularly the role of Islam and federalism. The draft recognizes Islam as a source of legislation. In a conces-

sion to religious conservatives who wanted Islam to be the main source, it also states that no law will be passed that violates the tenets of the Muslim religion.

It also accepts the principle of federalism but leaves it to a future elected national assembly.

Briefly

Singles dance tonight

The Colby Singles dance is planned for tonight from 8 p.m. to midnight with entertainment provided by "Off Limits," featuring Dick and Maybelle Moore and Bill Summers, all of Colby. All single people and alumni are invited. For details, call Don Birzer, 462-2127.

County Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include a monthly landfill report from supervisor Larry Jumper. The meeting is open to the public.

'Shelter operations' class planned

The Thomas County American Red Cross is sponsoring a "Shelter Operations" class on Tuesday, starting at 6 p.m. The class is open to people interested in assisting at winter storm shelters that are opened when the roads are closed or anyone wanting to become trained to respond to large scale state and

national disasters. The class will be held at the chapter office, 350 S. Range, Colby. Call (785) 462-7161 to register.

Free workshop planned

Colby Community College will host a free workshop on the new Kansas Destination-Based Sales Tax Law on Thursday, March 25, in the Colby College Student Union, Room 106. The 90-minute session will begin at 9 a.m. This program is being provided at no charge as a business outreach service of the Colby College community service division. For information call Barrett at (785) 462-6215 or email <mailto:lbarrett@kspeach.com>lbarrett@kspeach.com.

Musicians wanted for praise rally

A pre-national Day of Prayer rally is being organized on Wednesday, May 5 with "A Night of Praise and Prayer" as the theme. Coinciding with this event, musicians and vocalists are wanted to participate on a praise team or to perform special music during that evening. Pastors and lay people are also needed to offer specific prayers for the specific needs

of the country, said Karen Merryman. For questions or to volunteer, call her at 460-9077.

Orchestra performs Sunday

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will celebrate the winter season with a concert entitled "Broadway's Gallery" at the Colby High School auditorium on Sunday at 3:30 p.m. Admission to the concert will be by Friends of the Orchestra membership or tickets available at the door.

After 5 Club planned Tuesday

The High Plains Kansas After 5 Club is inviting everyone to its dinner party "This Old House," from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 9, at the Shepherd's Staff Conference Center in Rexford. Reservations and/or cancellations for the March dinner party must be received no later than Saturday by calling Carol Bohme, (785) 462-2791 or Janis Bakan at (785) 672-3809. Another reservation alternative is to contact Lori Haberer by e-mail at: lorihaberer@hotmail.com.



Much warmer

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area
Tonight...Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 20s. Southwest winds 5 to 15 mph.

Saturday...Mostly sunny in the morning then becoming partly cloudy. Warmer. Highs in the mid 50s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the northwest 15 to 20 mph in the afternoon. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. West winds 5 to 15 mph and gusty. **Sunday...**Mostly sunny in the morning then becoming partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s. West winds 10 to 15 mph. **Sunday night through Monday night...**Partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the mid 50s. Lows in the mid 20s.

The numbers
Thursday's high, 36
Low this morning, 30
Records for March 5, 83 in 1910 and -9 in 1960
Year ago today, 31 and 2
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.22

March total, 0.74
March snowfall, 1 inch
Soil temperature, 37

The sources:
The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

