

Weather Corner



Low near 30, highs near 60

Tonight — Mostly clear with a low near 32. West wind between 5 and 15 mph. **Wednesday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 70. Breezy with a northwest wind between 10 and 20 mph with gusts as high 30 mph. **Wednesday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 30. **Thanksgiving Day** — mostly sunny with a high around 57. **Thursday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 29. **Friday** — Partly cloudy with a high near 57. **Friday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 26. **Saturday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 56.

Temperatures
Monday's high, 59
Low this morning, 30
Records for this date, 75 in 1924, -5 in 1929
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
November's precipitation, 0.17

A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119.

Briefly

City offices close for holiday

Colby City Hall will be closed Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving holiday. Additionally, the city's sanitation department will not be operating on Thursday or Friday either. Those with trash pickup normally on Thursday and Friday, will be rescheduled to Saturday. For questions, call 460-4410.

Landfill open on Saturday

Offices at the Thomas County Courthouse, including the county health department and landfill, will be closed Thursday, Nov. 24 and Friday, Nov. 25 for Thanksgiving. The landfill will reopen Saturday, Nov. 26, with its normal weekend hours. The courthouse and health department will reopen Monday, Nov. 28.

Holiday services announced

Trinity Lutheran Church, Fifth and Country Club, will be holding a Thanksgiving service at 10:30 a.m., Thursday. Advent services will be held at 7 p.m., every Wednesday, beginning Nov. 30. For questions about other holiday services,

call specific church offices or check the Friday church directory in the *Colby Free Press*.

Genesis needs holiday donations

Genesis-Thomas County is making preparations for its annual Christmas Food Basket project. Non-perishable food items or monetary donations are needed. Donations may be dropped off at the food bank, 350 S. Range, Suite 6 on Wednesdays between 10 a.m. and noon and 1 and 4 p.m.; at Leroy's Printing, 560 N. Franklin; Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 1065 W. Fifth St.; First Presbyterian, Colby United Methodist or Trinity Lutheran Church.

Donations may be mailed to Genesis-Thomas County, Inc., P.O. Box 214, Colby, Kan. 67701. For questions, call 460-7930.

Gift shop holds open house

The Citizens Medical Center Gift Shop is offering a holiday open house until Monday, Dec. 5. Gift shop officials said there are many discounted items available for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Free winter band concert planned

Colby Community College will hold its Winter Band Concert starting at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 1, in the Frahm Theatre at the Cultural Arts Center on campus. The concert and jazz bands will be featured and there is no admission charge. For questions, call Dr. David Mruzek, director of bands, 462-3984, ext. 308.

College pool closed until Monday

The Colby Community College swimming pool is closed for maintenance, said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer. The pool will reopen on Monday. For questions, call 462-3984.

Special flag fundraiser underway

The Special Olympics and Sons of the Legion are asking residents to consider having flags placed in their front yard or at their businesses on special holidays. For those wanting to help the two organizations and show patriotism at the same time, call Greg Griffin, 460-0647, for details on cost. The flags are displayed on Memorial Day, Flag Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, and Armed Forces Day.

New program could hurt small, rural hospitals

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

A new government program could end up hurting small rural hospitals.

Kyle Hahn, administrator of Logan County Hospital, said this morning he's not looking favorable on a program called Medicare Advantage.

"With Medicare Advantage," Hahn said, "though the government contracts it out, it is run by private insurance; therefore it is not considered Medicare."

"We will not be able to receive cost based reimbursement for people who are on the Medicare Advantage program."

Currently, when someone on Medicare comes to the hospital in

Oakley, the hospital bills Medicare a fee for services. At the end of the year the hospital turns in to Medicare its cost report, in which the hospital figures what Medicare paid it versus what it cost to provide the services to the Medicare patients.

"We usually find that our costs are greater than our payments from Medicare and, because we are a Critical Access Hospital, we receive a payment from Medicare to offset our costs," Hahn said.

Hahn said if a person qualifies for Medicare they automatically qualify for Medicare Advantage.

"What is happening to the Medicare program is very confusing to all of us," Hahn said.

He said he sees Medicare's new program as the "government trying

to save some money."

"It's on the backs of us little hospitals. It has the potential to hurt us."

"I'm not supporting it, but if people want to sign up we will have to deal with it," Hahn said.

Individuals who decide to get into the Medicare Advantage program will need to make sure their hospital or physician is a participant in the program or that person will have to pay a higher co-insurance and deductible.

"Most all hospitals and physicians accept traditional Medicare,

and you do have a choice to stay with the traditional Medicare," Hahn said.

According to Hahn, Medicare Part D is not Medicare Advantage.

"Medicare Part D is the Medicare prescription drug coverage and is an insurance program offered by private healthcare companies. You can take out Medicare Part D without enrolling into Medicare Advantage. Logan County Hospital wants you to have all the facts before making a decision," Hahn said.

Joe Stratton, administrator of Sheridan County Health Complex, said the Medicare Advantage program is complicated to the hospitals as well as the consumer.

"It puts consumers in a bad position because they have to pick from

a number of companies who will manage their Medicare," Stratton said this morning.

He said enrollment for the new program is Nov. 15 to May 15, and individuals wanting more information about the program can call Medicare Advantage call 1-800-Medicare or visit the website: www.medicare.gov.



Kyle Hahn

RECOVERY....

The Bright Side of Addiction

Narcotics Anonymous is there for you and your family!

Meetings are Open to the Public
City Hall Basement
Tues., Fri. & Sun. - 8:00 p.m.

Education department questions interviews

TOPEKA (AP) — At least one Board of Education member is among those criticizing some questions the new state education chief's transition team is asking employees.

Education Commissioner Bob Corkins, hired in October, appointed the transition team to help him settle into his new job. He has started a top-to-bottom review of the Kansas State Department of Education, but some people have expressed concerns about the team's questioning of employees about their views on vouchers, which allow parents to use public funds to send their children to private school, and on loosening state laws on charter schools.

"I see them as litmus-test questions," said Christy Levings, president of Kansas-National Education Association. "I keep wondering how we're going to keep quality people in the department when the atmosphere is put to a test like this."

"What can the demeanor be?" Board member Janet Waugh, of Kansas City, Kan., said the transition team's inquiries could have a chilling effect on the department. "There's no reason to do it," Waugh said, "unless they're looking for people to support (Corkins') philosophy."

Corkins, who previously served as executive director of two think tanks critical of state education policies, supports school vouchers and expanding charter schools, which receive state funding but are freed from many rules and regulations.

Board member Kathy Martin, of Clay Center, defended the transition team's work, saying it's important for Corkins to have the right people in the right jobs.

"It's almost like smoking or cussing a lot," said Martin, one of

six conservatives on the board. "If that makes you uncomfortable, you need to find another slot."

Corkins said the objective isn't a staff overhaul.

"I've been in work situations where my personal beliefs have not been in sync with management," he said. "I've never been reluctant to surround myself with quality people who have a different opinion." But Don Hineman, a Dighton rancher and chairman of Kansas Alliance for Education, said department employees were aware of views held by Corkins and would be loath to cross their new boss on policy issues.



Bob Corkins

Thanksgiving Buffet
Thurs., November 24
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Please call to make reservations.
\$9.50 - Adults
\$6.50 - Children under 10

Buffet Open
Sun.-Fri. • 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Lounge Open 5 -12 p.m.
Lounge will be closed Thanksgiving Day.

Prairie Rose Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge
Located in:

1950 S. Range • Colby, KS
785-462-3933

1115

"What's Your Number?"

Free Press readers

Shop Colby Dec. 2-4 and WIN

During these 3 days, Colby Free Press readers may win prizes as well as get special in-store discounts from participating merchants. Stores will have numbers posted and Free Press readers need to shop and find which store has the number that matches their house number or post office box. Just show the store your address on your check or driver's license to win. Subscribers who receive their paper by mail, can show their address on the mailing label. You may win at more than one store, but you can only win once at each store. House numbers and post office box numbers may be the same, so it's first come, first win! Subscribers don't have to be from just Colby. Keep reading the Free Press to see which stores are participating!

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

On your 50th...

Birthdays are good for you.

Studies show that the people who have the most live the longest.

