

Weather Corner



Snow possible, otherwise cold

The forecast
Tonight — Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 20s. West winds around 10 mph.

Saturday — Mostly sunny in the morning then becoming partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s. Southwest winds around 10 mph shifting to the southeast in the afternoon.

Saturday night — Partly cloudy in the evening — Then mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of rain showers or snow showers after midnight. Lows in the lower 30s. South winds about 10 mph shifting to the north after midnight.

Sunday — Mostly cloudy. Much colder. Windy. A chance of rain or snow in the morning — Then a chance of snow in the afternoon. Highs in the mid 30s. Chance of precipitation 50 percent.

Sunday night — Colder — Breezy. Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of snow. Lows around 18.

Extended forecast
Monday through Tuesday — Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow showers. Highs in the mid 30s. Lows around 16.

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. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Fort Riley officer could face life in prison

TOPEKA (AP) — An Army investigator continues to deliberate whether a young infantry officer should stand court martial for murder and numerous other crimes.

Maj. James Ball has had the case of 2nd Lt. Erick J. Anderson since conclusion of a two-day hearing last week at Fort Riley.

Anderson is charged with two counts of murder, two counts of conspiracy, making a false statement, dereliction of duty and conduct unbecoming an officer for allegedly authorizing the shooting deaths of Iraqi civilians by soldiers under his command. If convicted, Anderson, 26 of Twinsburg, Ohio, could face life in prison.

During the hearing, Ball heard testimony from men who served in Anderson's platoon, part of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry, as well as Anderson's superior officers. Ball, who is not a lawyer, now must sift through that testimony, as well as previous statements made to Army investigators and decide whether Anderson faces a court martial. Ball also could recommend nonjudicial punishment.

Ball gave no timetable for his decision, and he was still deliberating Tuesday. His decision will be reviewed by Fort Riley authorities before being made public.

The shootings in question occurred while Anderson and his platoon were deployed to Iraq in 2004 and were conducting missions near Sadr City.

On Aug. 18, 2004, Anderson's platoon fired on a dump truck carrying civilians that was believed to be tossing bombs out along the roadside. The platoon fired on the truck, killing several civilians and severely wounding others, including a teenager. Two soldiers, Pvt. Johnny Horne Jr., of Wilson, N.C., and Pvt. Cardenas Alban, of Inglewood, Calif., were convicted of killing the boy, which they described as a "mercy killing" because of the extent of his injuries. Anderson is accused of authorizing the shooting. A second murder charge against Anderson alleges he authorized Pvt. Michael Williams, of Memphis, Tenn., to kill an injured Iraqi civilian on Aug. 28, 2004.

Briefly

Commissioners meet Wednesday

The Thomas County commissioners will hold their end of month meeting at 9 a.m. Wednesday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include Krista and Ron Alexander on a custodial contract at the Thomas County Office Complex; Martin Rinehart on billing from the hospital; swearing in of Kristy Rubio as deputy county clerk; an update from County Clerk Shelly Harms on voting equipment and consolidating; approval of minutes, November payroll and second half of November accounts payable; Thomas County Fair Board and E & G Promotions, Inc. agreement and approval of additions and abatements. The meeting is open to the public.

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.

Lunch-n-Learn program Dec. 6

No Lunch-n-Learns program will be held on Tuesday at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range in Colby. However, a program is planned from 12:05 to 12:55 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 6.

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.

Orchestra continues rehearsals

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra holds rehearsals from 7:30 to 9 p.m., Mondays in the Colby High School band room. All musicians are invited to join the orchestra, said Sharon Kriss, one of the members. Musicians span a wide range of vocations and ages (middle school to retirees) from communities throughout northwest Kansas and northeast Colorado.

Kansas City plans to seize land to fix statue

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — After nearly two years of unsuccessful negotiations, local officials say they will go to court to seize 600 square feet of land that holds a statue of abolitionist John Brown.

The city already owns the statue but has been unable to work out a deal with a nonprofit religious group that owns the land underneath it.

The city says it has to have the land to receive federal funds to help fix the statue, which is in serious disrepair.

Chief Counsel Hal Walker said the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., had offered It Is Written Ministries \$5,000 for the property, which he said is far above the value of the small tract.

But state Sen. David Haley, who represents the ministry, disagreed.

He said It Is Written Ministries is "perfectly willing to transfer this land."

The Unified Government, in a very heavy-handed way, is attempting to steal this parcel, without compensation, by misusing eminent domain."

The nearly century-old tribute to Brown sits near the city's historic Quindaro ruins, which marks the site of a key destination point for slaves seeking freedom along the Underground Railroad.

But Brown's nose is broken and part of a diploma he holds is missing.

And the land surrounding the statue is covered with debris, such as toilets and mattresses, that are near a building owned by It Is Written Ministries.

The city, Kansas City Kansas Community College and the Western University Association of the African Methodist Episcopal

Church have been working to improve the Quindaro Ruins and, more recently, the statue.

"I think that if one looks at the deep history of the statue of John Brown, there's no question that it should be in the public domain. It is something that everybody should be proud of," said Steve Collins, a Kansas City Kansas Community College professor.

Collins said a collection was taken in 1907 to fund a monument to Brown, whose attacks on slavery in the 1850s foreshadowed the Civil War.

The life-size white marble statue was carved in Italy. When it was dedicated in 1911, it was placed at Western University, the first black university west of the Mississippi River.

After the college closed, the statue stayed at the site until the 1970s, when the city bought it and moved it to its current location.

The statue was supposed to have been placed in the property's right of way, but the city later learned that

it had been put on land owned by the Bryant Butler Kitchen Nursing Facility.

The city is attempting to correct that mistake by acquiring the property.

One complicating factor is that It Is Written Ministries owes about \$6,600 in back taxes and special assessments on the property, which it purchased at a tax sale in 2003.

Haley said the organization has applied for tax-exempt status on the property.

The organization at least wants enough compensation to pay off the taxes, he said. Despite that, Haley said, the organization initially offered to lease the land to the Unified Government for \$1 a year over 100 years.

But LaVert Murray, the Unified Government's director of development, said the government rejected that offer because the restoration depended in part on federal funds that could not be used unless the Unified Government owned the property.

Wagonmaker preserves history through hobby

HORTON (AP) — The thud of ears of corn hitting the bangboard of his father's wagon has stuck with Don Werner for more than half a century.

"I always remembered that because I was always sitting there or laying inside (the wagon)," he says. "I always rode with him and was just amazed watching him shucking that corn."

The Powhatan, Kan., farm boy vowed that he, too, would have a wagon of his own someday.

"That always kind of stuck with me. ..." Don Werner says. "I could not ever afford to buy one or find one that I thought I would like, so I just built it."

And so a simple desire became a hobby, which later evolved into Werner Wagon Works, which he and his wife, Connie, have operated for 18 years from their home in Horton, Kan.

"He said that sound never left him," says Connie Werner, describing how the couple began a trade that only a handful of people in the United States practice.

Another sound — a whirring buzz saw — runs in the adjacent workshop, where footprints dance over the sawdust-covered floor.

It all began on a trip to Branson, Mo., when the couple met a blacksmith displaying his trade at Shepherd of the Hills.

"We stayed and talked to him for hours," Connie Werner says.

The blacksmith, who also was a wheelwright, later showed Don Werner the wagons he had.

Seeing his interest he said, "If you really want to learn, go to the Amish, up in Springfield."

So they went and spent a day with the people whose way of life depends on the animal-driven vehicles.

It didn't take long for Don Werner, an electrician, to glean what he could from the Amish. He took what he learned home, and in 1988, he made his first wagon using tools bought at various sales and given to him by friends and family.

"A lot of the tools (we use) are just like what they would've had in the 1800s," says Connie Werner, standing in the wheel shop, which is like a portal back to that time.

"In fact, those tools last a lot longer than the modern ones," she says. "They're more dependable, they're stronger, they don't break down as easy."

After Don Werner built his first wagon and won the grand prize at a

wagon show in Marysville, Kan., word of his work began to spread.

He was still working as a commercial electrician, commuting to and from Kansas City each day and working in his shop at night when the National Oregon/California Trail Center in Montpelier, Idaho, contacted him to make wagons for its living history museum.

A leave of absence and seven wagons later, he began building wagons full time.

Today, Don Werner estimates that he has produced roughly 180 to 200 wagons for customers in 40 states, Canada and Japan. In between his wagon making, he also restores various horse-drawn vehicles and makes and repairs wheels.

In the olden days, the top of a wagon, or box, was typically made out of poplar, but today, Don Werner uses oak. Hickory wood, which has a straight grain, is used in his wagon wheels because of its flexibility over rough terrain.

"Whether it's a box wagon, chuck wagon or covered wagon, whatever type of vehicle it is... we like to start building the wheels first, then the undercarriage or the running gear, so we can build the box on top of that," Don Werner says.

The Werners not only make wagons, but also have taken them on several wagon trains over the years.

"When we go on these, we travel virgin prairie over the actual trails," Connie Werner says.

There and at various wagon and buggy shows, they have met like-minded historians, including John McCoy.

"After going on a wagon train and jacking the wagon up every 30 miles to grease the hubs," Connie Werner says, "we were talking about there has to be an easier way so you don't have to take the wheel off." The Werners and McCoy put their heads together and the Real McCoy hub insert was born.

"I told them that there was an easier way to do that," says McCoy, who used to restore and build stagecoaches. "(The insert) goes in the hub and we put tapered roller bearings in it."

Let the Celebrations Begin ..
 Start the holiday season by celebrating with friends at the
9th Annual Colby Women's League Holiday Brunch
 Thursday · Dec. 1, 2005
 Come and Go
 10:00 am to 12:30 pm
 Colby Country Club
 Free will donations will be accepted to help support local charities. These include CCC ReEntry, Pioneer Memorial Library, Prairie Museum of Art and History and the Western Plains Arts Association.
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2005 Taurus SEL - Gold w/Tan Leather, 6 Cyl., Sun Roof, CD, Aluminum Wheels, 14K Miles. \$16,500	2001 F350 XL Cab Chassis - Flat bed, Silver w/Gray Vinyl, Diesel. \$16,850	2002 Corolla - White w/Gray Cloth, 4 Cyl., 52K Miles. \$8,995
2005 Taurus SE - Black w/Tan Cloth, 6 Cyl., 10K Miles, CD, P Seats. \$14,500	2004 Escape - 4x4, Gray w/Gray Cloth, V-6, 22K Miles, Loaded. \$18,850	2002 Windstar SE - Red w/Gray Cloth, 6 Cyl., Quad Seats, TV-DVD. 47K Miles. \$13,995
2000 Venture LT - Silver w/Gray Cloth, 6 Cyl., 99K Miles, Power Sliding Door. \$6,995	2001 F150 Reg Cab XLT - 4x4, Green w/Tan Cloth, 4.6L, V-8. \$9,995	1994 Caprice Wagon - Tan w/Tan Cloth, V-8. \$2,495
2002 Explorer Limited - AWD, Black w/Black Leather, V-6, 56K Miles. \$17,995	2002 C1500 Reg Cab - 4x2, Red w/Cloth, 6 Cyl., 62K Miles, Bed Cover. \$12,500	1994 Continental - 4 Door, White w/Gray Leather, 6 Cyl. \$2,495

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