

Briefly

Drug program planned

Mary Ramey, Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas, and a volunteer at the Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging, will be at the Senior Progress Center, 165 Fike Park, Wednesday. She will be talking one-on-one with people who have questions about prescription drug coverage or would like to enroll in a plan. Individual counseling appointments can be scheduled for that day from 1-3:30 p.m. by contacting her at the area agency on aging at 1-800-432-7422.

Parent survey deadline Monday

The Thomas County Interagency Coalition and Regional Prevention Center is mailing a "very brief" survey to parents of middle school and high school students in Colby and Brewster, said Diane Stithem, prevention center. The purpose of the survey is in finding out information on what parents know about underage drinking and the laws. "All you need to do is complete the survey and mail it back in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided," she said. "Surveys are completely confidential with the first survey received at Greenbush winning \$50." The goal this year is an 80 percent return rate and if the goal is met, more prizes will be awarded.

Heartland benefit barbecue Sunday

Heartland Christian School, 1995 W. 4th St., Colby, is planning a benefit barbecue and open house from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Sunday. The menu includes pit barbecue meat, sloppy joes, corn, baked potato, rolls, green salad, and dessert bar. Everyone is welcome with free-will donations accepted.

Swim Club to offer concessions

The Colby Swim Club will have a food booth again this year downstairs in the Colby Community Building during the Orange and Black Classic. The menu will feature the same homemade items as in the past, such as sloppy joes, sanchos, nachos, hotdogs, hamburgers, and chicken salads. Also on the menu will be jumbo cinnamon rolls, made fresh each morning, and homemade chili.

Commodities distribution next week

United States Department of Agriculture commodities will be distributed from 1:30-3 p.m. Wednesday at the RSVP office in the Senior Progress Center. Eligible people may receive them according to income guidelines on the above date and time only. No other arrangements for pickup will be made. Distribution is on a first-come, first-served basis and may not begin

until the advertised time. Participants are asked to not arrive at the distribution site before 1 p.m.

Eligible people who are not able to attend may send a signed permission slip with another person to pick up their commodities. Items include beef stew, peanut butter, green beans, apple juice, macaroni, cranberry juice and sweet potatoes. Call 462-6744 for more information.

Gaither Concert Sunday

The Colby Wesleyan Church, 320 W. Pine, will have a Gaither Video Concert at 6 p.m., Sunday. This week's concert will feature "A Gaither Homecoming Rivers of Joy Concert." All gospel music concerts are open to everyone and viewed on the big screen.

School to dismiss early Wednesday

Colby Public Schools are reminding parents and/or guardians that classes will be held Wednesday, Jan. 25, until 12:30 p.m., said Kirk Nielsen, superintendent. The reason for the notice is to alert families that the activity calendar had incorrectly stated there was no school on that day next week. Busses will run their normal routes with the early dismissal.

Weather Corner



Snow? 40 percent chance

The forecast

**Tonight** — A 40 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy with a low around 26. North wind around 5 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible. **Friday** — A 40 percent chance of snow, mainly before 1 p.m. Cloudy, then gradually becoming partly sunny with a high near 36. North wind around 5 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible. **Friday night** — Mostly clear with a low near 18. West wind around 10 mph. **Saturday** — Mostly sunny with a high around 43. North wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Saturday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 19. **Sunday** — Partly cloudy with a high around 42.

**Temperatures**  
Wednesday's high, 68  
Low this morning, 23  
Records for this date, 70 in 1911, -21 in 1984  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
January's precipitation, 0.07  
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Two-day irrigation conference scheduled in Colby

The Central Plains Irrigation Conference and Exposition will be held Feb. 21-22 at the Comfort Inn in Colby.

"The conference, sponsored by the Central Plains Irrigation Association, will acquaint participants with the latest information on irrigation equipment and water management practices," said Danny Rogers, professor and irrigation

engineer for Kansas State University Research and Extension.

"The conference is an excellent opportunity for irrigators to hear and talk with university and agency irrigation specialists and industry leaders from the Central Plains region."

Registration postmarked by Feb. 3 is \$60, or \$65 for participants applying for Crop Consultant Advisor

continuing education units. Late registration is \$65, or \$75 for those applying for the credits.

Registration fees include admittance to all sessions and the equipment exposition, a copy of the proceedings, two lunches, breaks and a social hour.

The conference, sponsored by the association, will feature presentations on Kansas irrigation demo-

graphics and how that impacts area residents.

A review of the renewable energy industry and options that might fit in the Ogallala region. Eight technical sessions will be offered, covering the latest information on irrigation systems and management.

Some of this year's topics include "Wastewater Utilization," "Resi-

due Management for Efficient Water Use" and "Limited Irrigation Crop Options."

For a registration form, hotel accommodations, or other questions, go to [www.oznet.ksu.edu/sdi/REvents/cpia.html](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/sdi/REvents/cpia.html).

Registration forms and payments should be mailed to Donna Lamm, 760 N. Thompson, Colby, Kan. 67701.

Fort Riley seeks 50,000-acre buffer against development

TOPEKA (AP) — Army officials hope a new program will help them establish a 50,000-acre buffer zone around Fort Riley and protect the historic post from urban encroachment.

The issue is significant as post prepares for an influx of 25,000 soldiers and civilians in the coming

years. Fort Riley officials said Wednesday that landowners who participate in the program will still own the property but won't be allowed to develop it.

"The Army is not wanting to purchase more land to train on," Jeff Keating, Fort Riley's program manager.

Congress has appropriated \$37 million to purchase easements nationwide, more than doubling funding from the previous year, said Lt. Col. Joe Knott, Army Compatible Use Buffer program manager at the Pentagon.

Craig Phillips, chief of conservation and restoration at Fort Riley, said a buffer would help avoid con-

flicts between the military and neighboring communities.

"The increase in the soldier population and associated increase in civilians could increase the pressure from housing developments around the perimeter of the installation," Phillips said.

Fort Riley will grow with the return of the 1st Infantry Division, which has been headquartered in Germany since 1995, and the relocation of an aviation brigade with more than 100 helicopters based at Marshall Field along Interstate 70.

Phillips said the buffer zone includes areas that are within earshot of noise from training ranges, as well as increased helicopter traffic

along the southern perimeter.

In expanding the fort's mission, Pentagon officials cited the abundance of training space and relative lack of encroachment, which were issues in the recent Base Realignment and Closure Commission process.

"For the most part, we are just trying to stay ahead of the potential that's out there," Phillips said. "There are some installations out there that are affected by land use. We don't want to get there."

Landowners in proposed buffer zone can sign an easement agreement through the Kansas Land Trust.

An appraiser will determine the

value of the land, and the federal government will give the owner a one-time payment. The easements are irrevocable and stay with the property whether sold or passed on to heirs.

"This is entirely a voluntary program," Phillips said.

RoxAnne Miller, executive director of the Kansas Land Trust, said the program allows native prairie and prime farmland to be preserved. In the long run, she said, the cost to taxpayers is cheaper.

"It makes good sense. Both of these things are deemed of importance to Kansans, even if it's not related to Army funding," Miller said.

Rexford man pled guilty to New Year's Day crime

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

A man on parole from Colorado has been charged and sentenced on a Thomas County crime that took place New Year's Day.

Ronald E. Martinez, 32, of Rexford was charged with one count of assault for running into the tractor of a semi-truck owned by Rexford Grain.

According to Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn, Martinez was attempting to drive into a vehicle owned by Rob Dice. Baughn said Dice was able to get out of

Martinez's way, leaving open the opportunity for Martinez to run into the truck.

Martinez pleaded guilty and was sentenced Jan. 4 in Thomas County District Court.

District Magistrate Judge Richard Ress sentenced Martinez to a six-month unsupervised probation and required him to pay court costs and attorney fees. In addition, Martinez will be responsible for paying for damage done to the vehicle. Martinez was returned to Colorado where he is on parole for felony escape from custody and drug charges.

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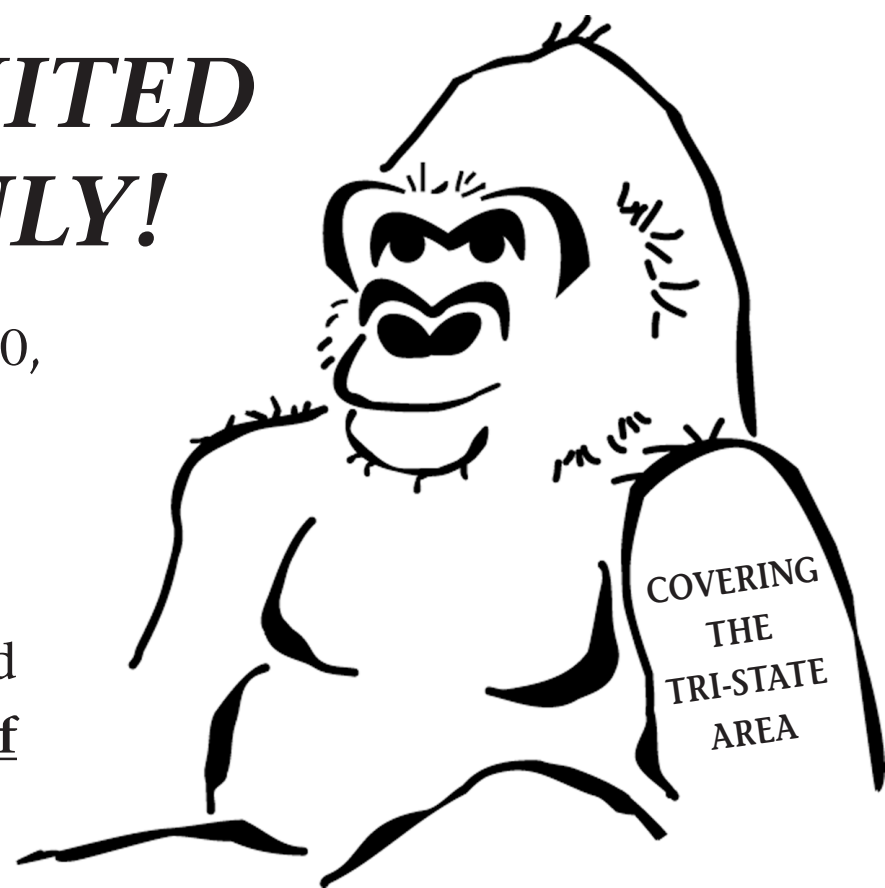
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