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JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Chuck Moore shovels snow off the sidewalk this morning in the 100 block of West Fifth Street. Deb Hauser (background), who works at the Saint Francis Academy, was also getting some early morning exercise.

Weatherman: 'It laid down like a blanket'

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Waking up to a blanket of snow this morning probably wasn't a surprise to many Colby residents. However, the amount of snow outside was more than originally forecast.

Dave Floyd, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, said a large portion of the area received between six to eight inches of snow.

A 20-mile wide band stretching from southwest to northeast over the area dropped up to eight inches in some places.

Predictions were for 2-4 inches in Russell Springs and Gove and 1-2 inches for Colby. Instead, Floyd said, the snow band stayed about 50 miles north of where it was supposed to go.

Not that that was a problem, he said.

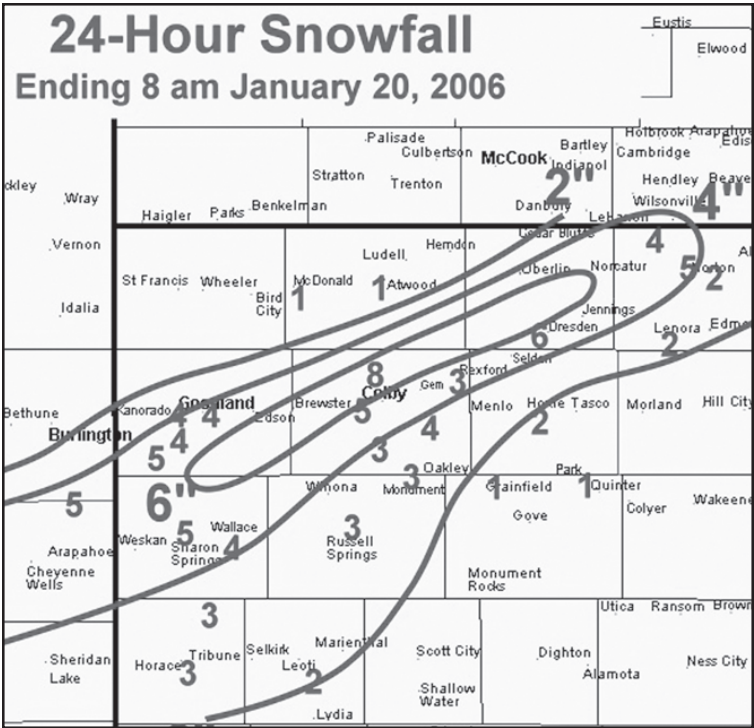
"The amounts were pretty generous," Floyd said. "There was good moisture with this snow."

Usually, there is a 10- or 12-to-1 ratio of snowfall to water. Ten inches of snow usually equates to about an inch of liquid water.

With this snow, spotters were reporting about four-tenths of an inch of water to four inches of snow. Some had .48 of water to five inches of snow.

"It worked out good there," he said. "It was a good, moist snow."

Snow in the area is also normally accompanied by wind, but not this time.



"There was very little wind with this event," Floyd said. "There was no drifting. It fell straight down."

Winds also make for difficulty measuring snowfall amounts with accuracy, but this snow proved very easy to measure. The data collected by observers matched with what the radar showed, and the snowfall map compiled today by the weather service.

"This was pretty uniformly laid out," he said. "It laid down like a blanket."

The snow also gave the area its moisture for the month. A normal snowfall for northwest Kansas in

January is seven inches.

"We're just right at normal," Floyd said, adding that should make farmers happy.

Such a heavy, wet snow will take a while to melt, providing winter wheat with added moisture and protection from wind.

Another snowfall like this before the end of the month would be a "boost."

He said the winter months are the lightest of the year when it comes to moisture, with only 0.4 being the average.

"This was really good," Floyd said.

College sees jump in spring enrollment

By Patty Decker
Free Press Editor

The Colby College board of trustees learned spring enrollment is up 25 more students during their meeting earlier this week.

"This is good news," said Skip Sharp, interim president.

Total number of students enrolled for the semester, that started Jan. 11, is 949 students compared to 924 students for the same time last year.

In addition to head count" increase, the total credit hours taught went up too, he said.

"This year's figure of 12,642 is an increase of almost 7 percent over last year's 11,841 credit hours," Sharp said.

The increase was attributed to good retention from the fall semester and many transfers from four-

year universities, he said.

"Our faculty and staff made a concerted effort to help students succeed," Sharp said.

"That commitment to service and to students increased our retention rate." He also said goals set by everyone at the college in keeping current students and attracting new students was successful.

"The transfer students told us they left the larger universities to have better one-on-one instruction and to have a more affordable education," he said. "I believe we have a very positive attitude on campus and that makes students feel good and want to stay."

Sharp said head count and credit hours will continue to increase as enrollments are finalized at the school's 25 outreach centers located in the college's 14-county

northwest Kansas service area.

The trustees also approved contracts and agreements at their meeting.

Cathy Gordon, a full-time instructor, was approved for EduKan, peer review; Linda Davis-Stephens, was approved for part-time EduKan/Cultural Anthropology; Vu Phan, was given the part-time fit lab monitor's position; and Darrin Bell received a pay increase as full-time night shift supervisor.

Agreements included two physical therapy assistant programs. One of those is with Rehab Source in Oklahoma City, Okla., and the other with Aegis Therapies, Inc., dba Beverly Healthcare, based in Scottsbluff, Neb.

The trustees also approved leasing a new postage machine from Pitney Bowes, Inc.

Community scores with Orange and Black tourney

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Orange and Black Classic basketball tournament has a huge impact. Many people come to town, and provide an economic boost, but it's also a huge event for the community itself, said Colby High School activities director Jeff Quenzer.

He estimated 3,000-4,000 fans come to watch the three-day tournament, and that's not counting the teams and coaches who come to participate. Quenzer said its' one of the bigger events in the community and takes a lot of effort to put on.

The tournament isn't just a school event, but a community event.

"I think it's a good thing," he said, adding everyone benefits.

People shop, eat and stay, which helps local businesses, and it also showcases volunteer spirit.

He said people may take for granted just how much work it takes to put on the Orange and Black, and also the school's wrestling tournament in December.

Volunteers fill many posts during both events.

"A lot goes on behind the scenes," Quenzer said. And like any other event in the county, like the fair, races or blue grass festival, the tourney takes a lot of planning and preparation.



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Colby Eagle R.J. Ladenburger greeted the crowd in the spirit line before the start of Colby's game against Beloit Thursday in the first round of the Orange and Black Tournament. For all the results, turn to page 10.

Senator looks to lower taxes, 'Prescription for Growth' plan

TOPEKA (AP) — Republican Sen. Jim Barnett outlined his platform Thursday for the governor's race, but Democrats questioned whether he could deliver on promises to lower taxes while providing additional money for public schools and higher education.

Barnett, an Emporia physician, said his "Prescription for Growth" plan is designed to give Kansas a comprehensive plan for improving education while stimulating economic growth.

He wants to cut individual and

corporate income taxes and eliminate estate taxes, while phasing in a \$400 million increase in aid to public schools over four years. He also promised an annual 2.5 percent increase in the budgets of state universities, community colleges and to cover increases in the cost of social programs.

To make his plan work, he would spread out spending under the state's 10-year comprehensive highway improvement program an additional two years and freeze spending on programs not related to

education or social services. He also believes the tax relief will stimulate economic growth.

He also proposed constitutional amendments declaring that only the Legislature can appropriate money and requiring Senate confirmation for Kansas Supreme Court justices. Both are responses to concerns about the Supreme Court's ordering lawmakers to spend additional money on education last year.

"It recognizes tough choices for our state and offers a comprehensive plan," Barnett said.

Leading Sunni politician calls on kidnappers to release American

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A top Sunni politician appealed Friday for the release of an American female journalist and urged U.S. and Iraqi forces to stop arresting Iraqi women as a deadline set by the reporter's kidnappers was set to elapse.

The kidnappers had threatened to kill 28-year-old Jill Carroll unless all female detainees are freed by Friday. No hour was specified, and there was no indication Friday that any prisoners had been released. A U.S. Embassy official said Friday he

was unaware of any contacts between a high-level hostage release team and the kidnappers. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the case, said U.S. authorities were meeting with various figures including political leaders, particularly from the Sunni Arab community, who may have links to the kidnappers.

Carroll, a freelancer for the Christian Science Monitor, was abducted Jan. 7 near the office of prominent Sunni Arab politi-

cian Adnan al-Dulaimi, whom she was going to interview. Her translator was killed.

On Friday, al-Dulaimi promised to work for the release of all women prisoners but warned that failure to set Carroll free would "undermine and hamper my efforts."

"We are against violence by any group, and we call the government and U.S. forces to stop raiding houses, arresting women," al-Dulaimi said in a statement. "I call upon the kidnappers to immediately release this reporter who came here to cover Iraq's

news and defending our rights."

He urged militants to protect journalists "regardless of their nationality."

"This act has hurt me and makes me sad because the journalist was trying to meet me when she was kidnapped," he added. "After she left my office because she was unable to meet me, she was kidnapped 300 meters from my office."

U.S. authorities have confirmed they are holding eight Iraqi women, and the Iraqi Justice Ministry has called for six of them

to be set free. It was unclear how many women may be in Iraqi custody.

The Friday deadline was set in a tape received Tuesday by Al-Jazeera television from the previously unknown group called "Revenge Brigade." Iraqi kidnappers have often given such ultimatums only to ignore them and continue holding captives.

Kidnappers of Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, seized in Baghdad last February, gave Italy 72 hours to withdraw its troops from Iraq.