

Weather Corner



Flurries with lows at 4 below

Tonight — Flurries. Cloudy with a low around -4. Wind chill values between -9 and -19. East wind between 10 and 15 mph. **Saturday** — Flurries before 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high around 12. Wind chill values between -4 and -14. Southeast wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Saturday night** — Scattered flurries. Mostly cloudy with a low near 5. East wind around 10 mph becoming south. **Sunday** — Mostly cloudy with a high around 20. South wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Sunday night** — Scattered flurries. Mostly cloudy with a low around 11. **Monday** — Partly cloudy with a high around 29. **Monday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 13. **Tuesday** — Mostly sunny with a high around 32. **Temperatures** Thursday's high, 43 Low this morning, 2 Records for this date, 72 in 1961, -13 in 1978 Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00 February's precipitation, 0.04 A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Breast-feed bill reviewed

TOPEKA (AP) — Mothers nursing their infants in public would get some protection from harassment under a bill many thought was doomed, but which managed to find new life in the Senate. Wednesday, senators gave first-round approval to the House-passed bill without dissent. Senate leaders expect easy passage when it comes up for a final vote Thursday. Supporters had all but given up on the measure, which says a woman can breast-feed in any place she has a right be. The bill was returned last year to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee because some conservatives thought it was a bad idea. As passed by the House, the legislation said mothers may breast-feed "discreetly" in public. The Senate committee struck that word, touching off the opposition.

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Briefly

Town meeting planned Saturday

Kansas Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. Jim Morrison will be in Colby from 1:45 to 2:45 p.m., Saturday, at the Thomas County Office Complex meeting room, 350 S. Range Ave. The purpose of the town meeting is to let constituents know what the legislative issues are and what concerns people might have. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

'Guest Night' for ladies planned

Area ladies are invited to attend "Guest Night" sponsored by the Hi-Plains Harmony Chapter of Sweet Adelines International. The special event is planned for 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 28, at the Colby United Methodist Church, 950 S. Franklin Ave. A door prize and refreshments will be provided. For questions, call Joan Wessel, 386-4241.

Moran to visit Colby

Congressman Jerry Moran will visit Colby Thursday as part of his tenth annual "Big First Listening Tour." He will be in downtown Colby during his Thomas County stop. Moran is visiting 10 western Kansas counties during his tour.

Childhood screenings planned

The Colby School District, along with the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center staff, will be having the pre-kindergarten screening Tuesday and Wednesday, March 7-8 at the United Methodist Church, said Emily Strange, school nurse. "Parents of students entering kindergarten in August 2006 are encouraged to take advantage of this developmental screening," Strange said. "The screening will

be done by professionals who know how children grow and learn." The screening will take about one hour to complete. To make an appointment for the screening or questions, call Strange at Colby Elementary School, 460-5111.

Trustees meet in Norton

The Colby Community College board of trustees will hold their regular meeting at 5 p.m., Monday, at the Norton County Hospital. Items on the agenda will include the annual audit report; approval of contracts; a report on the Wellness Center; selection of a firm for reference checking; report on presidential search and comments from Skip Sharp, president and other board members.

The college vehicles will leave at 4 p.m. for the trip to Norton. Boarding location is west of Thomas Hall. For questions or an agenda, call 462-3984.

'Daffodil Days' continues

Colby is participating in the annual "Daffodil Days" sponsored by the American Cancer Society. This year's coordinator, Cathy Harrison, said all proceeds go to help the society's mission in research and finding a cure. Daffodils are the first flowers of spring and a symbol of hope for a world free from cancer. With six different options available, people have many choices to fit their budgets. A bunch of daffodils is \$10; Cheer bouquet with vase, \$15; Bear and ABunch, \$25; 12 bunches, \$175; 25 bunches, \$250; and 50 bunches, \$350. For questions, call Harrison at 460-2501 (home); 462-2331 (office); fax 462-6242 or email: harrison@st-tel.net. Deadline for placing orders is Friday, Feb. 24. Daffodil delivery will be the week of March 6.

Auditors investigate sale barn

SOUTH HUTCHINSON (AP) — Auditors with the U.S. Department of Agriculture are investigating a South Hutchinson sale barn that closed, and some cattlemen have complained to police about checks from the business bouncing. Investigators with the Agriculture Department's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration on Wednesday began examining the accounts for Central Livestock Corp., which shut its doors Tuesday and has been put up for sale.

"This is very, very hard," owner Mac Frederick said. "It's terrible. If I had a way to get everything paid back, I would do it." John Barthel, regional manager for the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's Denver office, said only that his agency was conducting an audit to determine which customers were owed money.

However, several cattlemen have filed complaints with the South Hutchinson Police Department about bounced checks. Reno County District Attorney Scott Schroeder said it is too early to tell if fraud charges will be filed against Frederick, who purchased the business 12 years ago.

Frederick blamed his financial difficulty on the cost of worker's compensation and rising energy costs, despite one of the warmest winters on record. While Frederick said he has not filed for bankruptcy, he had to lay off three full-time and 30 part-time employees.

Don Guetschow, a rancher from

Cheney, said he used a check from a recent sale to pay off outstanding debts. When the check bounced, he said, he was forced to take out a loan to cover the bills. "This is going to hurt a lot of farmers," said Eddie Kohler, another rancher who complained about receiving a check that bounced.

South Hutchinson Police Chief Scott Jones said he does not know how many people have filed complaints against the sale barn or how much money is owed. According to the Reno County Treasurer's Office, Central Livestock Corp. owes \$30,000 in taxes — more than \$20,000 of it delinquent. This isn't the first time Frederick has been in financial trouble.

In 2000, the Agriculture Department ordered Frederick to stop selling livestock on a com-

mission basis because his liabilities exceeded his assets. He was fined a civil penalty of \$16,000 and ordered to provide monthly account reconciliations and balance sheets for two years.

Until a new owner is found, ranchers selling cattle, hogs and sheep will have to drive to Salina or Pratt, the next closest auction markets.

Ted Schroeder, an economist at Kansas State University, said Central Livestock Corp. is not alone in its struggle to survive, as direct-marketing and changing consumer demands threaten the nation's 1,200 sale barns.

"It's part of the evolution," he said.

Information from: The Hutchinson News, <http://www.hutchnews.com>

Vienna Choir to perform in Colby

The Western Plains Arts Association program "Bethany College Handbell Choir" scheduled for Sunday in the Colby Community College Cultural Arts Center will be rescheduled at a later date, association officials said. However, everyone is being reminded that the Vienna Choir Boys Concert starts at 4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 26, at the Colby High School auditorium.

Tax help Wednesdays

Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, will be the location on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. and until April 15 assisting with tax returns for the elderly or low to middle income families and individuals.

Alvin Volk is coordinating the project in Colby and will help in tax preparation at no charge. For information, call 460-2645.

Sacred Heart pre-enrollment set

Sacred Heart School will hold pre-enrollment for the 2006-07 preschool and kindergarten classes from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, March 8, in the school lobby, said Dave Evert, principal. Parents or guardians will need to bring immunization records, birth certificate, social security card and physicals. For questions, call 460-2813.

Courthouse, county offices closed

The Thomas County Courthouse, district courts, health department and landfill will be closed Monday, Feb. 20 for Presidents Day. They will reopen as usual on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

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