

**Weather Corner**



**High at 77 and low 33**

**Tonight** — Mostly clear with a low around 33. South wind 5 to 10 mph becoming west.  
**Tuesday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 77. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south.  
**Tuesday night** — Partly cloudy with a low near 38. South wind 10 to 15 mph becoming west.  
**Wednesday** — Partly cloudy with a high near 64. Breezy with a north wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. Wednesday night — Partly cloudy with a high around 29.  
**Thursday** — Mostly sunny with a high around 57.  
**Temperatures**  
 Sunday's high, Low this morning, Records for this date, 77 in 1904, -10 in 1960  
 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.

**Briefly**

**County to review transit van**

Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include Betty Nichols, who will talk with the commissioners about Rexford's transit van. The commissioners will review the budget for High Plains Mental Health at 9:30 a.m. and talk with Larry Hawkins of Central Benefit Health Insurance about claims. Other agenda items include approval of the payroll; second half of February bills; minutes; Kansas Public Employees' Retirement System pamphlet; University of Kansas seminar "Community Preparedness for the Next Pandemic in Kansas"; and the 2006 certificate of liability insurance from Bandy Enterprises, Inc.

ets, call 462-3004, 462-2474 or 460-6552. Or, outside Colby, call 1-800-279-8208.

**Dance planned Friday**

A Colby single and couple's dance is planned from 8 to midnight, Friday, at the American Legion, 1850 W. 4th. Entertainment will be provided by Swing N' Country. The event is open to the public.

**Gem Lions holding winter soup day**

The Gem Lions Club is holding its annual winter soup day from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, at the Gem Community Building. Veggie and potato soup, crackers, corn bread and cake are on the menu. Cost is free will donation and the proceeds will be used for community betterment.

**Brewster board has open seat**

The Brewster School Board is looking to fill a vacancy until the general election. The vacancy will be filled by appoint-

ment. The board has an opening because of the resignation of board member Tony Horinek. Anyone interested should call (785) 694-2236 before 4 p.m. Friday, March 17.

**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. The screening will take about one hour to complete. For an appointment, call 460-5111.

**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.

**Building a lasting friendship**

Gabriel Schriener, left, reads to Infinia resident Lydia Russel as Taylor Thummel looks on. The students in Erin Inman's first and second grade class at Heartland Christian School go to Infinia of Colby, a nursing home, once a month and read to the residents. Each month they read to the same resident so that they can develop a relationship with them and get to know them.



TONYA WINGER/Heartland Christian School

**Grant forum set in Colby**

The Northwest Kansas Grant Funding Consortium is sponsoring a Speaker's Forum in Colby Wednesday, March 15, at the Colby Community Building. The event is planned for organizations seeking grant funding with cost for the forum and lunch. Speakers include: Juliene Maska with the governor's office will present information on S.A.F.E. Communities Program, Federal and Other Grants; Linda Lanterman, Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks who will discuss information on funding for parks and walking trails; and Jerry Clevenger, Hartsook Companies, will provide information capital campaigns and fundraising. For costs or registration, call Western Prairie RC&D at (785) 462-2602.

**Federal inquiry finds district easy on pinching incident**

WICHITA (AP) — A federal inquiry has found that the Wichita County school district did not take appropriate action against a former high school principal who reportedly pinched a female student. The report from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights showed that a Leoti USD 467 investigator found "inappropriate touching" took place about 18 months ago between a freshman girl at Wichita County High School and then-principal Duane Custer. "However, the District failed to take appropriate action in response to this investigation, including taking disciplinary action against the principal," the report said. The report, released earlier this month, also said Custer was accused of making inappropriate remarks about other female students' bodies. As a result of the federal inquiry, USD 467 agreed to settle the matter by reviewing and amending the district's sexual harassment policy. The district also must educate fac-

ulty, staff and students on the policy in training and orientation sessions. Mark and Barbie Wilbur accused Custer of sexual harassing their daughter and sought the federal inquiry after they were told of the pinching incident. They said the report's conclusions gave them some relief. "We were elated that finally somebody agreed with us," Barbie Wilbur said. "I think the school district is going to take things seriously in the future. Which is what we wanted." Custer denied the incident and maintained his innocence. "It didn't happen," he said. "I am keenly aware of sexual harassment policies," Custer said in a prepared statement, "and as an administrator I have a duty to protect students, and I have always strived to do so."

In October 2004, the USD 467 school board decided against imposing any disciplinary action in the Aug. 27, 2004, incident. But Custer stepped down as Wichita County High School principal at the end of the 2004-05 school year and now heads the Salina Area Technical School. Salina USD 305 Superintendent Robert Winter, said district officials learned of the incident shortly after hiring Custer and looked into the matter. "We did our homework, and we're comfortable with where we are with Mr. Custer's employment," Winter said. A witness told the Office of Civil Rights that she saw the Wilbur girl and Custer talking near a locker room entrance at the Wichita Coun-

ty school in the lead-up to the apparent pinching. "What are you smiling at?" Custer asked her. The girl did not respond and then, the witness said, Custer "pinched her on the bottom," causing her to flinch, according to the agency's report. The report also outlined other apparent incidents involving Custer. Three students testified that the former principal, speaking at a May 24, 2004, freshman orientation, singled out two students by name as examples of "physically developed" females. One of the trio said Custer referred to development in the girls' "breast area."

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