



# Wind collapses Colby canopy

Strong winds cause damage throughout town

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

Wind gusts at nearly 70 mph Saturday caused major damage to many signs along South Range Avenue.

The most spectacular was the damage to the canopy at the BP 24/7 Store, 1980 S. Range.

Matt Grove, an employee at the store, started his shift at 3 p.m. when he said he noticed the canopy rocking. Concerned that it could blow over anytime, Grove called assistant manager Rob Kraft, who had just left the store.

By the time Kraft returned, about 15 minutes after Grove's call, the canopy had tipped over at about 3:30 p.m.

"We shut the power off right away to stop the sump pumps from operating," Kraft said. "The center pump was completely destroyed."

As for damage, Kraft said this morning it was too soon to estimate.

"It was the most exciting thing I had ever witnessed," Grove said.

The Colby Police Department barricaded the property's entrance until the canopy was safely removed said Gary Shull, detective.

Also called to the scene was Commercial Sign owner Bruce Bandy, who was already in the area working on the Burger King sign.

"The face was blown out of the high rise on the Burger King sign pole," Bandy said.

"One of the pumps was smashed under the weight of the 30' x 50' canopy," he said.

Using a crane truck, Bandy lifted

**"We shut the power off right away to stop the sump pumps from operating. The center pump was completely destroyed."**

— Rob Kraft, bp assistant manager

the canopy off the other pump and set the entire canopy down on the driveway.

"It took about two hours to complete the work," he said.

In addition to the Burger King and BP, other wind damage could be seen at Wal-Mart when a section of the pole sign was blown off.

City Limits had shingle damage, Maurices also lost pieces of its sign and Truck Town had a truck trailer tip over. In town, fencing along South Franklin was also damaged.

Mike Albers, technology director for the City of Colby, said the highest gust was clocked at 69 mph at 1 p.m.

"Right around noon," he said, "we had sustained winds at about 40 mph with gusts of 60-61 mph. As the day wore on, sustained winds reached 54 mph by mid afternoon."

When winds stay at a constant speed like what happened Saturday, "That's when the damage occurs," Albers said.

By 9 p.m. the winds had calmed down.



Sustained winds of 50-plus mph took its toll on the canopy at BP 24/7 Saturday. Commercial Sign owner Bruce Bandy and Brad

Bandy and a passerby looked at the canopy which was ripped off its anchors.

PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

## Thomas County Conservation District announces new director

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Spring has brought a change to the Thomas County Conservation District. A new director has taken over.

Danielle Freeman took over last month and has had a learning to curve to deal with. Freeman replaces Lynette Koon and Jessica Rhodes.

Freeman is the former director of

the Thomas County Community Foundation. She started with the conservation district last month.

"The new position is a challenge, but I'm excited about it," she said.

She has had to learn all of the

different projects farmers can sign up for and she also assists with federal programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Two-thirds of the conservation district's funding is from the county, and the rest from state and grant funding. They also cost-share with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and Pheasants Forever for wildlife habitat projects.

Freeman is a Colby native, and 1996 graduate of Colby High

School. She received her bachelor's degree from Baker University and is working on a master's degree from Fort Hays State University in organizational leadership with a certificate in grant writing.

She and husband Todd have two daughters, Eryn and Anastasia.

"We help with conservation education for youth and adults in the county," she said. The office provides cost-sharing funding for conservation practices to help produc-

ers. Sign-up for state cost-share programs will be May 22-June 9.

"That involves all cost-share practices," Freeman said.

One of the programs to sign up for during the same period is the non-point source pollution program. It deals with water quality, and cess pool/septic system closure.

The conservation district cost-shares 50 to 70 percent of a project. Many producers have signed up in the past, and she's hoping for more

this year.

Freeman invites producers to visit the office or call to find about what the conservation district has available.

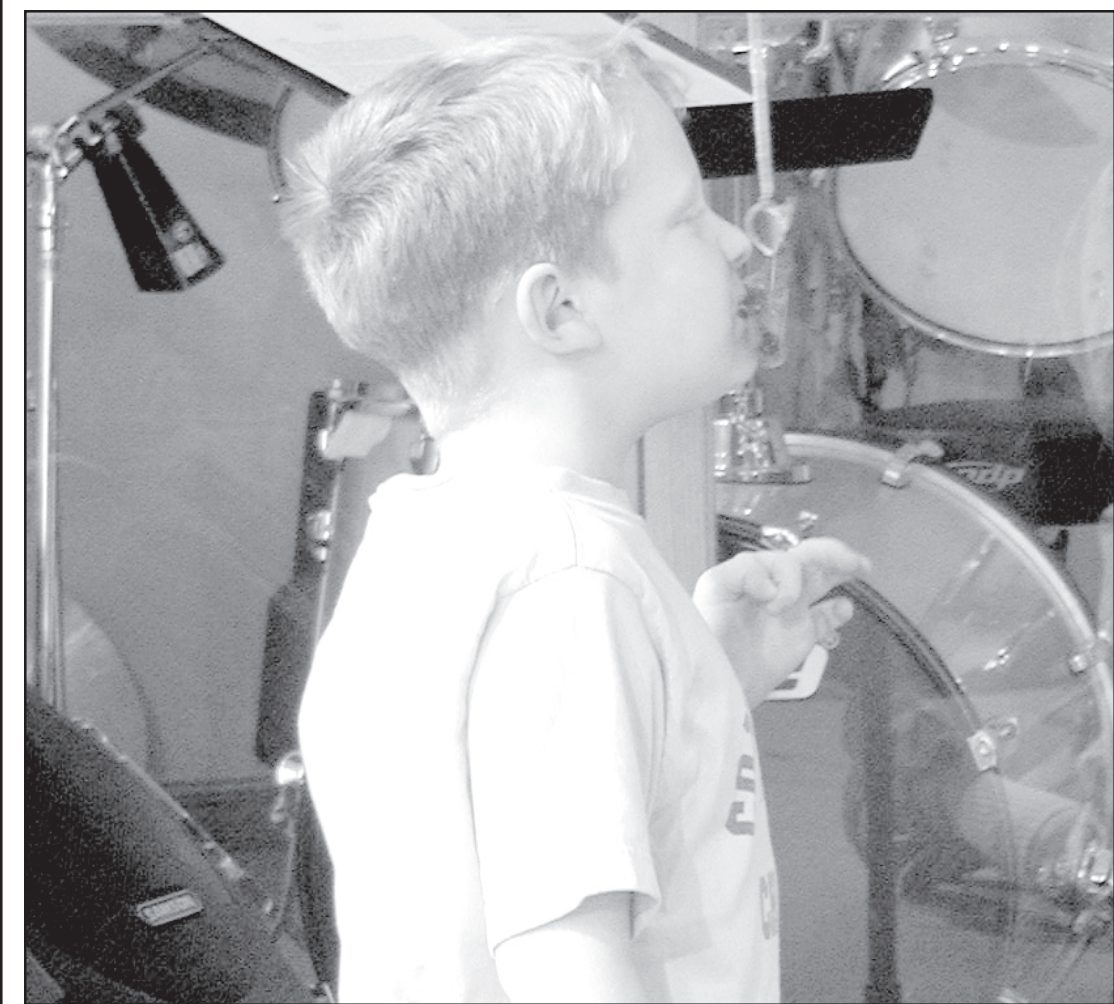
In addition to conservation practices, the office sells grass seed, drip irrigation equipment, trees and marking flags. Any of the items can be purchased over the phone or at the office at 915 E. Walnut.

For information, call 462-7482 ext. 303.



D. Freeman

'Look, ma, no hands!'



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Lander Niblock attempted to eat the candy off the string Saturday during the College Drive Assembly of God church's Easter celebration.

## Former Joint Chiefs chairman dismisses criticism of Rumsfeld

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld did not intimidate members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during planning of the Iraq war as some retired generals have charged, a former chairman said Sunday.

With Rumsfeld described by his critics as a micromanager who did not listen to military leaders, the Pentagon circulated a one-page memo late last week detailing the defense secretary's frequent contacts with numerous military and civilian advisers.

Richard B. Myers, the Air Force general who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs from 2001 until last fall, dismissed criticism that military leaders failed to stand up to Rumsfeld and President Bush when they disagreed with those civilian officials.

"We gave him our best military advice, and I think that's what we're obligated to do," Myers said on "This Week" on ABC. "If we don't

do that, we should be shot."

A half-dozen retired generals have called for Rumsfeld's ouster, citing mistakes in the conduct of the war in Iraq.

Some have suggested that intimidation by Rumsfeld kept military leaders quiet even when they thought policies were flawed.

"You'd have to believe that everybody in the chain of command is intimidated, and I don't believe that," said Myers, now a professor at Kansas State University's Institute of Military History and 20th Century Studies.

He added that Rumsfeld allowed "tremendous access" for presenting arguments.

"In our system, when it's all said and done ... the civilians make the decisions," he said. "And we live by those decisions."

The Pentagon memo, which was not dated or signed, put onto paper information that had been provided orally to reporters on Friday. It is not

unusual for the Defense Department to distribute such information to analysts, military officials and others who might be reporting or commenting on a Pentagon policy.

Senior military leaders "are involved to an unprecedented degree in every decision-making process" in the Defense Department, according to the memo.

Rumsfeld, it said, had met 139 times with members of the joint chiefs and 208 times with combat commanders from 2005 to the present.

Bush on Friday said that Rumsfeld "has my full support" and praised the defense secretary "for his leadership during this historic and challenging time for our nation."

On Sunday's news shows, Republican lawmakers either backed Rumsfeld or declined to take issue with Bush's support for him. Democrats continued to call for a change in Pentagon leadership.

## Tax deadline today

The deadline to get federal income taxes in the mail is 7 p.m. tonight. For anyone needing to get theirs in the mail, the front window at the Colby Post Office will be open until 5:30 p.m. tonight, its regular hours.