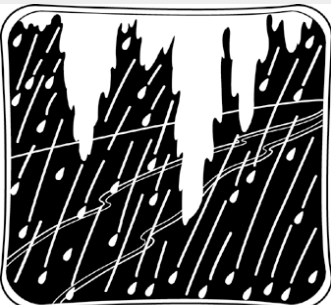


Weather Corner



Forecast calls from snow?

**Tonight** — A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy with a low around 34. Breezy with a north wind around 20 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 50 percent.

**Tuesday** — A 20 percent chance of snow showers before 10 a.m. Partly cloudy with a high around 49. North wind around 15 mph.

**Tuesday night** — Mostly clear with a low near 31. North wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm.

**Wednesday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 66. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.

**Wednesday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 40.

**Thursday** — Partly cloudy with a high around 78.

**Temperatures**  
Sunday's high, 88  
Low this morning, 43

Records for this date, 94 in 1906, 25 in 1958

Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.05

April's precipitation, .49

**Water Use from April 21 through April 23**  
2,641,500 average

A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Lunch complicates school debate

TOPEKA (AP) — A five-minute conversation over lunch at a Mexican restaurant could have big repercussions for the Legislature, the Kansas Supreme Court and the state's public schools.

Lawton Nuss and Pete Brungardt had what for them was an uneventful meal March 1 in south Topeka. The restaurant was a favorite of their guest, Steve Morris, who tagged along at Brungardt's spur-of-the-moment invitation.

Nuss is a Supreme Court justice. Brungardt is a longtime friend, a Salina Republican who serves in the Senate.

Morris, a Hugoton Republican, is Senate president. The Legislature is under a Supreme Court mandate to increase spending on public schools. The three men briefly discussed matters related to an education funding lawsuit that is still pending.

Drafting and pushing through a plan large enough to satisfy the Supreme Court already has proven difficult for legislative leaders. With last week's disclosure of the lunchtime conversation among the three men, the task became more difficult.

Nuss removed himself from participating further in the school finance lawsuit, filed in 1999 by parents and administrators in Dodge City and Salina. He said he wanted to avoid the appearance of impropriety — something demanded by the code of conduct under which he and other justices and judges operate.

But instead of preventing a public furor, the court's announcement of Nuss' action created one, at least among legislators, who are scheduled to reconvene Wednesday to wrap up their business.

Mays has said he is likely to appoint an investigating committee. Though Attorney General Phill Kline won't say whether his office has launched an inquiry, at least four senators said they have been interviewed or have given a statement.

They include Morris, who spent an hour with an investigator from Kline's office after being located riding a tractor in a farm field.

The court said Nuss only sought information that would help him understand various funding recommendations.

Degree reception Wednesday

Colby Community College will host a public reception to honor Jay Donelan and Jim and Betty Firestone on Wednesday, beginning at 3 p.m. in Room #108 of the Student Union. Donelan and the Firestones have been selected as the 2006 honorary degree recipients. The degrees will be conferred during commencement exercises on Saturday, May 13.

Hydrant testing continues this week

The Colby Fire Department continues testing hydrants throughout the city, said Assistant Fire Chief Rick Dickman. While the hydrants are being flushed, some residents may notice discoloration in their water. Should that happen, continue to run water until it is clear, he said. For questions, call 460-4454.

Legion baseball to meet Tuesday

An organizational meeting for American Legion baseball players and parents will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Sunflower Bank hospitality room, 500 N. Franklin Ave. Young men 19 and under are eligible to play unless they will turn 20 in 2006.

First-year players should bring their birth certificate. For more information, contact John Gatz at 460-2490.

Help needed for cleanup week

The City of Colby and the Thomas County Commissioners are combining their efforts to sponsor a city-wide and county-wide cleanup week from May 1 through May 6. Area service clubs and church groups are asked to commit their organizations to clean public areas in the city, such as ballfields, parks, all roadsides and entrances in Colby. If anyone is willing to volunteer their services to assist the elderly and infirm, call Jo Stange, administrative assistant to the city manager, 460-4410, and leave name.

Those who need assistance should also call the city and leave their names.

The city will then match up those who can help and those who need help.

College play begins Thursday

Colby Community College's drama department will feature "The House of Blue Leaves," at 7:30 p.m., April 27, 28, 29, in the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center Frahm Theater. Tickets are available in advance at the college bookstore, 460-4670 or at the door.

CRP deadline extended to Friday

The USDA's Farm Service Agency in Thomas County announced the extension of the sign-up deadlines for both the Conservation Reserve Program general sign-up and the special Conservation Reserve Program re-enrollment and extension opportunities until Friday. The CRP program is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally sensitive land, said Ross Sloan, executive director.

Farmers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, enhance wildlife and improve water and air quality. In return, the Farm Service Agency provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Information is available at the agency's website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm>.

Coffee planned for volunteers

A coffee beginning at 10 a.m. Thursday, April 27, is being held for all volunteers who have donated their time to Prairie Senior Living Complex. The event is being hosted by the staff and residents of the facility, said Cheryl Schwarz, activity director.

Hoxie school superintendent sees many changes

By Jan Katz Ackerman  
Colby Free Press

Teachers leaving and a school district closing were among Scott Hoyt's first year as Hoxie's superintendent.

"My first year has gone very well," Hoyt said. "I give that credit to my staff."

Now in his fifth year in Hoxie's school district, Hoyt oversaw the leaving and retirement of five teachers.

Vickie Deines retired last year as a full-time physical education and

health teacher but came back this year on a part-time basis.

At a recent school board meeting, Deines, resignation was accepted.

Also retiring from the district was elementary school teacher Chris Wycaver who has been with the district 32 years.

Leaving the district for other positions are second year teacher and coach John Petrie, as well as Tom Snodgrass, technology coordinator, and his wife, Terry Snodgrass, kindergarten teacher, who are moving to Kansas City to be closer to family.

ily.

Nikki Campbell will stay on a fourth grade teacher but is giving up her coaching contract with the junior and senior high school volleyball and girl's basketball programs. Gina Schamberger will stay on a third grade teacher, but resigned from her scholar's bowl coaching contract.

"As of right now, we are not having any trouble finding teachers," Hoyt said.

Hoyt said the district is receiving applications from both new and experienced teachers, having recently signed contracts with Richard and Rachelle Stephens who will come from Russell.

"They've taught at Russell for seven of the past 15 years," Hoyt said.

Richard Stephens will be the junior and senior high physical education and health instructor, and Rachelle Stephens will teach elementary physical education and music, both on a part-time basis.

Other contracts approve Monday were one with Mike Porsch as head high school wrestling coach; Aaron Dardis, who taught high school social studies this year, for high school assistant track coach; and Stan Raile, who will serve as a part-time custodian and substitute bus driver.

Hoyt said for the past year he's been involved with negotiations which have taken place with closure of the Jennings School District. Administration of that district was officially taken over by the state earlier this year, but after the term ends the land and building will have to be dealt with.

"It's a done deal," Hoyt said. "The only issue we might have to deal with is selling of the school building."

Hoyt said he had been advised a buyer for the building had been located, but change of ownership has yet to take place.

As far as the land previously taxed by Jennings, school district, one the school year ends on June 30 the land will be divided between districts in Norton, Oberlin and Hoxie.

Tax values have yet to be determined from the process.

Prom goes on for students at Riverton School

RIVERTON (AP) — High school students here donned crisp tuxedos and sparkling gowns over the weekend despite what authorities called a foiled shooting plot by their classmates.

The Riverton High School prom went on as planned Saturday, though five students suspected of planning the violent spree two days earlier remained in custody on \$500,000 bond.

Students who took part in the adolescent rite of passage said they were not surprised the dance was not canceled.

"Our school is not big on canceling things," said Daniel Koucky, a senior at Riverton High. "We have

not had a snow day in two-and-a-half years."

Like many Riverton students, Koucky wasn't sure what to believe about the alleged plot. At first, the rumors of plans for a Columbine-style shooting did not frighten him, but those feelings changed.

"I assumed it was blown way out of proportion," he said. "Then I started to consider the actual level of the odds that it was real."

Bethany Street, who dined with Koucky and four other couples at a Joplin, Mo., steakhouse before the prom, said she still felt unnerved by the incident, but was focusing on her glamorous night.

"I do not think many people

thought anything would really happen or that prom would be canceled," she said.

Authorities in Riverton — a community of about 600 people in southeast Kansas, near the Oklahoma and Missouri borders — say the five teens involved in the plot planned to wear black trench coats and disable the school's camera system before starting the attack Thursday afternoon.

Sheriff's deputies found guns, ammunition, knives and coded messages in the bedroom of one suspect and documents about firearms and references to Armageddon in two suspects' school lockers.

A bond hearing for the suspects

Restrictions eased on BTK killer

WICHITA (AP) — Good behavior has earned BTK serial killer Dennis Rader the right to watch television, listen to the radio, read and draw in his prison cell.

Prosecutors had sought restrictions on such activities, saying they would allow Rader to relive his grisly, sex-fueled fantasies through images of women and children and written and broadcast accounts of his murders. But Rader earned the privileges through the Department of Corrections' system to encourage good behavior, said Bill Miskell, a department spokesman.

The eased restrictions aren't sitting well with some family members of Rader's 10 victims and prosecutors who helped put him behind bars at the El Dorado Correctional Facility.

"We're having a hard time understanding why somebody like this is allowed to earn privileges when all the evidence was presented as to how he can turn what most people would consider to be innocent into something that is evil," said Kevin O'Connor, a deputy district attorney for Sedgwick County.

Georgia Mason, the mother of Nancy Fox, who was killed by Rader in 1977, was not pleased with Rader's new status.

"I just don't think he needs anything in that little cell," she said.

Miskell said he couldn't disclose what items Rader has obtained under the new rules.

The spokesman did say that written materials with sexually explicit content would not be allowed.

Even with the new privileges, Miskell noted that Rader remains in the prison's most restrictive environment. He is let out of his 8-foot-by-10-foot cell only one hour a day, five days a week, to shower and exercise.

Rader, who called himself BTK for his preferred method to "bind, torture and kill," would have to serve a minimum of 175 years before he would be eligible for parole. Kansas had no death penalty at the time of the murders.

His chief public defender, Steve

**MOVIE PASSES**

Watch for your name in the Wednesday movie listings for 2 free passes.

(Passes must be used within 7 days.)

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Celebrating Hometown Life

(available in trade area only)

See American Profile Magazine in today's issue of the

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**ATTENTION**

Colby High School, Brewster High School, and Golden Plains High School

**Senior Parents & HOMESCHOOLERS**

**Hurry in parents!! Deadline is May 3rd!!!**

The Colby Free Press is now planning the Senior Graduation Section and will be giving parents a chance to put a baby picture in along with a short message from the family for a small charge.

We will automatically feature your son/daughter's senior picture and information, but this will be your chance to put in a baby picture to show how much *your* senior has really changed over the years!

Call Crystal, Jasmine or John Altman @ 462-3963 for more info. or stop by the office at 155 W. 5th in Colby.

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