

Weather Corner



Highs near 100, lows about 65

Tonight — The forecast is calling for a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 10 p.m. Partly cloudy with a low around 64. South wind around 10 mph. Friday — Sunny and hot with a high near 99. South wind between 10 and 15 mph. Friday night — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1 a.m. Partly cloudy with a low around 63. Southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph. Saturday — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high near 95. North wind between 10 and 15 mph. Saturday night — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1 a.m. Partly cloudy with a low around 64. Sunday — There's a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high near 96. Sunday night — A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy with a low around 63. Monday — Mostly sunny with a high near 90. Temperatures: Tuesday's high, 94. Low this morning, 66. Records for this date, 109 in 1960, 44 in 1908. Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00. June's precipitation, 3.20. Water Use Report Thursday, June 29: 3,387,600 gallons. 3.5 million = Water Watch. 4 million = Water Warning. 4.5 million = Emergency. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Briefly

Landfill closing for holiday

The Thomas County Landfill will be open for business during regular hours, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, and 1 to 4 p.m., Sunday, but will be closed Monday and Tuesday for the Fourth of July holiday. Regular hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The landfill will reopen at its regular Monday through Friday hours from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday.

Childbirth classes starting

Citizens Medical Center will hold a four-week series of childbirth education classes beginning Thursday from 7 to 10 p.m. and will continue on July 13, 20 and 27. Expectant mothers in their last trimester are encouraged to attend. The labor support partner who will be with the mother in labor, is also encouraged to attend classes. The next series of classes will be October. Classes will be held at the hospital, 100 College Dr. For information or to register, contact Jeanene Brown, RN, education department at (785) 460-4850.

Artwork on display at local bank

A display of artwork by members of High Plains Art Club will be on exhibit in the board room at Farmers and Merchants Bank, 240 W. Fourth, Colby. The public will be able to view the artwork from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. July 3-7, 24-28 and 31.

Fireworks illegal within Colby

The Colby Fire Department is reminding residents the use, sale, or possession of fireworks within the city limits is prohibited. When using fireworks outside the city limits, individuals will need permission from the landowner. In Kansas, the sale of fireworks started Tuesday and will continue through July 4, said Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore. Bottle rockets are illegal in the state of Kansas. It is illegal to shoot fireworks on or under a vehicle, on any public roadway, within 50 feet of a fireworks stand or where fireworks are stored, and gas stations or any place liquid gas, including propane is stored, he said. McLemore urges everyone to attend the fireworks display at 10:15 p.m., Monday at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

Fundraiser Sunday

A fundraiser beef and noodle feed to benefit Phyllis and Allen Cheney will be at 11:30 a.m. Sunday at Rexford Community Hall, 205 Main. The Cheneys home and barn were damaged during recent storms. All proceeds will be used to help pay for repairs. Donations may be left at any branch of The Bank or mailed to Cheney Benefit, c/o Lyn Cheney, Rt 2 Box 38, Rexford, Kan. 67753. For information, call Lyn Cheney at (785) 687-8042 or Kay Cheney at 687-4651.

Mingo Church plans one-day event

The Mingo Bible Church is presenting a one-day Vacation Bible School starting at 9 a.m., Friday, July 7, at the church. "Better than a Circus," is the theme with activities concluding at 4 p.m., said Pastor Chris Shubert. All children from kindergarten to sixth grade are welcome to attend the one-day Vacation Bible School. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and a lunch will be served. For questions about transportation or the class, call (785) 462-2992.

Commissioners meet Friday

Kansas City students get double dose of three Rs

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Frank Oakley has always struggled in math class. This past school year, the 15-year-old was in it twice as much.

Like thousands of middle- and high-schoolers across the country, he received a double dose of math and English classes. The approach pays off at test time, but it's generating concerns that students are giving up electives and receiving a less well-rounded education.

For Oakley, doubling up on the two core subjects proved beneficial. "I actually kind of like it," the sophomore at Wyandotte High School said of the once troublesome subject of math as he finished his final exams. "I'm starting to understand it."

That's music to the ears of Mary Stewart, the head math instructional coach for high schools in the Kansas City, Kan., district.

“What seems to be happening is that in some high schools they are eliminating the electives . . .

Jack Jennings president of the education search group

"Always before, the constant was the amount of time we spent with the kids, and the variable was how much they learned," she said. "What we are looking at is switching that so the constant is what they learn and the variable is the time."

Starting this past academic year, Oakley's high school switched to a new program that requires freshmen and sophomores to prove they understand math concepts on two separate tests to get credit for a skill.

Students who need extra time to understand pi or the Pythagorean theorem can get it before and after school, over their lunch periods, during the summer or by enrolling in an extra period of the subject.

Meanwhile, all ninth-graders are enrolled in two English classes, with one aimed at improving their reading skills.

Schools are increasingly requiring extra class periods of English and math as they seek to boost test

scores and meet the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind law, which carries sanctions for low-performing schools. No Child requires that students be tested annually in the subjects of reading and math in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school, usually in 10th grade.

In some districts, students are attending two class periods each day of English and math. Meanwhile, in school districts with college-style block schedules, the core subjects are taught in longer classes that meet every day, instead of every other day, or for a full year, instead of a single semester.

Often, one of the English classes is devoted to reading instruction — something that has traditionally ended when students leave elementary school.

Variations of the approach are being used in other Kansas school

districts, including Shawnee Mission and Topeka, as well as schools in Missouri, Texas, New Jersey and California.

Havenscourt Middle School in Oakland, Calif., decided to require two class periods of the core subjects for all students because so many needed the help.

The change left no time for electives, forcing the school to drop wood shop, art, music and Spanish. Now, those electives and others are offered before and after school as extras.

"What seems to be happening is that in some high schools they are eliminating the electives," said Jack Jennings, president of the education research group. "They are giving kids a double dose of math or putting in a reading course in lieu of electives."

The American Federation of Teachers said 87 percent of its members — across all grade levels — reported in a survey that increases in testing have pushed important subjects and activities out of the curriculum.

"We can't say it's OK to spend so much time on the basics that we let the broader curriculum slide," said union spokesman John See, a former math teacher.

In Kansas City, Kan., administrator Steve Gering said finding that balance can be tricky.

Concealed guns among new laws going on books

TOPEKA (AP) — In a state where guns have been a part of life since frontier days, Kansas residents finally have a law allowing them to pack a pistol.

The days of shootouts in cowtowns like Abilene and Dodge City are part of Old West history, but for many, owning a gun remained as

much a right as owning land.

Yet, until this year, Kansas was one of the few states banning citizens from carrying a hidden gun, although in some parts of the state, having a pistol stashed in the glove box or under the seat of a vehicle is fairly common.

But come Saturday, Kansas be-

comes the 48th state to have a concealed gun law on the books, although permits won't be issued until Jan. 1. Illinois and Wisconsin are the only states that do not allow concealed carrying of guns in any way.

It's among some 180 new laws taking effect Saturday, including tougher penalties for child molest-

ers and imposing a minimum marriage age of 15.

Rep. Gary Hayzlett, a longtime booster of concealed guns, said he has received numerous calls from Kansans wanting to know how they get permits and who does firearms training. He said he has heard of waiting lists for classes.

For the Record

The following arrests or incidents have been provided by either the Thomas County Sheriff's office or the Colby Police Department. All suspects were booked into the county jail and are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Thomas County Jail is used by Colby, Oakley, Logan and Thomas counties.

Thomas County Sheriff's office Wednesday, June 21

•Driving while suspended: Richard Layton Powell, Jr., 29, of Augusta, Ga., was arrested at 3:47 p.m. by the Kansas Highway Patrol on Interstate 70 milepost 59 westbound for driving on revoked license and driving while suspended - habitual violator.

He was released from the Thomas County Jail at 6:45 p.m. with notice

to appear in district court.

Tuesday, June 27

•Battery: Christopher Anthony Gilliland, 31, of Monument, was arrested at 11 p.m. by a Logan County Sheriff's deputy for a court appearance on battery.

He was released from the Thomas County Jail at 11 a.m., Wednesday, June 28.

•Probation violation: Dale Alan Quast, 38, of Colby, was arrested at 10:12 a.m. after violating the terms of his probation. He remains in custody.

•Possession: Joseph Lee Evans, 25, of Colby, was arrested at 3 p.m., by the Thomas County Sheriff's office in the 500 block of South Mission and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia.

He was released at 3:40 p.m. on \$50,000 cash bond.

State, federal government fighting over Medicaid

LAWRENCE (AP) — The federal government says Kansas owes it a minimum of \$5.1 million for improper billing of Medicaid payments, but state officials say they don't believe Kansas should have to repay that amount.

A federal audit in February recommended the state repay the \$5.1 million for payments in 2002 and determine how much of an additional \$126.8 million in payments might need to be repaid.

Julie Brookhart, a spokeswoman for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in Kansas City, Mo., said her agency is still waiting for Kansas to provide information on how it determined what Medicaid payments were due to the state.

But the Kansas Division of Health Policy and Finance does not believe the \$5.1 million payment is warranted, said Gavin Young, a spokesman for the division.

The audit investigated how Kansas billed Medicaid for school-based health services for children with special needs.

Investigators said a sample of 300 Medicaid claims from the Wichita,

Kansas City and the Central Kansas Cooperative school districts in 2002 found 217 claims that should not have been paid.

The audit said most the claims should not have been paid because they lacked required doctors' orders or evidence that the services had been provided.

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