



COLBY FREE PRESS

Crash results in two injuries

A wreck between a motorcycle and car sent two people to Citizens Medical Center with injuries.

According to a report from the Kansas Highway Patrol, the accident happened at 10:10 p.m. Monday at the intersection of Interstate 70 Exit 53 and Kansas Highway 25.

Gregory Thomas Mead, 36, and passenger Sheila K. Williams, both of Colby, were southbound on Highway 25 on Mead's 1996 Vulcan motorcycle.

Monica Landa Garcia, 35, of Corpus Christi, Texas, was preparing to turn left from the interstate exit onto Highway 25.

She failed to yield at the stop sign, and Mead collided with the front driver's side of Garcia's 2002 Dodge car.

The motorcycle came to rest on its side against the car.

Mead and Williams were taken to Citizens Medical Center with injuries and an update on their condition was not available at press time. Neither were wearing a helmet. No one in the car was injured.

Andy A. Garcia, 14, and David A. Garcia, 17, both of Corpus Christi were passengers in the car.

Let me show you



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Brooklyn Bange, right, helped sister Brielle with her "puppy pouch" craft project during storytime Tuesday at Pioneer Memorial Library. Storytimes and other activities have been part of the summer reading program which ends next week.

Water usage rising

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

The more water is used in Colby means the closer to mandatory watering times, higher water bills or worse.

The combination of no rain and hotter temperatures reflects how many residents have used more water. For the first time since May, Tuesday's water usage surpassed the 3.5 million gallon mark. Total reported usage was 3,666,400 gallons, according to the city's public utilities department.

Should usage continue to stay above that total for another two days, the city will be forced to implement its water watch. A water watch means the city is asking residents and businesses to monitor their usage carefully, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

"Once the water watch is triggered by three consecutive days of usage over 3.5 million gallons, the next phase is the "water warning" stage," she said.

When the demand for water exceeds the 4 million gallon mark for three consecutive days, the city goes into a warning phase, Armstrong said.

Under a water warning, the city council could decide to go with a lawn watering system based on addresses. In addition, council could recommend no outdoor watering between the hours of 10 a.m. and 9 p.m.

"This would still be voluntary and not mandatory for residents and businesses in the water warning phase, but it should be taken as a serious warning," she said.

In the third and final stage, a water emergency will bring actions by the council, she said. A water emergency is issued when usage is above 4.5 million gallons for three consecutive days.

Those could include banning outdoor watering. It could also prompt the council to set a special meeting to discuss the status of the water supply and consider raising the costs for water.

"For example, fines could range from \$25 to \$250 every day if someone violates the laws regarding usage," Armstrong said.

Council would determine when to lift any and all water restrictions.

"Each stage is more stringent in water use than the previous stage and the mayor or city manager is authorized by ordinance to implement the appropriate conservation measures," she said.

Armstrong wants residents to be aware water usage is increasing. Should residents fail to heed the warnings, the city council could be forced to look at other alternatives.

"As everyone knows, we are in a drought condition," she said. "Because we are experiencing the higher temperatures, we need to start conserving now."

County stands behind its 'no alcohol' signs

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

An anticipated debate over alcohol at the fairgrounds and campground fees charged by the fair board failed to materialize at Monday's Thomas County Commissioners meeting.

The county has installed signs stating alcohol is not allowed.

"We are going to leave the signs up and that's going to be it," Evans said. "If there's any problem, we'll call the sheriff and he'll deal with it."

Several members of the Thomas County fair board attended the commission meeting to talk about a request by Commissioners Ron Evans, Paul Steele and Ken Christiansen. The request is to add a paragraph to contracts made with anyone using the fairgrounds to state the no alcohol policy.

Fair board members were in the final stages of a contract with Colby Community College to allow its rodeo team to use the fairgrounds for practices when the commissioners decided to request the extra wording to the contract.

At the fair board's meeting Thursday, several members were not pleased with the commissioners' stance. At Monday's commission meeting, Evans' short, but final comment on the subject took the flame out from under any brewing



FILE PHOTO

The rodeo during the Thomas County Free Fair and the fair itself are two activities that could be affected by the county's no alcohol policy at the fairgrounds. The Thomas County fair board fears not allowing alcohol at the fairgrounds will reduce number of events.

debate on the topic.

Fair board president Stan Strange was upset all three commissioners didn't attend the fair board's meeting despite an invitation to do so. Steele was the only commissioner to attend.

Evans said he knew Strange wasn't happy neither he or Christiansen attended, adding he was out of town and in order to comply with the Kansas Open Meetings Act it would have had to have been a special meeting for the commissioners

had they all three attended. In addition, Evans said there had not been enough time to have notified the public about a special meeting had two or more commissioners, a majority of a quorum, attended the meeting.

"One thing I'd like to point out is the fair board is doing a lot of things right," Steele said. "And they have pretty good cookies at their meetings."

Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn said unless there was some

kind of incident which involved alcohol, all his office could do at the fairgrounds was to enforce underage drinking laws.

Camping fees

The commissioners also had few comments about a recent request for the fair board to change its fees on campground spots.

At the July 5 commission meeting commissioners told the fair board they didn't want the county competing with private enterprise.

Dan Bourquin, owner of Bour-

quin's Old Depot Restaurant and RV Park, said the fair board prices undercut his rates.

At that meeting, Strange told the commissioners the fair board's prices were \$15 for one night, \$75 for one week, and \$275 for one month.

While the county's RV spots do not have the same amenities as those of Bourquin's — a restaurant and restrooms — the commissioners instructed the fair board to raise their rates to match Bourquin's.

Bourquin's current rates are \$24 for one night with a 30 amp electrical connection and \$26 with a 50 amp connection. Individuals parking for seven days are charged for six days. Campers staying 30 days or more are charged \$12 per day.

Evans said the fair board could continue to offer reduced rates for campers at special events such as Pickin' On the Plains, the county fair and rodeo events.

"This whole thing is all well meaning," Evans said. "Why can't we all just get along?"

"I just don't want complaints from Dan Bourquin," Steele said. "Just don't go below \$12 a day for the monthly rate."

Asked whether the Bourquins raised their rates would the fair board need to raise theirs and Evans said, "Do what you need to do and he'll do what he needs to do and hopefully we won't meet again."

Triple-digit temps continue across state

By The Associated Press

Temperatures continued to soar Tuesday across Kansas, where the heat wave contributed to the death of a southeast Kansas man and caused record-breaking utility usage as air conditioners worked to keep pace. Day-care centers kept youngsters inside and some construction companies told crews to stay at home Tuesday to beat the triple-digit temperatures.

Weather officials, meanwhile, extended a heat advisory through Thursday in the eastern half of the state, where the humidity was making it feel like 105 to 115 degrees.

Early afternoon temperatures Tuesday were 95 in Goodland, 99 in Liberal, 104 in Wichita, 95 in

Topeka, 100 in Parsons and 93 in the Kansas City suburb of Olathe. Wednesday was expected to be warmer with temperatures approaching 110 degrees in an area in central and south-central Kansas that includes Russell, Salina, Wichita and Hutchinson.

Westar Energy Inc., the state's largest electric utility, reported a new record usage peak of 4,893 megawatts on Monday.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment did not have any reports of heat-related deaths, saying it takes several days to learn of them. But health officials were urging Kansans to take precautions, saying the young and elderly are at greatest risk.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Art from the chaff

Courtney Heinrich, left, of Colby, and Berniece (Parsons) Scharz of Enid, Okla., looked at a wheat art exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art and History Tuesday. Scharz, who grew up in Colby, was in town visiting relatives. The exhibit will be on display until next month.