

Briefly

County closing for holiday

The Thomas County Courthouse and courts will be closed Monday, Sept. 4, for the Labor Day holiday. The county landfill will be open Saturday, Sept. 2, at its regular time and be closed Sunday, Sept. 3, and Monday, Sept. 4. The courthouse and landfill will open at its regular time Tuesday, Sept. 5.

College president on tour

Dr. Lynn Kreider, Colby Community College president, will be the guest speaker at the Hill City Chamber of Commerce Sept. 7; the Atwood Chamber Oct. 3; the Quinter Chamber meeting Oct. 5; and the Colby Chamber of Commerce meeting Nov. 10. All chamber meetings begin at noon. The Colby Community College Board of Trustees is hosting a public reception for Dr. and Mrs. Lynn Kreider 3 p.m. Wednesday in the Student Union.

Fall play auditions Tuesday

Auditions for the Colby Community College fall play will

be held from 7 to 9 p.m., Monday and Tuesday in the Frahm Theatre, Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center on the campus. Auditions are open to the public and community members are encouraged to attend. No preparations are necessary. For questions, call Terrilyn Fleming at 462-3984, extension 300.

Orange Fridays new tradition

The Colby Booster Club is looking at generating Eagle spirit this year by starting a new tradition. The challenge to businesses and individuals is to wear orange every Friday during the months of September to May as a way to build enthusiasm for local students and athletes at all levels of participation. "By wearing orange," a spokesperson said, "you will be showing support for more than 350 students in grades 7-12 in all extra curricular activities."

Scouting night planned Aug. 29

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are having a joint registration Tuesday, with the Girl Scouts having a "come and go"

from 6 to 7:30 p.m., in the Colby Grade School cafeteria, 210 N. Grant. The Cub Scouts will have an informational meeting starting at 6:30 p.m., also in the cafeteria, along with registration. For questions, call Penny Kline, 460-2929 or Jan Barnum, 462-6503.

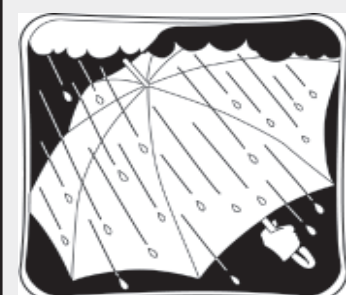
Tree trimming project to begin

The City of Colby electric crews are undertaking a major tree trimming effort in the community to insure the continuation of service during wind and snow storms, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong.

Marathon bridge fundraiser nears

The American Association of University Women is sponsoring its Marathon Bridge Tournament from September through May as a fundraising event to help pay for academic scholarships for Thomas County girls. Anyone interested in playing for the cause can call Sharon Kriss at 460-2800. In the 30 years the group has sponsored the marathon, more than \$20,000 has been raised for scholarships.

Weather Corner



The forecast

Tonight — A slight chance of showers before 1 a.m. Partly cloudy with a low around 52. North wind between 10 and 15 mph becoming calm. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.
Tuesday — Partly cloudy with a high near 77. Calm wind becoming northeast between 5 and 10 mph.
Tuesday night — Mostly clear with a low around 58. East wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south.
Wednesday — Mostly sunny with a high near 85. South wind between 5 and 15 mph.
Wednesday night — Mostly clear with a low around 62.
Thursday — Partly cloudy with a high near 89.

Temperatures

Sunday's high, 79
Low this morning, 53
Records for this date, 107 in 1899, 39 in 1911

Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
August's precipitation, 2.44

Water Use Report

Average Friday, Saturday and Sunday
• 2,082,200 gallons
3.5 million = Water Watch.
4 million = Water Warning
A recorded forecast is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Emergency grazing deadline extended

Director of the Kansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced today that livestock producers in counties approved for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) emergency haying and grazing may now hay or graze conservation land until Sept. 30. Prior to this extension, emergency haying and grazing in Kansas would have ended on Sept. 11.

"There are now 39 Kansas counties eligible for emergency haying and grazing," Fuller said.

"Sheridan County is the most recent county approved for emergency haying and grazing."

Counties previously approved include Cherokee, Cheyenne, Clark, Comanche, Decatur, Edwards, Ellis, Ellsworth, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Lane, Lincoln, Logan, Meade, Morton, Ness, Osborne, Rawlins, Rush, Russell, Scott, Seward, Sherman, Stanton, Stevens, Thomas, Trego, Wichita and Wallace.

The expanded area includes counties within 150 mile radius of any approved county for emergency haying and grazing.

Pressure on schools to make most of money

TOPEKA (AP) — For years, the mantra coming from school officials was that teachers knew how to help students learn but needed more resources.

More money for books, technology, specialized programs, upgraded facilities and better pay for teachers all were on the list. Give schools the resources, and student achievement would fly, they said.

Now legislators have promised more than \$830 million over four years, and the pressure is on school districts to get the results they have long promised.

"If little Susie or Johnny still isn't learning, even with these massive funding increases, it's going to ring hollow to keep blaming the state and the Legislature," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R-Independence.

"Teaching and learning have to happen in the schoolhouse; they can't be mandated from the Statehouse."

Funding increases legislators approved in 2005 and 2006 were forced by orders from the Kansas Supreme Court.

The justices concluded that the state's system of funding public schools was flawed and that the

amount of money going to classrooms was woefully inadequate.

Justices relied on evidence from a Shawnee County District Court trial of a lawsuit filed in 1999 by parents and administrators in Dodge City and Salina.

That evidence indicated there were significant gaps in spending that caused corresponding gaps in student achievement.

Witness after witness testified that schools knew how to get the desired student results but needed more resources.

The claims were similar to ones legislators heard repeatedly during their deliberations on school funding.

Legislators balked at first but eventually opened the treasury. In exchange for the money and relaxed restrictions, legislators also took steps to make sure they knew where the dollars would be spent through ongoing audits and reporting measures.

Justices also lifted their oversight of school spending by dismissing the lawsuit last month. While they didn't bless the Legislature's actions, the justices did indicate that legislators "substantially complied" with the court's orders.

"It's a valid step, but it's not the final step," said State Board of Education member Sue Gamble, R-Shawnee. "Now it's a matter of us continuing to tell the story of what's happening in education. It now comes down to accountability."

In the future, state law will require legislators to increase school spending based on the rate of inflation, as well as to make adjustments recommended by a commission they created to monitor education trends.

"It's not going to be business as usual for the Legislature or school districts. It's going to be a whole new dynamic in how this issue is looked at," said House Education Committee Chairwoman Kathe Decker, R-Clay Center.

Still, educators began the new school year saying they didn't feel any additional pressure than what they already face.

They cited state accreditation requirements, as well as student achievement goals prescribed by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which states that all students must be proficient in math and reading by 2014.

"Pressure for performance is part of today's climate. Accountability

is important, and we take it as a positive challenge," said John Showman, superintendent of South Haven schools.

Achievement scores indicate that Kansas students are doing as well or better than their national peers. For example, Kansas ranked among the top states in the nations in scores on the ACT college entrance exam. And steady progress has been made on state tests in a broad range of subjects.

Showman said the influx of millions of dollars into the education system will not cause major changes but will allow schools to continue their progress. Some improvements will be seen in the short term, especially with the hiring of new teachers to lower class sizes and to target programs for students at risk of failure.

Patience is a virtue in education reforms. For example, experts said changes prompted by a similar school finance lawsuit in Arkansas might need a decade to come to fruition.

Given the spotlight placed on the Kansas system, if meaningful improvement isn't achieved, it probably won't take legislators long to grumble about rescinding the in-

creases, or take another group of schools long to file a lawsuit crying foul.

A new lawsuit is most likely to be filed by small, rural school districts who feel they are being pinched by the courts and legislators. As Clifton-Clyde Superintendent Dave Roberts notes, rural districts can't raise additional dollars for salaries and programs to cover gaps in state spending.

"We have challenges all right, but right now the funding formula does not recognize our challenges the same way it recognizes those of cities," Roberts said.

"I think we are on our way to a two-tier education system, those who can raise money and those who cannot."

Still rural or urban districts must make due with their new resources and not expect legislators to accept excuses.

The reams of data used to argue for more money will now be used as the measuring stick to see whether schools are getting the job done.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Newsman John Milburn covers education and the Legislature for The Associated Press in Topeka.

Library announces fall activities, schedule

Story Times at the Pioneer Memorial Library start up again for the fall Sept. 12-14. These are designed to enrich and expand the preschool child's interest in reading and learning activities.

Each session is planned to give children an opportunity to hear a story, enjoy music and participate in completing a simple craft. Occasionally, there are special guest readers or presentations.

"We plan to have fun amusing ourselves with a couple of themes this fall," said Judy Kleinsorge, children's librarian. "They will be 'One Monster After Another,' 'Silly and Only Slightly Scary' and 'Snow Dudes: Frosty and Friends.'"

The schedule and offerings are as follows: Toddler Time (for children 18 months to 3 years) on Wednesdays, 10:15-10:35 a.m.; Preschool

(for children 3-4-5 years) on Tuesdays, 10:15-10:45 a.m. or 1:15-1:45 p.m.; or on Thursdays 10:15-10:45 a.m.; and Family Night (for the whole family) will be held on Tuesdays, 7-7:30 p.m.

Thursday sessions will be held in the Children's Room and all other session will meet in the library's meeting room.

Story times are free and open to the public. Registration is requested in order to help with program and space planning. Parents, grandparents and day care providers are encouraged to enroll their young child. Fliers and sign-up sheets are available at the library at 375 W. Fourth in Colby. Call the library at 460-4470 for more information.

Faced with a Drinking Problem?
Perhaps
Alcoholics Anonymous Can Help
Meetings are Open to the Public
City Hall Basement
Mondays & Thursdays - 8:30 p.m.

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Contact the

Thomas County Learning Center

for eligibility and enrollment information:

305 N. Franklin, Colby, 465-7900

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6-7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Aug. 30
COLBY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Student Union, Room 106

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