



COLBY FREE PRESS



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Ice coated a car's antenna Tuesday night. A winter storm moved into western Kansas Tuesday and early today. The storm first brought freezing rain and ice. Snow is expected before the storm

passes through Thursday. Road conditions closed many schools and power outages occurred earlier today across northwest Kansas.

Big winter storm freezes region

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

A winter storm and ice closed area schools and Interstate 70 today.

Jo DeYoung, financial officer with the Colby School District, said school was canceled today and was unsure about Thursday. Classes at Colby's Heartland Christian School and Sacred Heart School were also canceled.

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones said this morning there was

only one minor traffic incident in Colby today.

Other weather-related calls have involved broken tree branches and a power outages because of heavy ice. Snow is forecast later today.

This morning, I-70 was closed westbound from Colby.

The police department is monitoring the hotel situation to make sure enough rooms are available, and are in contact with the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Out in the county, there haven't been too many problems yet.

"People have anticipated the storm," said Undersheriff Jason Moses. "Traffic is fairly light."

He said at about 10:30 a.m., a deputy reported whiteout conditions at Levant, but the storm hasn't yet moved into Colby.

"We're just getting started," Moses said.

A few minor incidents have been reported, and there was also an accident with injuries on I-70 early today.

According to the Kansas Highway Patrol, at 2:05 a.m. 8.5 miles

west of Colby on the interstate, James E. McKinley, 49, of Sandusky, Ohio, was driving west on the interstate in 1998 Volvo semi. The trailer started to swing which caused the tractor to overturn. The truck slid on its right side.

McKinley and passenger Jonathan W. Metzger, 23, of Brook Park, Ohio, were transported to Citizens Medical Center in Colby.

Gwen Young with the hospital said Metzger and McKinley were both treated and released.

Vision screening among fair highlights

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Colby's annual health fair next month will include vision screenings provided by High Plains Lions Club.

The health fair is Saturday, Jan. 13, 2007, at the Colby Community College student union. Hazel Estes, president of the Lions club, said the state Lions organization has a sight bus, which allows on-site vision screenings. However, past district

governor Wayne Gilbert will bring screening equipment for the health fair. Screenings for glaucoma and peripheral vision are among the tests given. Estes said tests are just a preliminary screening, and if anything is detected, they will refer people to their eye doctor.

"It's a good fit to bring in at this time," Estes said. The club will also have videos and other material available on diabetes.

"Eyesight is related," she said, "and the disease also causes blind-

ness." The club will also have a used eyeglass collection at the event.

"We collect all over the world, then the glasses go to recycling centers," Estes said.

The glasses are then sent to underdeveloped countries and matched with people who need prescription glasses.

Estes said there are several collection centers around town. Lions also collects glasses at its various events. One was held at its recent pancake feed. She said the club col-

lects eyeglasses, or lenses if they are in good shape.

In 1925, Helen Keller called the club the "knights of the blind." Since then, sight has been a major project nationally.

Club member Darrel Follis said they also help purchase eyeglasses for school children or anyone with vision problems. Lions provides assistance if someone breaks their glasses, or parents might not be able to afford the full cost for their children.

Hoxie man claims city violated its own ordinance regarding dogs

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A Hoxie man is taking on city hall in an effort to keep his three dogs the city is calling pit bull dogs.

Mark Karnes, 27, has been charged with violating a city ordinance keeping pit bull dogs within city limits. Karnes claims the city is the violator.

"Six months ago the city filed paperwork against me saying I was harboring pit bulls," Karnes said. "In October, I got three tickets, and December 13 went to court, but Judge Tony Haffner wouldn't even look at my paperwork." Karnes said the city contacted him about his dogs in July, after Hoxie Chief of Police John Bieker took a

photograph of his dogs while they were in their locked kennel outside Karnes' home. He said Bieker took the photo to City Attorney Ken Eland, who filed a complaint against him.

After contacted by the city, Karnes took measures to make sure he complied with the city's ordinance. An ordinance stating dogs which are pit bulls, or have the appearance or characteristics of pit bulls, must be registered; leashed or muzzled; confined indoors or in a securely enclosed and locked pen or kennel; have signs posted to their

presence; be covered by liability insurance; identified by photograph; and reported to the city of its whereabouts and health conditions, sale or transfer of ownership.

Karnes said his attempts to register his dogs with the city have failed, being told he could not register them unless he could provide proof of the breed.

The city revised its ordinance in June and established a \$15 evaluation process which veterinarian Mark Poell will determine whether a dog is a pit bull.

Poell said Tuesday he has cared for Karnes' dogs in the past, but has not seen them recently. Medical records on file in Poell's office list Karnes' dogs as a mixed breed. Karnes claims the dogs are Labrador retriever and Shar-Pei mix.

Karnes said the city violated its own ordinance when, instead of having Poell evaluate his dogs, Haffner, during the Dec. 13 hearing, went to his house and looked at the dogs and made his ruling.

"He just looked at my dogs and said they were pit bulls because of their tight skin and large heads," Karnes said. "I've had these dogs five years and there has not been one incident with them."

Karnes was charged with \$200 fines for each of his dogs, plus he will have to pay court costs. Should Karnes refuse to comply with the ordinance, Haffner could find him in contempt of court and order the immediate confiscation of the animals. Should the dogs be confiscated, Karnes will be charged for the animal's shelter, food,

handling, veterinary care and testimony necessitated by the enforcement of the ordinance. Karnes said he asked the city clerk for forms on which to file an appeal, but was told the city does not have any such forms. He said he went to the clerk of the district court office and asked for an appeal form, but was told the same thing.

He also said he consulted with two attorneys in Wichita about his situation, but learned he can not afford to hire anyone to represent him in his case.

"He can file an appeal and he does not have to hire an attorney in his own case," Eland said.

Karnes said he plans to appeal the municipal court ruling, he just does not know how he will do it by Saturday's deadline.

Board looks at buildings

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Building use and improvements at the Thomas County Fairgrounds were discussed Thursday at the fair board meeting.

The board had a bid for siding for the solar building, but tabled the bid until the January meeting. The estimated cost of siding the building is \$10,000-\$20,000.

Board president Stan Strange said he has talked to county commissioner Ken Christiansen about using the building for storage for items belonging to the county's emergency management department.

Director Jim Engel needs a place to store cots and other supplies for emergencies. Strange said the commissioners might be willing to cost-share to repair the building if part of it could be used for storage.

Another option would be a new building at the fairgrounds.

"That's some food for thought," Strange said.

Board member Mark Anderson said the building has storage space, and only one-fourth of the building would be needed to store the emergency supplies.

Strange said the board should discuss the possibilities before taking any ideas to the commissioners. The board also talked about the rodeo. Board member Clair Schrock had a proposal from stock contractor Bronc Rumford for one night of rodeo and one night of bull riding, but nothing was decided.

Wild-cow milking or wild horse races to the rodeo was discussed, as well ranch rodeo were also mentioned.

In addition, the board approved the purchase of a fair management computer program for \$875.

The real meaning of Christmas

Heartland Christian School students Avery Lee, left, Luke Cox, middle, and Isaiah Cox, portray the wise men during the school's musical Christmas program "Jesus, Light of the World" held Tuesday. The performance combined music with the Biblical story of the birth of Jesus Christ.



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One and done: Search begins for new coach

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Colby School District is again looking for a head football coach.

The Colby school board approved the resignation of coach and strength training instructor Bob Ray at its meeting Monday.

In addition to the resignation, Ray will be fined \$500 for breaking his contract early.

Ray is expected to leave at the end of the current semester to become an assistant football coach at McPherson College. Ray coached Colby to an 1-8 record last season, his only one at Colby.

Board member Stan Molstad also asked about Ray's supplemental contract. The supplemental contract was for Ray to be an assistant track coach in spring 2007. That supplemental contract is now void but Ray will still be compensated for his regular teaching duties.

"We still owe him some money," said superintendent Kirk Nielsen.

The board will get an accounting of the amount owed to Ray at its January meeting.

Because Ray is leaving at the end of the semester, a long-term substitute teacher may be needed to fill his position.

District financial officer Jo DeYoung said some one could be hired permanently, but a substitute



Bob Ray



Kirk Nielsen

"We still owe him some money."

Kirk Nielsen, superintendent

is a more likely solution.

Substitute teachers are paid \$81 a day, a rate set by board policy. After 30 days, pay increases to the beginning-teacher rate of \$163.10 a day.

DeYoung said Ray worked 88 days of his contract, 99 days are left.

In other board news...

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen's contract was also on the agenda. The board approved renewing Nielsen's contract through June 30, 2008.

The calendar for the 2007-2008 school year was approved. The first day of classes will be Thursday, Aug. 23, 2007.

Nielsen said the calendar is similar to the one for this school year.

A few minor differences are included, such as two fewer late starts for school improvement meetings. He has had feedback that the late starts aren't working as well as hoped. They have proved an inconvenience for parents.

"We will work with parents," Nielsen said.

In other business, the board approved:

- A supplemental contract for Nancy Rundel as assistant forensics coach.

- An early graduation request for Bobby Weiss.

- The resignation of high school paraprofessional Melanie Hart and Joanne Dumler, who is retiring.