

Weather Corner



Freezing drizzle possible Thursday

Tonight — Mostly clear with a low around 23. South wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north. **Thursday** — Areas of freezing drizzle after 3 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high near 30. North wind between 5 and 15 mph. **Thursday night** — Areas of snow, freezing drizzle and sleet. Mostly cloudy with a low around 9. Northeast wind around 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Friday — A 40 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy with a high near 14. East wind between 10 and 15 mph. **Friday night** — A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy with low around 6. **Saturday** — Snow likely. Mostly cloudy with a high near 12. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent. **Saturday night** — A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy with a low around 3. **Sunday** — A 50 percent chance of snow. Wide-spread blowing snow. Mostly cloudy with a high near 14.

Temperatures

Tuesday's high, 36
Low this morning, 6
Records for this date, 73 in 1928, -10 in 1988
January's precipitation, 0.01
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

Briefly

Collie needs a home

The Colby Animal Clinic has an 8-month-old male Collie, male, brown and white, named "Lucky," ready for adoption. Clinic officials said Lucky would be perfect in a farm setting or where there's lots of room for him to roam. The only cost for adoption is his immunization shots. For questions, call 460-8621, or stop by the clinic, 810 E. Fourth St.

Chamber luncheon Friday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce luncheon is noon, Friday, at the Colby Country Club. The guest speaker is Diane Stithem, director of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The menu is spaghetti and meatballs, garlic bread, salad bar and brownies, said Holly Stephens, Chamber executive director. All chamber member and guests are encouraged to attend. For questions, call 460-3401.

Library storytimes resume

Storytimes at the Pioneer Memorial Library are starting again this week, said children's librarian Judy Kleinsorge, and will run through the first week in May. The schedule and offerings are as follows: Toddler Time (for children 18 months to 3 years) on Wednesdays, 10:15-10:35 a.m.; Pre-school (for children 3 to 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 are held on Tuesdays, 7-7:30 p.m. Story times are free and open to the public. Fliers and sign-up

sheets are available at the library at 375 W. Fourth. Call the library at 460-4470 for more information.

Mothers of Preschoolers to meet

Mothers of Preschoolers will meet from 9 to 11 a.m. Thursday at the Colby United Methodist Church, 950 S. Franklin. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the topic of the day is "spa day." Daycare will be provided. For information, call Michelle Mettlen at 460-3310.

Colby blood drive Tuesday

A blood drive is scheduled from noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday, at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. Walk-ins are welcome or participants can call toll-free 1-800-448-3543 for appointments.

Dog obedience training to begin

An orientation meeting for dog obedience training is planned at 7 p.m., Tuesday, at the 4-H Building on the Thomas County fairgrounds. The training is open to 4-H members and the public, said Carrie Bredemeier, trainer. The classes are open to dogs 5 to 6 months or older with the main emphasis in helping owners with socializing their dog and behavioral control.

The 4-H classes will work on obedience, showmanship and agility. This first meeting is without dogs, but current vaccination records are required for those planning to participate. For questions and costs, call Bredemeier at 460-3816.

Food sign-up continues

Prairie Land Food sign up, formerly known as Share, continues through Friday at the State Farm Insurance office, 905 E. Fourth St., Colby. Delivery is at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 27, at the Colby Sacred Heart School gymnasium, 1150 W. Sixth St. This month's food package contains six meats and six to eight fruits and vegetables for \$20.50 plus two hours of volunteer time of a person's choice. Meats included this month are smoked pork chops, pizza bites, fully-cooked shrimp, sliced roast beef, bacon and steak burgers. For questions, call Gene Griffin, one of the coordinators, 460-3579.

Grade cards to be released

Colby Public Schools is sending grade cards home with students in K-12 by Thursday, Jan. 18. Parents not receiving a grade card after that date are asked to call the specific building principal. For grade school requests, call 460-5100; middle school, 460-5200 and high school, 460-5300.

Spaghetti supper Friday

The Thomas County Relay for Life committee is hosting a spaghetti supper fundraiser starting at 5 p.m., Friday, at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. The event is in conjunction with the Eagle basketball game against Hoxie and is free-will donation. All proceeds go toward fighting cancer, said Diane Stithem, committee member.

Brewster, other towns talk about 2007 goals

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

As the calendar moved to a new year, area towns started looking at goals for 2007. While some towns are in a holding pattern, others have major projects to accomplish.

Hoxie

Hoxie City Clerk Jessica Spresser said this is the year the city will raze all of the asphalt streets.

Usually done every three or four years, the project was rescheduled to 2007.

Spresser said she did not know when the project would start since the bid process has not been done yet.

Another major project his year in Hoxie will be the installation of new playground equipment at the former "Kiddie Park."

Recently renamed after the late Sheriff Jim Johnson, the James L.

“Keep the public happy.”

Mike Baughn,
Brewster mayor

Johnson Memorial Park will have some \$80,000 of disability-accessible playground equipment.

A project spearheaded by Michelle Foote and Lola Baalman, both of Hoxie, the city matched up to \$40,000 of the money raised by the women.

Installation is tentatively set to begin in March.

Brewster

Mayor Mike Baughn said other than maintaining its current status, Brewster does not have any major goals other than to "keep the public happy."

Part of that process started in late

2006, when the city nearly lost its grocery store. The community rallied behind a nucleus of people who formed the Brewster Grocery, Inc. and as of the end of 2006 there was a paid membership of 76 people supporting the venture.

"We have hired Janet Carpenter to be our manager," Baughn said. "She'll be a one-woman show for a while, along with a host of volunteers."

Baughn said the first load of groceries arrived Wednesday, and he was hopeful more loads will fill the store.

A six-person board oversees the new grocery venture. Those board members are Jon Eicher and Baughn, three-year terms; Lawrence Mayer and Natalie Owens, two-year term; and Arnold Schindler and Doris Quenzer, one-year terms.

Rexford

"Survive," said Mayor Bill Dible. Optimistic that Rexford is moving forward, Dible said the biggest goal for the town of is just to keep doing what it has been doing.

"We'll probably do some more sidewalk projects," he said, "but that usually isn't decided until the summer."

Dible is pleased the council's function of overseeing the town is moving along smoothly.

"We've been pretty lucky," he said. "We've got everything pretty much up and going and things are going well."

Oakley

Mayor Frank Munk said Oakley is "moving ahead" with several projects. Besides last year's purchase by Midwest Energy of the electric distribution system, Munk said the city still needs to upgrade its power plant which was not sold.

"We also will need to do some equipment trades, and as we speak are in the process of taking water and sewer across U.S. 83 to the Wild West Foundation location," he said.

In the "thinking and discussing stage," Munk said he would like to see a go-cart and dirt bike facility built in Oakley.

"We have property available for it just east of the sale barn," he said. "And we'd like to see another water well put on line, a Kan-step program to add on to the fire station, and in 2008 we plan to replace the airport runway with concrete and in 2009 resurface South Freeman."

Topeka water expert says conditions could be 'historical drought'

SALINA, Kan. (AP) — If anyone in Topeka knows drought, it would be Tracy Streeter.

For starters, he's director of the Kansas Water Office, the state's lead agency in water planning. Furthermore, by law, the Water Office is responsible for identifying drought conditions in Kansas. He's chairman of the Governor's Drought Response Team.

And at the Kansas Water Authority's quarterly meeting last month in Great Bend, Streeter was talking up the drought. He twice said the state might be in a historic drought and that the relentless decline of the water level in Kanopolis Reservoir — it's at its lowest level since 1989 — was due to the weather.

"I wish I had a crystal ball to predict when the drought will break," Streeter said. "Obviously, lack of rainfall is the primary culprit ... We've got a very complex issue here in the midst of perhaps a historic drought."

But here's the thing — if when you say "drought" you mean unusually low rainfall, Kansas has only flirted with drought in recent years. That's according to the National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, Neb., which posts the Standardized Precipitation Index for the entire country. And a review of the Palmer drought index since 2000 confirms that, by any objective measure, weather conditions in central Kansas are on the dry side — indeed, some parts of Kansas, in particular the northwest corner, have seen periods of serious drought — but they don't compare

to drought that's been seen here before.

Through the end of November, the Standardized Precipitation Index for 2006 showed that the only part of Kansas that is unusually short of rain is the southeast corner, which is moderately dry.

And 2005? The only part of Kansas that didn't see near normal rainfall for the year was east-central, which was moderately wet.

What about 2004? Normal, except for the south-central/southwest corner, which was moderately wet.

2003? Northwest Kansas was moderately dry; the rest, normal.

It isn't until you go back to 2002 that significant portions of Kansas were drier than normal — northwest and west-central were extremely dry, north-central was severely dry and northeast was moderately dry.

But even in 2002, one of the driest years since 1970, central Kan-

sas — the area that contains the Smoky Hill River Basin below Cedar Bluff Reservoir — received rainfall that was classified as near normal.

The question of whether Kansas is in a drought isn't merely academic. A record number of streams in Kansas had low flow this summer.

The Smoky Hill River, which flows into Kanopolis Reservoir before it reaches Salina, where it supplies the city with water, was no exception.

Flow into Kanopolis through November is the lowest ever measured, breaking the low-flow record set in 1983. This year's flow was less than half the flow in 2002.

That low flow, in turn, has allowed the level of Kanopolis Reservoir to fall to the lowest level in 17 years. It has been below normal for 15 months and, if it hasn't recovered by early March, will set an all-

time record for the most consecutive days below normal.

Whether Salina faces a water shortage next summer will depend on the winter and spring. Today, the lake is 7.5 feet below normal, but one serious rain spell could erase that. In April 1973, the Kanopolis Lake level rose 20 feet in 10 days. There have been five years in which it rose more than 20 feet in a month.

But when state water officials say the lack of streamflow is due to drought, it implies the cause is both temporary and unusual. Pressed for

what he means when he says "drought," Streeter acknowledges that by established measures, much of Kansas hasn't seen much drought lately.

"If you look at the Palmer (drought index) or some of those, they don't indicate we are in a horrible drought right now," he said.

David Pope, chief engineer of the Division of Water Resources and one of the most powerful figures on the Kansas water scene, says the drought might not be the worst Kansas has weathered, but it nonetheless is real.

"I am not arguing the point that we are in a severe drought," he said. "We have had several years of cumulative below normal precipitation from which we have not recovered ... Keep in mind that you can have two or three or four years of marginal or even substantially below normal (precipitation) and then you can get above normal for a year or two, but you haven't recovered."

~ NOTICE ~

Beginning January 7, 2007

CJ's Boutique at Southwind Plaza in Colby will be closed on Sundays!

We will be open our regular hours Monday thru Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., so

Come in for great savings on ALL winter fashions.

CJ's Boutique

Southwind Plaza • 1105 Taylor Avenue
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Community Scrapbooking Crop

Saturday, January 13th ~ 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
In the commons area of the school.

Special class on how to make scrapbooks digitally using the new free Storybook software from Creative Memories. Traditional scrapbooking demonstrations and workshop time will also be part of this crop. Cost is \$30 for a full day, and \$15 for half day. Breakfast, lunch, and supper are included. **Please call 462-3677 to register.**

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