

**Weather Corner**



*Snow expected all weekend*

**Tonight** — Snow likely. Cloudy, with a low around 2. Wind chill values between -8 and -13. East wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

**Saturday** — Snow likely. Cloudy and cold, with a high near 9. Wind chill values between -3 and -13. East wind between 5 and 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

**Saturday night** — Snow likely. Cloudy with a low around 5. East wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent.

**Sunday** — Snow likely. Cloudy and cold with high near 10. North wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

**Sunday night** — A 30 percent chance of snow before midnight. Cloudy with a low around -5.

**Martin Luther King Day** — Partly cloudy with a high near 13.

**Monday night** — Mostly clear with a low around -1.

**Tuesday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 20.

**Temperatures**  
Thursday's high, 41  
Low this morning, 1  
Records for this date, 81 in 1953, -28 in 1912  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
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**

**Commissioners to meet Monday**

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include a meeting with Clair Schrock, county road supervisor, to discuss non-elected personnel issues; approval of Jan. 8 meeting minutes; ONEOK energy market update; support letter to Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas for capital assistance to purchase equipment to provide service to the elderly; agreement for services between Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas and Thomas County; county agreement to treat noxious weeds along state and federal highways during 2007. The meeting is open to the public.

**Cookie orders start today**

Colby Girl Scouts will be selling cookies starting today through Jan. 28. This is the scouts biggest fundraising event of the year and if residents are not contacted by Jan. 26, either call Penny Cline, 460-2929 after 6 p.m. or Mint Culver, 460-6005, cookie coordinators, to place an order.

**Square dance Saturday**

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club will meet at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St.

**Digital scrapbooking class Saturday**

Heartland Christian School, 1995 W. Fourth St., Colby, is hosting a scrapbooking class from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday, in the school. A special class featuring how to make scrapbooks digitally using the new free Storybook software from Creative Memories will be taught by consultants Julie Maurath and Kim Redick. Not mandatory, those interested in this class are encouraged to bring their laptop computers. Traditional scrapbooking demonstrations will also be part of this event. For costs and registration, call 462-3677.

**Thrivent Financial meeting Jan. 20**

The Northwest Kansas Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is holding a free soup and dessert supper at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20 at Trinity Lutheran Church, on the

corner of Fifth Street and Country Club Drive in Colby. Chapter officers will present an outline prepared by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in CD format. The subject matter contains an important first step with retirement. Instructions are included for Thrivent Financial members to access Web site calculator tools that can be used to get your retirement on the right track. For information, call Ralph Hansen at 460-2443.

**Colby blood drive Tuesday**

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

**Dog obedience training to begin**

An orientation meeting for dog obedience training is 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. For questions, call Carrie Bredemeier at 460-3816.

**Area students sought for Washington, D.C. youth tour**

Midwest Energy is looking for five students interested in an all-expense paid educational trip to Washington D.C., said Bob Helm with Midwest Energy.

"The five students selected will join over 1,500 others from across the country for the Government In Action Youth Tour," he said.

The students must be juniors in high school and their parents or guardians must receive electric or natural gas service from Midwest Energy.

Applications have been sent to all high school counselors in the area the company serves.

Helm encourages applicants to

fill out and return applications to Midwest Energy by Feb 16, 2007.

"The Washington D.C. Youth Tour is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association with assistance from state cooperative associations including Kansas Electric Cooperatives," he said.

"For many students, this will be a trip of a lifetime. They will see the many historic sights of Washington D.C., visit with our elected representatives and experience our government in action," said Earnie Lehman, president and general manager of Midwest Energy.

The company has five board of

director districts and one student from each district will be chosen, based on the applications received. The applicants will be notified in early March.

Those five chosen will be joining other high school students from across the United States. The Youth Tour takes place June 7-14.

**Firings were wrong, official says**

OLATHE (AP) — Seven assistant district attorneys and a chief investigator fired by Johnson County District Attorney Phill Kline say they expect to get their jobs back once their grievances are heard.

The criminal justice workers held a news conference Thursday, a day after filing grievances with the county that accuse Kline of going against county policies in firing them.

The eight lost their jobs Monday, after Kline took office as the replacement for Paul Morrison, who ousted Kline as attorney general in the November election.

Attorney Joe Colantuono, who is representing the workers, said the dismissals came without warning or explanation, violated Kansas public policy and disrupted the county's criminal justice system. He also said one of the grievances included allegations about the conduct of a political supporter of Kline, although he declined to elaborate.

"There's been a tremendous void left," Colantuono said. "We understand cases have been postponed." He said none of the employees

had performance problems, yet they weren't interviewed or given a chance to reapply for their jobs.

A grievance hearing has not been set. Kline spokesman Bob Murray said the district attorney's office doesn't comment on "individual personnel matters." He did point out that only eight of the office's 102 employees lost their jobs and said the county can terminate employment at any time for any reason.

The workers who were fired had no written contract with Johnson County or the district attorney's office, Murray said.

Bryan Denton, the office's chief investigator for 15 years, was among the fired. The attorneys dismissed were Michael Allen, Jennifer Barton, Norah Clark, John Fritz, Kristiane Gray, Steve Howe and Kendra Lewison.

"All of these people have outstanding conviction rates," said Fritz, longtime head of the juvenile division. "Their careers have been marked by integrity and fairness."

Colantuono said the group represents numerous years of experience in several areas, including sex of-

fender, drug, fraud and domestic violence prosecutions, and juvenile justice.

Dozens of people supporting the workers showed up at Thursday's news conference outside the Johnson County Courthouse.

With the dismissals, Kline has 20 assistant district attorneys from Morrison's staff. Three had resigned earlier to join Morrison in Topeka.

Kline, a Republican, was selected as Morrison's replacement in December. Morrison, a Democrat, had switched from the GOP to challenge Kline. Because Morrison won his five terms in the county office as a Republican, the GOP had the right to fill the vacancy, and Johnson County Republican precinct committee members chose Kline. Colantuono said the dismissed attorneys and investigator would have no problem working under Kline.

**Fort Riley brigade to leave early for Iraq**

TOPEKA (AP) — Before going on three weeks' leave, a brigade of soldiers packed their gear and sent it on its way to Iraq, expecting to catch up to it sometime in February.

Now, it appears the 4th Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division will be meeting up with containers of equipment and supplies sooner than expected. President Bush's decision to increase the number of ground forces in Iraq means the 3,400 soldiers of the "Dagger Brigade" of the Big Red One will leave Fort Riley three days ahead of schedule.

Lt. Col. Jay Pitz, brigade executive officer, said the change in plans had minimal effect on the soldiers.

"Everything was in place. Our soldiers have already completed their training and are ready to deploy," said Pitz, 39, a veteran of the first Gulf War in 1991.

The 3,400 soldiers heading to Iraq are part of the new strategy outlined Wednesday by Bush. His plan would raise troop levels in Iraq by 21,500 — from 132,000 to 153,500 — at a cost of \$5.6 billion. It also calls for the Iraqi government to increase its own forces and to do more to quell sectarian violence.

"We're going over prepared to conduct the full spectrum of combat operations," Pitz said.

An exact deployment date is not released by the Army.

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