

Weather Corner



Tuesday high 34; low, 18

Tonight — Clear with a low around 11. West wind around 10 mph. **Tuesday** — Sunny with a high near 34. West wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Tuesday night — Clear with a low around 18. Northwest wind around 15 mph.

Wednesday — Sunny with a high near 34. Northwest wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Wednesday night — Mostly clear with a low around 17.

Thursday — Mostly sunny with a high near 40.

Temperatures
Sunday's high, 28
Low this morning, 3

Records for this date, 77 in 1943, -17 in 1966

Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 5 inches of snow Saturday

January's precipitation, 0.63
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119.

Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

State seeks modifying sentences

WICHITA (AP) — Kansas corrections officials are seeking a rare order to modify the sentence of a man who has spent 21 years in jail after being sentenced as a habitual offender for committing such crimes as burglary and theft.

Gerald L. Smith, 57, has watched a parade of murderers and other violent criminals be released from jail while he stays, without a chance of parole until 2018.

Smith was sentenced as a habitual offender to 65 to 190 years before Kansas changed its sentencing guidelines in 1993. Under the state's current guidelines, Smith could have received a maximum of just under 13 years and been released from jail between 1996 and 1998, according to the Kansas Department of Corrections.

"So many I came to prison with who were on first-degree murder charges, they're home now," said Smith, an inmate at the Wichita Work Release Facility.

Kansas Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz filed a motion last week to have Smith's sentence reviewed in Sedgwick County District Court. A hearing has been set for Feb. 16.

The last time such a motion was filed was in 2004, when Werholtz made a motion to modify the sentences of Gloria Van Winkle and Paul Goseland, who were serving life terms for third convictions of cocaine possession. Both were freed.

Under state law, a court must modify a sentence recommended by the secretary of corrections unless the court finds that the public safety or inmate's welfare would be jeopardized.

Most inmates at the Wichita work release center have only a couple years left on their sentences and spend six months to a year working in the community to prepare for their release, said Bill Miskell, spokesman for the state's prison system.

Smith has been at the Wichita center for three years, with 11 remaining until his parole date. He doesn't work in the community but is in charge of shipping, receiving and distributing goods at the center.

"There are many inmates who would like to have that kind of assignment in the system," Miskell said.

Briefly

Homestead forms available

The Thomas County Clerk's office reminds residents eligible to submit claims on Homestead property tax refunds and food sales tax refunds, forms are available. "The Kansas Homestead program provides a property tax refund for eligible homeowners and renters who were residents of Kansas all of 2006," said County Clerk Shelly Harms.

As a Kansas resident the entire year, she said, persons are eligible if their total household income is \$28,000 or less and born before Jan. 1, 1951; were blind or totally and permanently disabled of all 2006 or have a dependent child who lived with them the entire year and born before Jan. 1, 2006, and under the age of 18 throughout 2006.

Massage clinic set in February

A massage clinic, sponsored by students in the physical therapist assistant program at Colby College, is planned from 5 to 9 p.m., Feb. 5, 12, and 20, in the health sciences building on campus.

All proceeds from the clinic go toward the program. Cost

for massages is \$12 per half hour.

To make an appointment, call 460-4797, but walk-ins are welcome.

Pheasants Forever event Saturday

Colby will host the annual Kansas Pioneer Chapter of Pheasants Forever at 5 p.m., Saturday, at the Comfort Inn Convention Center. Auction items include framed wildlife prints, original paintings, special drawings for firearms, and more. Tickets can be purchased by either calling Justin Foss, 460-7798 or Buddy Van Horn, 460-2181.

School Board meets today

The Colby School Board will meet at 7 p.m. tonight at the school's administration building, 600 W. Third St. Items on the agenda include reports from the principals, superintendent and curriculum director; out of district field trip requests; a resolution to destroy records and personnel issues. The meeting is open to the public.

Extension sponsors Tuesday event

The Thomas County Extension office is sponsoring a workshop noon to 1 p.m., Tuesday, in the meeting room at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range Ave., Colby. The presenter, Brian Bitz, has a self-directed campaign for keeping the brain functioning at its best, said Diann Gerstner, extension agent. For those who cannot remember someone's name, forgets their keys or is just a part of our hectic world, this event is for them and "laughing is required," Gerstner said. For questions, call 460-4582.

Malt beverage renewal time is here

The Thomas County Clerk's office is reminding businesses it's renewal time for county-issued cereal malt beverage licenses. "Cereal malt beverage stamps are issued by the county for those businesses that serve malt beverages and are not located within the limits of an incorporated city," said County Clerk Shelly Harms. "The state fee for the license is \$25 with the local fee of \$50 set by the county commissioners."

Problems found at Larned Hospital

LARNED (AP) — State and private inspectors, acting on complaints from patients at Larned State Hospital, found conditions termed "inhumane," according to a report from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Among the findings of the state inspection were that a lack of supervision contributed to the death of a patient who choked on food — even though hospital staff was supposed to watch what she ate because she had a swallowing disorder.

KDHE's inspection in November also found showers lacking hot water and filthy living areas, although a tour last week by a reporter and photographer from The Wichita Eagle found the living areas were cleaner and showers and sinks were putting out warmer water.

"Throughout the hospital, the governing body failed to assure that patients received care in a safe, clean and comfortable environment," the report said.

The hospital houses people with mental illness and sexual predators sent there after completing their prison sentences.

Joseph Kroll, director of KDHE's Bureau of Child Care and Health Facilities, said his agency's report "indicates a number of issues, violations of both federal and state law."

Remote control car racing



RC Club participants watched cars go round the track at the grand opening of Orschelns. The RC Club, Racing for Christ, continues to sponsor remote control car races. The next event is scheduled from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday at First Baptist Church of Colby, 615 W. Webster. The races are held in the basement of the church

and all middle and high school-age students are welcome to attend.

Students may bring their own car or race one of the church's. Learning how God's truths in the Bible apply to daily life will also be part of the experience, organizers of the event said.

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