

**Weather Corner**



**The forecast**

**Tonight** — Partly cloudy with a low around 32. North wind 5 to 15 mph becoming south. **Friday** — Partly cloudy with a high near 58. Southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph. **Friday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 33. West wind around 5 mph. **Saturday** — Partly cloudy with a high near 68. North wind around 5 mph. **Saturday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 38. **Sunday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 74. **Sunday night** — Clear with a low around 40. **Monday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 69.

**Temperatures**  
 Wednesday's high, 58  
 Low this morning, 30  
 Records for this date, 79 in 1935, -2 in 1912  
 Precipitation last 24 hours, 0.00  
 March's precipitation, 0.22  
 A recorded forecast available throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

**Briefly**

**Gaither video Sunday**

Colby Wesleyan Church, 320 W. Pine, is sponsoring a Gaither Homecoming video concert at 6 p.m., Sunday. The concert is free and open to the public. "Enjoy this great concert on the big screen," organizers said. Refreshments are free.

**College board meets Monday**

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m., Monday, in the board room of Thomas Hall. Items on the regular meeting agenda include introduction of Jeff Becker, cross country track coach; approval of employment contracts; discussion on tuition and fees and room and board increases.

Other items include change in policy manual related to naming a facility; auditor's request for agreement; request for contract continuation; board schedule of events in 2007; campus debit cards with Sunflower Bank and executive session on personnel matters and negotiations. For questions or an agenda, call 462-3984.

**Cemetery decoration removal**

With the warmer temperatures and drier ground, the Beulah Cemetery Board of Directors is asking families to take down any Christmas decorations that may have been left during the December snowstorms. Any decorations, such as miniature Christmas trees, ornaments, etc., will be disposed of after 5 p.m., Wednesday, March 21. For questions, call the Beulah Cemetery office, 462-3188.

**Lions host roast beef lunch**

Rexford Lions Club is hosting a roast beef lunch with all the trimmings from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday, March 25, at the Rexford Community Hall on Main Street. Free-will donations accepted for community projects.

**Tree deadline changed**

The Thomas County Conservation District has changed the deadline for tree orders, as well as the day for delivery. Orders will be taken through Friday, March 23, and Tree Day will be held Saturday, April 14, at the Thomas County 4-H

Building from 8 to 11 a.m. Please contact Danielle Freeman at 462-7482 Ext. 303 for order information.

**Farm Bureau plans seminar**

"The Ten Top Stupid Things Families Do To Break Up Their Business," will be presented at 6:30 p.m., Monday, March 26, in the Colby High School auditorium. The speaker is Jolene Brown, certified speaking professional, who also is a grain farmer in eastern Iowa. The seminar is free and sponsored by the 10th District of the Kansas Farm Bureau, along with other sponsors. Refreshments will be served and everyone is welcome to attend.

**Help sought for caravan**

Participants are sought for the June Antique Tractor Caravan scheduled for June 2.

The caravan will start in Bogue, going through Nicodemus to Webster Lake and back to Bogue. If interested, call Foyd and Liz Vanloenen, (785) 421-2604, or write: P.O. Box 10, Bogue, Kan. 67625.

**Senators approve divesting pension plan from Sudan**

TOPEKA (AP) — Senators approved a bill requiring the pension fund for retired teachers and state workers to end its investments in companies providing revenue to Sudan's government.

The measure is designed to pressure Sudan into ending violence in its Darfur region. The Sudanese government has been blamed for atrocities in an ethnic conflict that has killed more than 200,000 people and displaced 2.5 million.

The 40-0 vote sent the bill to the House.

"It is important that state retirement dollars not support the terrible atrocities in that part of Africa," said Senate Majority Leader Derek

Schmidt, R-Independence.

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System estimates that it has about \$38 million of its \$12 billion-plus in assets invested in companies with some ties to Sudan.

Under the bill, KPERS couldn't invest in a company if it had "oil-related activities" in Sudan, provided revenue to its government, sold military equipment there or had a role in the genocide. The bill would make an exception for some dollars in "passively managed" funds in which money is mingled.

Numerous states have begun divesting their public pension funds from Sudan.

The Kansas bill is modeled after

legislation in California.

Other states, including Missouri, have divested their funds from Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Syria, which the U.S. Department of State has identified as terror-sponsoring nations. Several executive orders already restrict U.S. companies from trading or investing in Iran.

At Schmidt's urging, senators amended the bill to require KPERS officials to compile a report by the start of the 2008 session showing how much money is invested in those four nations and what the effect would be of divesting.

Supporters of having KPERS divest from Sudan worried that the report on other nations would force

the pension system to end other investments or would close foreign markets to Kansas products.

"We're starting down a slippery slope. We're setting a precedent with Sudan. This really could unravel KPERS," said Sen. David Wysong, R-Mission Hills.

However, Schmidt said most Kansans would oppose the state investing pension funds in some of the same nations or regions of the world where their sons and daughters were fighting against terrorists. He said he wanted a report first so legislators can consider the effects on the pension fund.

"I just don't quite see what the concern is here," Schmidt said. "We

ought to gather information first."

Topeka activist Sonny Scroggins has been protesting the investment practices for several weeks with daily marches around the Statehouse. He first took the issue to the KPERS board last summer to encourage action.

He was pleased by the Senate's action — and Schmidt's call for a study of divesting from the other nations.

"I think that was really thoughtful," he said.

The bill was supported in a Senate subcommittee by students from Wichita East High School and the Sudan Divestiture Task Force, based in Washington, D.C.

**Researchers trying to find new ways to use cow manure; floors possible**

DETROIT (AP) — Home-buyers of tomorrow could find themselves walking across floors made from manure.

That's no cow pie-in-the-sky dream, according to researchers at Michigan State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

They say fiber from processed and sterilized cow manure could take the place of sawdust in fiberboard, which is used to make everything from furniture to flooring to store shelves.

And the resulting product smells just fine.

The researchers hope it could be part of the solution to disposing of the 1.5 trillion to 2 trillion pounds of manure produced annually in the United States.

The concept has its skeptics.

"Is this something you're going to bring into the house?" asked Steve Fowler, an economist with the Composite Panel Association, a

fiberboard-makers trade group based in Gaithersburg, Md.

Farmers traditionally use manure to fertilize their fields. But as the scale of farms has grown — with more and more animals densely concentrated in a single location — they can find themselves with too little land for the manure they produce.

"Farmers are having to put more and more money into dealing with manure," said Tim Zauche, a chemistry professor at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville who is working on the USDA research project.

A dairy farm can spend \$200 per cow per year to handle its manure, Zauche said. Those costs include onsite processing and spreading, as well as transportation for offsite disposal.

Environmental activists and regulators are paying increased attention to the contamination of streams and underground water

sources from manure runoff. And people who move into what used to be rural areas often complain about manure's odor.

Under pressure from regulators and the public, more large livestock operations are installing expensive manure treatment systems known as anaerobic digesters.

The digesters use heat to deodorize and sterilize manure, while capturing and using the methane gas it produces to generate electricity. The systems also separate phosphorus-laden liquid fertilizer from semisolid plant residue.

The solids have some known uses, including animal bedding and potting soil, and agricultural scientists would like to find more.

"We really need to think outside the box on what uses for manure are," said Wendy Powers, a professor of agriculture at Michigan State University.

Scientists at Michigan State in

East Lansing and at the USDA's Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wis., are conducting tests on various types of fiberboard made with the "digester solids."

As with the wood-based original, the manure-based product is made by combining fibers with a chemical resin, then subjecting the mixture to heat and pressure.

So far, fiberboard made with digester solids seems to match or beat the quality of wood-based products.

"It appears that the fibers interlock with each other better than wood," said Charles Gould at Michigan State's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Gould and Laurent Matuana, a forestry professor at Michigan State, recently finished a pilot study of manure-based fiberboard, funded by a \$5,000 grant from the Michigan Biomass Energy Program.

A draft of the report concluded

that fiberboard panels made with processed manure "performed very well in mechanical tests, in many cases meeting or exceeding the standard requirements for particleboard."

The USDA lab in Wisconsin recently began an 18-month, \$30,000 study to test the strength and endurance of the manure-based fiberboard and examine the economic practicality of using digested fiber

to make building products.

One good thing about the manure-based fiber is cost, said Zauche. Farmers who currently pay to dispose of manure could soon be selling it.

Whether that's enough to overcome the public's squeamishness about using a manure byproduct as a building product remains to be seen, a plywood trade group representative said.

**For the Record**

The following arrests or incidents have been provided by either the Thomas County Sheriff's office or the Colby Police Department. All suspects were booked into the county jail and are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Thomas County Jail is used by the towns of Colby and Oakley and Logan and Thomas counties.

**Thomas County Sheriff**

**Friday, Feb. 23**

• **Parking complaint:** A vehicle parked on Main and School in Rexford with no tags was called in at 8:37 a.m.

**Saturday, Feb. 24**

• **Service rendered:** A sheriff's deputy provided traffic control at 12:27 a.m. until Midwest Energy arrived at U.S. Highway 83 and County Road R where wires were arcing. Midwest Energy did not respond.

• **Traffic:** A 911 call at 1:53 a.m. advised of car being stuck on County Road O. A deputy pulled the vehicle out.

• **Traffic:** A 911 call at 3:52 p.m. sent a sheriff's deputy and troopers from the Kansas Highway Patrol to multiple accidents involving four semi trucks and three other vehicles on Interstate 70.

• **Service rendered:** A call at 4:03 p.m. advised of a school bus in a ditch on Kansas Highway 25. Students were transported to Rexford.

• **Motorist assist:** Sheriff Mike Baughn and another deputy provide escort for travelers off I-70 to Quality Inn, 1950 S. Range Ave. at 5:10 p.m.

• **Motorist assist:** A call at 5:50 p.m. advised of a white pickup truck on I-70 needing to be pulled out of a ditch.

• **Traffic:** A call at 6:34 p.m. advised of car in ditch on I-70 and at 6:37 p.m. a call reported three semis blocking U.S. Highway 24, 12

miles from Colby. Trucks were pulled out of the way. At 8:49 p.m., a deputy advised three more semis on U.S. Highway 83 were stuck. A wrecker moved them out.

**Colby Police Department**

**Wednesday, Feb. 21**

• **Recovered property:** Police were advised at 11:23 a.m. of a driver's license, credit card found at one of the stores in Southwind Plaza.

• **Theft:** A theft was reported at 11:43 a.m. at the Recycling Center, 720 E. College Dr.

• **Animal complaint:** Two dogs were reported at large at 1:42 p.m. in the 700 block of South Garfield.

• **Protective custody:** Police advised at 5:30 p.m. of a prisoner in custody at one of the motels and needing to go to the hospital.

• **911 Call:** A person called 911 at 8:29 p.m. of an automobile acci-

dent/property damage in the 1200 block of West Second.

**Friday, Feb. 23**

• **Telephone harassment:** A woman advised police at 9:30 a.m. her ex-husband was text messaging and calling her repeatedly in the 800 block of West Eighth Street.

• **Criminal threat:** A 911 call at 12:03 p.m. advised a woman was threatened in the 700 block of Dylan Drive.

• **Traffic:** A call at 4:56 p.m. advised of two men on bobcat at Siggins and Fourth Street with another man in the bucket of a tractor.

• **Traffic:** An officer called in at 5:22 p.m. to investigate the driver of a vehicle at Franklin and Third Street. The driver was arrested for driving while suspended.

**Saturday, Feb. 24**

• **Fire:** A woman called 911 at 3:46 p.m. after entering her home in

the 200 block of South Range to find it full of smoke. Police and fire department responded.



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