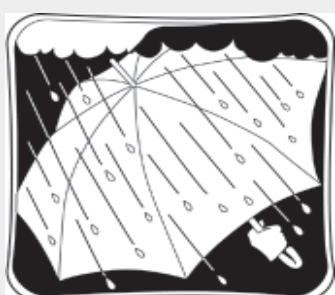


Weather Corner



Showers possible

The forecast

Tonight — Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy with a low around 57. North wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent. **Thursday** —

A 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy with a high near 77. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming east. **Thursday night** — A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Patch fog after 1 a.m. Otherwise, partly cloudy with a low around 59. East wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm. **Friday** — Areas of fog before 1 p.m. Otherwise, partly cloudy with a high near 82. Calm wind becoming southeast between 10 and 15 mph. **Friday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 61. **Saturday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 87. **Saturday night** — Mostly clear with a low around 63. **Sunday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 91.

Temperatures

Tuesday's high, 89
Low this morning, 63
Records for this date, 105 in 1950, 41 in 1985
Precipitation last 24 hours, 0.61
June's precipitation, 0.63

Water Use Report

June 12

• 2,565,000 gallons
3.5 million = Water Watch.
4 million = Water Warning
4.5 million = Water Emergency
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119.

Briefly

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. Agenda items include approval of agreements and employment contracts; discussion about campus roofs; executive sessions for personnel and negotiations; reports from Lynn Kreider, president; and comments from other trustees. The meeting is open to the public.

Traveling Lantern Company

As part of the Pioneer Memorial Library Summer Program, the Traveling Lantern Company will be performing, "Sherlock Holmes Takes the Case," Monday, June 18, at 1:30 p.m. The audience will follow Holmes and Dr. Watson (a volunteer from the audience) as they follow clues to solve the mystery. Following the program, children can get their ID cards updated at Ident-A-Kid, set up by Keyna Baalman. The program and ID cards are free

and open to the public. For more information, contact the library at (785) 460-4470.

Donations sought for garage sale

Heartland Rural Counseling is holding its third annual garage sale June 22-23 and donations are being accepted. All proceeds from the garage sale will help Heartland Rural Counseling in assisting low income families and children with mental health services. All donations are tax deductible. For those wanting to donate, drop off times are 6:30 to 8 p.m., June 14, 18 and 21 at 480 N. Franklin Ave. (formerly the Good Shepherd second-hand store)

Square dance Saturday

The Golden Buckle Square Dancers will meet at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. Anyone interested in square dancing is invited to attend.

Fair Board to meet Thursday

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H Building on the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include reports on the buildings and grounds, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising; committee map of vendor sites; Master Gardeners fair booth; Fourth of July fireworks stand on grounds and Friends of the Library letter about display of pictures at the fair. The meeting is open to the public.

Retirement reception Friday

The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services is sponsoring a retirement reception for Sandra Owen, 25 years; and Judith Kvasnicka, 31 years; from 1:30 to 3 p.m., Friday, at their office, 1135 S. Country Club Dr., Colby. For those unable to attend the reception, cards may be sent to Owen, 400 S. Franklin Ave., Apt. 38, Colby, Kan. 67701 and to Kvasnicka: 726 E. Sixth, Oakley, Kan. 67748.

Voters will help decide Hoxie hospital's future in August

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Sheridan County voters in August will decide whether they want to spend \$1.4 million dollars to repair and upgrade the county's healthcare facility.

"We would like to do it on our own," Joe Stratton, administrator of Sheridan County Health Complex, said.

"But we are asking the community to partner with us," Stratton met with Sheridan County Commissioners Keith Kennedy, Doyle Kauk and Ron Schamberger on Monday to talk about asking taxpayers for an additional \$225,000 each year to run the hospital, medical clinic and long-term care facility. Sheridan County Health Com-

plex is made up of an 18 bed hospital, 38 bed long-term care facility, eight assisted living apartments and a medical clinic.

The facility employs 120 people and has a monthly payroll of \$165,000. State law allows counties to collect up to 6 mills for hospitals before sending the question for more money to voters.

After going over figures for an hour, the commissioners agreed to conduct a special mail ballot election. Ballots will be sent to the approximately 1,500 registered voters, but the date of the election has yet to be set. In 1990, Sheridan County voters passed a similar measure which raised the county's appropriation for the complex to 10 mills.

Based on current valuations, the

10 mills equates to \$325,000, or about 6 percent, of the complex's \$4.7 million dollar budget.

A mill equals \$1 dollar per \$1,000 dollars of assessed valuation. In Sheridan County, one mill generates about \$32,500.

Should voters approve the \$225,000 added appropriation, it would mean an approximate 6.9 mill increase in taxes. Based on the 2006 valuation, taxes on a \$50,000 home would increase by approximately \$40, and the tax on a quarter of dryland would increase about \$30.

Actual 2007 valuation figures will not be able until after the special election.

Sheridan County's hospital, emergency room, west wing of the long-term care unit, kitchen and

laundry room of the complex were constructed in 1952, with the balance of the building being added in the 1990s.

The money being requested is earmarked for new windows, roofing, heating and air conditioning system, fire alarm system, 45 new beds, floor and wall covering, a new kitchen and laundry area and at least one new boiler.

Using today's figures, the total package of improvements is estimated at \$976,000.

"These are things we could do today if we had the money," Stratton said. The proposal also asks for two big ticket items - a CAT scan machine and ultrasound machine totaling \$450,000 to be amortized over five years.

"These would make it more con-

venient for patients, provide better medical care and help us be self-sustaining," Stratton said of services currently sent out of county or provided by Hays Medical Center's mobile units. "We are trying to create a new reality," Stratton said.

"We can decide to keep what we have, but we want to become self-sustaining and we believe we can, but we do need more help from the county."

Stratton said of a \$446,524 loss in 2007, \$175,000 of it came from the emergency room. But, Stratton said with the hospital's current status as critical access hospital, one with 25 or fewer beds, federal law requires an emergency room be part of the services provided. "People don't realize if we don't have a hospital we won't have an emergency room," Kauk said.

"The public has to decide if we want it. Either we do or we don't." Mike Heideman, public information officer with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the agency which licenses hospitals in Kansas, said federal and state laws will not allow a county to have an emergency room without a hospital.

"In order to have an emergency room, there must be a hospital," Heideman said. But Stratton does not favor cutting services as a means to saving the hospital.

"We could close the long-term care facility or cut jobs, but at what point in time do you go back to reality and educate people to the need to move ahead," Stratton said. "People need to know their vote will count one way or another."

County commissioners listen to budget requests

From "COUNTY," Page 1

The commissioners took no action on the budget requests, but said they will be taken under consideration when work on next year's budget begins.

The extension council asked for \$124,200 for 2008. They received \$119,676 for 2007. They request is

\$4,500 more than 2007.

Danielle Freeman, director of the Thomas County Conservation District, said they are requesting the same amount as last year. They received \$47,500 last year.

She said the district will get \$25,000 from the state this year, up \$10,000.

That was spurred by Natural Re-

sources Conservation Services office closings.

"Districts in general are going to have to become more self-sufficient," Freeman said.

Charlotte Linsner, program director with the domestic and sexual violence services, said the organization works with victims of sexual and domestic violence. They re-

quested \$1,000 from the county.

The agency opened an office in Colby in December 2006, and also runs a shelter. They serve 18 counties in northwest Kansas: Cheyenne, Decatur, Ellis, Gove, Graham, Logan, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Russell, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Thomas, Trego and Wallace.

Delete button handy when dealing with computer inbox spam

All you see or get now is spam. I don't keep track, but I get plenty and several of the same. After you get them on your computer, read all about them in the newspapers and so forth, people still fall for them. That I do not understand. I have received on the computer from the United Kingdom a notice I have won at least 25 times out of the last 30 days. The delete button is very handy.

From the VFW Bulletin: Special extra earnings for military services

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1940 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

For more information you may call (800) 772-1213 or your area Social Security office listed in the Feist telephone book.

Or go to www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm for more information. There is so much information on the website I would not have room for it all in this article. But I do have a copy and will share if you are interested.

Ombudsman Topics

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature was fortunate to get a small portion of their requests granted and the governor has signed the bill. We had asked for three additional ombudsmen's (person who investigates and attempts to resolve complaints and problems), we were fortunate to get one. This person will be located in one of the heavier populated counties. Next year we will work on getting the other two. If we are fortunate to achieve that, each Planning Service Area will have one ombudsman, that person will be responsible to train volunteers to visit nursing home residents for problems.

There were portions of other bills that will benefit senior citizens. More on those bills will be forth coming later. The Homestead was increased and I will have a 2006 and projected 2007 comparison at a later time when the figures are released.

Topeka Chat

I attended the May Governor's Conference On Aging held in Topeka. It is truly amazing how much information can be packed into one



Rosalie Seemann

Secretary, NW Kansas Area Agency on Aging

● Chat with Rosalie

and two-third days. Over 760 were registered for the conference. One of the sessions I attended was "Downsizing, getting ready for a smaller home." What I learned from this was a person should move every five years and don't forget to throw away things. Also, if a parent is downsizing don't tell them you don't want this or that and hurt their feelings. Take the item or article and dispose of it yourself.

I was visiting with a friend about one of my articles; she said I had never warned people to read the fine print. She is right, always read all

the statements or have someone do it for you. The more we hear about credit card companies offering "to good to be true" statements, they usually are.

Did you sign up for the "No Junk Mail"? It works! I have been mentally keeping track of how much we receive and it is amazing, we have had practically zero. Good for our landfills.

Other people have said they open the junk mail and if a return envelope is enclosed the send all back to the sender, as they have to pay the return postage. Good idea too.

Editor's note: As a way to inform older readers about ongoing topics, Seemann, secretary of the Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging, will answer questions or provide information about the agency on a monthly basis. Readers may submit questions by writing at: Chat with Rosalie c/o Rosalie Seemann, 426 Hale, Le-

vant, Kan. 67743, or email: rseemann@st-tel.net

The Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging is part of a national network of agencies created in 1973 by the Older Americans Act. The organization is responsible for administering Older American Act programs in the 18 counties of northwest Kansas.

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Thomas County's Salvation Army and the Colby Free Press salutes Wal-Mart employees and the Boy Scouts who volunteered to ring the bell throughout the season. Pictured in no particular order are Thomas County Salvation board members: Sue Draper, Kathy Ryan, Jane McDougal and Mike Baughn. Wal-Mart employees that participated are: Steven Reed, Lisa McEwan, Amber Bona, Kathryn Ballard, Teri Chase, Glenda Merideth, J.C. Carter, Jessica Rummel, Randy Wilson, Rebecca Vyzourek, LoriAnn Gotchall, Brandi Emmott, Emery Elmore, Vanessa Gray, and Jeana Simpson.