

Weather Corner



**Tonight...**Cloudy. A chance of light snow in the evening... Then snow likely after midnight. Areas of blowing snow after midnight. Snow accumulation around 1 inch. Lows around 19. North winds 10 to 20 mph. Chance of snow 60 percent.

**Tuesday...**Mostly cloudy. Colder...Breezy. A 40 percent chance of light snow in the morning. Highs around 30. North winds 15 to 25 mph. Tuesday night...Partly cloudy in the evening then clearing. Lows around 13. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph.

**Wednesday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 30s. Southwest winds around 10 mph. Wednesday night...Mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of light snow in the evening. Lows around 17.

**Thursday and Thursday night...**Partly cloudy. Highs around 40. Lows in the lower 20s.

**Friday and Friday night...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s. Lows in the lower 20s.

**Saturday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 50s. Saturday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 20s.

**Sunday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 50s. Sunday's low, high: 16, 48  
Saturday's low, high: 18, 44  
Friday's low, high: 16, 48

# Sherman County Fire Board nixes chief job

By Tom Betz  
ntbetz@nwkansas.com

Sherman County Commissioners continued to wrestle with the needs of the County Rural Fire department, but the County Fire Board has decided they do not feel there is enough money in the budget for a full time position.

The Commissioners agreed to look at more options including combining some other duties with a fire chief position as a potential solution, and to see about holding a special meeting in February with the county commissioners, fire board and city commissioners to explore mutual options.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he had the item put on the agenda to see where the question stood and knew that the fire board had met and voted not to have a full time fire chief.

"I am curious how the fire board came to the decision," Thomas said, "after saying a few months ago they wanted a full time fire chief. What do they feel is the solution?"

Marvin Duell, former fire board chairman said he was not at the meeting.

Richard Allaman, fire board member said the main reason was they did not feel there was enough money to pay a fire chief.

"There might be money this year," Allaman said, "but not for next year."

"Any solutions as to who is going to do the extra work load?" Thomas asked.

One of the areas of concern is the federal requirement to have the Conservation Reserve Program land burned between Feb. 1 and April 15. Thomas said there is a lot of CRP land in Sherman County that will have to be burned.

"I realize it is going to take a lot of time and I wonder how we

are going to cover what we can do with our volunteers," Commissioner Mitch Tiede said. "How are we going to get out to look at the burns?"

Thomas asked if any fire board members might be able to help.

A suggestion from the audience was to put a burn ban on.

Tiede said he had thought about that, and that legally the county could do that, but he did not see how it would really help.

Assistant Chief Chris Bauman, who works for Aquila, said the burning will increase the calls quite a bit.

"I don't know what we can do," he said. "We (rural firemen) are looking at drafting something like a question list for central dispatch to ask those who are calling in."

"If there are no close structures and the area is pretty clear maybe we could go ahead and let them burn, but if there are any questions we would have to come check it out."

"We have had some questions from farmers about burning along highways and having the sheriff or state troopers come out to control traffic. We do not want to get into that at all. We have told them we want to discourage burning around the highways and the city. Some have said they want to know how we are going to keep them from burning."

"We need a formal policy that we can go from."

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said they will have to follow the county burn permit regulations.

Tiede said having a more formal policy would be good because it would be something that could be shown to the farmer.

Thomas said having the policy might satisfy the federal government about areas that we would not allow to be burned.

Bauman said they were working

on something to bring to the commissioners.

Thomas asked if there had been requests to have the rural fire department at a burn site.

Bauman said there have been a couple of calls about small areas probably under 12 acres where they are close to trees or a homestead.

Tiede said we have several things that are changing, like Dorendo Harrell saying she does not want to do the bio-terrorism program any more.

Thomas said there is some money there that might be combined to help pay a fire chief to handle both, but said Harrell had said the federal government is cutting back on the money. He said she told him it takes about six to eight hours a week for the federal paperwork.

Tiede said he knew there was the idea of adding some other duties to help pay for a fire chief.

Bauman said he had mentioned the emergency management program the county is paying for now on a regional basis.

Tiede said he did not know how long Gary Rogers is going to be doing the job.

"I think there are some other solutions," Bauman said, "rather than just saying NO, maybe consolidate other county duties without over burdening him."

"Yes, we want to be sure there is 40 hours work, but not over work him," Tiede said.

Turning to the other part of the question about a new fire house for the Goodland rural department, Tiede asked Thomas what he had found out.

Thomas said he had found that the county could build a building and lease it back to the fire district at a nominal fee.

"What is the difference between that and a lease-purchase," Rasure asked.

Tiede said the idea was to keep the cost down so they are not taking a big chunk out of the fire budget.

He said there is a problem out at the planned site because there is not enough water out there. He said the water would be an added extra expense to put in the new building.

"I don't think we are done talking about the fire chief yet," Tiede said. "I think we are getting new ideas, but are not ready to make a decision."

"I don't disagree that things are getting tougher to do on an all volunteer basis," Rasure said. "I would like to see the city and county discuss an over all picture on fire protection and have open discussions about it. We all have the same needs."

"Don't you think that would be better if we have a chief at that time," Tiede asked.

"I think we need to have a plan and work toward it," Rasure said. "The money question is the biggest deal and the time."

Tiede said he agreed the money is a problem.

"If we go with a full time chief now it is going to be hard to pay for it next year," Rasure said.

"If we add some duties in that would help with wages," Thomas said.

"I think we need to look at all the ideas and find a way to be more efficient," Tiede said. We need to keep this going and not let it die out. We need to come up with more options."

Thomas asked if there was a way to compensate the firemen for their extra duties.

Rasure said the commissioners need to keep the fire board involved.

Thomas said he was talking about the fire board and if they have considered extra money for

the volunteers.

Allaman said the board are thinking about adding some money for extra duties because they know these people cannot be called away from their jobs all the time.

Tiede said Tom Rohr, fire board chairman and owner of Dependable Glass, had said the next fire board meeting would be held in Kanorado on Feb. 19, and they could look at the request for equipment for Kanorado at that time.

Tiede said Rohr said the board meets once a year in Kanorado and Brewster.

Thomas said he hoped the fire board could work out some details on the compensation.

Rasure asked if the list of equipment for Kanorado had been taken to the fire board.

Allaman said there had been some discussion about Kanorado needing equipment, but the board has not seen a list.

Tiede said Alan David, Goodland rural fire chief, had given him a list of equipment and said there were two banks willing to participate in a lease-purchase program.

"I am concerned that the fire board is not being included in all of these discussions," Rasure said.

Tiede said with the next meeting set for Kanorado that would be a good time to talk about it.

Thomas suggested that maybe the fire board and the county commissioners should meet with the city commissioners to explore all the options with the city.

Rasure said that would give them a chance to look at everything.

Thomas suggested having a meeting in February to discuss this. He asked the fire board members and firemen when would be the best.

# Eagles: 2008 looks great

From "HISTORY," Page 1

"You never know until after the state tournament's are over, but the wrestlers should finish first, second or third. The basketball girls have as good of a shot as anyone. The boys will probably be the #1 seed at sub-state. We have to wait and evaluate, but chances are this could be the best year ever."

Should the wrestling and girls basketball teams play up to their rankings and finish in the top three at state and the boys basketball team just reaches state for the first time since 2003, the history books show 2008 would indeed rank as, if not the greatest year ever, certainly one of the top three.

Since 1975, the first year girl's basketball became a varsity sport at Colby High, winter sports success has been no stranger to this community.

But that success has usually been limited to one or two programs a year.

The first truly great winter sports seasons in the new era of Eagle athletics occurred in 1977 and 1978.

In '77, the wrestling team and girl's basketball team both took third at state. The boy's basketball team went 12-4, but failed to advance past regionals.

The following year it was the wrestling team that didn't quite measure up. The boys basketball team reached state and the girls made for a second straight year, finishing fourth and 22-3 overall. The wrestlers had a state champion in Tracy Rall, but no other placers, and were just 1-7 in duals that season.

After a few good, but not great years in winter sports, the Eagles made their presence felt in 1984; also known as "The Year of the Eagle."

Both the boys and girls basketball teams finished 19-5 and took third at state. The wrestling team sent six to state and finished sixth as a team.

That season certainly ranks among the best in school history, but there would be no debate about the best year ever had a couple bounces gone the Eagles way in 1985.

The boys basketball team was ranked #1 in the state and had a 21-0 record, but failed to reach the state tournament after a shocking 45-42 loss to Hoisington in the sub-state finals. The girls went

through the regular season and sub-state at 22-1, their best season ever, but were knocked off in the first round of state 52-49 by Wamego in double overtime. The wrestlers sent eight to state and had two guys finish second and three take fourth. They also set the pins record as a team.

After another good year in 1986, things just kept on rolling for the Eagle basketball programs in 1987. The boys went 21-2 and lost by one point in the first round of state to Topeka-Hayden while the girls were 19-4 and lost to Holton in their first round state matchup. The wrestlers couldn't keep up their success, however. They finished 10th at state and were only 1-7 in duals.

The girl's basketball team finished runner-up to Rose Hill in 1990 and the boys won their first state championship in 29 years in 1999, but it wasn't again until 2000 that two winter sports programs made it to state in the same year.

That winter, the wrestling and girl's basketball teams finished third at state. Boys basketball was 16-7, losing to Scott City 58-57 in the sub-state finals.

In 2001, the wrestling team captured its first state title since 1958 and the boy's basketball team was 17-6 and reached the state tournament before losing to Sumner Academy in the first round.

Once again, Colby felt just short of the trifecta as the girls team bowed out in sub-state after a 15-7 season.

Last year has been the closest thing since 2001 to the ultimate winter sports season.

The Lady Eagles won the first state championship in any girls sport at Colby High to cap off a 24-2 season.

The wrestlers had a record 12 state qualifiers and finished fifth at state, which was good, but fell short of their expectations. Like so many winters before, the third team, in this case boys basketball, couldn't keep up and finished just 11-10.

Two out of three having stand-out seasons is remarkable, but all three doing it one year would be unheard of. There's still close to three weeks before state wrestling and more than a month before state basketball, but as it stands now, everything is in place for this to be a winter Colby High sports fans look back on as possibly the greatest ever.

"It would be awesome," said Kriss. "Pretty much every school in the state would respect us and realize what great athletes there are here. It would be a lot of fun to have two or three winter sports teams win state."

Three may finally be a charm in 2008.

# Amid the rhetoric on coal, proposed plant near Holcomb is being discussed

TOPEKA(AP) — The legislative environment seems hostile, but the first shoots of a compromise on energy policy may already have emerged from admittedly rocky Statehouse soil.

Key lawmakers are pushing legislation to allow Sunflower Electric Power Corp. to build two coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas. Last week, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius offered her own plan to permit one plant outside Holcomb if Sunflower would commit to developing wind farms and energy conservation programs.

Some supporters of Sunflower's \$3.6 billion project see Sebelius' proposal as a hollow gesture, arguing that she knows building only one plant isn't economically feasible for the utility. But her offer does concede an important argument, that western Kansas can't meet its future power needs without some coal-fired generating capacity.

Likewise, Sebelius and environmentalists see the energy bill as a hollow gesture, even though it would impose the state's first rules on carbon dioxide emissions. They argue the rules are a subterfuge, so lax that they'd actually encourage utilities to build coal-fired plants in Kansas.

But even a few months ago, legislators who drafted the proposed

CO2 standards for new power plants hadn't even wanted to debate such an idea. Their legislation is at least a concession to the idea that the subject can't be ignored.

"I think that's significant," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, an Independence Republican. "I do think this bill is intended as a compromise measure."

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"I think that's significant," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, an Independence Republican. "I do think this bill is intended as a compromise measure."



Give a SINGING VALENTINE!  
For just \$35, a quartet from the Tumbleweed Chorus will perform Singing Valentines for the recipient you choose. They will be in Atwood on Wednesday, Feb. 13 and Colby on Thursday, Feb. 14.  
To place your order, just call: (800) 279-8208  
-or- 462-2474  
We'll sing to gals ...or guys, too!

## Thomas County Wellness Fair

Thursday, February 7, 2008 ~ 5-7 p.m.  
Colby Community College Union

Health and wellness booths, area physicians explaining lab results, guest speakers discussing the genetics of cancer and screening guidelines, and activities for children. **Registration cost only \$5.** Children admitted free with a paying adult.

Call Jeanene at 460-4850 or Karen at 443-3715 for more info.

# SLAVENS FAMILY PRACTICE IS MOVING!!!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST WE WILL BE CLOSED TO MOVE TO OUR NEW LOCATION.  
1005 S. Range, Suite 200, Colby

Another change is happening as well. The clinic's name is changing to **DOCS ON CALL.**

Please come see Dr. Slavens, Physician Assistant Andy Rose, and Dr. France at our new location starting Monday, February 4th.



We're Moving!

We will be closed on Feb. 7th & 8th while we move to our new location at 1005 S. Range Ave., Suite. 100

On Feb. 11th we will open our doors at 10:00 a.m. Added comfort & convenience Expanded optical & sunglass dispensary Call 785-462-8231 to set up your next vision & eye health examination

Office Hours: M, T, Th, F— 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Wed.— 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Jeff Morrison, OD Mark Wahlmeier, OD