



COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Wild and windy

By Patty Decker

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Winds gusting to 55 mph Wednesday caused minor damage to fences, buildings and trees in town, according to city officials. Colby City Hall on Franklin Avenue lost power from about 7 to 8:30 p.m., said Chris Bieker, public utilities director. The exact cause of the outage was unknown earlier today, but Bieker did say some businesses downtown were also affected.

Unrelated to the downtown outage, a transformer blew at the Thomas County Fairgrounds, he said, but as to other wind damage, he wasn't aware of any major problems.

Mike Albers, coordinator of the local amateur radio club, Skywarn, said he and Bob McLemore, both of Colby, were checking for severe weather conditions by driving to other parts of Thomas County at about 5 p.m., Wednesday.

"We were keeping an eye out for any severe weather conditions, but there was nothing close to us," Albers said.

Twice the wind gusted to more than 50 mph, he said. The first gust hit at 6:44 p.m. and the second at 9 p.m.

Throughout the city, evidence of wind damage was visible with limbs on streets, signs blown off their poles and fencing down.

In addition, the flag on the pole in front of KXXX Radio Station on Range Avenue, was blowing when the lower anchor came untied as a result of the wind gusts.

Taylor Motors, in Southwind Plaza on the south side of Colby, also reported glass damage on one of their vehicles and damage to a free-standing sign.

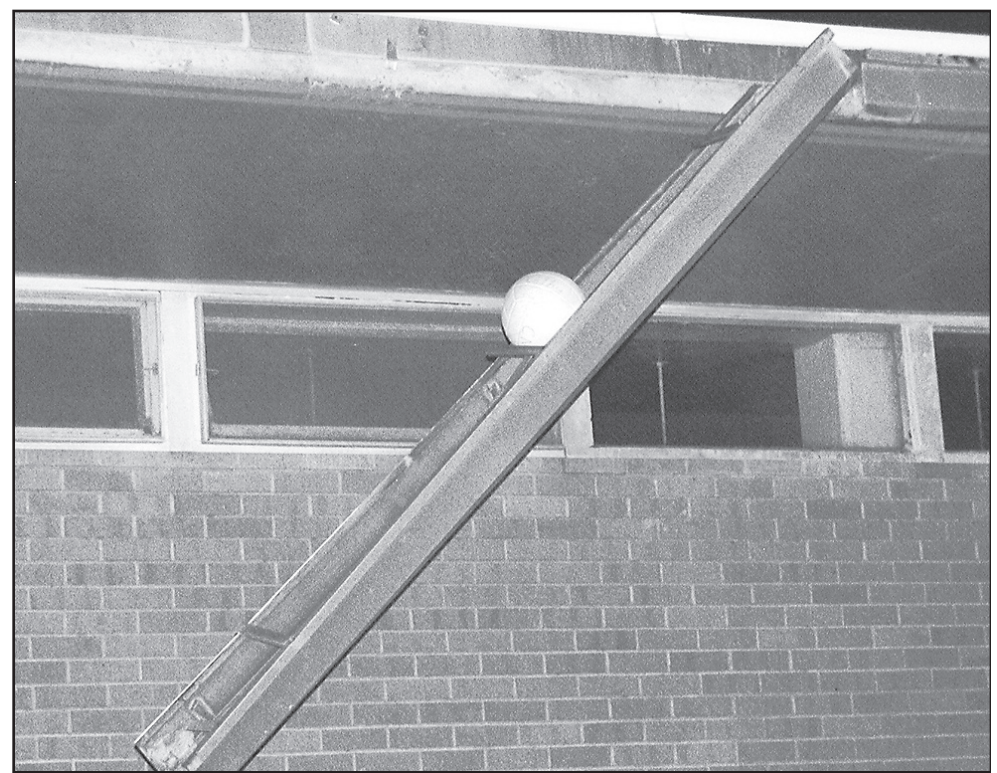


PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

LEFT: One of the panels on the Love's Country Store sign, 265 W. Fourth St., in Colby, was a casualty of the wind at about 7 p.m., Wednesday. An employee at the store said he chased the panel down Fifth Street after it had blown off the structure. A rainbow was visible (behind the damaged sign) after 8 p.m. **ABOVE:** Mammatus clouds were visible to the west of town before 8 p.m. Although ominous in appearance, said Mike Albers, coordinator with the amateur radio club, Skywarn, these particular clouds are harmless and do not mean a tornado is about to form. According to weather service officials, these clouds usually are seen after the worst of a thunderstorm has passed.



ABOVE: Patrick and Sally Toth's tree in the 800 block of North Lincoln Avenue was blown to the ground during Wednesday night's storm. Wind gusts reached 55 mph, knocking out a transformer near the Thomas County fairgrounds; downing limbs and signage around Colby. **RIGHT:** Volleyball-size hail? The guttering along the eastside of the Colby Middle School building was partially ripped from the structure Wednesday night. How long the volleyball (pictured) was lodged in the gutter prior to the damage would be anyone's guess.



Board cancels first meeting in May

By Joey Falkoff

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After holding three meetings in a six-weeks span, the Colby school board decided it had enough—at least for a couple of weeks.

The board voted to cancel their May 5 board meeting. The next board meeting is scheduled for May 19; the day after graduation. Agenda items include handbook changes, an insurance report, discussion of security cameras and teacher negotiations.

For more information on upcoming school events, contact the administration building at 460-5000.

In other boards approved a resolution to destroy records from eight years ago. The district is required to keep records only up to seven years.

Thomas County Academy principal Diana Wieland and business manager Jo DeYoung are still ironing out a grant application with the Thomas County Foundation. They said the application should be very specific to what the district wants.

Colby High School principal Rocky Robbins reported the school has begun working on its class schedules for 2008-2009. The school hosted the Technology Student Association convention April 10-12.

Robbins reported the high school has just one teacher opening for next year. Family and Consumer Science instructor Debbie Noble has resigned effective at the end of this year.

At Colby Middle School, principal Robb Ross announced the school had just begun the Kansas Assessments for social studies.

They will be done at the end of this week. Ross said he had been pleased with the math and science portion, but thought the social studies part asked about too many facts and figures. MAPS testing for the middle school will begin after the state assessments.

Transition days for current eighth graders to ninth grade will occur last two days of the school year. An Olympic field day is also planned for the end of the year at the middle school.

Colby Elementary School principal Terrell Harrison said she would begin reviewing applications for teacher openings next week. The elementary school has four openings to fill.

MAPS testing begins for the elementary school next week. Also, students began job shadowing Wednesday and will continue through next week.

Wieland said the district may no longer have access to the Kansas Educational databases, because they are going to begin charging schools for them. A charter school conference will be held in Colby May 29-30. It will include charter schools from across the state.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen announced a reception for retiring teachers will be held May 22. He also told administrators to start looking at changes they want to make to the handbook for next year.

Board president Tracy Rogers and member Janice Frahm are scheduled to attend the Kansas Association of School Boards regional meeting in Goodland May 6.

The board accepted the resignations of second grade teachers Carol Campbell and Sonja Kough. Both are retiring from teaching.

Petro Lube opens

By John Van Nostrand

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The odds of having someone in Colby needing a semi-truck tire worked on at 3 a.m. are small, but odds are greater for the dozens of over-the-road truck drivers along area highways.

Petro Lube is still breaking in its new facility located at 700 W. Horton in Colby, behind the Oasis Travel Center at Interstate 70 exit 53.

"We've been open since March 15 and we are still getting our name out," said manager Ed Martin.

Petro Lube offers a variety of repair services for semis including oil changes, preventive maintenance and tire repair. The shop is open 24 hours. Martin said the shop does have its

limitations on what kind of repairs he and his staff can handle. They don't do mechanical work which requires the engine to be dismantled.

The repair staff can assist with some parts related to the engine.

Complementing the repair work is an equipped truck that can be sent to a truck if it is stranded along a highway.

"For road calls, we will go as far as the people are willing to pay," Martin said.

Martin has been with Petro for four years, and was in Oklahoma City, Okla., and San Antonio, Texas, before Colby.

Petro has fueling services, travel stores, truck repair and maintenance centers, and other driver services at 69 locations across the country. For more information on Petro, go online to petrotruckstops.com

Briefly

Remote car races Sunday

The Racing for Christ Car Club, also known as the RC Club, welcomes everyone to attend its next remote control car races, from 2 to 5 p.m., Sunday, at the First Baptist Church, 615 Webster, Colby. This will be the last event until Sunday, June 1, said Kent Higerd, coordinator. "No experience is necessary and we have many remote control cars available for all ages who would like to learn," he said. There are no costs and the event is non-denominational. For questions or information, call 462-3440 or 462-2867.

Clean up week nears

The City of Colby and the Thomas County Commissioners are combining efforts and sponsoring a "City-Wide/County-Wide Cleanup Week," Monday through Friday, May 5-9. Area service clubs and church groups are asked to commit their organizations to clean public areas of the city, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. People and businesses are also encouraged to make an extra effort during this

week to spruce up their yards and share in the pride of having a clean city. Among the areas that need special attention are parks, ball fields, and all roadsides and entrances in Colby. Armstrong, on behalf of the city, is asking if anyone is willing to volunteer their services to assist the elderly and infirm to call Jo Strange, assistant to the city manager, at 460-4410 and leave your name. Those who need assistance should also call the city office and leave your names. The city will then try to match up those who can help with those who need help, she said.

Square dance Saturday

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club will hold its regular event at 8 p.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building. Any square dancers are welcome. For questions, call Elaine Hurr, 460-2895.

Baseball signup Monday

An organizational and sign-up meeting for American Legion Baseball will be held at 8 p.m., Monday, at the American Legion building, 1850 W. Fourth St.,

Colby. Organizers ask participants to use the west entrance. Sign up is for players who will not be older than 19 in 2008. First-time players will need to bring an original birth certificate. For more information, call John Gatz, manager, 460-2490 or 460-3383.

Day of prayer set May 1

The Thomas County Ministerial Alliance invites everyone to join them at noon, Thursday, May 1, in front of the Thomas County Courthouse, 300 N. Court Ave., Colby, for observance of the national day of prayer. There will be opportunities for group and individual prayers. The service concludes at 12:30 p.m.

Band concert May 1

A spring band concert will be held at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 1, at the Frahm Theater on the campus of Colby Community College. Director for the instrumental concert is Bradley Herndon. Everyone is welcome and admission is free.

Museum meeting May 3

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will have its annual meeting at 6:15 p.m., Saturday, May 3, at the facility, 1905 S. Franklin Ave., Colby.

'Aprilfest' Sunday

The Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Organization is sponsoring "Aprilfest," from 2 to 5 p.m., Sunday, in the school's gymnasium. The event, said Susan McLemore, one of the coordinators, will be a "fun afternoon of polka dancing and bingo." An admission fee will be charged for entry into the polka dance or bingo, or both. For costs, call McLemore 443-3042.

Teams forming for Relay

Teams are now forming for the July 25-26 annual Relay for Life in Thomas County, said Diane Stithem, publicity chair. This event will again be held at Fike Park in Colby and all proceeds will go toward a cure for cancer. Call 462-2383 or 443-2119.