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May showers lend help to wheat farms

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

After a total of more than four inches of rain in northwest Kansas this week, Agronomist Brian Olson of the Kansas State Research Station in Colby said the wheat is in good condition.

"It is in the flowering stage now, and entering the time when it forms the berry," Olson said. "This rain will give it a good shot to finish, and with the right conditions, it could even form a third berry to the mesh, or 'spikelet.'

"Ideally, we would like to see the temperatures between 70 and 80 degrees for the next 10 to 15 days, to let the berry finish filling."

Olson said it takes about eight days for the berry to become full length, after which it fills in with carbohydrate. The berry then goes through the "milk" stage, soft dough stage and then to the hard kernel, which is the final stage before harvest.

"There seems to be no evidence of freeze damage here," Olson said. "The freeze the first of April wasn't typical of later freeze damage where the crown is damaged."

The crown is the growing point just below the surface of the ground. The crown sends out shoots, or joints that, under the right conditions, will all produce a head of wheat.

"There are some fields here

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Rain storm floods waterways

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Even the driest of creek beds ran high with water this week as a storm system moved through northern Kansas, dumping as much as four inches of rain in two days.

Flooding occurred in Colby at Villa High Lake, washing out several sidewalks and playground areas, and along the various streams and low areas in town, but the Colby Public Works Department has not reported any damage.

According to the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, a volunteer organization that monitors precipitation across the United States, rainfall over the past two days measured an average of 4.31 inches around town. The network records data from six stations around Colby and one in Levant. The Levant station mea-

sured this week's rain fall at 3.61 inches.

The Kansas State University Research and Extension Center has put the total rainfall at 4.03 inches. The storm came after a relatively dry month. The total precipitation so far for May is 5.44 inches, the majority of that coming on Monday and Tuesday. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration listed northwest Kansas as extremely dry - 30 to 50 percent of the 30-year average - for last week.

The storm has continued east through Kansas, passing over Manhattan and Kansas City on Wednesday morning.

The National Weather Service is forecasting sunnier days for the rest of the week. Wednesday will begin the trend with highs in the 70s, continuing up to the 90s on the weekend. More precipitation may move in next week.



Ceremony honors area veterans

Kansas Army National Guard Sgt. Daren Guy (above photo, left) and Sgt. Randy Fortin stood at attention and saluted as taps was played at the Memorial Day service at Beulah Cemetery in Colby. The national guard provided a color guard and firing squad for a 21-gun salute. Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Commander Paul Ohlogge (right photo) spoke at the service, praising America's veterans, prisoners of war and current Armed Services members. The post put on the event and afterwards held a separate service at Sacred Heart Cemetery and a coffee and donuts reception at the post later that day. Post members put up flags at half-staff early in the day and flew them up to full staff at the end of the service.

KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press



High school hires new Ag teacher

By Andy Heintz

Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

Tom Rundell will replace Shawna Howell as the new vocational agriculture instructor at Colby High School. Although he will be assuming the role of a full-time instructor for the first time, Rundell will be a familiar face to many students at the school.

Rundell, husband of Nancy Rundell - speech, English, debate and forensics teacher at the high school - was the substitute teacher for Howell from November through January this year while she was on maternity leave.

"I built some pretty good relationships with students," Rundell said.

Colby High Principal Don Krebs said the school interviewed three candidates for the job before they decided to hire Rundell.

"We wanted someone who will bring some stability to the program," he said. "We feel like

we got a good candidate and that he will hit the ground running."

Several people from the high school's agricultural advisory council wrote letters of recommendation for Rundell, Krebs said, and the students he talked to also had positive things to say about him.

Rundell will be teaching an introduction to agriculture class at the middle school and high school. Other classes he will be teaching at the high school include animal science, agricultural construction, agricultural power class and horticulture.

He said he will be incorporating more technology into all his classes and he will be doing more group-type projects in the agriculture construction class. Rundell said he wants the horticulture class to involve more hands on work where students can get out into the field and work with crops and animals. Rundell will also be the new advisor of the FFA student organization. He said he wants to take a different

approach to running the organization.

Rundell discussed using a tractor restoration contest he knew about as a model that he could glean ideas from for other projects he could have the student farming organization participate in. The contest had groups try to put back together a dismantled tractor and make it look new again.

He said he would like to see the organization have a hands on approach to learn about the different components of a tractor such as the engine, the hydraulics system, the transmission and the fuel system. Working with precision technology is another thing Rundell said he would like to incorporate into the organization. He said precision technology meant using current technology to more efficiently use current inputs in farming operations.

"Technology in agriculture is expanding rapidly," said Rundell.

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Andy Heintz/Colby Free Press

Colby High School Sophomores Christian Wilson and Andrew Flanagin and junior Ethan Stickel paddled in a tiny stream west of Country Club Drive during a rainy Tuesday afternoon.

Briefly

Firefighters testing hydrants

The Colby Fire Department began testing fire hydrants Tuesday, and will be testing each hydrant between now and the end of June. The work may temporarily disrupt some water lines near the hydrants. For information, call Assistant Chief Sean Hankin at the Colby Fire Department, 460-4454.

Junior Golf sign up Thursday

Junior Golf sign up and practice will be 6:30 p.m. on Thursday at Meadow Lake Golf Course. Kids ages 8 to 17 are encouraged to sign up. The first tournament will be Monday. For information, contact Miles Ladenberger at 443-1362.

Reading sign up Thursday

Pioneer Memorial Library summer reading program sign up begins tomorrow, and a movie will be shown at 1:30 p.m. Many programs are available for

toddlers to 8th graders. Besides story time, there will be reading challenges, games and activities. For information, call Judy Kleinsorge at 460-4470.

Lions to hold Relay cake walk

The High Plains Lions Club will hold a cake walk at 6 p.m. Friday during the Colby Relay for Life event. The event, at the basketball courts in Fike Park, will go until all the cakes have been taken. Money raised will be pooled with the other money raised by Relay for Life. For information, call Roger Hale at 462-1172.

Friday cutoff for applications

Friday is the cutoff date for Organic Initiative applications in Kansas under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to be considered for Fiscal Year 2009 money. For information, call Andy Burr at the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service county office at 462-7482, extension 301

College to hold fishing derby

Colby Community College and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will hold a free "Kids Fishing Derby" from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday at Villa High Park in Colby. The lake will be stocked with channel catfish and bluegill. The Colby Community College radio station KCJC plans to broadcast live. Wildlife experts will talk to kids about fishing, and there will be a food vendor and face painting. For information, call Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs, at (785) 460-5429. The park is on the east side of Range Avenue south of the KXXX Radio building.

Church offers financial classes

The Colby Church of Christ will sponsor an introductory class for Financial Peace University, a money management course, at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Pioneer Memorial Library. For information, call

Josh and Ronda Faber at 460-6548 or Jared Spencer at 443-2403.

District accepting applications

Thomas County Conservation District is accepting applications for State Cost Share Funding on water resource and non-point source pollution projects. Some of the practices eligible include terraces, diversions, livestock pipelines, water wells and septic systems. Cost share rate is at least 60 percent. The landowner limit will not exceed \$7,500 per project. Applications may be picked up at the office at 915 E Walnut or printed from our web site at thecoconservation.com. Deadline is June 5, 2009. For information, call Debbie Potter at 462-7482 extension 303.

