

## Weather Corner



### National Weather Service

Tonight: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53. South wind around 10 mph.

Friday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 84. South wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 56. South wind 5 to 15 mph becoming north.

Saturday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 85. North wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 81.

Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 51.

Monday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 75.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 53.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 80.

Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 52.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 80.

Wednesday: High, 67; Low 49  
Precip: Wed. Trace  
Month: 0.67 inches  
Year: 10.82 inches  
Normal: 9.94 inches  
(K-State Experiment Station)

Sunrise Friday 6:18 a.m.  
Sunset Friday 9:08 p.m.  
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

## Pension law change to hit district budget

From "PENSION," Page 1

government pensions, she said.

DeYoung said the district will have several options for dealing with the surcharge. The district can lower salaries to reduce the amount they will have to pay to the system, it can contract retired employees through a third party for all of their salaries or it can continue paying the current salaries and pay the full surcharge.

DeYoung said the new law will discourage districts from hiring retirees and encourage retirees to look for jobs out of state, both of which would cut the potential talent pool Kansas.

"I can't think of a school building that would be happy about this," she said.

DeYoung said there will be no

grandfathering or reduced charges for current employees. She said the district has eight employees who are also drawing pensions, including high school principal Don Krebs, athletic director Larry Gabel and curriculum director Diana Wieland.

The district has contracted with the Thomas County Learning Center to pass through a part of the salaries of some of its retired employees, DeYoung said, but under the new law, this would not exempt them from the surcharge, merely lower the amount. The change could cost the district tens of thousands of dollars, since a 20 percent charge on a \$77,000 administrator's salary would be \$15,400.

The board took no action on the subject at the meeting.

## Academy moves to half time format

From "ACADEMY," Page 1

more kids than the original classroom benefit from it.

"By doing eighth grade only, next school year, the students will take other electives such as art, physical education, communications and journalism, and it will free up time for Mrs. Morgan to work with gifted students."

"In doing this, we have saved one teaching position, by spreading her abilities as a teacher to reach more students."

"We don't horde technology," added Morgan. "We like to pass it to all kids."

The school district, Morgan said, is looking at integrating all middle and elementary students into some version of the

program for the future, and is branching out.

"There is some project-based learning in the high school," Morgan said, "and the middle school is doing lots of middle school based learning."

"Project based learning involves all skills It integrates math, science, and reading, and kids take those skills and use them in real life situations."

The academy will be accepting enrollment for eighth graders, up to 15 to 20 students, including virtual students, said Wieland.

"The school board totally believes in this type and delivery of this kind of education," Wieland added, "because they want technology opportunities for all kids."

## Storms attract chasers

From "VORTEX," Page 1

science team, Romine said, to help determine where to find the best storms. Vortex 2 has attached some instruments to the intercept vehicle in the hopes of getting data from the inside of a tornado, he added.

"We'd love to get the data off those instruments," Romine said.

On Wednesday, the crew were doing practice exercises on county roads near Levant.

Romine said he wasn't sure yet which way Vortex 2 would head out of Colby. The group has a steering committee, which consults the head scientists on each day's weather and decides on a direction. The decision can often be a difficult one, since the right conditions may be in several places around the Midwest.

"We wouldn't want to get an OK storm one way and miss a great storm the next," Romine said.

Conditions are developing both north and south of Colby, he added, and the team will be moving out in one direction or the other today.

## Embark over budget, September opening planned

From "EMBARK," Page 1

The counsel discussed structuring a loan to Embark to help pay for the remaining renovations on the first floor. There will be a public hearing on the Embark loan at the next meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 16.

Brouthers said the company could bring a lot of jobs to northwest Kansas.

"We could literally have more employment than can be handled by one northwest Kansas town," he said. "It's feasible we could need 700 employers here in northwest Kansas."

On another matter, Kevan Trenkle, chief financial officer of Citizens Medical Center, asked if the hospital could get a waiver for the placement of a propane tank near the buildings on its campus to provide fuel for an emergency generator. The hospital now used natural gas to power its generator, but that doesn't meet state regulations. The hospital had been using a diesel-powered back.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong noted that according to information from the Kansas fire marshal's website, if a facility cares for anyone on life support,

it must have a generator and the fuel must be kept onsite. Piped-in natural gas is not considered a dependable source of fuel, she said. In other words, another fuel source is needed because if there is an emergency, and the natural gas to the hospital shuts off, it has to have a backup source of fuel.

Armstrong said the municipal code prohibits bulk storage of liquefied petroleum gas in most parts of the city. It can be used in industrial areas, but is prohibited in residential areas.

Armstrong said the council would have to grant an exception for the center to be able to install the tank. She said that the only time it is acceptable to use natural gas for a backup generator is if the utility company could not be affected by any natural disasters.

Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore said if the city was going to make any exception to the code, it needs to be for life-support purposes only. Armstrong said the city would make sure the ordinance only allowed propane tanks be installed in medical-type facilities.

Councilman Mark Beringer, asked Trenkle if he could research whether or not using liquified nat-

ural gas would be just as economical as propane. Trenkle agreed.

McLemore said propane can create a little more danger than natural gas. When natural gas leaks, he said, it is less likely to stay concentrated because it's lighter than air so it dissipates upward. Propane is heavier than air and hugs the ground, which leads to it becoming more concentrated and more likely to burn.

In other business, the council:

- Accepted a grant of \$92,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration needed to complete the Colby airport terminal apron project.

- Heard from Armstrong that NexGen, a renewable energy company, may not be able to install a windmill on the campus of Colby Community College because it has not been registered as an energy supplier in Kansas. She said the Kansas Corporation Commission is reviewing the status of the company as an energy provider.

She said NexGen is interested in working on a deal with the city where they would put wind into the city's system. If NexGen did business with the city, she said, it wouldn't have to adhere to the commissions' regulations because

the city gets energy under the municipal electric system where the commissions' regulations do not apply.

• Approved a commercial sign for the new fire station. The sign will cost \$2,957.

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