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Good harvest weather expected this week

By Vera Sloan

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Farmers are wondering just when the skies will clear and allow fields to dry out so they can get their crops out of the fields before winter sets in for real.

They can take heart, though, because the National Weather Service expects moisture to be below normal and temperatures to hover around normal over the

next three months.

This past week saw something that for sure felt and looked like real winter, with reports of as much as 12 inches of snow in Stratton, Colo., not too far from Thomas County's doorstep. Goodland reported less than an inch, but Colby got mostly rain.

Although most of Thomas County received rain mixed with snow, Levant had enough snow to make the ground white. Other reports ranged from one inch at At-

wood to over four in the McDonald and St. Francis area.

The early snow did bring abundant moisture to the entire Tri-State area from early Wednesday into Thursday, and moisture totals ranged from as little as a half inch in Sharon Springs to over two inches in Oberlin.

Interstate 70 was closed for a while in Colorado from Burlington to Limon, and power outages and tree damage were reported in Stratton, and in Benkelman and

Trenton, Neb.

A truck hauling grain overturned on U.S. 83 northeast of Colby about 12:05 p.m. Thursday, but the wreck was not weather related, the Thomas County Sheriff's Office said.

The 2004 International, driven by Dennis F. Swearingen, Atlanta, Neb., was southbound when it went off the right (west) side of the curve east of Gem, Trooper Jason Duffey of the Kansas Highway Patrol reported. The 56-year-

old driver was taken to Citizens Medical Center complaining of a small cut on his nose and pain in his shoulder. Grain spilled over the road and in the ditch.

Then Saturday, a cattle semi went off the road on K-25 about 10 miles north of town, Trooper Perry Frey reported. Craig A. Beaver, 38, of Morrison, Okla., was driving the 2004 Kenworth south on K-25 when it went into the west ditch and rolled

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Farmers hold court



VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Polar bears just happened to be a topic of conversation Friday morning when a group of coffee drinkers got together for the last time at J & B Meat Market. The store closed to day to

move to a new location on South Range. Ten to 15 men could be found each morning drinking coffee and catching up on the latest news about town.

Appeals judges hear alcohol cases

By Kevin Bottrell

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Before an audience of lawyers, students and citizens, three judges from the Kansas Court of Appeals sat at the Thomas County Courthouse last week to hear cases from western Kansas.

Judges Stephen Hill, Nancy Caplinger and Steve Leben convened Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon to hear 15 cases involving everything from driving under the influence to adoption.

The appeals court hears cases that have been decided in a district court and one of the parties involved is seeking to overturn that ruling. Hill said the judges are supplied with written briefs on the cases and a research memo on each from the court's staff. The attorneys for each side typically have 15 minutes to present their arguments, and the appellant, the party seeking to have a verdict overturned, can request time for rebuttal afterwards.

Hill said he and his fellow judges would be asking questions of the attorneys throughout their arguments, not to poke holes in their cases, but to help them better understand the issues.

"The Greeks had it right when they said 'all truth comes from the dialectic,'" Hill said. "That is, all justice hinges on questions and answers."

The cases are not decided at the hearing, but later in conferences

among the judges.

Of the 15 cases the court heard on Tuesday and Wednesday, several dealt with driving while under the influence.

In State of Kansas v. William Smith, the issue was whether or not the suspect was under arrest when he confessed to being intoxicated. Attorney Daniel Walter said Smith was driving down a state highway, pulling a farm implement when he was pulled over by a Kansas Highway Patrol trooper for having a tail light out. Smith had gotten out of his vehicle to talk to the trooper and in the course of that conversation, the trooper noticed an alcohol smell on Smith's breath and that his eyes were bloodshot.

The trooper told Smith to sit in his patrol car and asked him some questions, eventually getting him to admit he had been drinking. The trooper then searched the vehicle, finding several alcohol containers, and administered a sobriety test.

Walter argued that the trooper could not legally use that confession to further the investigation, since the trooper had not told Smith he was under arrest and had not read him his constitutional rights under the U.S. Supreme Court's "Miranda" decision.

Hill asked what the definition of being "under arrest is" and whether or not Smith felt he was under arrest after being put in the patrol car. Walter said most people have a reasonable expectation that

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Health secretary says there will be enough vaccine

WASHINGTON (AP) — Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said Monday the swine flu vaccine "is coming out the door as fast as it comes off the production line."

But at the same time, she acknowledged delays in getting a sufficient supply for all those

demanding it.

"We were relying on the manufacturers to give us their numbers and as soon as we got numbers we put them out to the public. It does appear now that those numbers were overly rosy," Sebelius said in one interview. "We do have a vaccine that works," she said. Sebelius

said the immune response is working faster than officials anticipated.

Appearing Monday morning on nationally broadcast news shows, she said officials now have a supply of about 16.5 million doses of

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Musician opens guitar shop

By Andy Heintz

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Pictures of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Pink Floyd and Johnny Cash decorate the walls of Thunder Cord Guitars, flanking rows of used guitars waiting to be snapped up by aspiring musicians and veterans alike.

The owner, Al Leiker, says he is a musician himself and the posters reflect his tastes and the music preferred by his adult son Troy.

Troy has a poster of his idol, guitar legend Stevie Ray Vaughn, hanging alongside a picture of Presley, Al's musical idol when he was a kid. Troy came up with the name of the store, his dad said.

The store, at 1125 Taylor Ave. in the Southwind Plaza complex, also has a poster of Troy after he won the Norton Idol competition. Troy lives in Norton and Norton Idol is the town's version of the television show American Idol, his dad said. He said his son was into Country Rock, while Dad prefers Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Presley. Troy is a fan of Vaughn, Pink Floyd, the Eagles and Cross Canadian Ragweed.

Leiker's love of music is evident to visitors. Often as not, he can be found singing and playing with other musicians in the back room. He said he was in several bands when he was younger. One day he was playing with some of his former bandmates.

"We used to jam together in the 1950s," said Leiker. "We thought we were the only musicians in Kansas back then."

Leiker said he was born in Hoxie and went to grade school and high school there. He went on to become a railroader in Denver. He spent weekends performing with one of his bands.

Leiker said moved his store from Norton to Colby and opened it to the public on Aug. 3, looking for more business in the larger town. His store was in Norton from 2004 to 2009. He said he thinks Colby attracts more business because of the traffic from Interstate 70.

The newcomer said he is impressed with the way Colby operates.

"I have to hand it to the people in charge of Colby," he said. "They seem to know how to run a city."

The owner said he prefers selling used guitars

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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Al Leiker, owner of Thunder Chords Guitar, stood by a row of guitars at the front of his store on Thursday. Thunder Chords will hold a ribbon cutting with the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

Briefly

For latest flu info, call 460-4599

A hot line for answers to questions on seasonal influenza and the H1N1 flu strain will be available throughout the flu season at (785) 460-4599. The Thomas County Health Department said information about the status and availability of vaccines, priority groups and the like will be available at this number.

Coaches offer coffee, talk

Join the Colby High School football staff for "Coffee with the Coaches" at 9 a.m. Saturday and every Saturday after home and away games at the Sports Shoppe, Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue. For information, call Eagles' Coach Chris Gardener at 460-1390.

Town hall meeting Tuesday

The City of Colby and the Colby Pool Committee will hold an open "town hall" meeting at 7 p.m.

Tuesday at the Community Building to discuss the proposed sales tax that will pay for the fire station and a new pool. For information, call City Manager Carolyn Armstrong at 460-4400.

Here's a chance to help a child

If you would like the chance to make a difference in the life of a child, join Saint Francis Community Services for a Foster and Adoptive Parent Experience from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at our offices, 180 W. Fifth Street. Recruitment Supervisor Valerie Leon said the agency will provide refreshments and answer questions about becoming a foster or adoptive parent. Bring your family. For information, call (866) 999-1599 or go to www.st-francis.org.

Hospital auxiliary needs help

The Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary is looking for volunteers to greet visitors, operate the gift shop

and help patients and their families, among other things. If you'd like to volunteer, call Tama Unger at (785) 460-1214 or Mary Smith at (785) 462-3387.

Come get a scare at soccer house

The American Youth Soccer Organization will have a haunted house from 7 to 10 p.m. Thursday, 7 to midnight Friday and 8 to midnight Saturday at 660 N. Franklin Ave. There will be a children's matinee for kids under 12 from 5 to 7 p.m. Halloween. Admission will be \$3 for kids under 12, \$5 for everyone 12 and over and \$2 at the matinee, or \$1 with a food item for Genesis-Thomas County food bank. All proceeds will go to the soccer organization. For information, call Emily Griffin at 460-0467.

Halloween bash for kids 13, under

Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Thomas County Community Foundation and the Modern Woodmen will hold a Halloween Bash for kids 13 and under

from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday at the 4-H Building on the Thomas County Fairgrounds. There will be food, prizes, games and lots of fun, said Diane Stithem of Big Brothers Big Sisters. For information, call Stithem at 460-9125.

Food bank taking applications

Genesis-Thomas County food bank has forms available for families who will need food baskets this holiday season. These can be picked up from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Genesis office, 350 S. Range Ave. Suite 13. Applications are due by Tuesday, Nov. 10. For information, call Genesis at 460-7930.



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