

Weather Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Patchy fog after 1 a.m. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 45. South southeast wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Tuesday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 10 a.m. Mostly cloudy, high near 66. Southeast wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Tuesday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46. East northeast wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Wednesday: A chance of drizzle before 1 p.m. Patchy fog before 1 p.m. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a high near 63. East wind between 10 and 15 mph.
Wednesday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 48.
Thursday: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 69.
Thursday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46.
Friday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, high near 66.
Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 40.
Friday: High, 58; Low 30
Saturday: High, 60; Low 38
Sunday: High, 65; Low 42
Precip: Friday 0.18 inches
Saturday 0.00 inches
Sunday 0.08 inches
Month: 1.36 inches
Year: 3.97 inches
Normal: 3.89 inches
(K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
Tuesday 7:00 a.m. 8:27 p.m.
Wednesday 6:59 a.m. 8:28 p.m.
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

Kansas sees \$70 million budget shortfall

From "BUDGET," Page 1

create lasting economic recovery," Parkinson said. "That's why I reiterate my call for the Legislature to return to Topeka at the end of the month prepared to raise the revenue we need to prevent permanent damage to the foundation of our state."
The Republican-controlled Legislature returns April 28 to finish its work for the year. Neither the House nor Senate has approved a budget for next year, nor any plan for new taxes to make it balance.
Parkinson has proposed \$380 million in tax increases, including raising the sales

tax rate, but the plan has found little support. His budget plan also includes small increases in public education and the state receiving additional federal dollars.
Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt said finding a solution will require a bipartisan compromise among legislators and Parkinson.
"Balancing this budget will be a daunting task of historic proportions," said Schmidt, an Independence Republican. "There is no good or popular option that will get the job done.
The Senate Ways and Means Committee will start working on its budget Monday

and then turn to tax proposals.
House and Senate Democratic leaders said tax increases must be part of the mix to prevent deeper cuts.
"Now it's time to make the tough choices that we knew were inevitable," said House Minority Leader Paul Davis, a Lawrence Democrat. "We must begin to look past 2011's bottom line and consider the long-term impact of our decisions."
House Appropriations Committee Chairman Kevin Yoder said the budget proposal drafted by his panel still would balance despite Friday's revenue revisions. That plan created a revenue surplus of more than

\$300 million in 2011 by freezing spending, making additional cuts and additional federal money for Medicaid.
However, Yoder said there doesn't seem to be support to either do what the House proposes or for the increases sought by Parkinson and Senate leaders to raise taxes. Yoder said the root problem is unemployment and how to create more jobs, not how to maintain current state spending.
"Would a tax increase help small business hire people again?" asked Yoder, an Overland Park Republican. "I don't think it will."

State Legislature may charge nursing homes more

TOPEKA (AP) — Operators of nursing homes and assisted-living centers in Kansas are deeply divided over a proposal to charge a fee for every bed in their facilities in an effort to attract more federal money.
A bill awaiting action in the Legislature would assess a fee of \$1,325 per bed. It would raise an estimated \$27 million from nursing homes, which could be matched by about \$62 million in new federal dollars.
Supporters say the extra money would help a state payment system struggling with deep budget cuts, while opponents argue that lawmakers facing a big budget gap would likely use the money for other purposes.
Phyllis Kelly, executive director of the Kansas Adult Care Executives Association, said nursing-home and assisted-living opera-

tors generally are united on most issues, but this proposal is so divisive that her organization is not taking a position.
"We usually as an industry are very together on the issues related to long-term care, our seniors and our elderly," Kelly said. "This is one that we definitely have different opinions about."
Debra Zehr, president and chief executive officer of the Kansas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, which represents nonprofit facilities, said she's been told that lawmakers in other states have used the revenue from this fee for other budget purposes.
But Cindy Luxem, chief executive officer of the Kansas Health Care Association, said she doesn't understand the opposition.
"I am shocked at the fact that the people that oppose this have scared senior citizens into think-

ing this is something they will have to pay themselves," said Luxem, whose organization represents both nonprofit and for-profit facilities. "There is this dirty secret, the issue about private pay, this is not a new issue for this profession."
Because nursing facilities operate with tight limits on Medicaid reimbursement, Luxem said, private residents often pay a larger piece of the overall bill. She said the new tax would help reduce that burden by bringing new money into the system.
"We've had a secret or a silent 'granny tax' for years," Luxem

said. "That's what providers do. They make the private pay people make up for those deficiencies."
Zehr said pressure to implement the fees and use the money for other purposes increases during difficult budget times. In fact, she said, the House Appropriations Committee budget already proposes taking some of the new money.
"I certainly am not saying there is malicious intent on the part of any legislator," Zehr said. "It is just what happens over time. In our case, it was 24 hours before the Legislature started to look at how they would spend that mon-

ey."
Luxem responded that the bill establishing the fees requires that the program end and money be returned to nursing facilities if the money is diverted. She noted that the state hasn't swiped dollars raised by a similar fee for hospitals.
And she said nursing homes might not get their 10 percent cut in Medicaid reimbursements restored without the new tax.
"I guess I'm being a realist," she said. "I don't believe there is any plans out there for any great revenue enhancements to help the great budget crises we are in."

Candidate arrested at Salina 'tea party'

SALINA (AP) — A Kansas gubernatorial candidate has been arrested over an alleged altercation at a recent "tea party" event in central Kansas.
The Salina Journal reported Saturday that Ken Cannon of Salina faces charges of battery and making a criminal threat. Cannon is running an independent campaign for governor.
Salina police said Friday that Cannon's arrest Thursday wasn't related to the tea party event, al-

though the alleged altercation took place at that gathering.
Police say it started when Cannon ran into the former head of the Concordia school board.
Police say the altercation stemmed from problems that had occurred while Cannon worked in the district.
However, his campaign manager, Keith Davies, says Cannon reacted after someone mentioned the death of Cannon's son.

LOCAL TV LISTINGS sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Table with columns for Tuesday Evening April 20, 2010. Rows include channels like KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, and cable channels like AMC, ANIM, BRAVO, etc.

Table with columns for Wednesday Evening April 21, 2010. Rows include channels like KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, and cable channels like AMC, ANIM, BRAVO, etc.

American Profile: We Celebrate Hometown Life. Stories from hometowns just like yours. Look for us each week in this paper.

ATTENTION... Colby High School, Brewster High School, Golden Plains High School and Heartland Christian School Senior Parents & HOMESCHOOLERS. Hurry in parents!! Deadline is April 26, 2010!!! The Colby Free Press is now planning the Senior Graduation Tab and will be giving parents a chance to put a baby picture in along with a short message from the family for a small fee. Call Andrea, Heather or Shaly @ 462-3963 for more information or stop by the office at 155 W. 5th in Colby.

WHITNEY COLETTE ADAMS. I plan to attend Colby Community College and play softball. PARENTS: Richard & Peggy Adams. It's been a real hoot, Whitney get em girl, and Godspeed. Love, Mom & Dad.

