



Harvest stays steady despite rain

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Sporadic rain kept combines out of some Thomas County fields this weekend while other farmers were able to finally get going. Kansas State University Extension recorded 1.3 inches of rain from a late-night storm Friday, making things soggy in the field Saturday. Flash-flood warnings were issued with that storm, however, Emergency Management Director Susan McMahan said today that no flooding was reported. Eric Sperber, manager of Cornerstone Ag, said the rain hit some parts of the county more than others and his elevators had steady business throughout the weekend, with far more loads of wheat

coming through than much of last week. Roger Hale of the Colby Harvest Office said custom crews were able to cut some wheat Sunday, but more rain this morning will delay harvesters to mid-afternoon. Many of the crews, he said, have already moved on to Nebraska and Colorado. Hale said the yields of the wheat coming in look good except where a few areas got hail in the spring. Sperber said farmers continue to report above-average yields across the county. Sperber estimated the county to be about 75 percent harvested today. "I hear of more and more people who are starting to finish up," he said.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Escaped inmate recaptured here

An escaped inmate from the Hutchinson Correctional Facility was gone for only a few hours before being captured in a Colby bar. According to the Associated Press, Robert Nickelson, 44, escaped Sunday evening from a work-release program at a food plant in Chase, near Great Bend. He had been serving five years and six months for the rape of an exotic dancer in Topeka in 2000

and two years for conspiracy to commit rape. At 11 p.m. that night, said Police Chief Randy Jones, the Colby Police Department got a call about a suspicious person at the B-Hive Bar and Grill. The caller, an employee of the bar, said the man had been trying to sell a vehicle. In a release, Jones said Officer Donnie Valles went to the bar and

See "INMATE," Page 3

Company begins pool construction

Pool contractor Prosser Wilbert Construction Inc. of Lenexa began earth moving for the new Colby Aquatic Center last week. The land had been a wheat field, part of which was cut and baled in May to make way for the construction. The center, which will include a conventional pool, kid pool, "lazy river" float area and several slides, is expected to be completed in time for next summer's pool crowd.



High schoolers perform at picnic



HEATHER WOOFER/Colby Free Press

The Steven Kerksiek band, comprising Kerksiek, Chace McNinch, Brock Wagoner and Bryan and Austin Scheideman, played at last week's Picnic in the Park. This Wednesday's

entertainment will be Wayne and Millie Lauritsen, better known as area bluegrass band Sappa Strings.

Sheriff to provide night security at fair

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

The Thomas County Fair Board will be hiring sheriff's deputies for security at night during fair week. At its Thursday meeting, the board voted to hire one deputy for \$10 an hour from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday to Friday, July 26 to 30. Board President Mark Anderson said the primary concern is for the expensive farm implements that are displayed on the fairgrounds that week. Most of that equipment, he said, would be moved out by Saturday afternoon, so a deputy wouldn't be needed that night. Sheriff Rod Taylor was at the meeting to discuss parking as well. He said West Cedar Street, the main street into the fair grounds, gets too narrow when parking is allowed on both sides during fair week. "You couldn't even get a fire truck or an ambulance up it," he said. Anderson said the board could

restrict parking to just the north side and leave the side next to the National Guard Armory empty to help traffic flow. Ron Kogler said he wasn't sure if the fair board had the authority to restrict parking on that street and suggested the board talk to Police Chief Randy Jones. Anderson said the board is also looking to increase the amount of handicapped parking after some complaints in previous years. In other business, the board: • Heard from Secretary Audrey Hines that she got an estimate of \$1,100 from Pro Floor Care to wax the floor of the 4-H building. The board voted to see if they could get the floor waxed for \$500. Hines said she would go back and see what could be done for that much. • Heard from Kogler about a memorial bench for Bob Rundel, who died shortly after last year's fair. Rundel's bench will be made from precast concrete and placed under a tree by the hog barn.

See "SECURITY," Page 3

Briefly

Volunteers needed for carnival
The Thomas County Amusement Association is looking for volunteers for the home-owned carnival at the Thomas County Free Fair from Tuesday, July 27, to Saturday, July 31. Shifts will be from 6:45 to 9 p.m. and 9 to 11 p.m. Volunteers are needed for the prize booth, ring toss, baseball throw and ball of chance. For information or to volunteer, call Holly Whitaker at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 460-3401 or Angie Gaede at 443-3853.

For questions, call dietitian Courtney McCarty (785) 460-4849. Refreshments will be served.
State office to close for lunch
The state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services office, 1135 S. County Club Dr., will close for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on weekdays until further notice. The office has been open during the lunch hour. For information, call the office at 462-6760.
Street sealing postponed
The Colby Street Department sealing project on Lue Drive, Brookside Drive, Eighth Street and Lynn Drive, all east of Thompson Avenue, has been delayed by rain until Tuesday. Have your vehicles off the streets by 8 a.m. that day. For information, call Public Works Director Chris Bieker at (785) 460-4420.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday
The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Merle Wolfe's home, 880 E. Eighth St. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. For information, call the First Presbyterian Church at 462-6342 or Wolf at 460-3879.
Sign up for soccer this month
The American Youth Soccer Organization fall season will start in September. The organization will have early registration from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Thursday, July 22, at the Pioneer Memorial Library. Registration is \$45 until Saturday, July 31, and \$50 after. For information or to set up an alternate time to register, call Emily Griffin at 460-0647.

Family to talk about Africa trips
The First Presbyterian Church in Colby plans a potluck reception and presentation by Tim, Rebekah, Andrew and Lydia Peterson about their trip to Tanzania at 4 p.m. Sunday at the church. The Petersons also will talk about the history of Christian missions in Tanzania. The potluck reception will follow. For information, call the Rev. George T. Rahn at (785) 443-2632.

