



Officials talk highway snow plowing

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Supervisors with the Kansas Department of Transportation, representatives of law enforcement agencies, city and county officials and emergency management managers met Tuesday, Oct. 5, in Colby to hear about the state's plan for how highways will be managed for snow removal and winter closures.

Highways in northwest Kansas see a lot of traffic, especially from commercial trucks, and bad weather can both delay

travelers and cause crashes, so it's important for people to know where and how much the department will plow during a winter storm.

David Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, displayed a map of the tropical area of the Pacific Ocean that has an effect on Kansas. He explained that last year, the Pacific was in a "El Niño" pattern, with warm seas in the tropical Pacific, but that now we are going into the "La Niña" pattern where colder temperatures are the norm.

He said ocean temperatures have an im-

act on the entire United States, primarily during the winter and spring months, and as weather travels over the thousands of miles, it influences the jet stream over this country. When it is unusually cool in the tropical Pacific, he said, it's usually colder than normal in northwest Kansas.

Floyd also mentioned that Kansas weather seems more difficult to predict because of the near proximity to the Rocky Mountains. He said the Climate Prediction Center is saying northwest Kansas weather for December, January and February should be dry and cold with below-normal snowfall. Average snowfall

at Goodland is 37 inches, he added.

Something new at the weather service this year will be wind probability forecasts. He said there will be an hourly weather graph with the probability of the wind speed. He told road officials he hopes they will "play around" with the wind graphics and see if they're helpful.

Michael Terry, district maintenance engineer in Norton, said the Transportation Department is in a new program for budget dollars. The goal is to improve and maintain the highway system, he said.

"It's tough to get the Legislature to consider KDOT when Reader's Digest came

out last year naming Kansas as having the best roads in the country," Terry said.

Although it's a nice designation, he said, it's a hard one to live up to.

He presented a map of the main roads through the northwest district, from Osborne, Russell and Smith counties on the east to the Colorado border. Main roads in the district will one of three snow-plowing designations: Class 1, I-70; Class II, U.S. 24, 36, 183, 283, 383, 281, 83 and K-25 from Colby to Atwood; and Class III, K-23, 27 and 25 north of Atwood and

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Concern for the future

Budget worries not over for rural school districts

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Mark Tallman, assistant executive director for advocacy at the Kansas Association of School Boards said any further cuts to the education budget will cause schools to cut effective programs like tutoring or retraining teachers.

Members of the Kansas Association of School Boards held meetings with parents, business leaders, higher education and community members in conjunction with fall regional meetings with school board members, school site councils and administrators on Wednesday, Oct. 6., at the City Limits Convention Center and Colby High School.

Tallman said Kansas schools have made progress in academic achievement for eight or nine straight years, but over the past two years, lack of money because of state budget cuts has led to stagnation. He said schools may have to face future cuts if the economy doesn't grow.

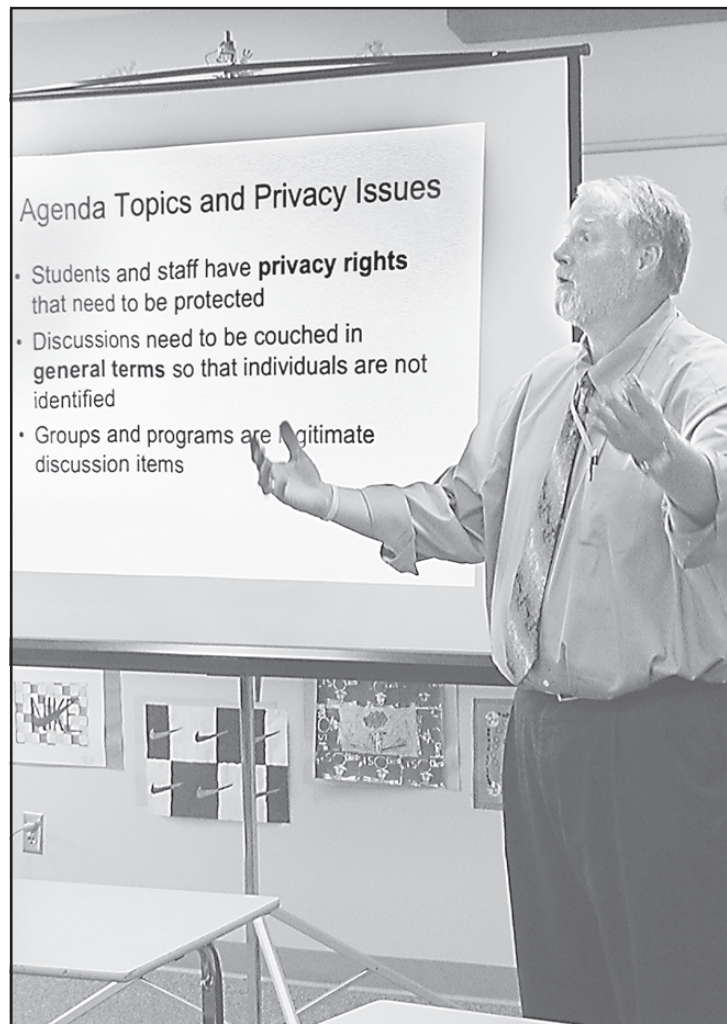
Executive Director John Heim

said it would be harder for rural school districts to get grants from the Race to the Top Program established by the Obama administration. The program rewards schools implementing specified education "reforms." He said the program puts rural districts at a disadvantage because their teachers don't get the same amount of training those in cities have available.

The number of people 25 years or older with a high school diploma in Kansas has increased over the years. A report put together by the association said, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 28.5 percent of Kansas students 25 or older had a high school diploma in 1940, while an estimated 88.6 percent received a diploma from 2005 to 2007.

Tallman said schools have made headway in narrowing the achievement gap between white students and minorities, but they still have some work to do. The Kansas Hispanic population has not seen an increase in people 25 or older with diplomas since

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ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press
Doug Moeckel discussed privacy issues during his talk on building an effective site council at the Kansas Association of School Boards meeting last week.

Vote in advance in 2010 election

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Advance voting is now open for the 2010 general election, and there's still a little time left to register.

Monday is the last day to register to vote. Registration is available online or at the Thomas County Clerk's office.

The clerk's office has been taking applications for mail-in advance ballots, and the first batch of ballots went out Wednesday. Any registered and eligible Kansas voter may apply for a mail-in ballot by requesting an application from the county clerk's office and then returning or mailing the application to the office. Applications are also available online at www.voteks.org.

The deadline to request a mail-in advance ballots is Friday, Oct. 29, and all ballots must be in by 7 p.m. on Nov. 2.

The clerk's office will also be offering in-person advance voting starting Tuesday and continuing until noon on Monday, Nov. 1, when the office will close.

In the primary election in August, 512 people voted in advance. About 90,000 people voted in advance statewide.

The Kansas Secretary of State

regularly posts official and unofficial registration numbers. The latest official numbers from July 19 - just before the primary election - show 4,426 registered voters in Thomas County, 733 Democrats, 2,786 Republicans, 18 Libertarians, 4 Reform and 885 unaffiliated. Statewide there are 1.7 million registered voters.

In the primary election, the county had a 38 percent voter turnout, higher than the state percentage, 25.2 percent.

The latest KWCH poll has Republican Jerry Moran leading 67 percent to 27 percent over Democrat Lisa Johnston in the race for U.S. Senator. Republican Sam Brownback is leading Democrat Tom Holland 60 percent to 32 percent for Kansas governor. Republican Tim Huelskamp is leading Democrat Alan Jilka 63 percent to 26 percent for U.S. Representative for the 1st District. In each of these races, third party candidates and undecided voters are in single digits.

State quilt show to feature old-fashioned bed turning

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If you've never been to an "Old Fashioned Bed Turning, Martha Washington style," and if you like quilts, then you won't want to miss being at The City Limits Convention Center at 7 p.m. on Friday night, when the Kansas Quilters Organization begins their bi-annual three day fall gathering in Colby. The public is welcome. Admission is \$6.

The re-enactment of how Martha Washington sneaked in a "trunk show" for her overnight guests is just a small part of the busy three day schedule of events.

It seems that the country's first First Lady made many beautiful quilts and put them all on her

guest room bed. When overnight guests came, she would take off the quilts one at a time to the oohs and aahs of her admiring guests. When she got to the bottom quilt, the guests were welcome to use that quilt to cover themselves for the night. From 40 to 50 quilts made by members of the Kansas Prairie Quilter's Guild from area towns, will cover the antique bed brought in for the show.

The gathering is expected to draw over a hundred quilters from across the state to take part in classes offered by national trainer, Debbie Caffrey of Albuquerque, N.M. Caffrey is famous for her "mystery quilts." A mystery quilt is one that is broken down into sections, or steps that are presented one at a time over several months, at a participating quilt or fabric shop. The quilter doesn't

know what the final design looks like until the last part is available.

After the bed turning, the public is welcome to participate in "fabric strip poker." Each person who plays will have a chance to win fabric.

Registration for Friday, Saturday and Sunday events begins at 4 p.m. on Thursday and will be open until 9 p.m. at the convention center. Registration will also be available Friday morning from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m..

Workshops will start at 9 a.m. on Friday. Debbie Caffrey, Elsie Campbell, Gail Eberle, Kristi Hawkins and Junelle Hills will be instructing. Campbell is a national hand-quilting award winner and instructor from Dodge City.

Registration will open again on

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press
Junelle Hills, owner of Colby's Quilt Cabin, adjusted a quilt on the antique bed brought in for the fall meeting of the Kansas Quilters organization Friday through Sunday at the City Limits Convention Center. The ornate 100-year-old bed will hold nearly 50 quilts for the "Old Fashioned Bed Turning," one of the opening events of the quilters meeting.

Briefly

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has a 1- to 2-year-old female vizsla (a Hungarian retriever breed), a small 1- to 2-year-old black-and-white male mixed-breed dog and several kittens available for adoption. Lost or strayed animals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Ballots due in extension election

Thomas County Extension Council Program Development Committee election ballots are due in by 5 p.m. Friday to the extension office, 350 S. Range Ave. Suite 15. The committee helps define the needs of the county and decide what in direction extension programs should go. Ballots are available at the office. For information, call the office at 460-4582.

Medics plan information meeting

Thomas County Emergency Medical Services plans a meeting for anyone interested in becoming a first responder or emergency medical technician at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the ambulance garage. For information, Dawnelle Umberger at 460-4585.

Grass clipping collection to end

The Colby Sanitation Department will stop picking up grass clippings Friday. Put grass clippings in with your regular trash throughout the winter. The department will notify everyone in the spring when grass needs to be separated from trash. For information, call the Public Works office at 460-4420.

Kiwanis to dish out flapjacks

The Colby Kiwanis Club will have an all-you-can eat pancake feed from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at

the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, 220 N. Lake. Proceeds will go for Christmas and youth projects and other community service. Tickets, \$4, are available from any Kiwanis member. For information, call Kenton Krehbiel at 462-6553.

Wine, cheese will benefit cancer

The Northwest Kansas Foundation for Hope will hold a come-and-go wine tasting benefit from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday at City Limits Bar and Grill. Tickets are available at Colby Dodge, Donelan Jewelry, Homeland Realty, People's State Bank and S&T Communications. All proceeds go to helping area cancer patients with expenses. For information, call Pat Sloan at 443-3261.

Screenings offered for kids

The Northwest Kansas Educational Service Cen-

ter and Colby School District staff will conduct early childhood screenings for kids 5 and under from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday at the Colby United Methodist Church. To make an appointment, call grade school nurse Amy Hutfles at 460-5111.

Genesis needs names for baskets

Genesis-Thomas County food bank plans once again to help area families during the holiday season. Forms are available for families in need who would like to receive a food basket. Come to the office, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 13, from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays by Tuesday, Nov. 9. For information, call Genesis at 460-7930.

