

Young farm leaders to meet in Wichita

More than 400 farmers and ranchers between the ages of 18 and 35 will gather Friday through Sunday, Jan. 28 to 30, in Wichita at the Kansas Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Leaders Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The theme for this year's conference is "Farming Beyond Your Field," focusing on opportunities for young farmers and ranchers to influence farm policy and public opinion through involvement and participation in Farm Bureau.

"We are excited to offer a meaningful agenda at our leaders conference," said Jeff Bathurst, a Dickinson County farmer who serves as volunteer chair of the Young Farmers and Ranchers committee. "Today's 20- and 30-something producers face unique challenges, and we are eager to work together to find ways to help fulfill our dream of building our lives in and around agriculture."

In a Saturday morning keynote address, the group will hear from Dr. Jeff Stamp, recognized globally as a master creative practitioner in over 30 industries, including food processing, advanced agriculture and venture capital. His topic is "Creative Innovation: The Entrepreneurial Imperative."

Also on the agenda is a presentation from Troy and Stacy Hadrick, fifth-generation ranchers from South Dakota, who will share their success in tapping into public trust of farmers and ranchers and influencing the hearts and minds of those not directly connected with agriculture.

Detailed information, including the formal agenda, can be found at www.kfb.org/yfr. Registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 14.

Kansas Farm Bureau, established in 1919, is an advocacy organization supporting farm families, with chapters in most counties.

Photography studio moves to Colby area

Laura Norris Photography, Midwest Energy, transferred from formerly of Goodland, has re-located to Colby and is open for business at 1880 County Road 15, four miles west of town and south from U.S. 24 on County Road 15.



Laura Norris

Norris said she specializes in weddings, families, babies and special occasions.

"I was in business in downtown Goodland for five years," Norris said. "My husband Tyler, who worked for

Electric, so we made the move to Colby."

She said she is a native of Grand Junction, Colo., and her husband is from Stratton, Colo. They have two sons, Quinn 2, and Orinn 6.

Norris said she is ready to go to work. She can be reached at (785) 821-4699, or go to her website at lauranorris-photography.com.

Louisiana mass bird kill just days after Arkansas

By Janet McConnaughey Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — It isn't easy being a blackbird in the South.

First, New Year's Eve fireworks were blamed in central Arkansas for making thousands of blackbirds confused, crashing into homes, cars and each other. Then 300 miles to the south in Louisiana, power lines likely killed about 450 birds, littering a highway near Baton Rouge.

It's almost certainly a coincidence the events happened within days of each other, Louisiana's state wildlife veterinarian Jim LaCour said Tuesday. "I haven't found anything to link the two at this point."

Mass bird deaths aren't uncommon. The U.S. Geological Service's website listed about 90 mass deaths of birds and other wildlife from June through Dec. 12. There were five deaths of at least 1,000 birds, with the largest near Houston, Minn., where parasite infestations killed about 4,000 water birds between Sept. 6 and Nov. 26.

In Louisiana, the birds died sometime late Sunday or early Monday in the rural Pointe Coupee Parish community of Labarre, about 30 miles northwest of Baton Rouge. The birds — a mixed flock of red-winged blackbirds, brown-headed cowbirds, grackles and starlings — may have hit a power line or vehicles in the dark, LaCour said. Two dozen of them had head, neck, beak or back injuries.

About 50 dead birds were near a power line 30 or 40 feet from Louisiana Highway 1. About a quarter-mile away, a second group of 400 or more stretched from the power line and across the highway, he said.

Dan Cristol, a biology professor

and co-founder of the Institute for Integrative Bird Behavior Studies at the College of William & Mary, said the Louisiana birds may have been ill or startled from their roost, then hit the power line.

"They don't hit a power line for no reason," he said.

In Beebe, New Year's revelers spent the holiday weekend cleaning up dead red-winged blackbirds. Some speculated that bad weather was to blame. Others said one confused bird could have led the group in a fatal plunge. A few spooked schoolkids guessed the birds committed mass suicide.

Officials acknowledged, though, they may never know exactly what caused the large number of deaths.

Cristol was skeptical of the fireworks theory, unless "somebody blew something into the roost, literally blowing the birds into the sky."

Wildlife officials in both Arkansas and Louisiana sent carcasses to researchers at the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wis. and the University of Georgia.

LaCour said he didn't expect results for at least two or three weeks.

In 1999, several thousand grackles fell from the sky and staggered about before dying in north Louisiana. It took five months to get the diagnosis: an E. coli infection of the air sacs in their skulls.

"I hope things go faster than that," said Paul Slota, branch chief for the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wis. He said necropsies of the Arkansas birds began Tuesday afternoon.

"If it isn't strictly trauma, it may take more time to get results back," he said. "When nothing shows up, you run the tests longer and let it incubate longer."

Dinner to honor Kansan of the Year

Sheila Bair, an Independence native who is chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., will be honored as Distinguished Kansan of the Year at a dinner by the Native Sons and Daughters on Friday, Jan. 28, in Topeka.

Named as one of *Time Magazine's* most influential women in 2009, Bair oversees the agency in Washington charged with maintaining the stability of the nation's banking system.

Judge Deanell Reece Tacha, born in Goodland and raised in Scandia, will be honored as the Kansan of the Year. She also will speak at the dinner. Appointed by President Reagan in 1985, Tacha serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, including seven years as chief judge. In 2007, Judge Tacha received the American Judicature Society's Devitt Award, the highest honor given to a federal judge for distinguished lifetime service.

Everyone is invited to attend the 93rd annual banquet in Topeka in the Sunflower Ballroom in the

Maner Conference Center adjacent to the Capitol Plaza Hotel on the grounds of the Kansas Exposition. A social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner and program at 6:30 p.m.

Corporate tables of 10 are available for \$500, individual seating for lifetime members is available for \$40 and new lifetime members may purchase seats for \$50, which includes a membership fee. Tickets may be ordered from Native Sons and Daughters, Box 546, Topeka, Kan., 66601-0546.

Tickets will be mailed for all orders received by Tuesday, Jan. 18. Ticket orders received after that date may be picked up at the coat check area in the Maner Conference Center beginning at 4 p.m. on the date of the event.

Native Sons and Daughters was formed to preserve Kansas history, uphold our pioneer ancestors, encourage youth to embrace Kansas ideals and honor outstanding citizens. Whether a Kansas citizen, native or not, all are invited to join the organization.

New field guide a tool to help manage insects

Farmers and consultants now have a new tool at their disposal for identifying managing insects.

"Crop Insects of Kansas" is a field guide released this fall by Kansas State University Research and Extension's Department of Entomology.

"It's a good reference for integrated management of insect pests in all the major crops across Kansas," said Jeff Whitworth, an Extension crop entomologist.

The guide contains full-color pictures and descriptions of both insect pests and beneficial insects at different stages of development. The guide focuses on the identification and management of crop in-

sects, not on insecticide use, since recommendations for insecticides change frequently. The insects are categorized by the crops they affect for easy reference.

Whitworth said the goal in creating this guide was to modify the popular book "Insects in Kansas" specifically for farmers and consultants. He said he hopes the guide will be something they can keep in their truck for a quick and handy reference.

Copies cost \$11.40. You can check one out at your county extension office. Order by going to www.ksre.ksu.edu/library or by emailing orderpub@ksre.ksu.edu.

On the Beat

COLBY POLICE Monday

1:27 p.m. — Employee reported two subjects in store several times buying compressed air.

5:02 p.m. — Protective custody report filed.

11:49 p.m. — Caller wanted to locate wife somewhere in Colby. Vehicle located, spoke with subject.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Wednesday, Dec. 29

6:15 p.m. — Assisted Colby Police with hit and run accident.

Thursday, Dec. 30

11:06 a.m. — Caller reported that light near residence appeared to have been shot out at Q.

Friday

6:45 a.m. — Civil forfeiture: re-

ports filed on four vehicles in impound.

8:12 a.m. — Assisted Colby Police at Fourth and Range with stalled vehicle.

8:15 a.m. — Police advised of stalled vehicle partially in roadway at south K-25 mile 193. Help en route with fuel; provided traffic control.

2:04 p.m. — Trash dumped on County Rd. 23 in the area of County Rds. W and Y.

Caller witnessed vehicle slide off road at I-70 mile 53 off-ramp. Unable to locate.

9:50 p.m. — Caller reported vehicle northbound on K-25 with children unrestrained. No disposition.

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