

Weather Corner



National Weather Service Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 26. South wind 5 to 15 mph becoming west.

Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 57. North wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Tuesday Night: Patchy fog after midnight. Otherwise, mostly clear, with a low around 24. East wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday: Patchy fog before noon. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 50. Northeast wind 10 to 15 mph becoming southeast.

Wednesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 28.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 58.

Thursday Night: A slight chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Friday: A chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 47. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Friday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 21.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 45.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 21.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 50.

Friday: High, 20; Low 10
Saturday: High, 41; Low 19
Sunday: High, 40; Low 12
Precip: Friday 0.02 inches
Saturday none
Sunday none
Month: 0.21 inches
Year: 0.43 inches
Normal: 0.45 inches (K-State Experiment Station)

Sunrise and Sunset
Tuesday 7:17 a.m. 6:36 p.m.
Wednesday 7:16 a.m. 6:37 p.m. (U.S. Naval Observatory)

Thomas County needs more emergency medical technicians

From "MEDICS," Page 1

Runs average about an hour from the time a crew is paged out until they are back to the ambulance garage, Gatlin said. Pay is \$26 an hour during an emergency and \$2 an hour when a technician is on standby, waiting for the pager to go off. They have the freedom to be doing other things, he said, but must be able to get away when an emergency happens.

Gatlin said the county averages anywhere from 300 to 500 calls each year, not counting transfers, and that doesn't vary much.

During daytime hours, the county ambulance garage is manned by two full-time technicians. That means a call during the day generally takes less time for an emergency crew to respond than a night emergency. At night, volunteers respond from their homes, and have to drive to the ambulance building, on the hospital grounds.

"However, if a call comes in where someone is not breathing," Umberger said, "volunteers respond directly to the scene and go to work on the patient while someone else brings the ambulance. Volunteers must have 20 runs under their belt with experi-

Medical volunteers paid for work on emergency runs

Thomas County has 24 emergency medical technicians working on the ambulance crew, but could use at least a dozen more, says Ken Gatlin, the county's emergency medical services director.

While classed as volunteers, the technicians are paid \$2 an hour when on standby and \$26

per hour when called out.

The job is a great opportunity for students who are considering a career in the medical field or for someone who has a desire to help people in need, he said.

Anyone who's interested should call the ambulance department at (785) 460-4585, said Gatlin.

enced technicians before they are allowed to respond on their own.

"We need more volunteers. Most people have jobs and can't leave their jobs to take a call. Rexford is uncovered during the day for that reason. And the more volunteers there are, the less burnout we have."

Umberger said the service has had an ad in the paper for three weeks to try to hire someone with emergency medical technician certification who can also serve as secretary. The person would also help take calls during day hours.

"It's a good-paying job, but so

far we've not had anyone apply," she said.

The person who's hired, she said, will have the opportunity for advancement, as a supervisor, dispatcher or other post. Sometimes a technician will move into nursing or become a physician assistant, and some even become doctors.

Gatlin said the volunteer shortage is a point of concern.

"At what point do you change the service when there are no volunteers?" he asked. "It's not a job that allows for on-on-the-job training."

School district to join regional mapping project

From "MAPPING," Page 1

Board vice president Tracy Rogers said he had several problems with the project. First, he wondered how secure the plans would be and whether they are to be posted on the Internet. The agreement says the physical plans will be kept at a secure location and then returned to the district, Harrison said. The computer files will not be published on a website, but rather given to the regional security council, local and state emergency managers and the Kansas Highway Patrol. The district also gets a copy.

Rogers' other concern was cost. The security group is paying for the project - which costs \$59,850 - with grant money, Harrison said. However, Rogers said, the money had to come from somewhere and items like this draw off money that should be used for the regular school budget.

Board member Omar Weber said he agreed with Rogers, but said the district shouldn't pass up the opportunity to get in on the project for free.

"What happens if somewhere down the line, some Homeland Security official makes it mandatory, and then we don't have the money?" he asked.

The board approved the project 5-1, with Rogers voting no. Board member Stan Molstad was absent.

The Northwest Regional Homeland Security Council covers Thomas, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton, Philips, Sherman, Sheridan, Graham, Rooks, Wallace, Logan, Gove, Trego, Ellis, Russell, Ness and Rush counties. There are seven regional councils in the state, all under the Kansas Department of Homeland Security, which answers to the adjunct general.

Colby wrestlers take first at state

From "STATE," Page 1

40-7.

Senior George Smollock lost his first match 10-5 and won by a 3-2 decision in his second at 189. He lost his third 2-1. Smollock was 33-13 this season.

Freshman David Mainus lost his first match 7-5 and was

pinned in his second at 103. Despite the losses, Williams said Mainus was one of the Eagles' most improved wrestlers this season.

Schmitt said Mainus and freshman Andrew Taylor "really turned a corner this season."

Mainus was 20-18 this season.

Lawmakers may pass rural tax abatement

From "TAX," Page 1

publican, said the program would be re-evaluated periodically, including annual reports to legislators with the number of people taking advantage of the program.

His Senate district covers four counties south and west of the Kansas City metro area. New Census figures due out this week for the 2010 count are likely to show the region continuing to add residents, while some counties in western Kansas have lost nearly a fifth of their population since

2000. "We're fortunate on the eastern part of the state where we take so much for granted," Apple said. "I think it's a good start."

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley said initially wasn't sure if he could support the plan but ended up being one of three Democrats to vote for it. His concern was whether the counties would have enough economic activity to attract new residents so they could find jobs and take advantage of the abatement.

LOCAL TV LISTINGS sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Table with columns for Tuesday Evening, March 1, 2011. Rows include KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, KSAS/FOX, Cable Channels, and Premium Channels.

Table with columns for Wednesday Evening, March 2, 2011. Rows include KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, KSAS/FOX, Cable Channels, and Premium Channels.

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