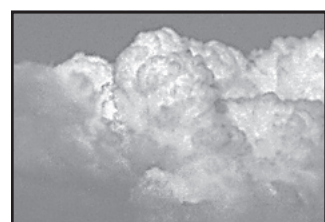


Weather Corner



National Weather Service Tonight: A slight chance of rain before midnight, then a chance of snow.

Friday: A slight chance of snow before noon, then a chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 42.

Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly before midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 20.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 47. Northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 25.

Sunday: Partly sunny, with a high near 54.

Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 22.

Monday: A 20 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 43.

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

Tuesday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy and windy, with a high near 36.

Wednesday: High, 33; Low 12 Precip: Wed. Trace Month: None Year: .43 inches Normal: 2.11 inches (K-State Experiment Station) Sunrise and Sunset Friday 7:13 a.m. 6:40 p.m. (U.S. Naval Observatory)

Candidate says focus on quality

From "QUALITY," Page 1

come from the bottom up instead of the top down. Leiker said the faculty are the ones who will have to put their time in to make programs successful.

"They must put in their heart, soul and effort to make it work," he said.

Leiker said the board needs to slow down and look forward to what the future is going to be like before making a decision for or against any project. He said the college needs to do a better job working with the community; they cannot afford to go their separate ways.

Although Leiker said the college needs to work with the people in town, he noted that it will have to go outside their traditional service area in order to grow its enrollment due to the declining local population. He said since the college can no longer be a low-cost provider because of the low enrollment numbers they will have to create quality programs that can't be found in other areas.

For example, Leiker said Colorado students are not going to come to the college unless it has excep-

tional programs because people in border states would have to pay more in tuition costs - higher than in-state tuition at Colorado community colleges. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education newspaper, the highest in-state tuition among Colorado community colleges is \$3,244 at Northeastern Junior College in Sterling. Keegan Nichols, vice president of student affairs, said tuition costs for people from border states - Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas and Missouri - at Colby Community College is about \$3,300.

The increase in tuition costs at the college has correlated with a drop in enrollment. Colby's peak fall enrollment was in 1998-1999 when students took 17,891 credit hours compared to this past fall's 14,943 credit hours. The number of credit hours in fall terms stayed relatively high until the 2002-2003 year when it started to drop. While the number of credit hours has not declined every year - the figure was 16,078 in the fall in 2009-2010, a jump from 15,614 the previous school year - the overall trend reflects a gradual decline.

Alan Waites, vice president of business affairs at Colby Community College, said the college needed students to take at least 12,400 credit hours in order to

prevent their 7.5 percent revenue shortfall from getting any worse. Waites said the college has already has 12,402 for spring enrollment without the eight-week spring semester classes, which will be added mid-March.

Leiker said he is a big fan of hybrid classes (a mix of traditional and online course work). He said studies have been done showing that students do better in hybrid classes than in traditional or on-line classes. He said when he was a student using a tape recorder helped him tremendously because he could take a lecture apart on his own time. He said this is similar to hybrid classes because if students don't catch everything that is said during class, they can listen to it online on their own time. He said this allows students to excel if they are willing to put in the work.

Leiker said the board and college needs to do a better job of giving recruiters something to sell when they try to get high school students to come to Colby. He said recruiters need to be less reluctant to give board members bad news. If recruiters lose a student to another school, he said, they need to brainstorm what this other college had that Colby didn't.

Attorney to study right-of-way dispute

From "DISPUTE," Page 1

when the power poles were put in the ground. The landowner purchased farm ground along that road in 1999 and more in 2005.

"The county has to follow state laws regarding mowing road rights of way," Shrock said, "so we will have to mow anything growing in the right of way."

Mahoney will research what court cases in other counties say about this same kind of boundary disputes. She will get the information to the commissioners, who will send the information to the landowner.

"I guess where it goes from there is up to the landowner" Shrock said, "and in the meantime the county will continue to maintain the road where its at now."

The commissioners agreed to pay \$5,000 a month to Mahoney as a temporary county attorney, the same they were pay-

ing Flipse. She will assume the case load of over 300 cases for prosecution. Mahoney said she is looking forward to being able to answer the commissioners' questions and would be sending them a letter. She said it is her intention to do what's best for the county.

Mike Baughn, investigator for the county attorney's office, said the average case load for county attorneys in the area is 146 cases. In 2008 and 2009 the number of cases filed in Thomas County was 302.

County Clerk Shelly Harms said there is a possibility when the load is so big that many of the cases are given diversion, Thomas County could lose some of the juvenile officers stationed here. Baughn and Mahoney presented the commissioners with statistics taken from the Kansas Judicial Branch website saying that with the 1,122 cases filed in Finney County the cases were spread between 9 prosecuting attorneys.

New tornado siren online now in Menlo

From "SIREN," Page 1

needing some work in places.

Shrock told commissioners the speed limit was up to the sheriff's department, but his department already had plans to work on the road but had to wait until there was moisture before they could do the work effectively.

Rhonda Fernandez, of Professional Insurance Consultants reported to the county commissioners that their decision to start a Health Replacement Account in employee health benefits had saved the county around \$65,000 the first six months of being in the program. The county's health costs

this time last year was \$409,000 and to date it stands at \$336,000. She said only nine out of 56 employees have submitted claims the past six months, and four out of the nine haven't met their deductible yet.

In other business the commissioners: • Signed the annual renewable agreement for four ambulances and the service.

• Heard from Larry Sharp representing the county insurance pool that Thomas County's average usage this year was up to 149 percent mostly due to damage from hail storms.

Twelve-year-old in custody in double murder

From "CUSTODY," Page 1

on the sidewalk in front of the family's house on a corner lot.

They said the Long children were homeschooled and the family was deeply religious, attending one neighborhood church on Saturdays and another on Sundays.

"You'd always see them around town, volunteering for stuff," said Ronnie Speakman, who was at the vigil with about six other people who said they knew the family. "He worked for Frito-Lay and you would always see him stacking chips in the aisle, always a smile on his face."

Two blocks away at the Evangelical Free Church, which the family attended, Pastor Ron Lee told more than 100 people at a prayer service that the gathering was meant as an opportunity for prayer and encouragement while members grieve.

"Most of it is confusion," Lee said. "I don't un-

derstand exactly what's gone on or why. Some of the reports that have come out, I'm not sure I even believe it."

Lee, church members and friends described the family as longtime residents and active members of the church, with Charles serving as an elder and Marilyn serving as director of the church's children's ministry.

The Longs had seven children, ranging in age from their mid-20s to 5, and the younger children were home schooled by Marilyn Long. One church member, rancher Paul Rhoades, 74, said Marilyn Long grew up in Burlington and attended high school with his daughter.

Lee said the injured children were Sarah, 5, and Ethan, 9. Greg James, an elder at the church, said he visited the family at The Children's Hospital in suburban Denver and visited the children as they recovered in the hospital. He told the congregation that the family was hopeful the children would recover.

LOCAL TV LISTINGS sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Saturday Evening March 5, 2011. Table with columns for time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, KSAS/FOX, Cable Channels, etc.).

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Sunday Evening March 6, 2011. Table with columns for time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, KSAS/FOX, Cable Channels, etc.).

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