

Weather Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1 a.m. Areas of fog after 1 a.m. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 40. East wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Friday: Areas of fog before 10 a.m. Otherwise, cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 76. Breezy, with a south wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 44. South wind around 15 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 79. Breezy, with a southwest wind between 15 and 25 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers after 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy and breezy, with a low around 41.

Sunday: A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy and windy, with a high near 59.

Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy and windy, with a low around 37.

Tuesday Night: Mostly cloudy and breezy, with a low around 35.

Wednesday: A 20 percent chance of rain. Partly sunny and breezy, with a high near 55.

Wednesday: High, 66; Low 40
Precip: Wed. None
Month: None

Year: 0.99 inches
Normal: 3.98 inches
(K-State Experiment Station)

Sunrise and Sunset
Friday 7:18 a.m. 8:15 p.m.
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

Departing youths draining small towns

From "LECTURE," Page 1

imagine living anywhere else.

Among the returners, there are two types: boomerangs and high fliers. The boomerangs are those who left temporarily to get some kind of education and planned to come back. Many went off to get two-year associate's degrees, Carr said, and many are women who come back to marry stayers.

The high fliers are achievers who come home to do great things, he said, including doctors, lawyers or teachers. The high fliers are by far the smallest group, he said, but are the focus of policy efforts at the city, county and state level to get them to come back. These efforts include loan forgiveness or free land.

"The program in Iowa was by far the politest," he joked. "It was, 'Come back to

Iowa, please.'"

The catch with these programs, Carr said, is that the high fliers he interviewed said they didn't come back for money or incentives, but rather for emotional reasons.

Carr said he was asked by publishers in New York why people should care about collapsing rural towns. Most of the country's food comes from rural areas, he said, and they provide many more armed forces recruits than urban areas.

Carr said education reform could be the best way to stop the hollowing out effect. National education standards are wrong-headed, he said, and ignore students who need more or less resources to succeed.

"Research tells us we have to have a multi-layered approach," he said.

Schools need to pay better attention to those most likely to stay, he said, Career

planning needs to begin in middle school and all schools need to have job-skills programs that will help students fill local needs.

One example, he said, is a school that discovered a shortage of qualified welders in its town and so started a welding program. By the time the students left high school, they were certified welders and all got jobs.

Community colleges like Colby's are a key institution, Carr said, because they can help high schools provide job training classes. In a time when state cutbacks are the norm, he said, institutions need to pool resources.

Carr said he sees technology as a benefit, especially distance learning and telecommuting. Telecommuting is a way to involve the leavers, even if they don't physically

come back. Carr said his research found many of the leavers who don't want to come back to their town, but do want to help it stay afloat.

"It's not a matter of sending a few dollars," he said. "It's 'What else can I give back.'"

For agricultural economies like Colby's, Carr said, niche marketing can help reverse economic decline. More farmers and ranchers should produce organic products, he said, which earn more money and are popular right now.

Despite the problems facing small towns, Carr said he is optimistic that the declines seen in the last 20 years can be reversed.

"As bleak as this issue can be for some places," he said, "for most towns and areas there's promise. (The decline) isn't inevitable."

Shutdown looms as Congress argues

From "SHUTDOWN," Page 1

and delay IRS refunds for taxpayers at home.

"The issue is ideology, not numbers," he said, criticizing Republican proposals to limit the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency and a prohibition on the use of federal or local funds to pay for most abortions in the District of Columbia.

Obama has expressed opposition to the week-long interim measure, and Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., said the president would veto it. It's unlikely to get that far, however; Reid has labeled it a nonstarter in the Senate.

Despite Reid's assertion that the two sides had largely agreed on spending cuts, Boehner said partial agreements were not possible.

It was unclear how much the talks had narrowed the differences on spending. Boehner recently floated \$40 billion, more than the \$33 that the negotiators had adopted as a framework, but less than the \$61 that was contained in a bill the House cleared than six weeks ago.

Other policy "riders" pressed by Republicans include: blocking money to implement Obama's health care bill; effectively stripping the Environmental Protection Agency from enforcing rules on global warming, cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and lakes in Florida; and limiting enforcement of last year's financial reform bill. Obama emerged from the nego-

tiations late Wednesday night to declare that differences between Republicans and Democrats had narrowed somewhat. But at this point, only urgent action can avert a shutdown of much of the government at midnight Friday, he said.

Wednesday, the White House used its unmatched megaphone to emphasize the stakes involved in the negotiations, arranging a briefing for the presidential press corps on the ramifications of a partial government shutdown.

The officials said military personnel at home and abroad would receive one week's pay instead of two in their next checks. Among those affected would be troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and the region around Libya.

Tax audits would be suspended - welcome news to some, no doubt - but there were unhappy tidings for others. Income tax returns filed on paper would pile up at the IRS, and refunds would be delayed as a result.

National parks would close, as would the Smithsonian Institution and its world-class collection of museums clustered along the National Mall within sight of the Capitol.

While the political wheels turned, hundreds of demonstrators rallied outside the Capitol, calling for budget cuts and a shutdown, if necessary, to get them.

"Shut the sucker down," one yelled, and the crowd repeatedly chanted, "Shut it down."

Parched grass catches fire

From "FIRE," Page 1

fire weather watch for Friday, from late morning through evening.

The service said "critical fire weather conditions" are possible west of a line from Benkelman, Neb., to Gove, covering most of Thomas County. Critical conditions appear likely again Saturday, the service said, and both Monday and Tuesday. With grass dry and winds expected, outdoor burning should be avoided, forecasters said.

Carey said the grass fire Wednesday was in the Winona fire district out of Logan County, but the Brewster Fire Department got the first call. Later,

trucks from Logan County rolled out to help. Then Thomas County emergency manager Susan McMahan called the fire department here about 3:15 p.m. and said mutual aid was needed.

Wednesday night, Carey said, the call came from Levant about 8:30 p.m. A trash fire at 307 Main got out of control, he said, and started grass on fire. It got into the neighbor's yard and set a couple of old cars on fire, he said.

"It got close to several structures," he added, "but they didn't catch on fire, fortunately."

Crews took two tankers and the rural pumper, he said. The fire was under control by 9:18 and firemen were back at the house by 10:45 p.m.

LOCAL TV LISTINGS sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

Table with columns for Saturday Evening (April 9, 2011) and various TV channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, etc.) listing programs and times.

American Profile: We Celebrate Hometown Life. Stories from hometowns just like yours. Look for us each week in this paper.

Table with columns for Sunday Evening (April 10, 2011) and various TV channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, etc.) listing programs and times.

Group plans walking event for awareness

Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas invites people to walk and help raise awareness of the many issues those with developmental disabilities face in the "Walk a Mile in My Shoes: Walk Around the World" awareness campaign.

Developmental Services and other agencies across Kansas hope to get people to walk more than 24,902 miles - the circumference of the Earth - to support the more than 4,500 Kansas with developmental disabilities who are forced to wait for services.

To participate, log the miles you walk between now and April 26. Log sheets are available at www.dsnwk.org or www.invisiblekansans.com.

The program is sponsored by Invisible Kansans, which seeks to raise awareness of the thousands of Kansas children and adults who have been forced to wait for help.

For information, contact Steve Keil, director of development, at (785) 625-5678.

Free Lunch Fri - Sun 11 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Hot dogs & Soda. INDOOR SHOWROOM. April 8th - 17th • 10 days of Dynamite Deals! Over 100 units in stock & on order - ALL ON SALE!

Low Cost Conservation - Tree and Shrub Seedlings Use for Any Conservation Planting. Bareroot and containerized stock available. Kansas Forest Service. Spring orders being taken through the First Monday of May.

Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce. Welcome: New Business • 1880 CR 15, Colby KS • 785-821-4699. Photo of a group of people holding a large ceremonial check.