

Weather Corner



National Weather Service Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 36. West wind between 10 and 15 mph. Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 72. West wind around 15 mph. Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 43. West wind around 10 mph becoming south. Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 81. Breezy, with a south wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. Friday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy and breezy, with a low around 39. Saturday: A chance of showers. Partly sunny and breezy, with a high near 58. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent. Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy and breezy, with a low around 35. Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 60. Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 34. Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 63. Monday: High, 49; Low 33 Tuesday: High, 62; Low 36 Precip: Monday 0.35 inches Tuesday 0.41 inches Month: 1.89 inches Year: 2.88 inches Normal: 3.98 inches (K-State Experiment Station)

Public shares views with courts commission

From "PUBLIC," Page 1

in some areas. Walker said it is nice to have a local judge, Wallace County's judge has been in place for eight years, but the state is paying him full time for about two days of work. She suggested either making the position part time, scaling down the county to two magistrate judges or sharing a judge with a neighboring county.

"I don't want to lose access to a judge," she said, "but I don't believe we need to have judges tied to certain counties."

Hoxie lawyer Ken Eland disagreed, saying counties would get less-qualified judges if the positions were made part time.

Eland also said ready access to title records is key for his practice. During last year's court furloughs, he was unable to get information, such as if a judgement had been made on a title before closure, which is a potential liability for him.

"Service is what's important, and sometimes that costs money," he said.

Eland suggested that raising taxes may be necessary to maintaining essential government services. Douglas Spencer, an Oakley lawyer, said that had also occurred to him, but he was not sure how much of an increase would be necessary. People need to know that raising taxes is an option, he said, so that they have the choice when they vote.

"If we want to keep these nice things that we have, we have to pay for them," he said.

Spencer suggested returning responsibility for magistrate judges to the counties. Counties would likely pay them less and reduce hours he said, but the burden would no longer be put on the state.

"The bottom line is the state is looking to cut judges," he said, "and that ought to be in the counties' hands."

Walker said that some of the northwest counties, such as Wallace and Logan, can't raise much money with taxes because of how farmland is valued. Residential and

commercial property owners pay the lion's share of the taxes, and the low-population counties don't have enough of those to generate a lot of revenue.

"I'm afraid of dumping the burden on counties until we can fix that," she said.

Spencer was also concerned about state-required technology upgrades. Counties are having trouble as it is maintaining computers, he said, and would the state provide continuing support or just pay for the upgrades?

Hoxie business owner Ed Heim said it is important to keep the court system local, because it is tough on businesses if their employees have to be gone to appear in court. Heim suggested that a lot of the case load could be handled by magistrate judges, rather than district judges.

"The governor just signed a bill encouraging people to move to rural counties," he said. "I don't think we need to be taking jobs out of rural counties."

Nancy Gladin, Logan County District

Court clerk, said court employees are worried about losing their jobs. She said she appreciated technology, and there is a savings when records don't have to be copied, but it would take a lot of manpower to put all the records on computer.

"And what happens when the internet goes down?" she asked.

Williams thanked the audience as the meeting ended, saying he hoped their suggestions would go into the Supreme Court's recommendations to the legislature.

Eland suggested the commission hold more public meetings when they have formed a recommendation for the Supreme Court, because it is difficult for the public to give a good opinion when they don't know what is going on.

"I appreciate what you're trying to do," he said, "but I think it's ahead of where it needs to be."

Williams said if anyone had any more input, they could send an e-mail to kscourtstudybrc@kscourts.org.

Fate of Kansas Arts Commission rests with governor

From "GOVERNOR," Page 1

Arts Commission but providing \$200,000 to the Kansas State Historical Society, funds that could then go to the new, private foundation.

House Speaker Mike O'Neal, a Hutchinson Republican, noted that the setup Brownback proposed is similar to how the state oversees other humanities programs.

"You eliminate the state government footprint part of it and any added expense that goes with that," O'Neal said.

Brownback sought the change as part of initiatives he argued would make state government more efficient and save taxpayers money. Arts advocates contend the move would cost Kansas as much as \$1.2 million a year in federal arts funds, something the governor and his staff dispute.

Last month, the Senate killed an executive reorganization order

making the changes, effective July 1. But the private foundation already has formed, and Brownback could get much of what he sought if he simply vetoed the Arts Commission's entire budget.

Overriding his veto would take two-thirds majorities in both chambers, something that's not likely.

Brownback spokeswoman Sherriene Jones-Sontag would say only that the governor will "carefully consider and review" any budget for the commission approved by legislators.

But Senate President Steve Morris, a Hugoton Republican, said Brownback has indicated that a veto is "a strong possibility," and O'Neal said he'd be shocked if Brownback didn't strike the money.

Senate leaders expect their negotiators to fight for the Arts Commission funding and see it as an important budget issue.

"They're going to dig their heels in," said Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, a Topeka Democrat.

And House Minority Leader Paul Davis, a Lawrence Democrat, said if the governor wants to accomplish his often-stated goal of attracting people and business-

es to rural areas, he should keep the commission in place.

"The Kansas Arts Commission provides cultural opportunities in many rural communities that would not exist if the Kansas Arts Commission did not exist," he said.

But O'Neal said House Repub-

licans are adamant that having a "government middle-man" in arts programs doesn't make sense and want the budget to reflect Brownback's proposal.

"I think he's serious about vetoing the funding even if the House would agree with the Senate and put it in," O'Neal said.

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Thursday Evening April 28, 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, Premium Channels, SHOW).

Friday Evening April 29, 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, Premium Channels, SHOW).

Scott County loses commissioner in crash

SCOTT CITY (AP) - One of four family members killed Friday in a plane crash north of Topeka is being remembered as an up-and-coming leader in Scott City, where he was a Scott County commissioner and member of several community boards.

Dylan Spencer, 35, of Scott City, was piloting a small plane when it crashed into a muddy field three miles north of Topeka. His wife, Amy, 34, and their two daughters, 7-year-old Chase and 5-year-old Ansley, also died in the crash. They were on their way to visit Amy Spencer's family near Topeka and celebrate Easter.

"He was a young person that was very active in the community," Larry Hoeme, a fellow Scott County commissioner, said of Dylan Spencer. "He is one that will be missed for years to come. He was one of the young leaders of the community. It's devastating."

Dylan Spencer spent more than three years as a member of the Scott City's City Commission, and also was one the county economic development board and the Municipal Airport board. Amy Spencer was a special education

teacher. The Garden City Telegram reported that Dylan Spencer, who ran Spencer Pest Control, became involved in city and county government at a young age.

"The community has lost a tremendous asset with Dylan and his family," Hoeme said.

Jefferson County Sheriff Jeff Herrig said Friday that based on a witness' account, he believed the plane's motor sputtered and then cut off before the crash. The plane left a long trail of debris in conditions so sloppy that emergency crews initially had trouble reaching the wreckage.

Peter Knudson, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board, which is investigating the crash, told the Associated Press on Saturday that preliminary indications are that both engines were producing power at the time of impact.

"There was no distress call," Knudson said. "The pilot was in contact with air traffic control. The aircraft struck the ground in a left-wing, nose-low attitude at a high velocity and cartwheeled. That created an impact crater 21

feet long, and the entire debris field was 370 feet long by 100 feet wide."

He said the engines ended up 4 to 5 feet below ground.

Weather conditions around Topeka were cool and damp, but there were no severe storms in the area when the plane went down.

Reaction in the small western Kansas farming community where the Spencers lived was swift as news of the tragedy unfolded heading into the weekend.

"I learned the news an hour ago," Rep. Don Hineman of Dighton said late Friday. "I've known the family all my life. Dylan was a very, very ambitious and hard-working young man. Amy was involved in education. It's just a tragedy."

Jack Frick, also a Scott County commissioner, said Dylan Spencer was a strong businessman and great leader. He said the family was well-known throughout the community and were avid Kansas State fans.

Don Wells, superintendent in the Scott County School District, said Amy Spencer was a wonderful teacher.

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