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Storms bring rain, lightning to county

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
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Several unusual storms blew through northwest Kansas this morning, bringing rain and baseball-size hail.

The storms continued the week-

end trend by mostly missing Colby, but causing mayhem in the surrounding area.

Moving through from southwest to northeast out of Colorado, the first storm passed through southern Thomas County at 7 a.m. before following a path northeast along U.S. 83. A second storm

passed over Brewster and Levant at 10:15 a.m. A third storm passed broke apart into several smaller storms that rotated around south of Goodland in the afternoon.

National Weather Service spotters reported 4.25-inch hail in Wallace County and 2.75-inch in Sheridan County. The storm also produced damaging winds. South of Sharon Springs, the top of a grain bin was blown off, trees were uprooted and several irrigation pivots were blown over.

The service issued a tornado warning around Quinter, and at least one tornado was spotted at 12:55 p.m.

Friday's storm passed over Colby at 10 p.m., dropping about less than 1/5 inch of rain. Hail up to 1 1/2 inches was reported north of Leoti. Near Tribune, a semi-trailer rig was blown over into a power pole, which then fell on the truck. Several other power poles were knocked over wind.

On Saturday, a thunderstorm came through in the evening, dumping about a quarter inch of rain in Thomas County. The storm brought with it intense lighting late at night. One burst split open a 50-year-old small leaf-linden tree near the Colby School District administration building. The strike threw pieces of the tree trunk at least 50 yards to the south.

The storm also produced 3/4 inch hail near Goodland and Tribune as well as winds up to 60 mph. A tornado was reported at 7:40 p.m. 11 miles south of Gove.

Things were much worse in Colorado. Funnel clouds and at least one tornado were reported near Cheyenne Wells, with accompanying hail up to 4 inches.

A Sunday evening storm missed Thomas County to the north. After dropping 1 3/4-inch hail in Yuma County, Colo., it proceeded into Nebraska, where it spawned at least two tornados near Benkelman and McCook.

The weather service is predicting more thunderstorms tonight with a slight chance of showers Tuesday morning.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

This small-leaf linden tree at Grant Avenue and Third Street was damaged by a storm sometime late Saturday or early Sunday. Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said a lightning strike likely superheated the moisture inside the tree, causing it to explode.



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

This thunderstorm on Friday, seen here looking northwest over City Hall, dropped less than 1/5 of an inch of rain. The slow-moving storm could be seen on the horizon for hours until it arrived in Colby after 9 p.m.

Department to show off projects

The Kansas Department of Transportation will hold a public information open house about the upcoming project to improve K-25 on 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday in the Logan County Courthouse, 710 W. Second St. in Oakley.

The department plans to improve the highway from Russell Springs to the U.S. 40 junction in northern Logan County. The project is paid for by the Kansas Legislature's T-WORKS program, but it has not been let to contract.

At the open house, department engineers

will be available for questions about the project. They will outline the construction phasing, detail the official state detour, and answer specific questions regarding access to county roads. People can visit at any time during the open house; no formal presentation is scheduled.

Those unable to attend the open house can contact the department's Norton office for copies of the take-home information, which will be available after the meeting.

The open house location is handicapped

accessible. Those who need a sign language interpreter, an assisted listening device, large print, or Braille material, or other accommodations to participate in this meeting should notify the department at least one week prior to the meeting. Requests may be addressed to District Three Public Affairs Manager Kristen Brands, at (785) 877-3315 or kristenb@ksdot.org in Norton or (785) 296-3585 voice/hearing impaired 711.

Court officials finish streamlining study

WICHITA (AP) — Judges and court workers have completed the data-collection part of a study aimed at making Kansas' court system more efficient.

The Wichita Eagle reported that the data will be analyzed by the National Center for State Courts. That national nonprofit group works to improve the justice system and lobbies on behalf of courts at the federal level.

Members of a committee looking at the issue held public meetings throughout the state earlier this year, one of them in Colby.

The results of the \$200,000 consultant study of how judges and other court workers spend their time will go to a panel that will recommend changes if they are needed.

Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Lawton Nuss said the panel also is gathering public input on ways to improve the courts. The

two initiatives are called "Project Pegasus," after the winged horse in Greek mythology.

The goal is to prevent situations like last year when courts were closed four days.

"When our budget is cut or when we don't have enough money, it is our people who suffer, they're the ones who have to get sent home," Nuss told members of the Wichita Pachyderm Club, a Republican group, this past week. "Unfortunately that also comes at the expense of Kansas citizens, because when we have no money and we have to close the courts, the citizens no longer have access to justice."

Nuss said most of the consultant study is being paid for mostly from salary and benefit savings accrued after appellate Judge Jerry Elliott died in April of last year and for-

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Former attorney general has tough road to court

By Roxana Hegeman

The Associated Press

WICHITA — Former Kansas Attorney General Steve Six's bid for a seat on a federal appeals court has gotten more difficult now that his two home state senators have come out against it, with his nomination now debated on Thursday by the U.S. Senate judiciary committee.

On the eve of his vote earlier this week, Sens. Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran, Republicans from Kansas, announced they would oppose the confirmation of the Democrat. Neither senator gave a reason, but anti-abortion groups have lobbied against it.

Roberts said he would urge his colleagues to vote against it.

Six's hearing last month before the Senate Judiciary Committee

came two months after President Barack Obama nominated the Democrat to sit on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Six, a former state judge, began his law career nearly two decades ago as a clerk at the Denver-based court. He lost his attorney general's seat in the wave of Republican election victories and left office in January.

In a statement released Friday, Roberts said he felt it was im-

portant for Six to have a hearing before the judiciary committee so he could provide his views and answer questions from the senators.

"Based on that hearing, a review of the committee record will show several areas where his answers were not forthcoming or where issues of his judgment in handling cases as Attorney Gen-

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Briefly

Harvest matchmaker available

Roger Hale will be available again this year to help farmers and custom harvesters get together. His office is at Truck Town, 105 W. Horton. There is no cost for this service. For information, call Hale at (785) 269-7712 or 460-8785.

College pool open for summer

The Colby Community College swimming pool has reopened for the summer. Pool hours are 5 to 7 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday to Friday for lap swimming. Open swim hours are 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The pool is available for group parties. For information, call Kipp Nelson at 460-5476.

Museum puts up student art

The Prairie Museum of Art and History is exhibiting artwork created by Thomas County students

throughout June. The exhibit includes work by students from Colby High, Middle and Grade Schools, Brewster High School, Heartland Christian School and Sacred Heart School. There is no admission fee to view this exhibit. For information, call Programming and Education Director Ann Miner at 460-4590.

Center has prevention materials

The Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention center has videos, brochures and other materials on subjects like parenting, substance abuse and neglect prevention available at its office at 140 W. Fourth St. The center is closing on Thursday, June 30, and is looking to give away its materials. For information, call the center at 460-8177.

College offers exercise class

Colby Community College is offering two ses-

sions of a Water Exercise Class through Thursday, July 28, in the college pool. The first session will be from 7 to 7:55 a.m. and the second session will follow from 8 to 8:55 a.m. The classes are taught by Leslie Wagoner. For information, contact Penny Cline at 460-5404 or penny.cline@colbycc.edu.

Kiwanis needs help for fireworks

The Colby Kiwanis Club is accepting donations to help pay for their Fourth of July fireworks display. Kiwanis member Rick Dickman said contributions are appreciated since costs go up each year. To donate, send a check to Kiwanis Club, Box 501, Colby, Kan., 67701.

Picnic in the Park on Wednesday

Picnic in the Park is at noon on Wednesdays at Fike Park. The entertainment for this Wednesday will be the Bugbee Sisters. The event is sponsored by

the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Colby Free Press. In case of inclement weather, listen to KXXX/KRDQ. For information, call the chamber office at 460-3401.

Church plans social on Saturday

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints will have a branch social at 6 p.m. Saturday at Andy Rose's house on 11 Cottonwood Drive. Hamburgers and hot-dogs will be provided. Bring a salad or a dessert to share and a lawn chair. For information, call 460-6807.



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