



COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

June 22, 2011

Volume 122, Number 97

Serving Thomas County since 1888

8 pages

Twisters hit area

Storms drop tornados, hail around area on Monday

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

A large storm system hung over northwest Kansas on Monday, bringing high winds, flooding, hail and damaging tornados.

Several smaller storms moved through in the morning before the larger system settled over the area in the afternoon. The earliest hit southern Thomas County with wind, rain and hail at 7 a.m. Another passed north of Colby at 10 a.m.

The largest storm of the day moved in from Colorado in the morning, passing over Garden City before moving north. Radar images showed the storm centering on Thomas County and rotating around northwest Kansas, southwest Nebraska and eastern Colorado in the afternoon.

A piece of the storm broke off and moved northeast over Gove, Graham, Sheridan and Norton Counties before heading into Nebraska. That storm produced several tornados. The first was reported three miles west of Quinter at 12:55 p.m. Spotters reported hail up to baseball size as the storm moved north.

Two tornados were spotted by law enforcement crossing U.S. 283 north of Hill City at 1:57 p.m. A spotter reported another pair of tornados near Almena at 2:39 p.m. These tornados destroyed or damaged several homes and farm equipment from Almena to Long Island in northern Norton County.



TERRY NELSON

This tornado (above) touched down near Long Island and Almena in Norton County at 2:39 p.m. Monday. It destroyed several farm buildings and equipment. Several residents of this house northeast of Almena (below) were home at the time, but were uninjured.

See "TWISTERS," Page 3



CARLLEEN BELL/Norton Telegram

Officials talk new building for ambulances

By Tomi Miller

Colby Free Press
colby.society@nwkansas.com

The Thomas County Commissioners invited Colby officials to their meeting Monday to talk about a potential new ambulance building.

Colby Mayor Gary Adrian and City Manager Carolyn Armstrong came to discuss possible locations for a new building. The ambulances are currently housed at Citizens Medical Center.

The commissioners told the mayor they are looking for a space that can provide a place for the emergency medical services volunteers to train and a place to store ambulances.

The officials discussed putting up a free-standing building behind the fire station to park the ambulances or adding a bay to the south end of the station. Sharing space with the fire station would be ideal because it would save money and time, Adrian said, but political details could get in the way.

The commissioners agreed that they want voters and taxpayers to know all options were explored for the placement of ambulances, as well as space for emergency medical technicians, before they made any decisions. Commis-

sioner Paul Steele said they realize there are many details to work out before the city and county can even begin to plan a new ambulance building.

"It is important for us to carry on dialogue about the ambulance building arrangement so all political aspects can be explored," he said.

No action was taken, and the discussion ended with the mayor asking the commissioners to send a letter to Armstrong or himself, stating what the county wants included in the ambulance facility.

"We have to work together, or we will never be able to improve are health services for the city as well as the county," Adrian said.

In other business:
• Kelly Robbins, Western Kansas Child Advocacy representative, started off the meeting with a proposal for the commissioners to provide money for the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center. She said she will be happy with any amount of money, but a \$5,000 grant per year to the foundation would be beneficial. The commissioners have contributed \$2,500 in years past.

The organization, which has an office at 135 E. Third St., is a found-

See "OFFICIALS," Page 3

State holds forums on Medicaid changes

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Sam Brownback's administration prepared Tuesday to kick off public forums on reforming the Medicaid program in Kansas, part of a review that's supposed to result in proposals later this year for controlling the state's costs in providing health care to the needy.

The first of four planned forums was scheduled for Wednesday afternoon in Topeka, and Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer, a surgeon who's leading the administration's Medicaid team, said at least several hundred people will be attending the event. Both Brownback and Colyer are expected to participate.

"We're trying to tackle the overall structure, also how it serves patients, how we deal with costs and quality," Colyer told The Associated Press.

The Medicaid team also has scheduled forums for July 7 in Wichita and July 8 in Dodge City.

Colyer said it will have another in late summer in the Kansas City area and expects to draft its proposals by early fall.

The Republican administration's efforts are likely to be closely watched by legislators and advocates for the poor, elderly and disabled. Those groups have medical services covered by the program, which is administered by the state under rules set by the federal government, which picks up about 60 percent of the program's costs.

Kansas Democratic Party Chairwoman Joan Wagnon, a former legislator and state revenue secretary, promised that she'll attend the first forum. She said she's concerned that the Brownback administration's focus is cutting Medicaid spending.

"This is supposed to be a listening tour to find out what people think, and I want to tell them what I think," Wagnon said. "Kansans need to get out of their chairs and

See "MEDICAID," Page 3

Senator to visit Friday

Sen. Moran will be making stops on his listening tour Friday at 9 a.m. in Norton and at 11

a.m. in Oberlin. Both stops will be to visit a variety of downtown businesses in the area.

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.

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 is from 7 to 7:55 a.m. and the second session follows 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.

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.

Christian school to sell fireworks

Heartland Christian School will sell fireworks lot on Country Club Drive from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Monday, July 4, in the Colby Livestock

Auction parking lot. Proceeds will benefit Heartland Christian School. For information, call Ronda Myers at 462-7727 or 443-1384.

Festival looking for vendors

The Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Committee is looking for food and merchandise vendors for the festival, Friday to Sunday, July 15 to 17, at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Food vendors are asked to be open for business Friday night and all day Saturday and Sunday until about 2:30 p.m. Merchandise vendors have the option of being open all hours or Saturday only. For information or an application, call Leilani Thomas at 460-7643.

Seniors plan potluck July 12

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing

homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share; table service and beverage will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

Head Start looking for kids

Head Start, a tuition-free preschool, is accepting applications for its 2011-2012 school year. The school accepts applications all year long for kids 3 and 4. For information, or to get an application, call 460-6067.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3