



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Pickin' on the Plains



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Married couple Darin and Brooke Aldridge performed on stage with their band Saturday at the Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Festival. The Aldridges performed all three days of the festival and taught a workshop on singing. For more photos from the festival, see pages 6 and 7.

## Red Cross to close Colby regional office

By Kevin Bottrell  
Colby Free Press  
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The American Red Cross is closing its Colby office, a move the Wichita office says will save the organization \$17,000.

Red Cross spokesman James Williams said the organization is looking to cut administrative costs and will close down the Colby office on Sept. 2. The office, in the Thomas County Office Complex, has a part-time employee, Sherry White, who will be laid off.

In addition to providing relief in an emergency, the local Red Cross offices coordinate blood drives, health and safety classes and disaster relief training, many of which were run by volunteers. Williams said those same volunteer services will still be available.

"The Red Cross isn't a building," Williams said. "Its success isn't measured in store fronts."

Closing the Colby office is one of several cuts the organization is making. Human resources, finance and technology services are all being done at the national level, Williams said, instead of by state or local offices. The Great Bend office will also be closed, he said.

Williams said the cuts are the result of a slower-than-expected economic recovery and increased costs in health and retirement benefits.

The Colby office is responsible for eight counties: Thomas, Cheyenne, Wallace, Sheridan, Logan, Gove and Sherman. In December 2009, the Colby office took over Sherman County when the volunteer at the Goodland office took another job. Rather than re-staff the office, the Red Cross consolidated it with Colby.

## Secretary expects hundreds at summit

By Kevin Bottrell  
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More than 250 people, including Gov. Sam Brownback and other Kansas officials, will gather at Colby Community College on Thursday to talk about how to extend the Ogallala Aquifer while still growing the state's economy.

The aquifer stretches from Texas to South Dakota and includes all of western Kansas.

The summit will go from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the college's Cultural Arts Center. Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman said as of Tuesday more than 250 people are registered. Anyone who wants can still attend the summit, he said, but they may not get lunch.

Rodman said the 2010 census showed that Kansas lost private sector jobs over the past 10 years.

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## Let the fair begin



KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

A Thomas County 4-Her guided his dog over the ramp at the dog agility competition Sunday at the Colby Recreation Fields. The competition was one of the first surrounding the Thomas County Fair, which officially begins Monday.

## Group seeks to save reservoir

By Tom Betz  
The Goodland Star-News  
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Saving Bonnie Reservoir is coming down to the wire, and people in northeast Colorado and northwest Kansas are trying to find a way to stop the plan to drain the reservoir after Labor Day.

Bonnie Reservoir was created by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as a flood control project following the 1935 flood on the Republican River that killed more than 100 people and produced wide devastation from northwest Kansas into Nebraska and back into Kansas as the river rolled past Concordia and down to Salina where it joins the Saline River.

Bonnie has been a Colorado State Park for many

years, a good fishing lake and stopping place for migratory birds, but the reservoir has become a contentious point in the Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas Republican River Compact.

Farmers in northeast Colorado have been looking for options other than shutting down irrigation wells to satisfy the water allocation under the compact, and draining Bonnie is something suggested as one measure.

Colorado is in the process of building a pipeline to bring water to the allocation point, but the pipeline will not be completed for at least another year.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback has been asked by people from Colorado and northwest Kansas to stop

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## Heat 'dome' cooks midwest states

By Tammy Webber  
Associated Press

CHICAGO - For millions of people enduring this week's extreme heat and humidity, it feels like they're living in a pressure cooker. And in a sense, they are.

Much of the United States is trapped under a heat "dome" caused by a huge area of high pressure that's compressing hot, moist air beneath it, leading to miserable temperatures in the mid-90s to low 100s and heat-index levels well above 100 degrees.

"It's hot no matter what you're doing or where you are," said Tim Prader, a 50-year-old construction

worker who was taking a break Tuesday at a job site in St. Louis. Although his huge Caterpillar excavator has air conditioning, he couldn't entirely escape. "When you're done for the day, you're ready to eat, drink and hit the couch."

The oppressive conditions extending from the northern Plains states to Texas and from Nebraska to the Ohio Valley. And they're expanding eastward.

When a high pressure system develops in the upper atmosphere, the air below it sinks and compresses because there's more weight on top, causing temperatures in the lower atmosphere to heat up, said Eli Jacks, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Silver Spring, Md.

The dome of high pressure also

pushes the jet stream and its drier, cooler air, farther north - it's now well into Canada - while hot, humid air from the Gulf of Mexico circulates clockwise around the dome, traveling farther inland than normal.

Combined with generally clear skies and the sun's higher summertime angle, "it gets really hot," Jacks said.

That also explains why temperatures in, say, North Dakota this week aren't all that different from temperatures in Houston, he said. The big difference is that people in Houston are accustomed to hot weather, while those in the north are not.

"In places where the highest temperature you ever expect is

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## Promoting tourism



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Leilani Thomas chatted with a representative from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism on Saturday at the Pickin' on the Plains festival. The department has been sending a decorated sport utility vehicle to various state events to promote statewide tourism.

## Topeka death not caused by heat

TOPEKA (AP) - The Shawnee County coroner says an employee at the Goodyear plant in Topeka who died Tuesday had heart-related problems that contributed to his death.

The Topeka Capital-Journal reported that the worker was identified as 45-year-old Darrell Wayne Davis of Netawaka. He died Tuesday after collapsing at the plant.

Shawnee County Coroner Dr. Erik Mitchell said in

a preliminary report Tuesday that an autopsy showed Davis had severe plaque buildup in a heart artery and had suffered a previous heart attack.

The coroner's office said the cause of death was listed as coronary artery disease.

An investigator in the coroner's office emphasized that Davis did not die of heat stroke, but said any extreme in the environment can be threatening to people with heart disease.

