

Weather



National Weather Service

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 22. North wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 38. North wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 16. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 40. South wind 5 to 10 mph becoming northwest.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 19.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 47.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 23.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 49.

Sunday Night: A slight chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 23. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Monday: A slight chance of rain and snow. Partly sunny, with a high near 38. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 20.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 40.

Monday: High, 33; Low 14
 Tuesday: High, 38; Low 31
 Precip: Monday 0.03 inches
 Tuesday 0.04 inches
 Month: 0.62 inches
 Year: 20.18 inches
 Normal: 20.65 inches
 (K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
 Thursday 7:57 a.m. 5:22 p.m.
 Moon: waning, 74 percent
 (U.S. Naval Observatory)

Closure decisions put off to May

From "CLOSURE," Page 1

there. Reynolds said he'd been told that the changes would not affect departure times for mail trucks leaving Colby and delivery times at homes and businesses would also be unaffected.

Moving Colby's mail would save about \$14,000 after transportation costs are factored in. Reynolds said the number is comparatively low because Colby's processing - and much of the equipment used to do it - has already been moved out.

Express mail from within the 677 zip codes should remain a same-day service, he said. Priority packages that are too large to fit in mail sacks will be handled manually in Colby, just like they are now. Newspapers that are sorted down to the five-digit zip codes will go out with that day's mail as long as it is brought in by 4 to 5 a.m. Newspapers that are addressed with the first zip

code numbers will have to be sent to Denver to be sorted into delivery order.

Reynolds said that although the study supports moving Colby's processing to Denver, the service hasn't made a decision yet. The service has gone to great pains to say they do not make final decisions before the public meetings. In a Thursday release, the service said there had been inaccurate reports in the media that a list of studies was a list of offices slated to close.

"Let's be very clear," the release said. "Our studies are still in progress."

Reynolds said feedback from community meetings is included in the material sent to Postal Service headquarters for those who make the final decisions.

From 1970 to 2006, he said, the service expanded its operation. Now with the decline in volume, it has excess capacity.

"Now we have equipment out there that may be used to run 10

hours that's now running eight hours and might have the capacity to run 20 hours," he said.

While standard mail, which includes newsletters, flyers and ads, has remained steady, it brings in significantly less income. Three pieces of standard mail equal the price of one first class letter, Reynolds said.

Another piece of the puzzle is a \$5 billion payment that congress has required the service to make each year to cover pension costs, including those for employees not hired yet.

There is anywhere from \$40 billion to \$75 billion set aside now from those payments, but Reynolds said the Postal Service is not confident that it will get that money back, even though Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe has asked for Congress to allow it.

Public officials have been weighing in on the decision to delay closures. Sen. Jerry Moran called the move "good news,"

saying the service had told him privately of the delay prior to the announcement. Moran has an amendment in the 21st Century Postal Service Act that would require the Postal Service to develop standards of service that must be considered before closing a post office.

The National Newspaper Association postal committee chair Max Heath said he still expects the processing centers to close, just later than anticipated.

"But every day a plant remains open is another day we have to persuade Congress of the value of universal service, particularly in small town and rural America, and to look for answers that keep USPS alive without demolishing newspaper mail," Heath said. "Particularly in a world where personal letters and even credit card bills become rarer inhabitants of the mailbox, people will still be drawn to the mail if their local newspapers are in it."

Citizens speak out against delivery delay

From "CITIZENS," Page 1

eliminated. He said in the past he hasn't known about changes until the day they are made, and he has had trouble getting hold of anyone who can give him correct information. Reynolds asked the contractor to give him contact information after the meeting and said that he knew of one truck route between Colby and McCook that would be lost if the service goes ahead with the plan.

The contractor also took issue with Reynolds' claim that no postal employees had been laid off, saying that his uncle, who had driven mail trucks for 42 years was laid off not long ago. Reynolds had said earlier in the meeting that the service had gone from 880,000 employees to 559,000 entirely through attrition and voluntary early retirements. Independent contractors, he said, were not part of those figures.

When asked how much money these Area Mail Processing studies cost, Reynolds said the calculations of time, distance, maintenance and money saved are done in-house by an employee who is working full time anyway, so that part does not cost extra. The studies also include the public comments from the meetings, he said.

Reynolds said the service does sometimes hire outside firms to audit its business.

Colby citizen Mel Fry asked whether the impact on local business had been taken into account at the Postal Service headquar-

Postal Service seeks comments

The U.S. Postal Service is taking comments on the Area Mail Processing Study. Comments can be mailed to:

Manager, Consumer and Industrial Central Plains District
 Box 199504
 Omaha, Neb., 68119-9404

ters. Reynolds replied that it hadn't, but the service's economists expect to lose another 39 billion pieces of mail and some of that would likely come from people who choose not to utilize the post office.

Fry suggested that since the federal government is intent on creating jobs, why doesn't the post office go back to hand-sorting so it can hire on more people and have better service. He also suggested the service raise fees.

"People don't mind paying for a good service," he said.

Colby Free Press Publisher Sharon Friedlander said the Postal Service is forcing newspapers out of the system, which in turn is not good for the service.

When asked if any of these studies had resulted in a processing center not being

moved, Reynolds said the center in North Platte, Neb., was not moved after a study found that consolidating it with Cheyenne, Wyo., would not save any money.

"Not every one of these studies is a slam dunk," he said.

Free Press Systems Administrator Evan Barnum said that his mother-in-law receives medication through the mail that has to be kept chilled. Currently it is packed with a cold pack that is good for 24 hours, but may not be good for 72.

State Rep. Rick Billinger said that if the service wants to compete, it's going at it all wrong, and that it should start cutting at the administrative level.

Martha Ruiz Martinez, a representative for Sen. Pat Roberts, was at the meeting. She distributed two letters Roberts has sent to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. In the first letter, sent in October, Roberts wrote about the 134 rural post offices that are in danger of being closed.

"Surely, given the threat this policy poses to the identity of small community America, there must be some other alternative!" Roberts wrote by hand at the bottom of the letter.

The second letter concerned the processing centers. Roberts said he understood the pressure the Postal Service is under, but he urged Donahoe to consider the economic loss in jobs and delays caused by closing processing centers.

Gov. Brownback details new education funding proposal

From "FUNDING," Page 1

population changes, there's nothing in the state formula that responds to that."

Some Brownback critics are questioning whether the current finance formula is flawed or whether the state has simply committed too little money to its schools. The Great Recession led the state to back away from big, court-mandated increases in aid to schools.

The state has been sued by 32 students, along with their parents and guardians, and the Dodge City, Hutchinson, Kansas City and Wichita school districts. They argue state funding is inadequate and that the money is distributed unfairly.

But Kansas House Minority Leader Paul Davis, a Lawrence Democrat, said he isn't sold on the necessity of a "total overhaul."

State law now caps school district

property taxes and under Brownback's plan the cap would be removed. Critics of the idea worry that wealthy districts will move far ahead of poorer ones in the education they offer, but Fulmer said the formula is designed so that a wealthy district's local tax increase could trigger more state aid to poorer districts.

Fulmer said last month that Brownback would propose allowing counties to increase their sales taxes, with much of the

revenue shared across county lines. But some legislators and educators questioned whether urban counties would want to increase sales taxes, knowing local dollars would flow to other parts of the state.

"I'm a little dismayed at how poor of a reception that it had," he said. "We thought that we were going out with an option that people could enact instead of using property taxes, but I'll tell you, around the state, people didn't like it."

Briefly

Economic Development to meet on Thursday

The Thomas County Economic Development Alliance board will meet at 8 a.m. Thursday in the meeting room at the Office Complex, 350 S. Range Ave. For information, call 460-4511.

Learn about history at Food for Thought

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will hold the first Food for Thought program on the 2011-2012 season at noon Thursday with a talk by Jim Gray on cattle and the cowboy era. Food for Thought is offered every third Thursday each month through April. For information, call 460-4590.

Ring the bell for the Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is in need of bell-ringers for its Walmart kettle. Money raised is used locally. To volunteer, call Sue Draper at 462-7511.

College pool, gym closed until Jan. 2

The Colby Community College pool will be closed through Sunday, Jan. 1, for renovations and repairs. The pool will reopen on Monday, Jan. 2. The college fitness lab will be closed Saturday through Jan. 1. It will also reopen on Jan. 2. For information call 460-5411.

Get a Colby Eagles flag and support the team

The Colby High School boys basketball team is selling Colby Eagle flags to raise money for the team. The 3- by 5-foot flags are \$55 each. To order a flag, call 443-2763.

Booster club to sell shirts and hoodies

The Colby High School Booster Club will be selling eagle foil print shirts and hoodies at the Community Building for this season's basketball games and wrestling meets. Proceeds go to the club, which supports Colby High School athletics. For information, call Tracy Rogers at 462-0489.

Help available with benefit paperwork

A mobile services outreach van from the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs will be set up from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at Dollar General. Commission staff will be on hand to assist veterans or surviving spouses with getting benefits from the federal government. For information, call 462-3572.

Hays church to hold services at high school

The Celebration Community Church will hold a night of worship beginning at 6 p.m. Saturday in the Colby High School auditorium. The event will include live music by The Ignite Band. For information, call (785) 625-5483.

LOCAL TV Listings Sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

| Thursday Evening December 15, 2011 | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | 7:00 | 7:30 | 8:00 | 8:30 | 9:00 | 9:30 | 10:00 | 10:30 | 11:00 | 11:30 |
| KAKE/ABC | Charlie Brown | | Katie Couric | | | | Local | Nightline | Jimmy Kimmel Live | |
| KBSL/CBS | Big Bang | Rules | Person of Interest | The Mentalist | | | Local | Late Show Letterman | Late | |
| KSNK/NBC | Community | Parks | Office | Whitney | Prime Suspect | | Local | Tonight Show w/Leno | Late | |
| KSAS/FOX | The X Factor | | Bones | | Local | | | | | |
| Cable Channels | | | | | | | | | | |
| A & E | The First 48 | | The First 48 | | Beyond Scared Straig | Beyond Scared Straig | | The First 48 | | |
| AMC | Miracle-34 St. | | | | Miracle-34 St. | | | | | Holiday |
| ANIM | Ned Bruha | Ned Bruha | Wildman | Wildman | Swamp Wars | | Wildman | Wildman | Swamp Wars | |
| BRAVO | Housewives/Atl. | | Real Housewives | | Real | Housewives/Atl. | | Housewives/Atl. | | Real |
| CMT | Ghostbusters II | | | | Ghostbusters II | | | | | |
| CNN | Anderson Cooper 360 | | Piers Morgan Tonight | | Anderson Cooper 360 | | E. B. OutFront | | Piers Morgan Tonight | |
| COMEDY | Futurama | Futurama | | | Ron White: Fix | | Daily | Colbert | Tosh.0 | Tosh.0 |
| DISC | Storm Chasers | | The Earth Wild | | Weed Wars | | The Earth Wild | | Weed Wars | |
| DISN | Random | Santa Buddies | | | Wizards | Shake It | Random | Good Luck | Wizards | Wizards |
| E! | Sex-City | Sex-City | Fatal Triangle | | E! Investigates | | Chelsea | E! News | Chelsea | Chelsea |
| ESPN | High School Basketball | | | | High School Basketball | | SportsCenter | | SportsCenter | |
| ESPN2 | Wm. Volleyball | | Wm. Volleyball | | | | Football | | NFL Live | |
| FAM | Finding Nemo | | Beauty and the Beast | | | | The 700 Club | | Whose? | Whose? |
| FOOD | Chopped | | Chopped | | Chef Hunter | | Cupcake Wars | | Chopped | |
| FX | Two Men | Two Men | Two Men | Two Men | Sunny | League | Sunny | League | League | Sunny |
| HGTV | House | Hunters | Spelling Manor | | Selling L | Selling | House | Hunters | Spelling Manor | |
| HIST | Big Shrimpin' | | Swamp People | | Big Shrimpin' | | The Universe | | Big Shrimpin' | |
| LIFE | Project Accessory | | Project Accessory | | Project Accessory | | Project Accessory | | Project Accessory | |
| MTV | Ridic. | Ridic. | Beavis | Beavis | Beavis | Beavis | Good Vibe | Good Vibe | Scary Movie | |
| NICK | My Wife | My Wife | '70s Show | '70s Show | George | George | Friends | Friends | Friends | |
| SCI | Resident Evil | | Jeepers Creepers 2 | | | | Wrong Turn 3 | | | |
| SPIKE | Jail | Jail | IMPACT Wrestling | | | | Damage | | | |
| TBS | Fam. Guy | Fam. Guy | Big Bang | Big Bang | Big Bang | | Conan | | Office | Office |
| TCM | Life With Father | | | | Girl-Everything | | Mister Roberts | | | |
| TLC | D.U.I. | D.U.I. | D.U.I. | D.U.I. | Cellblock 6 | | D.U.I. | D.U.I. | Cellblock 6 | |
| TNT | CSI: NY | | CSI: NY | | CSI: NY | | CSI: NY | | CSI: NY | |
| TOON | Regular | MAD | King/Hill | King/Hill | Amer. Dad | Amer. Dad | Fam. Guy | Fam. Guy | Childrens | Aqua Teen |
| TRAV | Bizarre Foods | | Bizarre Foods | | No Reservation | | The Layover | | Bizarre Foods | |
| TV LAND | Home Imp. | Home Imp. | Raymond | Raymond | Raymond | Raymond | King | King | King | King |
| USA | Law & Order: SVU | | Law & Order: SVU | | Burn Notice | | Covert Affairs | | Law & Order: SVU | |
| VH1 | Legally Blonde | | | | Top 40 of 2011 | | | | T.I.-Tiny | T.I.-Tiny |
| WGN | How I Met | How I Met | How I Met | How I Met | WGN News at Nine | | 30 Rock | Scrubs | Scrubs | Sunny |
| Premium Channels | | | | | | | | | | |
| HBO | Charlie | The Blind Side | | | | | Taxicab Confessions | | 24/7 Flyers | |
| MAX | A-Team | Big Mommas: Like Father | | | Cedar Rapids | | | | The Right to Bare All | |
| SHOW | The Italian Job | | The Mechanic | | | | Teller | | Beach | The Canyon |

Friday Evening December 16, 2011

| | 7:00 | 7:30 | 8:00 | 8:30 | 9:00 | 9:30 | 10:00 | 10:30 | 11:00 | 11:30 |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| KAKE/ABC | Extreme Makeover | | Extreme Makeover | | 20/20 | | Local | Nightline | Jimmy Kimmel Live | |
| KBSL/CBS | A Gifted Man | | CSI: NY | | Blue Bloods | | Local | Late Show Letterman | Late | |
| KSNK/NBC | Chuck | | Grimm | | Dateline NBC | | Local | Tonight Show w/Leno | Late | |
| KSAS/FOX | Happiness Is | | Ice Age | Simpsons | Local | | | | | |
| Cable Channels | | | | | | | | | | |
| A & E | King's Bag of Bones | | | | | | | | King's Bag of Bones | |
| AMC | The Aviator | | | | | | | | Thinner | |
| ANIM | Fatal Attractions | | Fatal Attractions | | Infested! | | Fatal Attractions | | Infested! | |
| BRAVO | Housewives/Atl. | | Silence-Lambs | | | | | | | |
| CMT | Urban Cowboy | | | | Pure Country | | | | | |
| CNN | Anderson Cooper 360 | | Piers Morgan Tonight | | Anderson Cooper 360 | | E. B. OutFront | | Piers Morgan Tonight | |
| COMEDY | Tosh.0 | Tosh.0 | Tosh.0 | Daniel Tosh: | Serious | Dane Cook | Vicious Circle | | Patrice O'Ne. | |
| DISC | Gold Rush | | Gold Rush | | Flying Wild Alaska | | Gold Rush | | Flying Wild Alaska | |
| DISN | The Game Plan | | | | Good Luck | Good Luck | Austin | Austin | Good Luck | Wizards |
| E! | Sex-City | Sex-City | Kourtney and Kim | | The Soup | Fashion | Chelsea | E! News | | Chelsea |
| ESPN | To Be Announced | | | | To Be Announced | | | | | SportsCenter |
| ESPN2 | College Football | | | | NFL Kickoff | | NFL Live | | NFL Kickoff | |
| FAM | Beauty and the Beast | | Up | | | | The 700 Club | | Whose? | Whose? |
| FOOD | Ba. Glama | Diners | Diners | Diners | Diners, Drive | | Mystery D | Diners | Diners | Diners |
| FX | Christmas-Krank | | | | Christmas-Krank | | | | Deck the Halls | |
| HGTV | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters | Hunters |

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

| | HIST | LIFE | MTV | NICK | SCI | SPIKE | TBS | TCM | TLC | TNT | TOON | TRAV | TV LAND | USA | VH1 | WGN |
|-------|--------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|------|------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| HIST | Pawn | Pawn | Real Deal | Real Deal | Invention | Invention | IRT Deadliest Roads | Pawn | Pawn | | | | | | | |
| LIFE | Unsolved Mysteries | | Amer. Most Wanted | | Amer. Most Wanted | | Starving Secrets | Unsolved Mysteries | | | | | | | | |
| MTV | Scary Movie | | | | Where Is Santa | | | Where Is Santa | | | | | | | | |
| NICK | SpongeBob | Kung Fu | '70s Show | '70s Show | George | George | Friends | Friends | Friends | Friends | | | | | | |
| SCI | WWE SmackDown! | | | | Sanctuary | | Haveen | | Sanctuary | | | | | | | |
| SPIKE | Star Wars-Phantom | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |