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Blizzard will travel across plains

The Local Emergency Planning Committee listened to a conference call from the National Weather Service in Goodland at noon yesterday regarding the expected blizzard to hit this weekend.

The service said the storm is expected to affect the front range to Hays. They are expecting road and school closures and livestock loss.

Since the conference call, the winter storm warning was upgraded to a blizzard warning at 4:09 a.m. today.

Precipitation in Colby will be widespread. Kansas will see rain starting at midnight on Thursday to early Friday morning where 3/4 of an inch to 1 1/2 inches of moisture expected.

The peak of the blizzard will be Friday afternoon to Friday evening. According to the warning, this will be a high impact event with widespread snow amounts

of 6 to 12 inches expected northwest of a line from Tribune to Hill City.

It is also possible for locations along a line from Limon, Colo., to McCook, Neb., to see maximum snowfall accumulations of 14 to 16 inches or more. Locations southeast of a line from Tribune to Hill City can expect widespread snow accumulations of 3 to 6 inches.

Snow will continue through Friday night and Saturday morning before diminishing late Saturday.

Wind will also be a factor in this storm. The warning says winds will turn north tonight and increase to between 20 and 35 mph with gusts around 45 mph.

The area of strongest winds will spread eastward on Friday and Friday night. Widespread areas of blowing and drifting snow with visibilities of 1/4 mile or less are expected.

Wear red for awareness

By Christina Beringer
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American Heart Month is being kicked off tomorrow with National Wear Red Day to bring awareness to the disease's risk factors and especially the fight against heart disease in women.

Join staff of the Colby Free Press as we wear red tomorrow to help educate and acknowledge the deadly affects of heart disease.

"This is our way of recognizing the affects of heart disease which bring such devastations to our lives," stresses Sharon Friedlander, publisher of the Colby Free Press. "Every one of our staff will wear red tomorrow to support women and to support ourselves."

As a leading cause of death among women in the United States, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the American Heart Association encourages Kansans to wear red tomorrow, Friday, Feb. 3.

"More women die of cardiovascular disease than from the next four causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer," said Dr. Moser, secretary and state health officer. "But 80 percent of cardiac events in women could be prevented if women made the right choices for their hearts involving diet, exercise and abstinence from smoking. Wear red and make it your mission to learn all about preventing heart attacks

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Quality time with Dad



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Sacred Heart School held Doughnuts with Dad on Tuesday. Tuesday was also Career Dress-Up Day, so students dressed up as the profession they want to be when they grow up.

Curriculum changes expected

By Christina Beringer
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Plans to implement a new improvement plan and incorporate other curriculum changes into all levels of Colby Public Schools can be expected next year, says curriculum director and high school Vice Principal Diana Wieland.

"There are many factors that are playing into these changes," explained Wieland. "The reason why we will adopt a District Integrated Improvement Plan for the next scholastic year is because we didn't meet AYP requirements in a subgroup for special needs kids."

The Department of Education explains that the No Child Left

Behind act requires states to measure "adequate yearly progress" for schools who receive Title I funds for special needs programs. The measuring helps to ensure all students reach the level of academic proficiency set by the state.

Wieland said special education students in third grade through high school didn't meet reading standards last year or the year before, and because of this the implementation of the improvement plan became necessary.

"We've actually already started to implement the plan within the schools because as soon as you know you didn't meet an expectation, you must begin plans for change immediately," she said. "So, we have begun implemen-

tation before approval has been given; we are still in the draft phase."

The draft of the improvement plan was submitted to the Board of Education in Topeka on Jan. 13, with consultation assistance from Kansas Learning Network district facilitator Kelley Gillespie. As of Monday, the school has not yet received feedback.

"We should be celebrating that our special needs students have actually improved. In 2010, 71.3 percent met or exceeded the expectations, and that number rose to 72.1 percent in 2011. The goal is 89.6 percent, but I am proud of each of our students with disabilities, especially the ones who have made improvements or met the standard," she said.

Targeted goals for the plan focus on mathematics and reading, she explained, because those two subjects set a basic foundation to be successful in all other areas.

"We've established SMART goals for ourselves that demonstrate specificity, measurability, are actionable, can show results and are time sensitive," she said. "And one of the action plans that we've come up with are Monitor Mondays because our staff is great at giving feedback, identifying problems and looking at solutions in different ways."

Wieland explained that during seminar, a designated study hour, teachers watch over students to identify where problems are occurring. The observations and proposed solutions are emailed to the counselor. Then the teachers meet on Mondays to discuss their findings and the students are asked to

help come up with solutions. "By involving the students with the problem-solving process, it encourages the student to become responsible for the solution," said Wieland. "We are doing everything we can to provide support and accountability for every student."

In addition to the improvement plan, curriculum changes and amendments can be expected for the 2012-2013 school year.

"The state is in the process of leveling the playing field, so to speak," explained Wieland. "Common Core Standards have been initiated by Kansas, which have already been adopted by almost all of the states in the U.S."

"The consistencies will help to ensure a smooth move from one state to another. They will allow for compatibility, so the class a student takes here in Colby will be the same class they take if they happen to move to another state who uses the Common Core Standards."

Wieland said, all of the grade levels will slowly move into the common standards over the next three years, to allow for a seamless transition. She said many of the curriculum changes are similar to what is taught now, but some aren't taught at the same grade level, which will take some adjusting to.

"One thing in particular will be the teaching of money skills in elementary levels. It is now thought that younger kids don't grasp decimals as well, but do understand the basic elements of probability

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Singing the blues



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

Kieron Lafferty as "Elwood Blues" (left) and Wayne Catania as "Jake Blues" sang to a crowd during the Official Blues Brothers

Review, sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association, in Oakley on Sunday afternoon.

Rest area closed on eastbound I-70

This morning, the Kansas Department of Transportation closed the Interstate-70 eastbound rest area near Kanorado, Colo., at mile marker 7.5.

Due to a break in the main water line, the entire facility will be closed until repairs can be made.

For information, contact the department's Area Two engineer

Oelschlager at (785) 626-3258 or erico@ksdot.org in Atwood. Or contact Kristen Brands, their public affairs manager of northwest Kansas at (785) 871-2137 or kristenb@ksdot.org in Norton.

