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Activities still on tap for holiday

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The Fourth of July in Colby will feature hot dogs, watermelon, music and bingo – but no fireworks.

For food and music, go to the 4-H Building on Olive Street west of Range Avenue, at the main entrance to the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

There, in air-conditioned bliss, the Colby High Plains Lions Club will be putting its traditional Fourth of July celebration.

Roger Hale of the Lions Club said event will begin about 6 p.m. and the entertainment starts at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will begin at 7 p.m., which Hale said is a little later than usual for the benefit of the cooks.

“It’s pretty hot for our guys to be out there with those cookers,” he said.

The menu includes hot dogs, chips and watermelon. While the club buys the hot dogs, buns and chips, he said, Walmart donates 50 melons.

“The ones we don’t use, they can’t take back,” he said, “so we take them to the nursing homes.”

Hale said bingo starts about

7:30 p.m. It’s free, he said, and the club has a truckload of prizes to give away.

“It’s literally full,” he said. ‘The back is full, the back seat is full, the front seat is full. There’s just room enough for me.’”

The prizes were donated by a group at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, he said, adding, “We’ve got some pretty good prizes.”

Entertainers include the Bugbee Sisters, Kayla Cozza and possibly the McLemores, he said.

The Kiwanis Club of Thomas County-Colby decided to cancel its big fireworks show, normally set off at the fairgrounds after the Lions event, because of the hot, dry weather and the fireworks bans enacted by the city and county.

“If we’re not going to let anybody else do it, we might get complaints,” said Rick Dickman, club president. “And if we’re setting off fireworks, someone else might say, ‘Oh, well, it’ll be OK if we do a few,’ and they’d get in trouble.”

He said the club might have the show on Labor Day or Patriot Day, or to mark Thomas County’s birthday this fall.

“The weather should be a little

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Offices, banks to close on Fourth of July

All city, county, state and federal offices, including the courthouse, post office, county office complex and City Hall, will be closed on Wednesday for the Fourth of July.

The Colby Sanitation Department will not pick up trash that day. Wednesday’s trash route will be picked up Thursday, and the Public Works Department asks that tipper cans be at the curb by 8 a.m.

All banks will be closed, including the Farmer’s and Merchant’s location at Dillons.

Downtown Colby merchants will close for the holiday. Great Western Tire, Colby Implement, Colby Ag and Lang Diesel will all be closed. High Plains Co-Op and Cornerstone Ag also will be closed on Wednesday.

The Oasis Travel Center and Bosselman’s will be open. The Loft, upstairs at Oasis, will be open regular hours.

Many businesses and restaurants, such as Dillons, Walmart and J&B Meat Market, will be open, but it might be a good idea to check on hours. The Walmart pharmacy will be open, but the Dillons pharmacy and Palace Drug will be closed.

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Pioneer Memorial Library will be closed, however.

The Colby Free Press will not print a Wednesday issue, and the paper’s office will be closed. The office will reopen Thursday and we will print a paper that day.

One-vehicle accident causes minor gas leak

An accident involving a land-scaping truck led to a few minutes of excitement along Terrace Drive and Wheat Ridge Road north of College Drive just before 12:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon.

The vehicle backed into a gas meter in an alleyway east of Terrace Drive, breaking it off and releasing in a substantial flow of gas, said Sgt. Ron Alexander of the Colby Police Department.

Due to the size of the leak, homes were evacuated on Terrace Drive and along the west side of Wheat Ridge immediately to the east.

A Midwest Energy crew was able to make repairs quickly, Alexander said, and residents were allowed to return home about 1:10 p.m.

Midwest Energy spokesman Bob Helm in Hays said the gas pressure on a line going into a house is only about two ounces, so such an accident has a fairly low risk.

“We’d certainly like to ask people to be careful driving down alleys,” he said, “simply because it could be a fire danger.”

He said gas-meter accidents are becoming more common, and people need to remember there’s a utility easement in alleys that includes water and telephone connections as well as natural gas.



Swimmers practice new skills

Swim instructor Paige Arnbruster (above) gave directions and taught “level 3” skills Monday morning at the Colby Aquatic Center to (from left) McKenna Husband, daughter of Lloyd and Nicole Husband; Brylee McKee, daughter of John and Linda McKee; and Olivia Williams, daughter of Brian and Bethany Williams. The girls mastered breathing under water and floating on their back.

CHRISTINA BERINGER
Colby Free Press

Kansas schools expect less money

By Christina Beringer
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Superintendent Terrel Harrison and Vice President Tracy Rogers told the Colby School Board last Monday that discussion at the Kansas Association of School Boards meeting centered on money for schools, which could be the lowest it has been in decades.

Harrison said schools are now

expected to do more with less money.

“It’s depressing,” she said regarding the outlook for school money.

She said a “district advocacy” meeting on Kansas Educational Achievement and Funding had been facilitated by Mark Tallman, associate executive director of the association. She said he brought up many good questions.

Considering cuts possible after a

massive tax cut passed by the legislature, public school operating budgets could be the lowest since the 1950s in term of their proportion of Kansas personal income. Harrison said even so, schools are expected to do more for more children than ever before.

No other state has educated so many children to our current high levels of achievement while spending less, she said. Educators at the conference questioned

whether Kansas can sustain job and income growth while reducing its financial commitments to schools.

The state’s high level of achievement is shown in a January report from the association which shows that the state’s test scores have risen 10 straight years in a row, with more and more students moving to higher levels.

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At least 18 dead after storms cut power

By Ben Nuckols
Associated Press

WASHINGTON – Millions of people in a swath of states along the East Coast and farther west went into a third sweltering day without power today after a round of summer storms that killed more than a dozen people.

The outages left many to contend with stifling homes and spoiled food over the weekend as temperatures approached or exceeded 100 degrees.

Around 2 million customers from North Carolina to New Jersey and as far west as Illinois were without power this morning. And utility officials said the power would likely be

out for several more days. Since Friday, severe weather has been blamed for at least 18 deaths, most from trees falling on homes and cars.

The power outages had prompted concerns of traffic problems as commuters took to roads with darkened stoplights. But throughout northern Virginia, there was less traffic than normal in many places today as federal workers took advantage of liberal leave in place for the day.

To alleviate traffic congestion around Baltimore and Washington, federal and state officials gave many workers the option of staying home. Maryland’s governor also gave state workers wide leeway for staying out of the office.

“It was less traffic,” said Rob Lavender, who commuted to Arlington County from the district. “It’s more hectic on a regular day.”

There were scattered stoplight outages and some transit delays for Maryland commuters headed into Washington.

“It was a mess,” said Jason Lynch, a 23-year-old Energy Department software developer.

He counted at least three malfunctioning stoplights during his two-mile bus ride from Colesville to the Glenmont stop on Washington’s Metro subway system.

There were more than 400 signal outages in Maryland today, including more than 330 in

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