



# COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Friday  
July 6, 2012

Volume 123, Number 105  
Serving Thomas County since 1888

10 pages

## Drought conditions prompt burn ban

By Sam Dieter  
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Dry conditions have led the Thomas County Commissioners to declare a ban on open burning of any kind over the whole county. The burn ban, reissued on Thursday, has been put into effect for an indefinite period of time.

Burn bans are also in effect across a large area of northwest Kansas, including Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Logan, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman and Trego counties among others.

Colby Fire Department Fire Service Officer Ross Carney said that the wind and drought-like conditions make fires that much harder to fight.

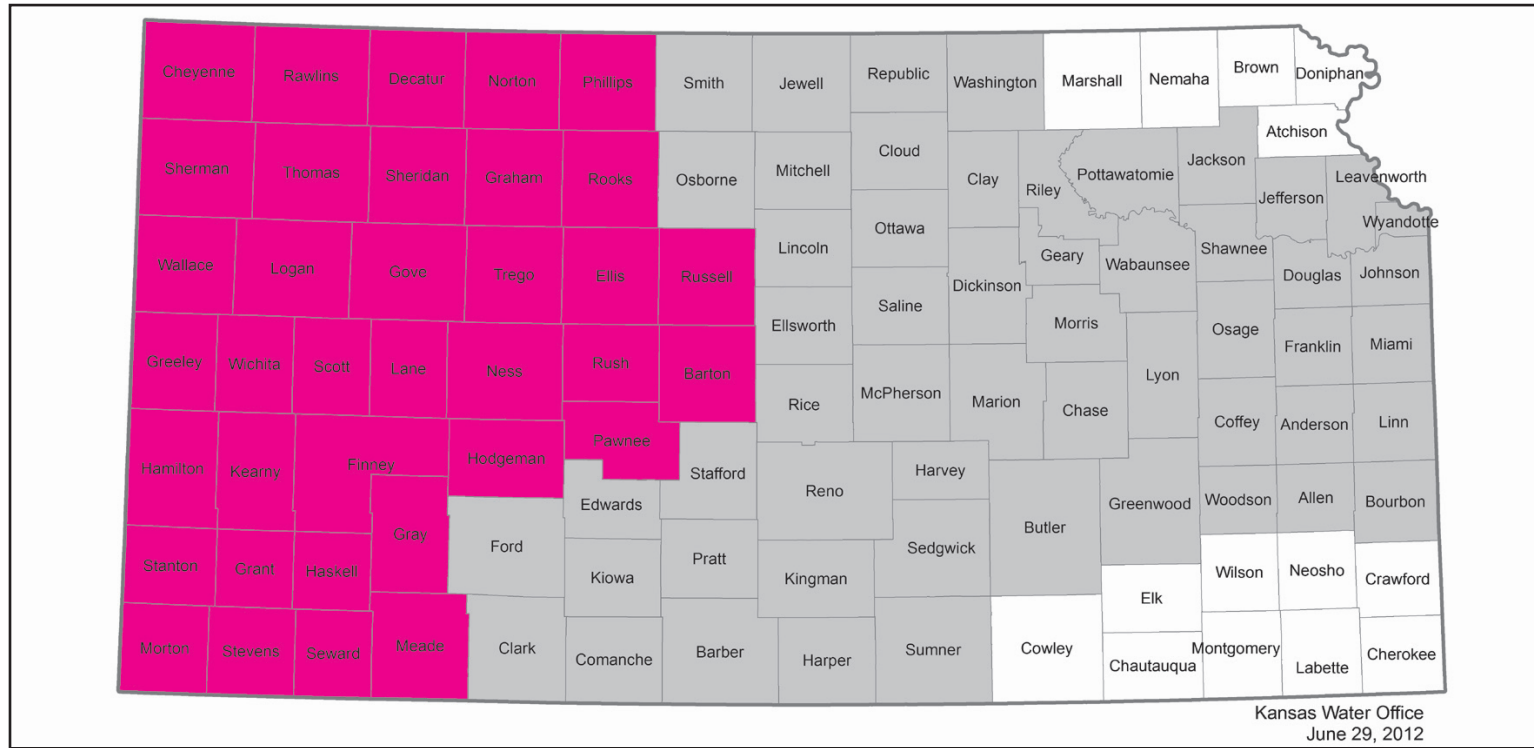
"Since we haven't had any rain all the vegetation isn't at the level of moisture that it usually is, when the heat comes in ... it makes it that much worse," Carney said. "Everything's just like a candle

box waiting to happen."

Carney also stressed the need for the public to keep safety in mind. "Everybody just needs to be real cautious about not throwing their cigarette butts on the ground and keeping their vehicles maintained," Carney said, "and just staying aware of things like that."

Gov. Sam Brownback has also issued a drought declaration for 36 Kansas counties, including Thomas, placing them on emergency status. Based on standards such as the level of precipitation, an emergency drought classification allows for emergency water conservation plans and emergency withdrawals from publicly-owned lakes and reservoirs.

Such a classification also allows the governor to declare a burn ban. Drought conditions have been declared in all Kansas counties, including 55 counties placed on drought warning status and 14 counties placed on drought watch status.



Gov. Sam Brownback issued a drought declaration for most of Kansas, with 36 counties, including Thomas County, being placed on emergency status (magenta) while 55 counties are under a warning (gray) and 14 counties are under a watch (white).



## Lions Club holds holiday hot dog feed

Byron Fritz and Larry Koon (above) grilled hot dogs Wednesday for the High Plains Lions Club Fourth of July hot dog feed at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Marguerite Edmundson (left), Mayor Gary Adrian and an unidentified attendee garnished their hot dogs at the table where Sheryl Brenn was handing out watermelon. Norma Higerd (below) played with great-grandson Ryan Temaat before the meal. The Bugbee Sisters provided entertainment before the food was served and bingo games followed the feed.

MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press



## Power outages affect Colby in past two weeks

By Kayla Cornett  
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Colby experienced a city-wide power outage Thursday evening after the town lost its feed from MidWest Energy, and some parts of town experienced an outage earlier that morning as well.

Public Works Director Omar Weber said the power outage Thursday evening, which occurred shortly after 5 p.m. and lasted about 10 to 15 minutes, happened because the city lost its feed from MidWest Energy.

That means, he said, the City of Colby lost power off its supply line from the firm, which is exter-

nal to the city's operations. However, MidWest Energy had no record of this outage, according to Bob Helm, manager of corporate communications at MidWest Energy.

Helm said nothing showed up on their computer system about Colby's outage, but said it could have been a problem with the breaker on the supply line.

He said sometimes a breaker will kick itself off due to heat, wind, a tree branch or something similar and it will then reboot itself.

Helm said the breaker will try to reboot three times; if it doesn't

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## Five spots open for museum camp

The Prairie Museum of Art and History still has five vacancies open for people interested in attending their free historical performance camp that will culminate in a performance next Friday.

The "Night at the Museum" production, styled after the movie of the same name, runs from Monday to next Friday and is open to kids who have completed the fourth grade to adults, said Program Director Ann Miner of the museum.

Participants will attend camp at the museum from 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 1 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday

when the evening performances will be held, she said.

"We don't expect any dinosaurs to tromp through and I'm afraid Teddy Roosevelt will not be riding around the museum on his horse," she said, "but we may have J.B. McGonigal acting out his Civil War experiences or Ella Murphy posting signs advertising Murphy's Cafe far and wide."

Miner said that they already have three adults and seven kids registered, but are still looking to fill their 15-person limit.

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## Legislative panel to talk school audits

TOPEKA (AP) - A legislative oversight committee is scheduled to consider seeking additional audits of Kansas school district operations and a new review of the cost to implement national education standards.

The Legislative Post Audit Committee has asked the state's independent auditing staff to review school district operations over recent years, looking for ways to help districts find efficiencies in spending and organization. The audits generally have found that districts could save money by

purchasing supplies in bulk and by modifying the way their academic schedules are assembled.

Committee members will meet Tuesday in Topeka to discuss future audits, as well as the need to determine how much additional money it will cost schools to implement new national academic standards.

The changes, developed by a coalition of states, seek to provide common expectations.

