



Blizzard warning closes Colby schools

With the forecast for a blizzard today and tonight, the Colby School District closed its doors today.

Transportation Director Alan Wade said administrators decided Tuesday afternoon to cancel school so that parents could be notified last night.

"When they forecast a blizzard," he said, "they kind get serious about that." He added that school should resume

Thursday, the last day of classes before winter break.

At the National Weather Service, lead forecaster Jeremy Martin said the storm was moving just a little slower than expected, but still appeared to be on track to hit the area by afternoon.

He said the main storm, a low-pressure trough, was over the Four Corners area at noon and moving east.

"We've got an organized band of snow from Ogallala (Neb.) to Imperial down to Limon (Colo.)," he said, "and the parent system is not yet past the Rockies."

He said the heaviest snow and the worst winds should come between 2 and 8 p.m. as the system moves east.

"I wouldn't be shocked to see a few 60 mph gusts in there, maybe right around sunset," he added.

The service put Thomas County and the other eight counties in northwest Kansas under a blizzard warning until midnight. It was predicting three to seven inches of snow along and north of Interstate 70. Higher amounts were expected near the Nebraska line.

Winds 20 to 30 mph with gusts of 40 to 50 mph were expected to create blizzard conditions by late afternoon, with visibil-

ity below a quarter mile.

The low tonight was expected to be 8 degrees, with winds up to 40 mph and gusts to 55. Wind chills could dip to 10 degrees below zero.

The precipitation was expected to begin, possibly with some rain, about 3 p.m., changing to heavy snow, and then move out of the area by midnight.

Colby College to raise tuition for all students

By Kayla Cornett

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The Colby Community College trustees decided Monday to increase tuition for all students beginning next year as one way to help with the college's money problems.

President Stephen Vacik said it's almost time for students to decide where they're going to college and he wants to give them good information about tuition.

"We don't want to wait on tuition until it's too late and they've already made their decisions," he said.

So, Dr. Vacik said, the administrative team sat down and talked about what to do and determined that it was time to raise tuition fees. He reminded the board the college didn't raise tuition or gen-

eral fees at all last year.

"Our revenue, as you know, has been not as strong as we would've liked given our expenditures," Vacik said, "and in order to help that ... we propose to raise the tuition...."

He proposed raising tuition \$3 per credit hour for in-state students, \$4 for students from border states, \$5 for other out-of-state students and \$6 for international students.

He said they have involved the community and have asked others to take part in improving the college's cash situation, but it has come to asking their students to step up and do their share.

He added that the majority, if not all, of Colby's competitors are raising their tuition next year as well, so it's not out of line for the

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Schools will have wireless access

By Sam Dieter

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The school board accepted a bid to add wireless Internet access throughout its buildings by installing more fiber optic cable and internet access points.

The board approved a bid from Kansas City-based company AceMidwest LLC to install fiber optic cable in the school buildings for \$81,483.53. District technology coordinator Phil DeYoung presented the bid for the project which would provide wireless Internet for all the school district buildings, including the elementary and middle school campus and the high school.

AceMidwest put forward the

only bid for the project, although three companies initially expressed interest in bidding, including American Underground, based in Wichita and Network Communications Inc., based in Kansas City.

Currently, he said, the school has a small number of Internet access points, many of them in the form of Internet routers that teachers take between classes.

The project will result in having an access point in every class room, and multiple access points in many public buildings, including six in the high school auditorium. In theory, DeYoung said, there could be hundreds of people in that room getting Internet at once.

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Colby kids hunt for candy canes

About 15 kids ran around the playground at Fike Park on Saturday (above) for the annual Candy Cane Hunt sponsored by the Colby Recreation Department. Korrynne (left) reached for a candy cane left near a small ladder. Kids (below) had to look all over the playground to find the candy.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Off roading??



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

A tractor-trailer rig blocked traffic Tuesday when it went off K-25 about 10 miles south of town. Tod Hileman, a spokesman for the Kansas Highway Patrol, said the patrol got a call about

11:03 a.m. that the truck, driven by Jayden Cahoj, had gone off the road, but no one was hurt. By about 11:30 a.m., trucks going both directions waited for the road to be cleared.

County gives college \$600,000 advance

By Christina Beringer

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Thomas County Treasurer Donita Applebury told commissioners Monday that she'd be issuing a \$600,000 advance distribution for property taxes to Colby Community College after receiving a letter outlining the need.

Under Kansas law, she said, the treasurer can decide whether to fulfill such a request and does not need approval from commissioners.

The three-sentence letter from Chief Financial Officer Alan Waites last Wednesday, made a formal request for the money. No representatives from the college came to the meeting.

"The college does not have adequate cash, reserves or invest-

ments to cover operational cash requirements this month without this early distribution," Waites wrote.

He has been monitoring the college's cash flow all fall, reporting to college trustees each month. The college usually has cash problems toward the end of the year, then recovers in January when it gets its first big tax payment and students pay tuition for the second semester.

By law, the college is required to submit its request in writing, Applebury said, and it can ask for up to the amount of taxes actually owed. She said county officials didn't verify the accuracy on

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