



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Bin fix prepares for new harvest

New siding panels are being added to a flat shed for grain north of Eighth Street where part of the building gave out in December.

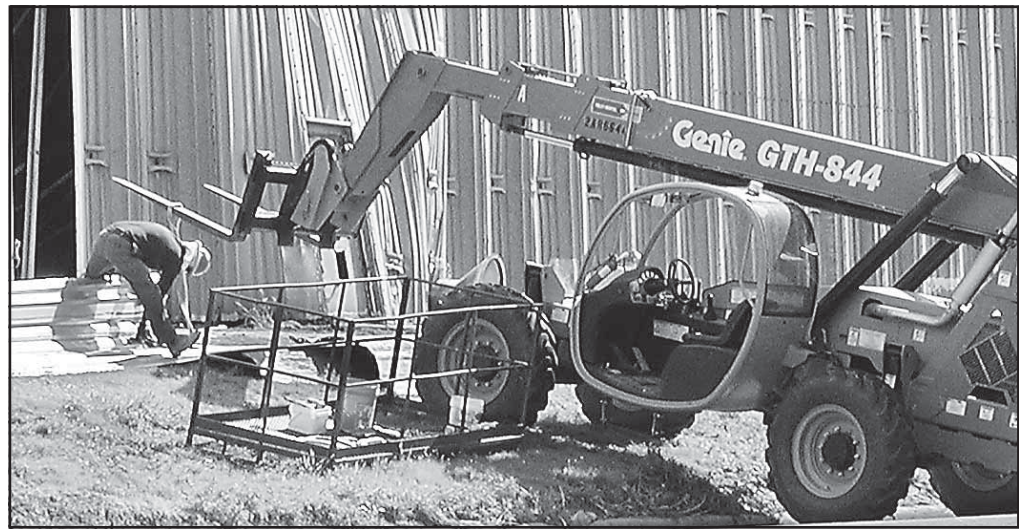
Workers cut away panels on the southwest side of the Cornerstone Ag shed Friday, and took away a door that gave out Dec. 12. Eric Sperber, the manager for Cornerstone, said new panels will be added to the shed, partially as part of normal repairs to the building, and that an angle iron brace near where the wall and roof meet will be replaced.

Sperber had thought parts of the brace gave way in December, which caused the wall to bend outwards and some wheat to spill out. The grain from the area that collapsed was all

sold and removed removed by May, which is the normal time for it to be taken out, but for awhile workers had not even gone into the collapsed section of the shed between when it collapsed until the end of March.

A forklift hoisted several new panels up against the side of a damaged flat shed north of Fike Park (right) on Thursday. The workers were replacing several panels on the side of the shed (below) that were damaged when a brace gave out in December.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Drive to help fire losses

Raynor Doors in Colby is the drop-off site for a project begun by the Firefighter Wives of Decatur County, who are collecting donations for the victims of the Black Forest Fire near Colorado Springs.

Andrea Burmaster said the drive is intended to gather non-perishable items such as clothing, children's items and household items.

"Something like that could have happened here in Kansas," she said. "We would want help just the same."

Items can be brought to one of the donation sites, which also include the Decatur County Good Samaritan Society and the Credit Union in Oberlin.

Donations will be collected until the end of June. Burmaster said the group will deliver donations to a designated drop site by the end of this month.

According to the National Public Radio website, the wildfire has destroyed nearly 500 homes, with at least two deaths, making it the most destructive wildfire in Colorado's history.

For any questions regarding the donation drive, contact Burmaster at (785) 470-1119.

Bluegrass festival plans star lineup

The 18th Annual Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass and Folk Festival will fill the Thomas County Fairgrounds with music fans from Friday, July 19, to Sunday, July 21.

Marshal Allen Bailey of Dodge City and Cowgirl Janey, hosts of High Plains Public Radio's *Western Swing and Other Things*, will emcee the event. Bailey was voted the 2010 "Heroes of Western Music" Disc Jockey of the Year.

Performers will include Blue Highway, the International Bluegrass Music Association's 2013 Vocal Group of the Year; Rhonda Vincent, the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America's 2013 Female Vocalist of the Year and Entertainer of the Year; the Bonham Revue; Jeff Scroggins and Colorado; Driven; the McLemores; Larry Booth; and the Sappa Strings.

"We seem to upgrade every year to bigger and better acts," said organizer Jo Booth.

The festival will also feature jam sessions, workshops, youth activities, food and craft vendors and a Sunday homecoming gospel show.

"We have a showcase for young instrumentalists who want to perform on Saturday morning at 10 a.m., followed by the open stage where anyone who wants to perform can," said Booth. Thursday night features a potluck supper and campfire jam session.

Show times are 6 p.m. Friday, noon and 5:15 p.m. Saturday and 9:30 a.m. Sunday.

Tickets are available at Farmers and Merchants Bank, Dillons and the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Prices are \$40 for the entire weekend, or \$35 in advance, \$20 for Friday night or Sat-

urday night only, \$25 for all day Saturday, \$15 for Sunday and \$10 for youths 12 to 16. Children under 12 are free with an adult.

Sponsors include Open Spaces Sports, High Plains Public Radio, Cahoj Earthmoving, City Limits Convention Center, the Colby Free Press, SureFire Ag Systems, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Rocking M Radio, the J.D. Skiles Co., Lon Frahm, U-Pac Storage, Citizens Medical Center, the Bottle Gallery, the Hampton Inn, Strutt Insurance Services/Prairie Land Insurance, Comfort Inn, Frontier Ag, the Gem Lions Club, Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Holiday Inn Express, the Thomas County Community Foundation Directors Fund/Paul Steele, Colby Walmart Super Center, S&T Telephone; Pat Criss, Woolfer Construction and Irrigation, El Dos de Oros Mexican Restaurant, Western Plains

Energy and American Implement of Colby.

For details, call the bureau at 460-7643 or see the festival website at www.pickinontheplains.com.

Fire cause sought

THOMAS PEIPERT
Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — Investigators are getting closer to pinpointing where Colorado's most destructive wildfire started.

El Paso County sheriff Terry Maketa said Monday that local, state and federal investigators are "zeroing in on the point of origin" of the Black Forest Fire near Colorado Springs. It's 75

percent contained.

Nearly 500 homes have been lost in the fire and two people who were trying to flee were found dead in the rubble.

The investigation is one reason authorities have been hesitant to let people back to the area hit hardest by the fire. Firefighters are also working to put out hot spots. Maketa said residents could be temporarily allowed back as early as Tuesday.

Harvest predictions low

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
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The wheat harvest in Northwest Kansas is predicted to be just over half of what it was last year.

A mix of late freezes and dry conditions have plagued the growing wheat since it was planted. On June 12, Kansas Agricultural Statistics, predicted the winter wheat crop will be 307.8 million bushels, down 21 percent from last year's crop. The average predicted yield is 38 bushels per acre, down five percent from last year.

Jason Lamprecht, Kansas state statistician, said the predicted yield dropped even more markedly for farmers in northwest Kansas.

"They had some timely rains last year," Lamprecht said.

Agricultural statistics consider northwest Kansas to consist of Cheyenne, De-

catur, Graham, Norton, Rawlins, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas counties. With the drought, the yield here is predicted to be 27,000 bushels, a little over half of last year's. Wheat fields will yield an estimated 36 bushels per acre that last year produced 48.5 bushels.

Statewide, agricultural statistics predicts that farmers will harvest 81 percent of the land that planted with wheat this year, and that in northwest they will harvest 750,000 acres out of the 950,000 they planted. Each of the figures from the June predictions was slightly higher than what was predicted in May.

Jeanie Falk, the multi-county agronomist for the Kansas State University Northwest Research Extension Center, would not speculate on what the yield will look like.

"We've had tough growing conditions

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SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press
A shelf cloud (above) was seen approaching Colby from the northwest at about 7 p.m. Sunday. This cloud was formed by strong winds being pushed out from under the storm cloud, resulting in branches torn off trees around town (left).

Voting record honored

State Rep. Don Hineman, a Dighton Republican who represents most of rural Thomas County, has been recognized for making every recorded vote during the 2013 legislative session.

Official records of the Kansas House show that Hineman did not miss a single vote of the 323 cast by the full House, House clerk's office said.

"House Republicans took many important votes this session, including tough votes on tax and budget reform," said Majority Leader Jene Vickrey (R-Louisburg). "Rep. Hineman has exemplified a true



Don Hineman

commitment to representing his constituents, not shying away from any vote. The dedication he has shown to his job in Topeka and to the legislative process is most commendable."

Hineman has served in the House since 2009. He represents the 118th District, which includes Gove, Lane, Logan, Scott, Sheridan, Trego, and Wichita counties and parts of Graham and Thomas.

The House clerk records, and recently confirmed, the official voting records of 135 state representatives.

Storm brings rain, wind damage

A brief but violent thunderstorm swept through Colby Sunday night, dropping some rain and leaving tree branches scattered in the street.

The storm was seen coming towards Colby at about 7 p.m. Sunday night, and had ended here by about 9 p.m. The worst of it passed quickly, according to Dave Floyd, a meteorologist at the Goodland station of the National Weather Service.

Winds reached up to 63 mph and stayed at about 60 mph for a 10-minute

period between about 7:20 and 7:30. Measurements were taken in Colby of .66 and .75 inches of rainfall; about two thirds of an inch accumulated between 7:18 and 7:43. The rain had stopped by around 8:50, Floyd said, although there were still some wind gusts.

Omar Weber, the public works director for the city, said a stop sign blew over at Country Club Drive and Horton Avenue and a traffic light was loosened, he thought at Fourth Street and Range Avenue. City workers were called to pick

up several branches in the street, he said, but that was the worst of the damage.

This morning, the weather service predicted a 50 percent chance of severe thunderstorms today and a 70 percent chance of severe storms tonight. There is a 50 percent chance of thunderstorms Tuesday night, with a possibility of more storms through Wednesday.

