



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Shimmering heat hastens harvest



HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press

Heat waves danced and shimmered as a combine worked its way through Ross Rodenbeck's wheat acres south of Colby Wednesday afternoon. According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service, northwest Kansas winter wheat was three

percent ripe and zero percent harvested as of Monday. State-wide, eight percent of the crop had been harvested, down from 94 percent this time last year.

District upgrades under way

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
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The Colby School Board approved a lease-purchase agreement for upgrades to the district buildings at a special meeting Thursday morning.

The agreement is for \$900,000 to improve the heating and cooling systems and make other energy-saving upgrades to its buildings over the next three budget years, through The Bank, where the district has its primary checking account.

"This allow the district not to commit every penny of its capital outlay fund," District Business Manager Jo DeYoung said.

DeYoung said that the agreement has a 2.95 percent interest rate, and the district will pay about \$314,000 each budget year. The district will get \$65,000 in its bond and interest fund in September, she said, that will help cover the expenses.

She added the district will try to pay it off as soon as possible. In

January, the board voted to raise the tax levy to a total of eight mills, and the 5.846 bond levy for the high school expires this year.

The district approved the contract for a \$1.5 million upgrade to its buildings with 360 Energy Engineers, with the help of local contractors, at its April meeting. The Lawrence-based engineering consulting firm had been helping plan a upgrade of the heating and cooling systems and other features of the school buildings since last summer.

The board voted to have the special meeting at its regular monthly meeting Monday.

At the Monday meeting, the board:

- Approved year-end transfers for the school district at its meeting Monday night.

DeYoung said she would need to give the board a new version of the transfers to be approved in July, because the school is still waiting on money for the state. She gave the board members a

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Wheat harvest progressing

WICHITA (AP) — The Kansas wheat harvest has now reached the Nebraska border.

The industry group Kansas Wheat reported Thursday that combines are running from Norton to Marshall counties along the Nebraska border.

Ag Valley Co-op in Norton says just a few thousand bushels of wheat have been brought in so far. Early test weights have been running 55 to 56 pounds per bushel. Many fields still have a green cast to them, but harvest is expected to pick up by early next week.

Harvest is about halfway complete around Hoisington in central Kansas. The United Ag Service elevator in Hoisington says yields have been ranging from 20 to 50 bushels an acre there. Test weights have been coming at 56 to 62 pounds per bushel.

House pushed to act on bill

By David Espo

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House and its conservative majority are coming under pressure to act after the Senate passed a landmark immigration bill opening the door to U.S. citizenship to millions while pouring billions of dollars into securing the border with Mexico.

President Barack Obama, traveling in Africa, called Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to urge them to have the House act on the issue and emphasize it's a priority for him, the White House said Friday.

But the bill's prospects are highly uncertain in the Republican-led House, where conservatives generally oppose citizenship for immigrants living in the country unlawfully. Many also prefer a step-by-step approach rather than a comprehensive bill like the legislation the Senate passed Thursday on a bipartisan vote of 68-32.

"Today, the Senate did its job. It's now up to the House to do the same," Obama said in a statement. "As this process moves forward, I urge everyone who cares about this issue to keep a watchful eye. Now is the time when opponents will try their hardest to pull this bipartisan effort apart so they can stop common-sense reform from becoming a reality. We cannot let that happen."

Members of the Senate's so-called Gang of Eight, the senators who drafted the bill and hoped a resounding vote total would pressure the House, echoed the plea.

"To our friends in the House, we ask for your consideration and we stand ready to sit down and negotiate with you," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said. "You may have different views on different aspects of this issue, but all of us share the same goal, and that is to take 11 million people out of the shadows, secure our borders and

make sure that this is the nation of opportunity and freedom."

At a news conference, House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, made clear the House would not simply take up the Senate bill as some Democrats and outside advocates are calling for, but would chart its own legislation with a focus on border security. How exactly Boehner will proceed remained unclear, but the speaker has called a special meeting of his majority Republicans for July 10 to go over options.

"The House is not going to take up and vote on whatever the Senate passes. We're going to do our own bill," Boehner said. "It'll be legislation that reflects the will of our majority and the will of the American people."

At a panel discussion Friday hosted by Bloomberg Government and the National Restaurant Association, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, R-Fla., rejected the notion that House Republicans would feel any pressure to act just because the Senate had done so.

"If anybody thinks that because there's a Senate bill the House members will feel pressure, that's just not true," said Diaz-Balart, who's involved in a faltering bipartisan effort in the House to craft a comprehensive bill. He said the pressure would come because lawmakers recognize the system is broken and in need of repair.

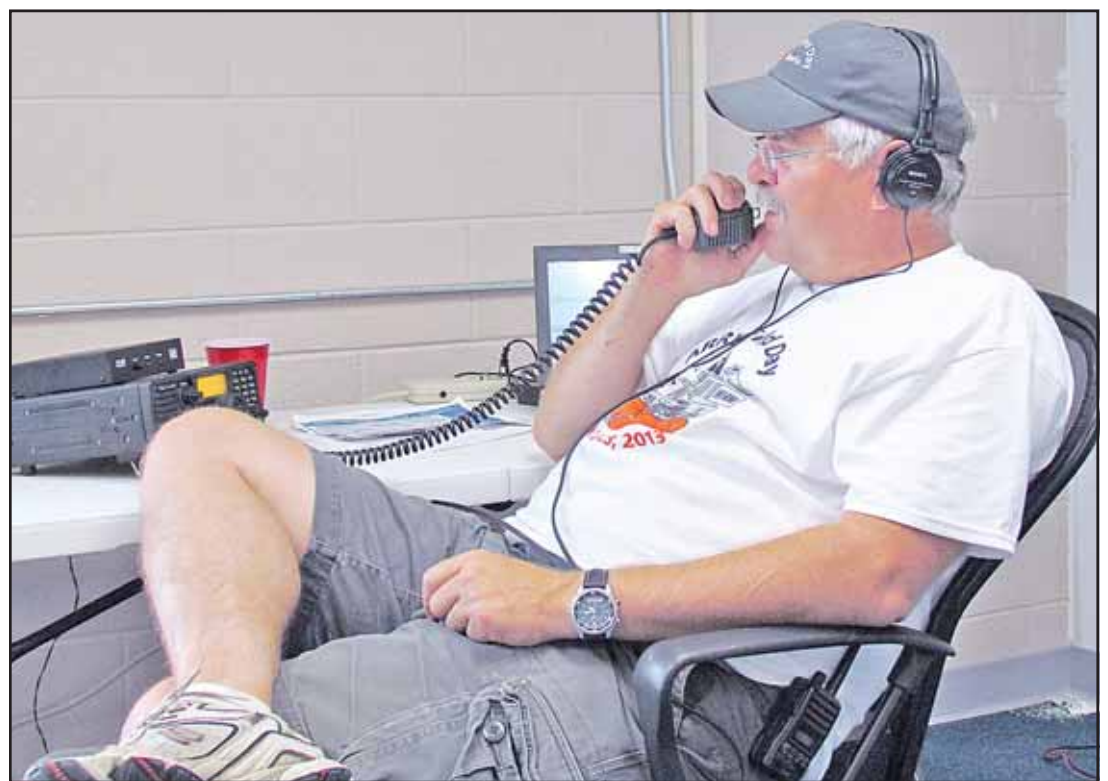
The bill passed by the Senate devotes \$46 billion to border security improvements, including calling for a doubling of the border patrol stationed on the U.S.-Mexico border and the completion of 700 miles of fencing — changes added at the last minute to attract Republican support. No one would be able to get a permanent resident green card until those border enhancements and others were in place.

The bill also makes it mandatory for employers to check their

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TOM BETZ/Goodland Star-News
Bob McLemore (WY01) talked on the six-meter radio as a part of the Field Day last weekend. A temporary 35-foot high antenna erected for the radio club flew a flag in the breeze.



Hams hold Field Day

By Tom Betz

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Each year the American Radio Relay League offers amateur radio operators a chance to test their equipment and in a 24-hour period see how many contacts they can make across the country and even portions of the world.

Saturday and Sunday a group of eight Hams from Colby, Goodland and Arapahoe, Neb., gathered at the Colby Municipal Airport to participate in Field Day, and when the 24 hours were over, Bob McLemore (WY01) reported the hams had

made 1,085 contacts and had 3,940 points in the ARRL program.

The Colby hams were from the Trojan Amateur Radio Club and sponsored the event using much of their equipment and the Northwest Kansas Incident Management trailer to haul the generators and other equipment to the airport.

Helping in the setup and operation from Colby were Bruce Frahm (K0BJ), Jeff Morrisson (K0FW), Mike Albers (K0FJ), Nathan Reitcheck (KCOGLA) and Ryan McLemore (KD0JFP). Calvin Peck (KD0OSY) was from Arapahoe, Neb.,

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Hoxie man chosen to train as astronaut

A Hoxie man has been selected to train as a next-generation astronaut, possibly available for trips to an asteroid or to the international space station riding a new privately operated rocket.

Tyler N. Hague, 37, son of Don and Bev Hague, who now live in Gering, Neb., is a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. He was named as a member of NASA's 2013 Astronaut Candidate Class earlier this month. He is one of eight candidates who NASA picked after searching for a year and a half, looking through 6,100 applications.



Tyler Hague

Col. Hague graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School. He is now deputy chief of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, organized in 2003 to deal with the "roadside bombs" used against Americans in Iraq by the Department of Defense.

He and the other candidates will report to the Johnson Space Center in Houston in August for two years of technical training. Among other things, they will

be taught Russian, learn to dive to prepare for underwater space-walk training, and take trips in a modified jet airplane that drops out of the sky, giving its passengers the sensation of weightlessness as it free falls.

If they pass the training, they could be chosen for a mission to space, the agency says.

