



On the road again



HEATHER ALWIN/Colby Free Press
This week, County crews were out sealing a stretch of Old 24 between Brewster and Levant (above and left). Thomas County road workers were sealing streets in Brewster in 100+ degree weather last Friday. After the streets were oiled and crews press a layer of rock into the sticky goo, Darrin Bell, a highway department employee, swept off the loose gravel (above).

Drowning is fast and silent, watch kids around water

It's a warm summer day and you're at the pool with your kids. Your cell phone rings and you answer it, shifting your focus from your kids to the conversation.

Children can get into trouble in a matter of seconds when around water, so Safe Kids Kansas recommends that parents actively supervise children when they are in or near the water.

Drowning is the second highest cause of unintentional death for children ages 1 to 4 in both the U.S. and Kansas.

"Kids drown quickly and quietly," said Cherie Sage, Safe Kids Kansas. "A drowning child can't cry or shout for help. The most important precaution for parents is active supervision. Simply being near your child is not necessarily supervising."

Safety tips from Safe Kids Kansas to keep your children safe around pools and

spas this summer:

- Never leave your child unattended around water, even for a moment. There is no room for compromise on this one. Stay where you can see, hear and reach kids in water. Infants or toddlers should be within arm's reach of an adult at all times.

- Put the cell phone away, forget about all the other things you have to do and give your children 100 percent of your attention when they are near or around water. This is the time to avoid distractions of any kind. If children are near water, then they should be the only thing on your mind.

- Empty all tubs, buckets, containers and wading pools immediately after use. Store them upside down and out of children's reach. Small children can drown in as little as one inch of water.

- When there are several adults present and children are swimming, use the Water Watcher card strategy, which designates an adult as the Water Watcher for a certain amount of time (such as 15-minute periods) to prevent lapses in supervision. Download a Water Watcher card at www.safekids.org.

- Every child is different, so enroll children in swimming lessons when you feel they are ready. Teach them how to tread water, float and stay near the pool's edge when they are first learning to swim, but don't assume swimming lessons make your child immune to drowning. There is no substitute for active supervision.

- Teach children to swim with a partner, every time. From the start, teach children to never go near or in water without an adult present.

- Remember that swimming aids such

as water wings or noodles are fun toys, but they should never be relied upon for safety and cannot be used in place of a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device.

- Don't leave toys in or near the pool, where they could attract unsupervised kids.

- Make sure backyard pools have four-sided fencing that's at least four feet high and a self-closing, self-latching gate to prevent a child from wandering into the pool area unsupervised.

- Educate your children about the dangers of drain entanglement and entrapment and teach them to never play or swim near drains or suction outlets.

- If you do have pool or spa drains, protective measures include anti-entrapment drain covers and a safety vacuum release system to automatically release suction

and shut down the pump should entrapment occur. Go to www.PoolSafety.gov for a list of manufacturers of certified covers.

- Keep rescue equipment, a phone and emergency numbers by the pool.

- Parents have a million things to do, but learning CPR should be on the top of the list. Local hospitals, fire departments and recreation departments offer CPR training.

Even a near-drowning incident can have lifelong consequences. Kids who survive a near-drowning may have brain damage.

For information about drowning and water safety, call Safe Kids Kansas at (785) 296-0351 or visit www.safekids.org.

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