



# COLBY FREE PRESS

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## Robbery suspects under arrest

Police have arrested two men as suspects in an armed robbery Sunday night at the Quality Inn on Range Avenue.

Police say they caught Shawn Gill, 19, in the country this morning after he ran from a traffic stop the night before. Colby Police said Gill ran into a field of milo after police stopped him and another suspect near mile marker 56 of Interstate 70, about two miles east of the Country Club Drive exit. Neither police nor the sheriff's office released the name of the man arrested during the traffic stop.

The robbery happened about 11:15 p.m. last night. Police, sheriff's deputies and Kansas Highway Patrol troopers converged on the area to search for the man who fled. A call went out for a Highway Patrol plane to help in the

search.

Police announced they were looking for Gill in a press release sent out just after 7 a.m. today. About 10:30 a.m., officers found him near the site of the traffic stop. He was booked into the Thomas County Jail at 12:04 p.m. today for interference with a law enforcement officer, a misdemeanor, and unlawful distribution of a controlled substance, a felony. Since today is Columbus Day, no judge was at work to set a bond.

Police said they would release more information once formal charges have been filed. The men were being held in jail on charges not related to the robbery. An employee at the Quality Inn would not comment on the details of the robbery.

## Utility costs expected to rise

WICHITA (AP) — Heating bills across Kansas will be significantly higher this winter as temperatures return to their icy norms and natural gas prices climb from historical lows, utility experts predict.

Kansas Gas Service, with 630,000 customers across the state, expects customer bills to increase about 6 percent from November to May, spokeswoman Dawn Ewing told *The Wichita Eagle* (bit.ly/1fsolrz).

That estimate is based on a return to normal weather conditions over that period, she said. In the past two years, temperatures have been unseasonably mild across much of the country, including the Midwest, but weather experts say that's probably going to change this year.

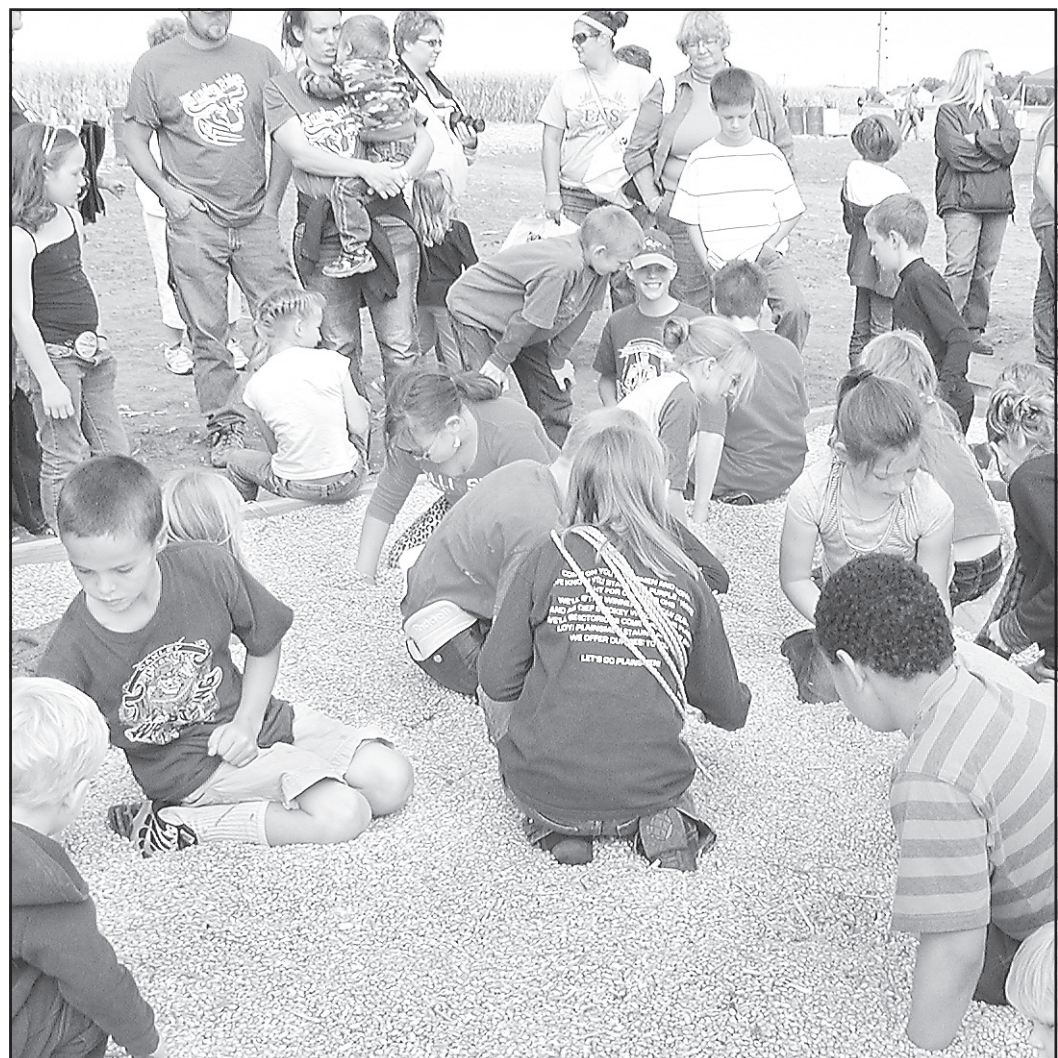
Accuweather.com forecasts cooler temperatures and more storms, while the Commodity Weather Group said it expects temperatures to be slightly cooler than normal nationally.

Low natural gas prices that have driven energy prices down in recent years are headed up, doubling the impact on consumers.

Black Hills Energy, which serves more than 600,000 customers in Kansas, Colorado, Iowa and Nebraska, expects its natural gas prices to be in line with a projected national average that's 10 percent to 12 percent higher than a year ago, company spokesman Gabe Schlickau said.

"The reason it's drifting upward

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Teams gathered corn into old-fashioned machinery (top) Saturday afternoon from a corn field behind the Buffalo Bill Cultural Center. Meanwhile, kids went through a pile of corn

(above) in search of spare change during the 42nd annual Kansas State Corn Husking Contest. Jamie Heskett shoveled corn out of her wagon (left).

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

## Girls collect money to help out

By Heather Alwin

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Nine-year-old Mallory Branum and her friend Makenna Cersovsky, Colby fourth graders, are going door-to-door collecting money for Brennen Ostmeier, a 20-month-old Colby toddler with a rare form of cancer.

Mallory, daughter of Travis and Amy Branum, heard about Brennen's illness at school and wanted to help raise money for his family, her father said.

Brennen's father, Jason Ostmeier, teaches at Colby Grade School, and his mother, LeAnn, was a teacher through last year. Mallory was in her third-grade class last year.

Mallory came home from school this week, after finding out about the Ostmeyers' need, and found a wide flower vase to use for her collection, taping a note on it explaining why she was collecting money.

She and Makenna, daughter of Lloyd and Nicole Cersovsky, went around town with the vase and a letter the school sent home about the Ostmeyers' situation. Knocking on doors and gathering donations, Mallory and Makenna have collected about \$300 already, Travis Branum said.

"Generous people have been giving her money," he said.

The Branum family has not yet been able to speak to the Ostmeyers about the effort, he said, but he hopes Mallory will be able to give the money to them sometime this week. Mallory is still collecting money and probably will continue, said her dad.

The Ostmeyers could not be reached for comment.

## West Nile virus cases now at 32 in Kansas

Twelve additional cases of West Nile virus have been reported to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, bringing the total for the year to 32. Two Kansas patients have died of the disease.

So far, none of the cases has been in Thomas County, but one case each has been reported in Logan, Decatur and Ellis counties and two in Sherman, all in northwest Kansas.

"Cases are on the rise in Kansas," said Dr. Robert Moser, secretary of the department and state health officer. "We want to bring this to everyone's attention, as we expect an increase in this disease before winter is here, and we strongly encourage the use of methods that prevent mosquito bites."

As of Oct. 7, the case count by county in Kansas was seven in Sedgwick (Wichita), six in Barton (Great Bend), three in Johnson, two in Wyandotte and one each in Atchison, Butler, Chautauqua, Marshall, Republic, Rice, Rush and Saline. The department said no other details about the patients or the two deaths would be provided at this time.

West Nile virus is spread to people through bites from infected mosquitoes, but it is not contagious from person to person. Although most persons will not develop any illness at all, symptoms can range from a slight headache and low-grade fever to swelling of the brain, and in rare cases, death. People who have had West Nile are considered to be immune.

The department recommends these precautions to protect against West Nile:

- When outdoors, use insect repellent con-

taining an EPA-registered active ingredient on skin and clothing, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. Follow directions on the package.

- Mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times, or consider staying indoors.

- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

Cases are most common in the late summer and early fall. In 2012, 57 cases of the virus were reported in Kansas.

Birds are not tested for West Nile virus in Kansas and the department will not be collecting information about dead birds. If you find a dead bird, experts recommend that you wear gloves, place the bird in a plastic bag and dispose of it in the garbage.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide web page with information about the virus and preventing mosquito bites at [www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes/).



Makenna Cersovsky (left) and Mallory Branum have been collecting money to help with cancer treatments for Brennen Ostmeier.



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