

**weather
report****45°**

at noon

**Today**

- Sunset, 4:24 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 6:56 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:24 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 35 degrees
- Humidity 24 percent
- Sky Sunny
- Winds Northwest 10
- Barometer 30.14 inches and falling
- Record High 76° (1939)
- Record Low -23° (1919)

Last 24 Hours*

- High 42°
- Low 21°
- Precipitation —

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear; low 15-20; light northwest wind turning southerly. Tomorrow: Sunny; high in low 40s; south wind 10-20.

Extended Forecast

Saturday through Monday. Saturday: dry; high 40-45; low around 20. Sunday and Monday: chance of rain or snow both days; highs 40-45; lows 20-25.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local
markets****Noon**

- Wheat — \$2.03 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.91
 - Loan deficiency payment — 54¢
 - Corn — \$1.55 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.61
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 38¢
 - Milo — \$2.20 hundredweight
 - Soybeans — \$3.90 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.98
 - Loan deficiency payment — 91¢
 - Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$5.65 cwt.
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — \$6.04
 - Confection current — \$11/\$7 cwt.
 - Pinto beans — \$15 (new crop)
- (Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and Prairie Pea and Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

**afternoon
wire**Late news
from the
Associated
Press**1 p.m.****Conspiracy true
in King murder**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Although a civil jury has concluded there was a conspiracy to kill the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a 1 1/2-year-old Justice Department investigation is not likely to produce any criminal charges, Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder said today.

Declining to release specific findings of the probe by the department's civil rights division, Holder told reporters: "I would not expect there would be any criminal prosecution out of our report."

Holder said the report ordered in August could be released within weeks.

Because the Justice inquiry was limited to examining two conspiracy allegations that emerged in recent years, including the one examined by the civil jury in Memphis, Tenn., Holder said he doubted the report would put to rest speculation about the 1968 assassination of the civil rights leader.

Charges pending in Colby bomb threat

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

At least two Colby High School students, and possibly others, could face criminal charges for leaving a bomb threat note at the high school on Tuesday, yet the investigation into the first threat of violence continues, according to information released by police and school officials Wednesday night.

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones said that two 14-year-old boys have charges pending today and were released to the custody of their parents on Wednesday. The case has now been forwarded to the Thomas County Attorney's Office for possible prosecution, he said.

The first threat, on an audio cassette threatening "acts of violence" if the board of education did not change certain policies and decisions, was discovered Saturday at the Colby Post Office.

"During the course of our investigation Wednesday," Chief Jones said, "we do not believe these two individuals (responsible for the note) are connected with the first (voice tape) threat."

In addition to the criminal charges pending with local law enforcement officials, Colby Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said an informal hearing for a short-term suspension will be held for these student suspects who were involved in the bomb threat note.

"During this period of short-term suspension, school officials will prepare to hold a formal hearing for a long-term suspension,"

Nielsen said. "Formal hearings for long-term suspensions," he said, "are presented to a hearing officer recommended by me and approved by the board of education at the next regularly scheduled board meeting on Dec. 20."

Nielsen said school officials hope to put closure on this portion of the situation by the upcoming school Christmas break.

But until the entire situation is resolved, Nielsen said the district will continue to have "strict security measures" in place in all buildings.

Also, in the hopes of finding the people responsible for the first threatening voice tape, a reward fund is being established.

"Several community members have called the school offering to contribute money towards a reward," Nielsen said. "In an effort to bring closure to the original threat...reward fund accounts have been established at all Colby banks."

As an added incentive, one Colby board member and his wife will match the first \$1,000 contributed to the fund for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the people responsible for the cassette tape, he said.

Some 50 people, in addition to local and state-wide media sources, attended the special press conference, which lasted approximately 30 minutes.

After both Jones and Nielsen read from their prepared statements,

they opened the meeting to questions ranging from whether or not the note was serious or a hoax to what agencies are currently involved in the investigation of the original threat.

"We took the bomb threat note seriously," Jones said, "I think parents took it seriously since many would not let their children attend school."

In response to the investigation, Jones said the Colby Police Department, federal postal inspectors and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation are providing assistance.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's school violence task force is not involved opting to allow the work to continue at the state level, Jones said.

Jones made no comment on whether or not the voice tape is being analyzed by other experts.

"The (police) department is extremely grateful for the complete cooperation of the parents of both of these individuals (involved in the bomb threat note)," Jones said. "We will continue to assist the school in whatever way possible including continued security," Jones added.

"School officials appreciate the efforts of the Colby Police Department and the Colby High School administration in the investigation that has taken place so far and we will continue to cooperate with the police until this is resolved," Nielsen said.

Keeping all those angles straight



Framing crew members worked at hammering trusses in place for the roof of the Wheat Ridge Acres Assisted Living Center on west 8th Street on Wednesday.
Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

New call out procedure working, sheriff says

By **Tom Betz**

The Goodland Daily News

Over the last three months there have been 22 call outs, and the Sherman County Sheriff's department has had a total of 12 hours of overtime during that time Sheriff Doug Whitson told the county commissioners Tuesday.

Whitson told the commissioners the new call out procedure was working well, and the overall morale of the department was much better. Under the call out policy, if a deputy is called out beyond their regular hours they will be paid a minimum of two hours.

Several of the call outs were for female prisoners, Whitson said, and two were for juvenile transportation.

Whitson also reported that there had been significant savings by having Brenner Ford do the oil changes rather than the county shop. He said Brenner Ford did six oil changes in September at a cost of \$120. This compared to the charge from the county shop of \$147 for four oil changes in August.

When asked why such a dramatic difference between the county shop and Brenner Ford, Whitson said it was a lower labor cost at Brenner Ford.

The commissioners agreed to continue the two-hour call out program and to continue having Brenner Ford do the

oil changes.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby had been asked to check on the county expenses for juvenile care over the past few years to see if paying the \$1,000 participation fee to Trego County Juvenile Detention Center in WaKeeney was a better deal than paying for time used.

Selby reported to the commissioners that comparison of a year when the county paid the participation fee and when they paid based on use showed that the county did better by paying the participation fee.

Commissioner Kenny Davis made the motion to pay the \$1,000 participation fee, seconded by Commissioner Gary Townsend. The vote was unanimous, with Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld joining Davis and Townsend, in approving the motion.

Selby told the commissioners she had talked to the various agencies involved with juveniles and explained her policy. She said they are to use other options available before considering taking juveniles to the detention center in WaKeeney.

The commissioners also asked Selby to look over the current farm lease agreements for county land that are about to expire. The contracts have

been drawn up over the past five years, and there are some differences.

Selby said she would come up with an agreement where the commissioners can pick and choose what options they want in an effort to standardize the contracts.

Under a discussion of standard procedures for farm leases the commissioners felt it was customary for the lessor to receive one-third of the crop, and for the lessor to pay one-third of the costs for pesticides and fertilizer. Herbicides are not usually included, the commissioners said.

The commissioners also discussed going with a low rate cash lease which would mean the county would not be required to worry about compliance on crop payment programs. The lease would require the lessee to make sure the ground was in compliance.

Selby was also asked about bills for two victim care cases which have not been paid. She said she is pursuing one case and recommended the county pay that bill to Goodland Regional Medical Center. However, she said since there were no charges being filed in the other case she recommended the bill be sent to the City of Goodland, since they originally handled it.

For future cases, Selby said she has visited with both the city officials and the sheriff's department and all have agreed on a procedure. If a city police officer finds a case they think should be pursued they are to contact the sheriff for investigation. If the sheriff's department determined the case should be pursued, the county would then be responsible for the bills.

The two bills date back to January and March. The commissioners agreed to pay the \$500 bill and deny the \$700 one.

The commissioners decided that if Alan David signs the emergency medi-

cal training agreement which has been drawn up for all students taking the classes, they will reimburse him for the costs. Under the agreement, David would have liability coverage through the hospital. Otherwise, the county does not want to assume the liability for a first responder who does not have such coverage. Without the county coverage, David would have to provide his own malpractice insurance.

Commissioner Townsend suggested the commission consider establishing a method to recognize employees for special efforts or completing a class or coming up with a cost-saving idea. The commissioners felt it was a good idea, but that guidelines need to be developed to give to the department heads to determine when an employee was deserving of recognition.

There was a question of purchasing about six chairs for the commission room to be used by citizens who wish to visit with the board. Currently, there are several mismatched chairs being used. The commissioners decided to have William McKnight, building manager, check and see if he could find enough matching chairs in the courthouse and perhaps check into refinishing the chairs.

For the past year or more, Curt Way has been the acting Director of Public Works, in addition to his official position as Road and Bridge Supervisor. The commissioners discussed moving him into the Public Works Director position, and whether there should be one person in charge of Road and Bridge and another for the Landfill. The board decided to visit with Way before a decision is made.

The commissioners decided that the next meeting will be 8 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 21, in the commission room on the first floor of the Sherman County Courthouse.

Students face metal detector at city school

MAIZE (AP) — A rash of unrelated threats in Kansas schools this week has frightened parents and landed at least one student in trouble.

The threats followed an incident Monday in which a boy at the Fort Gibson, Okla., Middle School fired 15 shots before being subdued by a teacher. Four students were wounded and a fifth suffered bumps and bruises.

"It is not uncommon when there is a disaster of some type in another state to see more calls come in to schools or to the toll-free hotline," said Dale Dennis, deputy commissioner for the Kansas Department of Education.

As of Monday, the "Safe School" hotline — established Aug. 20 after the massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. — had logged 350 calls, said Sgt. Bill Arehart, communications officer for the Kansas Highway Patrol's central communications center. Of those, 83 calls — ranging from an alleged rape to planned bombings and shootings — were referred to school and law enforcement officials for follow-up.

School officials in Kansas have been taking few chances when faced with threats of violence. Among the latest: — Students arriving for class Wednesday morning at Maize High School, near Wichita, lined up for metal detector scans in response to two reported threats of violence.

— In Jefferson County, authorities detained a 12-year-old boy after an alleged bomb threat at Oskaloosa Middle School on Tuesday night.

— And in Colby, a bomb threat was discovered Tuesday night, just days after threats to school board members prompted Monday's closure of schools.

School officials had prepared for such incidents.

The school board association provided signs with the school violence prevention number for every classroom in the state, Arehart said. The state teachers association also paid for large signs for hallways in schools across the state. The high school activities association held summer workshops on school safety.

Two months ago, about 70 school administrators from around the state came to Goddard for a symposium on preventing school violence sponsored by U.S. Attorney Jackie Williams in the wake of the Columbine shootings.

Kansas school districts also have held mock hostage drills, drafted new policies and beefed up school security.

Two threats were made in Maize, said school spokeswoman Amber Dutton. The first was a note on the chalkboard in the teachers lounge that read, "the shootings will continue. Maize is next, Feb. 1, 2000."

The school district sent a letter home to parents Tuesday informing them of the threats. The letter, from Superintendent Craig Elliott and principal Ken Rickard, said the district has not decided whether to hold school Feb. 1, 2000.

Dutton said a student also told a counselor Tuesday that she had overheard conversations about a student bringing a gun to school.

That threat, repeated Tuesday night