

Senior gets appointment to West Point

By CAROLYN PLOTTS
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Ever since he was in junior high, Aaron Helm of Norcatar has dreamed of going to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. He said a teacher in his gifted class set his mind to thinking about college and, in particular, the academy.



Aaron Helm

Now, thanks to a lot of hard work and some help from Rep. Jerry Moran and Kansas' two senators,

advice.

"Take a pair of scissors and just cut the word 'quit' out of it," his uncle told him, adding that he might get tired, but he should remember that the guy in charge is tired, too, and he has to keep going.

Aaron has been "going" for years. He is a long-time member of Star Valley 4-H Club, president of the Decatur Community High School National Honor Society, and a member of

the school's Student Council. He is a student athlete, participating in cross country, wrestling, weight club and D-Club. He has gone out for speech, band, honor band, Drama Club, the school play, Boys State and Scholar Bowl. Aaron is a graduation usher, a homecoming escort, prom server and Halloween Clean-Up captain. He is also active in Catholic Youth Organization at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Oberlin, and the Sons of the American Legion. He was named a Putnam Scholar and a Kansas Hansen Scholar.

In addition to his busy academic life, Aaron works part-time at Creative Dimensions in Oberlin and has helped his father remodel a house for his family. The oldest in a family of five, he has three brothers and a sister, plus his mother, Deb Helm.

Aaron said he is not worried about adjusting to the rigors of military life. He said he would remember his father's advice, "Keep your stuff straight."

May calendar full with school events

With lots of things coming up in May, people might want to mark their calendars with upcoming school events to keep the dates straight.

At both the grade school and high school, May can get to be a busy month with fun days, concerts, graduation, prom and other events to end the year.

With students getting out on Thursday, May 24, they only have 16 days of class left. Seniors have their last day of school on Thursday, May 17, so they have only 11.

At the grade school times and dates to remember include:

- 7:30 p.m. Thursday for the fourth-sixth grade concert.
- Friday, May 11, fun day for grades 1-3 in the morning and 4-6 in the afternoon at the high school track.
- 8:30 a.m. Thursday, May 24,

student awards.

At the high school:
• 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, band concert at the high school.

• 6 p.m. next Wednesday, speech awards at the high school auditorium.

• 7 p.m. Saturday, May 12, promenade on Main Street with prom activities to follow at The Gateway.

• 7 to 9 p.m. open house.

• 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 15, music and vocal awards in the auditorium.

• 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, awards in the auditorium.

• 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, baccalaureate in the auditorium.

• 2 p.m. Sunday, May 20, graduation in the gymnasium.

• 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 21, junior high vocal and band concert in the auditorium.

Sherman Township hearing canceled

The Decatur County commissioners canceled a hearing on closing a road between sections 3 and 4 in Sherman Township after learning that everyone involved didn't receive notice.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said landowners had been in her office over the past week asking about the possible road closing and why they didn't receive a letter.

The road is one mile west and about 1 2/3 miles north of the Sherman Cemetery.

The commissioners decided not to schedule another hearing until

they can talk with members of the Sherman Township Board and landowners in Decatur County and Nebraska, since the road is near the state line.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said he had talked about the contract with Red Willow County officials. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he had looked at the contract and made the necessary changes.

The contract establishes maintenance of the miles that border Kansas and Nebraska in Decatur County. The contract will spell out which



OUTSIDE OF HERNDON, a Nebraska-Kansas-Colorado RailNet crew worked Monday morning to fix the track washed

out when the area received around six inches of rain last Monday.

— Herald staff photo by Dave Bergling

Rain washes out roads, tracks

Thunderstorms last Monday night dropped buckets of rain in the northwest part of Decatur County, washing out roads and damaging the railroad tracks south of Herndon.

Around 11:30 p.m. last Monday, a tornado was reported south of Midway, causing damage to a family homestead west of Achilles. Paul and Sheryl Nelson lost a milk barn, hog house, chicken and turkey

houses. They found one grain bin across the road.

A machinery shop at Jackie Urban's farmstead west of the Nelson farmstead also suffered damage from the storm.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said the Herndon area got about six inches of rain. The water rushed over the roads, washing away the gravel. Mr. Stallman said

there was also some damage under the roads around culverts.

He said the road and bridge crew will probably fix the culverts, although he isn't sure how many will need to be replaced. He said there is still a lot of dirt on top of the culverts, so he isn't too worried.

The Nebraska-Kansas-Colorado RailNet tracks south of Herndon suffered damage from high water

from Ash Creek. A crew worked on the tracks on Monday. Several phone calls to the line's office in Grant, Neb. and the headquarters of OmniTRAX, the company that owns the railroad in Colorado, went unanswered.

The northwest got the most rain in the county, with Jennings getting just .30 of an inch and Oberlin, .60.

Storm spawns damaging tornadoes

By TOMBETZ
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A slow-moving thunderstorm spawned at least a half dozen tornadoes Monday evening, tracking northeast from Sharon Springs to Herndon and on into Nebraska.

The National Weather Service office in Goodland said at least two tornadoes caused damage, and weather experts were out looking for signs of more. Flooding was reported in the Herndon area on the Beaver Creek and near McCook, where water washed over the railroad tracks.

Jerry Killingsworth, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, said the first tornado struck five miles southeast of Brewster about 8:50 p.m., destroying a grain bin and causing some minor damage to a house and trees.

The second, about 13 miles south-southeast of Atwood, rated an EF1, at the lower end of the Enhanced Fujita scale. Tornadoes are rated 0-5 based on the amount of damage they cause.

The tornado tore the roof off a house owned by Harlan and Margaret Hagler, snapped six power poles and damaged some outbuildings.

Mr. Killingsworth said the second twister touched down between 9 and

9:30 p.m. Wet roads and flooding made it difficult to do damage assessment, he said, adding that forecasters are looking for signs of more twisters.

"We think there were ... up to a half dozen," he said.

The storm spawning the tornadoes started at Sharon Springs and went northeast to Herndon, then into Nebraska, passing east of McCook. Radar indicated rainfall of up to 5-6 inches along the mostly rural path of the slow-moving storm, with some flooding reported between Herndon and McCook.

A strong supercell thunderstorm formed south of Sharon Springs about 6 p.m. Mr. Killingsworth said, and the first of several tornadoes was sighted on the ground three miles east of Sharon Springs at 6:50 p.m. by a trained weather spotter.

The tornado was moving slowly northeast about 8 miles northeast of Sharon Springs, described by a weather service employee as a column. The tornado was going into a rope formation by 7:12 p.m. The employee reported the tornado lifted at 7:18 p.m.

The storm continued to move slowly northeast, growing in size and intensity as it neared the Sherman County line about 7:30 p.m. In

the growing darkness, weather spotters were unable to confirm if the tornado had reformed, but based on the radar images the tornado could have been wrapped in rain and nearly invisible.

The storm moved northeast into Thomas County, and Jim Engel, Thomas County emergency manager, reported damage five miles southeast of Brewster at 8:50 p.m.

A Thomas County sheriff's deputy reported a car blown off of I-70 at mile marker 39 about 2 miles east of Brewster at 8:56 p.m.

Sirens blew in Brewster about 8:30 p.m. when the tornado was reported five miles south by radar image. A weather service employee gave the all clear for Brewster about 9 p.m. as the storm and possible tornado had moved about three miles northeast of the town.

On the west edge of the growing storm, a forecaster at the weather office spotted a tornado seven miles northeast of Goodland at 9:04 p.m.

An amateur radio operator reported a funnel cloud six miles north-northeast of Levant at 9:36 p.m.

Engel followed the storm north of Levant while staying in touch by radio with Al Pietrycha, science and operations officer in Goodland, and

followed it to the Rawlins County line. At times, Mr. Engel told Pietrycha, the lightning would reveal what appeared to be a tornado in the storm, but at other times the storm was so intense any tornado would have been shrouded.

Using a global positioning system connected to a spotter network, Pietrycha was able to see where Mr. Engel was and would tell him to move south or east depending on how the storm was moving to keep him out of danger.

Mr. Engel said at one point, the updraft from the cell was getting very close, and he decided to head south.

Other tornado reports on Monday were three miles northeast of Haigler, Neb., at 10:35 p.m. by a Dundy County sheriff's deputy, and two miles east of Wauneta, Colo., at 10:49 by a Yuma County sheriff's deputy.

Mr. Killingsworth said the office got reports of hail up to golf-ball size. Continued rain on Tuesday caused the service to issue a flash-flood watch for the Tri-state area into Wednesday morning. There were reports of water across the road near Eckley, Colo.

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Notice Taxpayers

May 10th is the Deadline for the Last half of 2006 taxes. If not paid on or before May 10, 2007 these taxes will bear interest.

Please bring first half paid receipt or tax statement information when making payment.

Jean Hale
County Treasurer
Decatur County, Kansas

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