

Cool temps help wheat get growing

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Green wheat blankets Decatur County, kept healthy and growing by the cooler temperatures and recent rain, and prospects look good for a big harvest next month.

"This is probably the wettest it has been for a while," said Brian Olson, agronomist with Kansas State University, "and the wheat is in pretty good condition."

Mr. Olson said he has heard farmers say that this is the best the wheat has looked in a long time. The potential exists to get a great crop, he said, depending on the weather in May and June.

"This type of weather is just perfect for wheat," he added.

The 70-to-80-degree temperature range is great, he said. The area can get a lot of rain, but if the temperature gets up to 95 degrees, the wheat just won't grow.

With the cool temperatures, said Mr. Olson, the crop is moving right along and looking good, although farmers in central Kansas are hurting from freeze damage.

The wheat plot in Norton County picked up some freeze damage, he added, and the farther east you go,

the more the damage.

In Decatur County, some of the bottom ground might have been damaged a little from the freeze last month, but most of it should be fine.

With the recent storms, he said, he hasn't heard of any hail damage, just good rain.

The plants have put on the first joint and are moving into the second. The third joint won't be far off, said Mr. Olson, with the good growing conditions.

By the middle of May, he said, the wheat should be flowering and berries will be filling.

At the end of the month, wheat heads should be out and filling with berries. Hopefully, said Mr. Olson, there will be a lot of grain.

For summer crops like corn, grain sorghum and sunflowers, he said, farmers have moisture for planting. Some may be a little behind in planting corn, he said, because it's just too wet to get into the fields.

Decatur County had a chance for rain and thunderstorms Tuesday, then later in the week, the National Weather Service said.

There was no forecast for general rain, however, just scattered showers.

Traer landmark Elephant Rock loses head, trunk

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Since the days of frontier explorers and cattle drives, people near Traer have used a rock a mile south of the town shaped like an elephant as a landmark.

No more. The rock no longer resembles an elephant after part of the head and trunk collapsed sometime Friday night.

Connie Grafel, marketing director for The Gateway, who lives east of Traer, said someone who lives in the area reported hearing the roar of a tornado on Monday, April 23, when the area was hit by storms. She wondered if that caused some damage to the rock, noting that it didn't collapse until later in the week.

"It doesn't look like an elephant anymore," said Ms. Grafel. "It's too bad; it is quite a landmark for the area."

According to a website by the Kansas Geological Survey, Elephant Rock was "an eroded outcrop of the Ogallala Formation."

The Ogallala is a layer of loosely consolidated debris that constitutes most of the rock outcropping on the high plains. It forms the cap layer over the Ogallala aquifer.

Over the years, Elephant Rock, which looked like a large elephant with its trunk down standing on the hill overlooking Traer, has been used for historical stories and to tell early travelers where they were.

Jim Wesch, who lives north of Traer about two miles, said he noticed the damage Saturday morning, so it must have happened sometime Friday. He said he went out to check the roads for the Oberlin Arts and Humanities tour on Sunday and noticed that the whole west half of the rock had fallen. He said the elephant's body, a large rock to the back side, is intact.

The front half, which included the head and trunk, are gone. Over the years, said Mr. Wesch, Elephant Rock has also been called "the hole in the rock." Now, there's no hole or arch left, he said.

(See ROCK on Page 5A)

Athlete returns home

By **JIM MERRIOTT**
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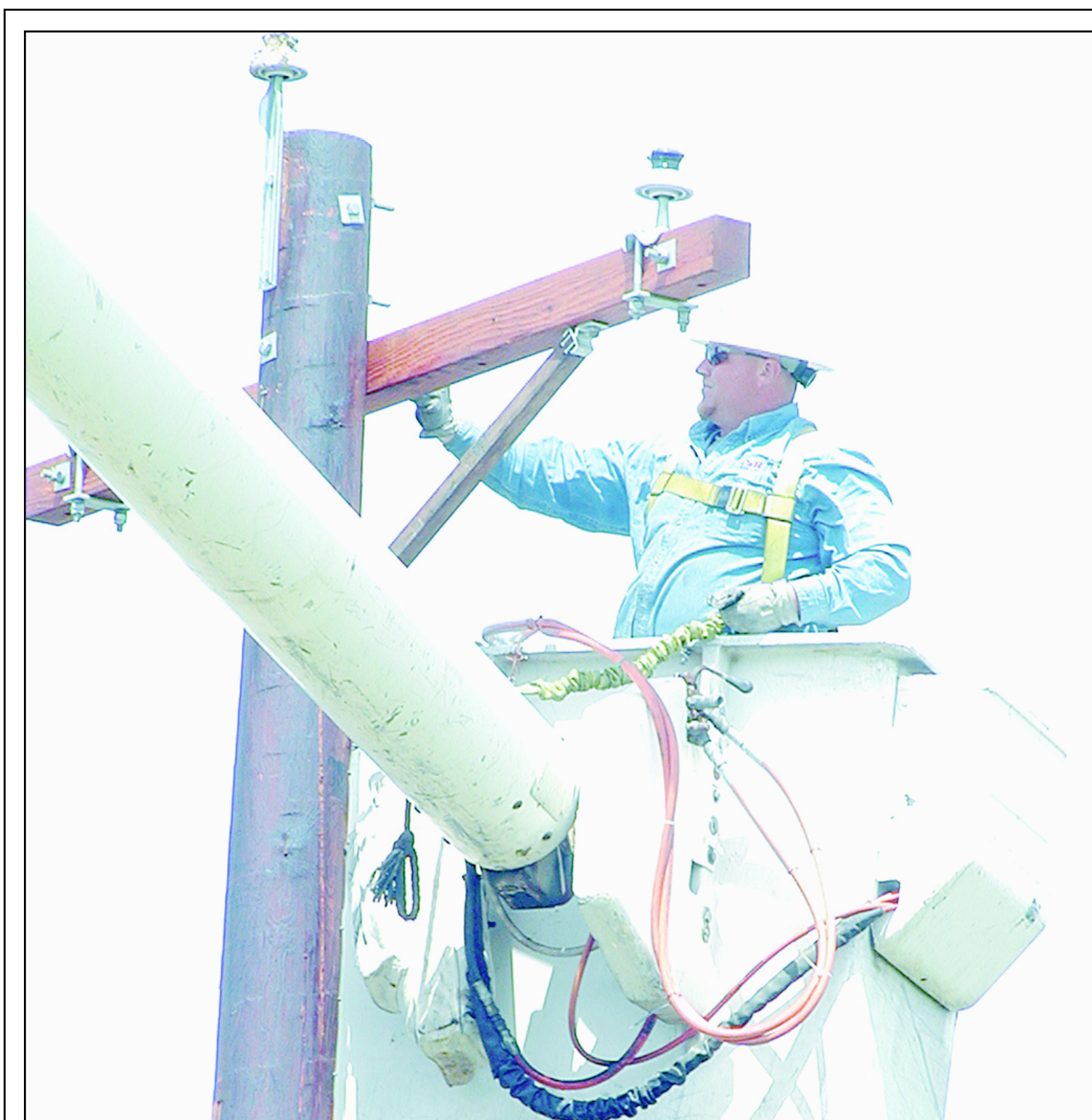
Doctors told Kyle Glodt he'd be in rehabilitation for six months after surgery to mend a broken neck suffered in a snowboard crash this spring.

They didn't count on the Decatur Community High senior's intent to graduate with his class this month — or the willpower it would take to come home in just 30 days.

March 20, Glodt, an athletic youth who lettered in football, basketball and track for the Red Devils, bucked the odds on his survival and his ability to walk and function after the accident left him lying on the slopes of SolVista Ski Resort near Winter Park, Colo.

Kyle left the hospital for rehabilitation March 30 — his sister's birthday — and returned home on April

19, nearly five months earlier than doctors predicted.



ON MONDAY Charles Beller (above) with C&H Power worked on replacing a power pole about 15.5 miles east of Oberlin on the north side of U.S. 36. For almost a mile, the

company had placed new poles (below) that would replace old ones damaged in winter storms in the last two years.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Power crews move in

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Prairie Land Electric Cooperative has hired an Oklahoma contractor to rebuild about 1,200 miles of power lines damaged in winter storms over the last two years, and the company has bought at least four houses and possibly a motel in Oberlin.

The crews are settling in for the long haul, with the work expected to take about three years. At least 40 men and women are working in the area, staying here three weeks and going home for the fourth.

Jimmy Moore, vice president and superintendent of distribution of the firm, C&H Power Line, said the company got the job through an engineering firm that works with Prairie Land. The firm has an approved list of electric companies to help electric co-ops, he said, and



Dewey-based C&H Power was on that list. Mr. Moore said the company bid the job in Decatur County and got it.

The crews have worked in Decatur and Norton Counties and have line west of Oberlin to repair too.

Mr. Moore said he thought that most of the project is getting done with money through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The damage the last few years was really heavy to the power lines in

that in the western part of the county in 2005 and last year it was more by Oberlin and Dresden and C&H crews are upgrading those lines.

Earl Hansen, director of operations with Prairie Land, said the lines were damaged in the blizzard in 2005 and storms at the end of 2006 and the first few days of 2007. In 2005 alone, he said, about 500 miles suffered damage.

"It is way too big a project to do

by ourselves," said Mr. Hansen, "so we had to bring in help. There is lots of line to rebuild and we need to keep up with our current work."

At the end of last year when the ice storm hit the area, said Mr. Hansen, some C&H crews were already in the area working.

They had started on the damaged line from 2005 and will continue working until lines damaged (See POWER on Page 8A)



AT HOME IN OBERLIN, Kyle Glodt read through a huge stack of get-well cards which came after a snowboarding accident in late March.

— Herald staff photo by Jim Merriott

19, nearly five months earlier than doctors predicted.

"We were told very few people who have suffered this injury ever

walk again," said Kelly Glodt, (See SENIOR on Page 8A)

Commissioners quiz director about emergency plan

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Decatur County commissioners asked the emergency preparedness director about the county emergency plan, required by federal and state law, last Tuesday, although the commissioners haven't seen a copy.

The commissioners asked Bert Cool several questions about the plan. They said they wanted to know if plans are in place in case there is an emergency, anything from a tornado to a biohazard problem.

Did anyone attend the Red Cross shelter meeting in Colby? asked County Attorney Steve Hirsch. Mr. Cool said Decatur County is supposed to go to a meeting in Phillipsburg. Mr. Hirsch said at the Red Cross meeting, they will let counties know what they need to do to be con-

sidered a Red Cross shelter. Commissioner Stan McEvoy suggested getting contracts with the county and the cities about shelters. The county is supposed to have those in place, he said.

Mr. Cool said the county has a contract with Dresden but changes were needed to the ones for Jennings and Norcat and he hasn't seen them since.

Is the county's emergency plan ready? asked County Clerk Marilyn Horn, noting that the last plan is from 1995. Mr. Cool said the new plan will probably be the same thing, just shortened.

He said the plan is on Deputy Patti Skubal's computer, since she is the emergency preparedness assistant.

Is the county doing any testing to see if the plan works? asked Mr. (See PLAN on Page 5A)