



Cause of fire undetermined, chief says today

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore said the cause of the fire that destroyed Hutfles Construction and Northwest Kansas Telecommunications late Thursday night will probably remain undetermined.

“The only thing at the point of origin for fire was a pickup,” he said, “and it was burned too badly to tell what might have started it.”

He added the fire probably started sometime after about 9 p.m., when the last employee left.

McLemore said the insurance company investigators would be out on Wednesday to finish the investigation, but didn’t hold out much hope of finding anything new.

The monetary loss had not been determined yet, but McLemore said it would be big. “They had a lot of tools and equipment in the buildings.”

McLemore, who lives two blocks from the fire, said he could see smoke when he left his house after the call came in at 10:23 p.m.

“By the time I pulled onto (Court) street, I could see flames from the Hutfles building,” he said.

Lt. Don Phillips and firefighters Doug Lewis and Tom Benson entered the burning building shortly after arrival and were able to put the initial fire in the pickup out in short order.

// The only thing at the point of origin for fire was a pickup.”

— Bob McLemore, chief

McLemore said firefighters also completed a search of the building quickly. “We were concerned about the apartments above (Northwest Kansas Telecommunications),” he said.

The apartments were unoccupied at the time, although Jack Johnson, owner of the telecommunications company, lost a hunting dog he had left in the building.

Firefighters had more trouble with a fire that had extended into the attic area of the building. Tall ceilings and a good head start by the fire hampered efforts to stop the spread.

“Basically, the fire got bad enough that it became too dangerous to work inside the buildings,” said McLemore.

Firefighters were forced to pull out and take a stand at P&D Auto Repair, just east of the fire building. P&D suffered some damage from fire extension, according to McLemore.

“We had some extension through an air conditioner and the roof tar got hot and bubbled, but we were able to stop the fire there,” said McLemore.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Tim Hutfles, owner and manager of Hutfles Sand and Excavating in Colby, started work today at Southwind Plaza (formerly Whites Factory Outlet) by tearing down the London Fog building. The demolition work is one of the first steps in the renovation process of the new plaza, according to Tuffy Taylor, a local businessman, who purchased the property last month. The London Fog building used to be the old

Nickerson Farms building in the late 60s and was later renovated and stood as the first of many outlet stores in the early 90s. Hutfles said he was “breaking up the building” this morning and it would take probably two or three days to demolish the building and remove the debris. Hutfles said all materials will be hauled off to the Thomas County Landfill.

Results of photo contest draw onlookers to library Sunday

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library recently sponsored a photo contest for the purpose of creating a visual time capsule of Thomas County, and Sunday an open house was held to recognize the winners, said J o a n n e Sunderman, librarian.



Ryan Bland

The contest was for one day only, she said, and the rules were simple. “The photographs were to be taken in Thomas County and they were to be taken in the 24-hour period from midnight to midnight on Wednesday, May 2,” she said.

Prior to, and including the day of the photographing, anyone who wanted to test their skills was provided with a free roll of film and they could photograph anything they wanted to.

“We didn’t want to limit anyone’s creativity, so photographs could range from portraits to landscapes and action to still life,” Sunderman said.

Once photographers had completed their assignment, the film was returned to the library with all processing charges paid for by the sponsoring

committee. In this first photo contest, there were 80 participants, who covered 1,080 square miles of the county through photography with 3,704 photo prints to choose from.

“A screening committee narrowed the nearly 4,000 photographs to around 300 and a final judging then chose the 100 winning pictures in the three categories,” Sunderman said on Sunday.

There were three best of category pictures.

Those winners were Ryan Bland in the adult division; Timothy Knox in the youth category; and Ryan Allen in child’s division.

Honorable mention winners were Sheila Sprenkel, adult; Shanda Draper, youth; and Kayla Williams, child’s division.

All participants in this first photography contest included the following



Tim Knox



Ryan Allen



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

More than 100 people attended the unveiling of the first-ever photo contest highlighting “A Day In the Life of Thomas County,” which was sponsored by the Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library. The open house was held Sunday to recognize the photographers and their work. **ABOVE:** Jeff Terrell (foreground) looked at the exhibit along with his wife, Krysti, who is holding their youngest of four children, Brenly.

people in the adult division: Nicolle Bailey, Paul Bailey, Evan Barnum, Clara Barrett, Sheryl Barrett, Ardath

Beringer, Ryan Bland, Coleen Dougherty, Bill Draper, Sue Draper, Ray Duffey, Don Fosdick, Helen Frahm,

Deanna Carmen, Linda Garrett, Jeff Horlacher, Millie Horlacher, Ray Imhof, Amy Jennings, Rosemary

Board approves deal with abortion provider

TOPEKA (AP) — A Lawrence abortion provider accused of performing an abortion against a patient’s wishes won’t be punished under an agreement approved by a state regulatory board.

The 15-member Kansas Board of Healing Arts on Saturday voted unanimously to accept a settlement with Dr.

Kristin Neuhaus that requires she keep a more detailed consent form and comply with the law.

“We’re already doing everything that was recommended,” Neuhaus said after the hearing.

Neuhaus was accused of performing an abortion on a patient who withdrew

consent on June 7, 2000.

Kelli Benintendi, an attorney for the Board of Healing Arts, has said the woman only wanted a local anesthetic and withdrew her consent to the procedure after she was sedated with Diazepam. Neuhaus said the woman was told Diazepam would have to be used

because of the age of the fetus, and the woman consented to the procedure.

Under the agreement with the board, Neuhaus must comply with state laws on sedating and monitoring patients, keep proper medical records and inform patients about the probable gestational ages of their fetuses.

Briefly

Weather: Not much change

Low temperatures will be near 60 and highs around 90 for the Colby area the rest of the week, says the National Weather Service. Tonight, partly cloudy skies will usher in a slim chance for thunderstorms — only about 20 percent — with southwest winds 5-15 mph and a low temperature of 60. Tuesday, partly sunny, a high near 90 and southwest winds 5-15 mph. Tuesday night, cloudy, a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms and the low near 60. Wednesday through Friday, thunderstorms, lows around 60 and highs near 90. Colby’s weekend temperatures: highs, Friday 87, Saturday

91 and Sunday 89; lows, Saturday 54, Sunday 55 and this morning 55. Precipitation remains at 0.29 inches for the month. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 80 degrees. The records for Aug. 20: 104 in 1900 and 43 in 1908. *(The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

Budget hearing rescheduled

The public hearing on the proposed budget for the Colby School District has been rescheduled, according to a legal

notice in the Thursday, Aug. 16 issue of the Free Press. The public hearing will now be held on Sept. 4, 2001 at 7 p.m. in the administration building at 210 S. Range. In addition, the board will meet today at 7 p.m. to tour all facilities, discuss facility rental fees, along with reports, employment recommendations, and other business.

Hog Roast is Wednesday

Gem Lions Club is having its annual Hog Roast from 5-8 p.m. Wednesday, at the Gem Community Building. Local “Blue Grass,” “Folk,” and “Country Music” groups

will be providing entertainment. Ken Poland, is publicity chairman. “Free will donations will be asked for and the net proceeds will be used for community betterment. We will also be collecting used eye glasses and hearing aids for recycling,” Poland said.

Council agenda released

Water will again be the topic of discussion at the Colby City Council meeting at City Hall on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. The council will also hold a public hearing on a wellhead protection plan.

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