



COLBY FREE PRESS

Boy, 3, drowns, six others saved in vehicle mishap

WAKEENEY (AP) — A 3-year-old boy drowned Tuesday when a sports utility vehicle filled with children went off a boat ramp and into the Cedar Bluff Reservoir south of WaKeeney.

Two adults in the vehicle managed to free all but one of the children before the SUV was fully submerged.

The accident happened as one of the adults drove around the campsites about 1:45 a.m. looking for a group of friends. The driver apparently went off the ramp and into the water, said Trego County Sheriff Curt Bender. Alcohol appeared to be involved, Bender said.

A woman and a 24-year-old male got out and tried to free the children from the vehicle, Bender said. They freed six, ranging in age from 21 months to 8 years, and put them on top of the sinking vehicle. Their panicked screams alerted two fishermen who were camped out near the area.

One of the fishermen took an aluminum fishing boat into the water and

loaded up the children before the vehicle went under.

Sheriff Bender arrived at about the same time. He stripped out of his clothes, put on a life jacket and dove into the water with a flashlight.

"I couldn't see. It was pitch black. I just slammed down with a flashlight, but I couldn't see anything, so I went down again and did more just feeling around," he said.

Other emergency personnel arrived and worked to pull the vehicle from the water, but the child was not inside.

A search continued, and the fisherman who owned the aluminum boat then rowed farther out. The remaining boy's floating body was found about 50 or 60 feet away from where the vehicle entered the water.

The boy was taken to a WaKeeney hospital, where he was pronounced dead, Bender said.

No names have yet been released by authorities.

Candidate Adkins disciplined in 1994

TOPEKA (AP) — A Republican running for attorney general was lightly disciplined for an ethics violation in 1994.

Sen. David Adkins, of Leawood, received an informal admonition from the office that handles complaints against attorneys for the state Supreme Court. Adkins reported the violation himself.

Adkins was disciplined for taking payments from the estate of a client, Julie Mahaffie, after she had died. He was acting as executor of her estate at that time.

The family was upset by the payments, totaling \$1,134, because they believed Adkins had told them he would put affairs in order for free.

When the conflict arose, Adkins wrote a letter to the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator.

"It was a matter of miscommunication that, in hindsight, I could've

handled a lot better," Adkins said Tuesday during an interview.

The investigation that followed concluded that Adkins was "sincere and credible" but had made no clear arrangement on legal fees.

"The fact that Adkins approved and paid his own bills is troubling, but he never tried to hide this fact, and the bills do not seem to be out of line," an investigator wrote.

The informal admonition was imposed in August 1994. Disciplinary Administrator Stan Hazlett said the penalty is the least serious disciplinary action. On Monday, Topeka attorney Charles D. McAtee joined Adkins and former state Rep. Phill Kline, of Shawnee, in the GOP primary. McAtee said he was concerned about what he sees as the negative tone of the race.

The only Democratic candidate for attorney general is Geary County Attorney Chris Biggs.

Bishops crowd Dallas for meeting

DALLAS (AP) — Nearly two decades after they first publicly confronted the problem of clerical sex abuse, the nation's Roman Catholic bishops face a historic meeting on the issue — this time with their credibility tattered.

Revelations in diocese after diocese

of the church's indifference toward abuse victims compelled the bishops to propose a national policy on disciplining errant priests.

"For the integrity of the church leadership, this is the most important meeting they've ever had," says Jay P. Dolan, a University of Notre Dame

historian. He thinks this gathering far overshadows any other since the nation's bishops began meeting regularly in 1919. Today, the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse — the panel drafting the plan — was expected to pore over amendments suggested by their fellow bishops.

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Colby Fire Department recently purchased a thermal imaging camera that will be a valuable tool in helping them locate the source of the blaze, assist in search and rescue and improve their overall ability in protecting the people of Thomas County, said Bob McLemore, fire chief.

"What this camera will do for us is protect our people and firefighters in the event of fires, car accidents, looking for lost children or even in apprehending criminals," he said.

For example, if a child gets lost during the night in a field or other location, the camera looks at heat and can pick up heat signatures. The same is true, he said, in a vehicle

accident when occupants might be thrown.

A similar type of imaging camera was also put to the test not long ago in Thomas County when law enforcement officials used it to locate a man wanted in another state.

McLemore said the incident happened in January when the man set fire to his car at a nearby rest area and then hid out in a field underneath a pile of grass after dark. The camera, acting as another set of eyes, found the man and he was arrested.

In a fire, the camera will aid firefighters to find the primary heat source that could be hidden in a wall, attic or basement.

The total cost of the camera was \$18,800 and the money to purchase it came from many different sources, he

said. During a training meeting Tuesday night, Roger Voss, manager of Wal-Mart and Jerry Schoenfeld, business center leader of Midwest Energy were both invited to view the new camera and how it will benefit everyone.

Midwest Energy supplied everything for the firemen's pancake feed in February and along with the help of those who came to the feed and other donations, the total for that fund-raiser was nearly \$4,500. Other contributors were the Thomas County Sheriff's department donated \$8,260, the Colby Police Department giving \$6,293, Wal-Mart giving \$2,200; and S & T Telephone donating \$500.

There was also a committee of firefighters who spent many hours testing out various types of imaging cameras before making a recommendation

on the one they believed would be the best for the community. Committee members were Tom Benson, Dwayne Plumisto, Brian Quagliano, Sean Hankin, Keith Haberer and Chuck Plumisto.

"The committee met twice a month for six months and evaluated six different cameras by taking the cameras to various training locations to see how they worked," he said. Plumisto said the group talked with a lot of other fire departments across the state and looked at which camera would do the best job.

"We were so impressed by the awesome donations from the community," he said. "It helped a lot to know that so many people and businesses were backing us by supporting this decision."



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Member of the Colby Fire Department, (left to right) Sean Hankin, Dwayne Plumisto, Chuck Plumisto, Keith Haberer, and Tom Benson learn to use the new thermal imaging camera at Tuesday night's training session. Those five, along with Brian Quagliano, who was not at the training session, were on the committee to research, evaluate, and recommend the best camera for the department.

Imaging camera reality for firefighters

Briefly

Thunderstorms, 70s/80s

It looks like the 50s and 70s/80s will dominate the Colby region's weather picture through the weekend, reports the National Weather Service. Highs Thursday and Friday will be in the middle to upper 70s, giving way to the lower 80s on Saturday and Sunday, with lows generally in the 50s. Thunderstorms are a possibility tonight, with winds 10-20 mph out of the north. Next shot for moisture is Saturday afternoon. Colby's high Tuesday was 89 and this morning's low was 65. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 81 degrees. There was an additional 0.02 inches of moisture during the past 24 hours, giving Colby 0.58 inches for the month. The records for June 12: 105 in 1950 and 41 in 1985. (The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Taxes due next week

The second half of the 2001 real estate and personal property taxes are due by Thursday, June 20, in the Thomas County Treasurer's office, said Donita Applebury, treasurer. For questions or information, call 462-4520.

Archery tournament Sunday

The Northwest Kansas Bowhunters are sponsoring a 3-

D archery tournament on Sunday, June 16, at the archery range in Colby. The range is located just north of the railroad tracks off Franklin Ave. and members, guests or those interested in the sport are encouraged to attend. For questions or information, call Gordon Rasmussen, 462-6524.

Fair board meets Thursday

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday in the 4-H Building at the fairgrounds. Everyone interested in a Thomas County home-owned carnival is invited to attend, with the intent of getting a carnival in place for next year. The board will discuss plans for this year's carnival. The meeting is open to the public.

Barbershop singers needed

The Tumbleweed Chorus of Northwest Kansas and Eastern Colorado is looking for men of all ages who would like to sing. In an effort to raise awareness about the singing group, chorus members are sponsoring a cook-out on Thursday, June 13, at 6:30 p.m., at the Colby United Methodist Church.

"This will be a good opportunity for people to find out what barbershop harmony is all about," said John Collett, president of the chorus. "We have a great time and would like you to be included," he said. For information or questions, call Collett at (785) 899-7531.

Center takes phone books



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Members of the Thomas County EMS and Colby Fire Department assist Rosa and Aldin Valdez after their rollover accident this morning on I-70.

Rollover sends two to Colby hospital

By MICHELLE L. HAWKINS

Colby Free Press

Shortly before 8 a.m. this morning, a rollover accident occurred at mile marker 46, near Levant, on westbound I-70. This section of the interstate is currently under construction.

According to Thomas County Deputy Sheriff Jim Engel, a 1980 passenger car driven by Rosa Valdez, of Colorado, went out of control after she fell asleep at the wheel. After driving through the median, Valdez overcorrected through the right-hand lane and then rolled the car into the north ditch. She and her son, Aldin Valdez, were transported by ambulance to Citizens Medical Center. Both were admitted. No condition reports were available at press time today.

**Flag insert
in today's edition**

