



Careers on wheels



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Kathi Wright with Thomas County Emergency Medical Services helped Colby Grade School students into one of the county's ambulances at the school Thursday. Delivery trucks, the ambulance, a police car, fire trucks, other city vehicles, a Pepsi truck and a crane were at the school as part of a career day to show off vehicles and the jobs that come with them.

Rain helping wheat, soil specialist says

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

Rain this week could mean a wheat harvest with average yields.

"This is heaven-sent," said Rob Aiken, a crop research specialist and research director with the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby. "It gives it a chance at average yields and good cover."

He said the rain is coming late but it does mean the wheat could yield 40 bushels an acre when it's har-



Rob Aiken

vested early this summer.

"We can hope for average," Aiken said. "That's probably the best we can hope for. That's my expectations."

It also enhances the chances for summer crops and lessens the threat of wind and erosion, he said.

Another advantage, he said, is that rain this time of year helps build back up soil moisture, which crops will need this summer.

"This is like money in the bank for improving yield potential," he said.

Aiken said the fields at the experiment station are testing back with results of about an inch and a half of available soil moisture.

"We could use another four or five inches of slow, steady rain," he

said, adding most soil can hold up to five or six inches of moisture.

The soils in Thomas County are silt loams. "They're beautiful soils," Aiken said. "It's hard to get better soils. That's what we have around here."

Soil moisture acts as a buffer for a crop between rains and also helps with irrigation. He said good soil moisture helps both dryland and irrigated crops.

Rainfall in the immediate Colby vicinity is running close of half an inch this week, with lesser amounts to the west.

Goodland reported .29 inches and Burlington, Colo. .15.

The forecast is calling for more moisture today, tonight and Saturday morning.

County fair board approves fire works, fees at meeting

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County Fair Board gave the Kiwanis Club permission to hold the annual Fourth of July fireworks display at the fairgrounds at its Thursday meeting.

Rick Dickman, a member of the Colby Fire Department and Kiwanis Club, was there to answer questions the board had. He said the set up would be the same as last year, with the fire department setting off the display.

"We are certified shooters," he said. "That's the only fire we can make."

In other business, the board changed the amount of money it pays out for the trash pick-up and

other work during the demolition derby at the fair.

They dropped the fee from \$2,000 to \$500.

Board member Nancy Rundel expressed concern over the matter because in year's past, the Lions Club has helped with the demolition derby and was paid for its services.

Board President Stan Strange said he would talk to the club and let them know about the change and also give the organization the chance to accept or refuse the chance to earn the money during this year's event.

The board also heard committee reports on different projects.

Strange said the siding work on the barns is almost complete and

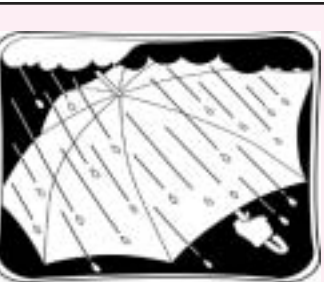
ready for a board walk-through soon.

"I'm pretty happy with the way it turned out," he said.

Dead pine trees were also removed from the fairgrounds and manure pits are being put in for disposal of animal waste during the fair.

Gary Garrett reported he received confirmation from the rodeo associations that they received the money for the rodeo fees.

The board also gave fairground custodian Bob Rundel the okay to purchase up to \$500 in basic tools and an air compressor for the shop at the grounds because they need tools for basic maintenance and other projects.



More moisture

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area Tonight...Occasional rain showers and snow showers. Breezy. Lows in the upper 20s to around 30. North winds 15 to 25 mph decreasing to 10 to 15 mph after midnight. Chance of rain and snow 80 percent.
Saturday...Mostly cloudy in the morning, then becoming partly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of rain showers. Highs in the 40s. North winds 10 to 15 mph with higher gusts.
Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. Northeast winds around 10 mph, shifting to the south after midnight.
Sunday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s to around 50. West winds 5 to 10 mph.
Sunday night...Partly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of moisture. Lows in the upper 20s to around 30.
Monday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the 50s.
The numbers
Thursday's high, 61
Low this morning, 37
Records for April 9, 93 in 1930 and 14 in 1973
Year ago today, 73 and 24
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.22
April total, 0.46
April snowfall, 0
Soil temperature, 54
The sources:
The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Young donors help to make blood drive successful

By TISHA COX

Colby Free Press

The American Red Cross blood drive at Colby High School on Wednesday was one of the more successful drives held in the community, said co-coordinator Jackie Stephens.

She said 178 people gave 150 productive pints of blood. More than 80 people were walk-ins and there were also 38 first-time donors.

Stephens said the goal was 130 units so the drive exceeded the goal. She said they were pleased with the event and its results.

"It was a very good turnout," Stephens said.

Co-coordinator Jo Frahm said the school's Service Club helped with the drive. "They really lived up to their name," she said.

Stephens said the club members worked the registration table,

served food and acted as escorts. "All we did was provide the food," she said. "A lot of them helped (students) that weren't in service club just by giving blood."

The fact so many young people donated was a plus, Stephens said, and they've been added to a call list to let them know when the next blood drive will be held. "Once they give, they're on that list," she said.

The Red Cross usually holds four or five drives a year. Stephens said people can give blood each time and it's recommended they wait at least 56 days between donations.

"You can't give blood more often than that," she said.

Students and members of the community weren't the only people who got involved. Stephens said high school principal Brian Kraus gave blood as well as several teachers and substitutes.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Don Kready of Colby donated his 24th pint of blood while American Red Cross donor specialist Ron Gray watched during a drive at Colby High School on Wednesday.

Briefly

Clarification made on sewer rates

Following Thursday's article on the increase in sewer charges beginning next month, Carolyn Armstrong, city manager, wanted to offer clarification regarding rates.

"Residential sewer rates are established based on water consumption during the months of December, January and February," she said. "Summer yard watering will not impact the sewer rates for residences."

For other questions about the new charges or for a copy of information regarding why the city has no choice in building a new wastewater treatment plant, either call 462-4410 or stop by Colby City Hall, 585 N. Franklin.

Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include Walt Hill presenting a review of the annual budget for High Plains Mental Health. The meeting is open to the public.

Senior dance approaching

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program annual recognition night will be from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, April 21 at the American Legion in Colby. The theme is "RSVP Jungle Jam-boree." The dance is open to all seniors and the Ramblin' Andy Family Band will provide entertainment. Tickets are available at the RSVP Office, P.O. Box 803, Colby, Kan.

67701 or call (785) 462-6744. Tickets may also be purchased at the door.

Landfill closes for holiday

The Thomas County landfill will be closed Sunday in observance of Easter, said Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor. The landfill will be back on regular hours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Kindergarten performance

The Colby Grade School kindergarten class will perform "A Day on the Farm" at 7 p.m. April 22 at the Colby Grade School auditorium. The performance is open to the public. There is no admission charge.

Preschool open house next week

Heartland Christian School will hold its preschool "Open House" on Thursday for parents wanting to start their 3-4-year-old child for the 2004-2005 school year. It begins at 9 a.m. with an informational meeting with classroom participation to follow in the preschool classroom. For questions or information, call the school at 460-6419.

Voter registration open

Voter registration books are now open for anyone who has

changed their name, address or who will turn 18 before the next statewide general election. You may stop in at the County Clerk's office to pick up a registration card.

Easter Cantata tonight

A community-wide Easter Cantata will be performed at 7 p.m. tonight at the Berean Church in Colby. The public is invited to attend.

Farm Service open house

The Thomas County Farm Service Agency will host an open house from 1-3 p.m. next Friday at the office, 915 E. Walnut in Colby to welcome Ross Sloan, county executive director. Refreshments will be served.

Hamburger feed Saturday

The Cystic Fibrosis "Great Strides Walk" will hold a hamburger feed fund-raiser in the Colby Wal-Mart parking lot starting at 10 a.m. Saturday. Items on the menu will be hamburgers, hot dogs, sodas, treats and chips. Also available will be Easter cakes and pies.

Senior banquet reservations due

Reservations for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program "Recognition Banquet" are needed by Monday to the RSVP office. The banquet will be held Wednesday, April 21 at the American Legion in Colby. For reservations or information, call 462-6744.

