



COLBY
FREE PRESS

Fewer birds, fewer hunters, says an official

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

The pheasant population was better than last year, but for Benny Young with the state's wildlife and parks department, it seemed there were fewer hunters and fewer birds than expected.

"There's really no way to estimate the numbers," Young said today. "It just seems to me that while I was out this weekend, the numbers on hunters and birds are slowly declining."

During the last couple of years, hunters have been moving further east to the north and west of Salina, into Rooks, Graham, and Osborne counties, and as far up as Republic, he said.

The reason for the shift, Young said, was primarily caused by the drought conditions in northwest Kansas over the last couple of years. Adding to the decline here, more rain in those eastern counties resulted in higher pheasant and quail numbers.

Opening weekend also was hampered by weather as well, he said.

"Of the people I spoke with Saturday and Sunday, everybody Saturday said they did a lot better than day," Young said.

He estimates that every hunter in Thomas and Sherman counties on Saturday averaged one-half to three-quarters of a bird.

"The weather on Sunday hurt a lot," he said.

After having rain earlier last week, the dirt roads were already soft and with snow on Sunday, the roads were even muddier and walking through the fields was even more difficult.

Quail season opens next week-



end, but normally that's a busier time for the eastern part of the state, Young said.

Currently, pheasant and archery deer seasons are open.

The next major hunting boost will be begin Wednesday, Dec. 1 when deer season using firearms will begin.

Although a busy time for hunters, deer season (using firearms) involves more local residents rather than non-residents.

As the state's Wildlife and Parks Department natural resource officer, Young's job is enforcement.

In the fall and winter months, Young said he is busy in the three counties of Sheridan, Thomas and Logan, checking bag limits and licenses. When spring and summer arrive, he said he begins checking boaters and fish licenses and limits in those same counties.

Getting ready



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Matt Norman, a Colby city employee, worked to put up Christmas decorations on Franklin Avenue. Decorations have been going up, signaling the rapidly-approaching start of the Christmas season. Somewhere in the mix is the holiday that ushers in Christmas — Thanksgiving. The lights should be brightly shining for the big Christmas parade scheduled this year for Sunday, Dec. 5.

Police ask for assistance

By **PATTY DECKER**

Free Press Editor

The Colby Police Department needs help in finding a car thought to be involved in vandalizing almost 20 vehicles over the weekend.

The side-view mirrors on a total of 18 cars were destroyed either by a bat or large object.

Unbeknownst to the alleged vandals; however, someone witnessed the incident in progress.

Apparently, the witness saw two males in a car driving off after smashing yet another side-view mirror, said Gary Shull, police investigator with the city.

Since all damage was done in the evening on both Saturday and Sunday, the witness told police that the car was believed to be white in color. It was also identified as a four-door, mid-sized Chevrolet, possibly a Corsica or Cavalier, with black bumpers, black trim all around and occupied by two males. The witness was unable to determine the age or other specific details on either person.

Shull said police were checking with high school and college officials in case they could identify the owner, but so far no suspects have been named.

Most of the vandalism occurred north of Third Street with a lot of concentration on East Eighth and Ninth Streets.

Damage estimates are expected to be in the thousands of dollars, Shull said today.

Anyone with information on a car that matches the above description is urged to call the Colby Police Department at (785) 462-4460 or stop by the law enforcement center, 225 N. Court Ave.

Shull said there is also a new e-mail address available for this purpose as well.

Itis: policetip@cityofcolby.com

New ambulance purchase tops county commission agenda

By **TISHA COX**

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County commissioners heard a short presentation at their meeting this morning from county emergency medical services director Kathi Wright on a new ambulance the department is purchasing.

She explained it's her first ambulance purchase as director and said they try to get a new ambulance every four or five years to trade out the oldest unit.

Wright said the current transfer unit will be sent to Brewster and the ambulance there will be stripped of its equipment and sold. She said the new ambulance is replacing

one of the two in Colby.

Commissioner Ron Evans said the county has four ambulances — two in Colby, one in Brewster and another in Rexford. He said keeping up the county's ambulance service is an important investment and a matter of life and death.

Wright said the next ambulance to be purchased will be in about five years and when they get it, Rexford will be the next to get their old ambulance switched out.

"We've got to depend on those vehicles, keep them up," she said, adding she wanted to know if they should go through a local lender for the purchase or dip into their

general fund. The commissioners told her to go with a local bank.

The ambulance purchase was approved at the Aug. 31 commissioners meeting with a bid of \$90,246 from Midwest Vehicle Professionals in Wichita.

The commissioners also heard a request from Lacey Township trustee Jerry Baird to put some of the township's roads under minimum maintenance.

He said some of the roads need signage to warn motorists about potholes or other hazards.

Commissioner Duane Dawes said liability is an issue. By putting up signs, it takes

the liability off the township but if a sign is down and an accident happens, it places liability back on the township.

Evans said he and his fellow commissioners need to go out and take a look at the roads, and talk about it again. They plan to go out and drive the roads sometime on Friday morning and Baird asked if he could accompany them. If they are unable to go out on Friday, Evans said they will get it done by the end of the month.

"We do not interfere with township business," he said. "We aren't ready to make a decision."

The commissioners also briefly dis-

cussed the proposed extension district with Rawlins County. Members of the extension council and the Kansas State University Extension-Research Center had gone before the commissioners last month to look into the possibility.

This morning, Evans said he doesn't see it happening in the immediate future because Rawlins County had two new commissioners elected this month.

They also went over the policy handbook with Maybelle Moore, Donita Applebury and Mary Cech. The three have been working on revising the handbook, which had its last revision in 1996.

Proposal would ban smoking in public places

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Anti-smoking advocates are pushing an ambitious proposal that would ban smoking in public places on both sides of the state line in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

The Kansas City Council is expected to vote Nov. 23 on a law that would ban smoking in most workplaces and a host of public places, including bowling alleys, pool halls and stores.

But the more expansive proposal would eliminate smoking in Kansas City bars and restaurants and is pinned on the passage of smoking bans in Jackson, Platte, Clay and Cass counties in Missouri and Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas.

City Councilman Charles Eddy, who is leading the council's anti-smoking campaign, said Kansas City wouldn't approve the restaur-

ant and bar ban unless an undetermined majority of the metropolitan population has smoking ordinances in place.

Eddy said that would protect businesses from having customers flee for establishments in neighboring communities without bans in place.

Kansas City's neighbors have not appeared eager to endorse the plan. In Independence, a debate on a

smoking ban is at least six months off.

And in the largest suburb on the Kansas side, Overland Park's City Council has likely delayed the issue until January and Mayor Ed Eilert said the proposal has little support.

Comprehensive, citywide smoking bans aren't even expected to be addressed in Lee's Summit, Kansas City, Kan., and Olathe, Kan., officials said.

Colby
Atwood
Herndon



Should be a little warmer

Tonight...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 30s to low 40s. South winds 5 to 10 mph. **Tuesday...**Partly cloudy. Highs in the 60s. Southwest winds 5 to 15 mph. **Tuesday night...**Partly cloudy in the evening then becoming mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of showers. Lows in the lower 40s. Southwest winds around 5 mph. **Wednesday...**Cloudy with a 20 percent chance of rain. Highs in the mid 50s. West winds 5 to 10 mph shifting to the northwest in the afternoon. **Wednesday night...**Cloudy with a 50 percent chance of rain. Lows in the lower 40s.

The numbers

Sunday's high, 38
Low this morning, 30
Year ago today, 62 and 29
Records for this date, 81 in 1941 and 4 in 1920
Precipitation: Nov. 13, 0.13, Nov. 14, 0.13
November total, 1.24
Snowfall: 2.5 in. Nov. 13-14
Soil temperature, 40

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.

Briefly

Great American Smokeout is Thursday

The American Cancer Society's "Great American Smokeout," which is a nationwide event to challenge people to stop using tobacco is planned for Thursday. In conjunction with the smokeout, the the Community Awareness Team in Colby is joining with other youth-led organizations in western Kansas to fight against young people using tobacco throughout the week. In this special campaign to stop underage use of tobacco, said Carla Sharp, awareness team coordinator, students here and across the state will be letting the tobacco industry know, "We're Not Buying It," using various advertising messages and information.

City Council to meet

The Colby City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers at City Hall. Items on the agenda include approval of the consent agenda; old business; new business consisting of a request for property tax abatement for Truck Town, request for utility services to regional state office building on South Country Club Drive at in-town rates, report on private dwellings/nuisances, an update on airport master plan

meetings; and reports and discussions. All meetings are open to the public. For questions, call 462-4410.

Children's flu clinic planned

The Thomas County Health Department is sponsoring a children's flu clinic on Wednesday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., said Juanita Dewey, public health practitioner. No appointments will be scheduled and all flu shots will be done on a walk-in basis only. The cost is \$18. For questions, call the health department at 462-4596.

Names sought for 'Heart Tree'

Organizers of the "Heart Tree" are once again seeking names of children who could benefit from having their wish realized during the holiday season. The "Heart Tree" was established three years ago in remembrance of Dr. Jeff Jennings, who died suddenly at the age of 29 and prior to Christmas in 2001. The tree symbolizes Dr. Jennings' love for the holiday season, coordinators said. Anyone who might know of a child in need is asked to call Jennifer Van Eaton at Sacred Heart, 462-2179.

