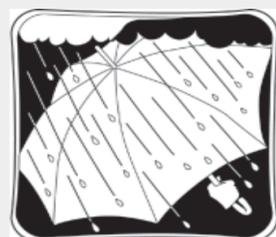


## Weather Corner



### The forecast

**Tonight** — Partly cloudy then gradually becoming clear with a low around 25. Blustery with a north wind 20 to 25 decreasing to between 5 and 10 mph. **Saturday** — Sunny with a high around 60. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south. **Saturday night** — Clear with a low near 38. South wind around 10 mph. **Sunday** — Sunny with a high near 76. South wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Sunday night** — Clear with a low around 46. **Monday** — Mostly sunny with a high around 85. **Monday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 47. **Tuesday** — Partly cloudy with a high near 71.

### Temperatures

Records for this date, 86 in 1952, 14 in 1961  
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00  
April's precipitation,  
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

## Briefly

### Easter egg hunt Saturday

The 31st annual Kiwanis Scott Haas Easter egg hunt will be Saturday, April 8 at Fike Park beginning at 10 a.m. Newborns to 3-year-olds will hunt at 10 a.m.; followed by 4- to 6-year-olds at 10:10 a.m. and 7- to 9-year-olds at 10:30 a.m. Listen to KXXX for updates in case of bad weather.

### College meetings continue

Nine special meetings were held or are coming up regarding the selection of a new president for Colby Community College. Those meetings started Wednesday and Thursday and continue Friday and Monday involving the two presidential candidates, Dr. Lynn Kreider and Clayton Tatro. The board is expected to recommend a candidate for employment at 5 p.m., Monday, in the Thomas Hall board room on the campus.

### Fair board to meet

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 13 at the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Items on the agenda include: Thomas County extension agent report; bills and financial report; committee reports on the buildings and grounds, carnival, rodeo, parade, demolition derby, races, fair book and advertising income/expenses; discussions on the fair barbecue and event sponsor contract and display cases for open class. The meeting is open to the public.

### Tax help Wednesdays

Pioneer Memorial Library, 375 W. 4th, will be the location on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. and until April 15 assisting with tax returns for the elderly or low to middle in-

come families and individuals. For information, call 460-2645.

### Square dance Saturday

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club is holding a dance beginning at 8 p.m., Saturday, at the Colby Community Building. Callers for the dance are Marlin and Jackie Spellmeyer of Ogallala, Neb. Visitors are always welcome.

### Public transportation available

The general transportation van is available to anyone in Thomas County said Shelly Harms, county clerk. The van services are provided to Colby, Brewster, Gem, Menlo, Rexford and a portion of Oakley as needed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. For reservations, call 460-2901 or 443-9208 by 11 a.m. the previous business day.

# Corkins still playing defense over educational role

LAWRENCE (AP) — Six months after he was hired as the state's education commissioner, Bob Corkins says he's trying to do his best to convince critics that his intentions are good.

"I came into this position expecting a huge challenge, and it has been exactly that. It's been six months of pretty intense work," he said.

When he was hired as education commissioner, Corkins had no experience as a teacher or school administrator; he had operated think

tanks that criticized public schools and had lobbied against increases in state education spending.

The State Board of Education chose him on a 6-4 vote, with the conservative majority supporting the hire.

His hiring and the state board's fight over science standards critical of evolution have galvanized efforts to change the board's composition in the upcoming elections.

"There were several issues last fall that kind of energized folks,"

said Don Hineman, a Dighton rancher who is chairman of the Kansas Alliance for Education.

"The hiring of Corkins was one of those issues. He came in with a pre-existing bias against public education, and some of his activities since then have demonstrated that he still holds those opinions," Hineman said.

Education Board Chairman Steve Abrams, R-Arkansas City, defends Corkins.

"There's a learning curve with

any commissioner that would come on board," Abrams said. "The biggest challenge he has had is from the schools and convincing them that he isn't trying to destroy public education."

Soon after Corkins took the job, he was viewed as a threat when he pitched the ideas of more charter schools and a voucher program on a tour of western Kansas. And he advised legislators they need not follow the recommendations of a then-to-be completed study of education costs. The study has been cited by the Kansas Supreme Court as a necessary guide for lawmakers to meet their constitutional duty to fund public schools adequately.

Corkins also was criticized when he hired a consultant to help him with his transition.

"The wheels are coming off the wagon," said board member Bill Wagnon, D-Topeka, who voted against hiring Corkins.

"He is driving all professional staff out of the (Education) Department, and he embarked on a fool's errand to expand charter schools and exempt them from accountability," Wagnon said.

Corkins defends his performance and points to the board's support for all-day kindergarten and a new database to track student progress. He continues to make contacts across Kansas and is restructuring the Kansas Department of Education.

"It's a democratic process, just like the Legislature or any govern-

mental entity made up of elected officials. It will be rare when you have unanimous opinion on any given issue," he said.

John Morton, superintendent of the Newton school district, said Corkins has made an effort to meet people in the field.

But, Morton added, "The issues are so complex, it's tough to get up to speed on a lot of them. He certainly has a continuing task ahead of him in terms of that."

Corkins' future as commissioner hangs with the fall elections. It has been suggested his time is limited if moderates take control of the Board of Education and demand changes at the top.

But Corkins said he's not concerned about the elections.

"I'm here to do the best job I can in whatever time is available," he said.

## Law suit filed over future bar

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Wyandotte County officials who developers say initially granted a request to bring a bar to a shopping district near Kansas Speedway now face a legal battle, after denying a special-use application for the Coyote Ugly Saloon.

RED Speedway Inc., the developer of The Legends shopping center, claims it received approval in 2004 to bring in as a tenant the New York-based bar known for bartop-dancing women and the movie it inspired by the same name.

But wary that the national chain uses sex as a marketing tool, and after public outcry at two meetings earlier this year, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., commissioners rejected a permit required of businesses that intend to sell more alcohol than food.

That prompted lawyers for RED Speedway and Coyote Ugly to file a lawsuit contending officials acted arbitrarily. They also claim the original approval was instrumental in the design of The Legends and that \$2 million has been spent in constructing a building for the bar.



A stitchin' good time

TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Margot Trowbridge, Lois VanHorn and Lola Griffin worked on a quilt Wednesday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. The quilters meet once a week at the museum to visit and quilt.

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