

Serious charge dismissed

Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline has dismissed the most serious charge against one of five teenagers accused of planning to attack their high school and turned all five cases over to the Cherokee County prosecutor, a spokesman said Thursday.

The five students, all from Columbus, were arrested April 20 after a message about an alleged plot for shootings at Riverton High School in southeast Kansas appeared on the Web site Myspace.com.

James Tillman, 16, had been charged by the state in May with felony solicitation of first-degree murder, punishable by 55 to 247 months in prison and a fine of \$100,000.

However, Tillman will now face one felony juvenile count each of incitement to riot and making a criminal threat, said Jan Lunsford, a spokesman for Kline.

Another member of Kline's staff, spokeswoman Sherriene Jones, said dismissal of the more serious charge resulted from further investigation since May.



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

City of Colby employees worked to remove a segment of railroad track crossing south Franklin Avenue Wednesday. Only one segment of track, which is no longer being used, was removed. The track is owned by Union Pacific Railroad.

Two sisters malnourished

WICHITA (AP) — Two sisters found emaciated at a Wichita home were forced to spend hours standing and even ate their meals that way while their stepmother's own two children ate normally, according to testimony at a hearing for the girls' father.

The girls, ages 6 and 7, were removed last month from the home and spent many days hospitalized before being placed in state custody.

Doctors found extensive bruising on the girls and said both were in a "chronic, extended state of malnutrition," Sedgwick County District Judge David Kaufman said during Thursday's bond reduction hearing for their father.

Alex A. Wood, 28, and his wife, Jennifer Wood, face two counts each of abuse of a child.

Jennifer Wood also is charged with aggravated battery, accused of choking the 7-year-old. Both adults remained jailed Thursday on \$100,000 bond after Kaufman refused to lower Alex Wood's bond.

The couple married about a year ago.

Jennifer Wood's own two children — a 4-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy — were described as well-nourished but have also been placed in state custody.

Eastern U.S. continues to sweat under heat wave

NEW YORK (AP) — The sweltering heat that was confirmed in at least a dozen deaths in the East and Midwest this week was not unusual for Iman Arbab.

"For me, 100 degrees — it's normal," said Arbab, 57, a native of Sudan who sells newspapers from a crate outside Penn Station in Manhattan.

"When you're young, you don't feel it," Arbab said Thursday morning. "When you get old, you feel it." After two days of triple-digit temperatures, the region was in for another day of steamy weather Thursday. The heat wasn't expected to break until a cold front moves through overnight Thursday and pushes Friday temperatures down, said National Weather Service meteorologist Tim Morrin.

The weather service again posted heat warnings from Massachusetts to South Carolina and in parts of Oklahoma.

At 6:30 a.m. Thursday, sweat was already dripping down Alex Williams' forehead as he rolled a handtruck bearing a 175-pound beer keg off his un-airconditioned truck in Manhattan. The National Weather Service said the temperature was around 83, but with a "feels like" rating of 89.

"I drink lots of water — but no beer," said Williams, of Brooklyn. Since Sunday, heat was confirmed to have played a role in at least 12 deaths in the Midwest and East, plus one in Oklahoma. At least eight deaths were suspected as being related to the heat.

A heat wave was blamed for as many as 164 deaths last month in California, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said Wednesday that he asked the federal government for loans to farmers who suffered more than \$1 billion in losses.

In Illinois, at least six heat-related deaths were confirmed in Cook County since Sunday, and police believe that another six deaths in Chicago on Wednesday could be heat-related. Four deaths were reported in Maryland, including three elderly victims who did not have air conditioning, officials said.

A 15-year-old high school football player died Tuesday in Georgia, one day after collapsing at a practice. In Pennsylvania, a 74-year-old custodian was found dead in bed, his heart disease aggravated by the heat.

In Oklahoma, authorities said a 92-year-old man found near his car Tuesday died of heat-related causes.

The suspected deaths included an 18-month-old boy was found dead Wednesday in a van in Kentucky and a 50-year-old construction worker who collapsed in Michigan Wednesday.

Wednesday's high hit a record-breaking 102 at LaGuardia Airport. The mercury hit 99 at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and Baltimore and Philadelphia each climbed into the upper 90s.

Even on Massachusetts' Cape Cod, usually a haven during the steamiest weather, residents were baking. "The water just pours off of you," said Carla Sullivan, the dockmaster at Hyannis Marina. "This is Texas hot."

Utility officials urged people to resist cranking up air conditioners amid heavy electric demand. Con-

solidated Edison, the utility that serves customers in and around New York City, set its second record in two days for peak demand. The Power Authority and ISO New England, which runs the region's power grid, also reported record-setting energy use.

After an equipment problem developed, residents in one section of Manhattan were asked Thursday to conserve power by not using unessential equipment.

In Queens, some residents found themselves in the dark again after recovering from a 10-day outage in late July. That included grocer Salm Ali, who said he had to throw out \$17,000 worth of produce last time.

Some Massachusetts residents were thrown into the dark Wednesday night because of thunderstorms.

Kansas heat kills six

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has received six confirmed reports of deaths due to heat related illness in the state. The department is reminding people to take precautions to protect themselves from extreme heat.

The deaths occurred between July 16-20 and included: a 65-year-old man in north-central Kansas; a 67-year-old woman in north-central Kansas; an 89-year-old man in north-central Kansas; a 46-year-old man in southeast

Kansas; a 79-year-old man from northeast Kansas; a 56-year-old in south central Kansas

"We regret to learn of this loss of life and our thoughts are with the families," said Dr. Howard Rodenberg, KDHE Division of Health Director. "It is a reminder of the importance of protecting yourself from high temperatures by drinking plenty of water, taking breaks from the heat and wearing light colored, loose clothing. Also, please remember to check regularly on those who don't have air conditioning."

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