

Weather Corner



Freezing temps in the forecast

Tonight — Partly cloudy with a low around 31. North wind between 5 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Friday — Partly cloudy with a high near 63. West wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Friday night — Mostly clear with a low around 36. Calm wind becoming east around 5 mph.

Saturday — Partly cloudy with a high near 65. East wind between 5 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Saturday night — Partly cloudy with a low around 41.

Sunday — Partly cloudy with a high near 69.

Sunday night — Partly cloudy with a low around 38.

Monday — Partly cloudy with a high near 71.

Temperatures
Wednesday's high, 54
Low this morning, 31
Records for this date, 92 in 1989, 19 in 1909
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.07
October's precipitation, 1.82
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119.
Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

Governor says higher ed is top priority

KANSAS CITY (AP) — Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius promised Wednesday that higher education would be a top priority if she is elected to a second term, but Republican challenger Jim Barnett blamed her for rising tuition costs.

Barnett said the state hasn't been able to provide enough tax dollars to its universities and community and vocational colleges because its economy hasn't grown enough. He added that State Board of Regents' institutions face more years of stagnant state aid because of how Sebelius has managed state finances.

But Sebelius dismissed Barnett's prediction, accusing him of painting a "gloom-and-doom" picture of the state's economy. She also noted that during her first term, the state has phased in a \$112 million increase in spending on higher education.

The two candidates also differed on stem cell research, with Barnett suggesting the state needed to be cautious in supporting new work to avoid promoting human cloning and Sebelius saying the state should help research accelerate.

They also staked out different positions on how far the state should go to prevent local governments from taking private property for economic development.

Barnett has repeatedly challenged Sebelius' assessment of the Kansas economy as robust, suggesting it's in fact sluggish and needs to be stimulated through tax cuts.

During Wednesday's debate, he tied his arguments to concerns about rising tuition rates.

In-state tuition at state universities has increased every year since 1999, doubling at the University of Kansas, and regents have complained about a lack of state funding. Fifteen years ago, state funds covered nearly half the universities' operating costs; the figure now is 29 percent.

"This is what happens when we as an economy in this state continue to lag behind our neighbors and the entire nation," Barnett said.

The two candidates answered questions for an audience of about 200 people.

Their debate at a movie theater in the Legends shopping district near the Kansas Speedway was sponsored by Kansas City-area chambers of commerce.

Briefly

Chamber luncheon Friday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon is scheduled for noon, Friday, at Montana Mike's, 1855 S. Range Ave. Midwest Energy is sponsoring the event. All chamber members and their guests welcome. For questions, call Holly Stephens, executive director, 460-3401.

Tootsie Roll Drive begins Friday

The Colby Knights of Columbus annual Tootsie Roll Drive is scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. "When you see those friendly gentlemen in their bright yellow and red aprons, please be generous so aid may continue to those special people with disabilities," said Dick Parnell of Colby and chairman of the drive.

Free grant-writing workshops set

The Kansas Arts Commission is offering free grant-writing workshops to nonprofit organizations, public agencies and individual artists in five communities throughout Kansas. The Kansas Arts Commission has changed the guidelines for many of its grant programs, so interested applicants are encouraged to attend. The grant-writing workshops will feature Kansas Arts Commission program managers as well

as Kit Bardwell from Accessible Arts, who will address compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The free grant-writing workshops will be held in Hays, Topeka, Iola, Wichita, and Dodge City from 1 to 4 p.m., during the week of Oct. 23. For information call, Matt Miller or Jennifer Wesco (785) 368-6542 or Jennifer@arts.state.ks.us.

College board meets Monday

The Colby College board of trustees meets at 5 p.m., Monday, in the board room of Thomas Hall. Agenda items include approval of agreements with Carondelet Health Network, IHC Health Services, Scott and White Memorial Hospital, Research Medical Center and Norton County Hospital. In addition, the college will consider approving employment contracts, a new telephone system, library copier, and discussion of special meetings. The trustees will also talk about a new leave policy, vehicle leases and hear reports from Dr. Lynn Kreider, president and other administrative officials. Meetings are open to the public. For questions or to receive an agenda, call 462-3984.

Seminar offers growth potential

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce is co-sponsoring a workshop aimed at helping entrepreneurs and/or small businesses grow in profits and success, said Holly

Stephens, executive director. The seminar, "HyperGrow Your Business" will be offered in Colby from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 2, at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350 S. Range Ave., Colby. For complete details, either call the Chamber office, 460-3401 or visit the HyperGrow website: www.hypergrow.com/colby.htm

Voter registration until Oct. 23

People can register to vote in Thomas County until 5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 23 for the November general election, said county clerk Shelly Harms. They can register at the courthouse, 300 N. Court Ave.; Department of Motor Vehicles, 990 S. Range; Colby Post Office, 535 N. Court, or online. For other questions, call the clerk's office, 460-4500.

Essay contest deadline Nov. 1

The Masonic Grand Lodge of Kansas is sponsoring an essay contest with this year's topic: *How is Trade with China Affecting Life in America*. The contest is for junior and senior public high school students. A total of \$12,000 will be awarded: first place, \$4,000; second, \$3,000; third place, \$2,000; and fourth, \$1,000. Four honorable mentions will receive \$500 each. Essays must be submitted to the local Masonic Lodge on or before Nov. 1. In Colby, send essays to: St. Thomas Lodge, P.O. Box 421, Colby, Kan. 67701.

Hoxie officials consider contracting law enforcement

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

News that Hoxie's chief of police is retiring prompted city officials to begin exploring their options for law enforcement.

Police Chief John Bieker, who has been with the department 27 years, said his last day is Dec. 31 and city leaders are looking at whether to contract law enforcement services through the county or ask the county to consolidate services.

"We are in the exploratory stage," Ken Eland, Hoxie's city attorney said Wednesday.

Eland said the city is leaning toward asking the county whether it will enter into a contract with Hoxie for its law enforcement services.

In 2003, efforts to improve Hoxie's law enforcement department were evaluated by G.H. Management Consulting Inc. of Prairie Village. At that time, consultant Charles Grover, along with his partner, Ellen Hanson, blamed department problems on a lack of structure and communication, calling the two-person department "close-knit," yet "unrealistic."

Besides Bieker, the only other officer with the department was Dawn Marie Jones, now a dispatcher with the Sheridan County Sheriff's office. Grover and Hanson believed the city's problems stemmed from issues such as overtime, scheduling, visibility of officers while on duty and their service have been questioned.

Hoxie Mayor Lori Horesky, said Wednesday that the city wants to try

City commission compares budgets

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Cost is a major issue that Hoxie city officials will look at when trying to decide whether to contract law enforcement services with Sheridan County.

To date, the combined figures have not been put on the table.

Law enforcement budgets for the city of Hoxie and Sheridan County are similar, but differ in many aspects.

City Clerk Jessica Spresser and County Clerk Paula Bielser talked about the figures for each budget.

In 2006, Hoxie's city police department budgeted \$73,500 for staff, consisting of the chief and

one officer. That figure will drop to \$70,000 in 2007.

The county budgeted \$118,000 for the sheriff, two full-time deputies and one part-time deputy. The county also budgeted \$64,375 in 2006 for its three full-time and three part-time dispatchers.

The city does not budget any money for dispatching services.

Spresser said in 2006, Hoxie budgeted \$15,050 for insurance and all other items such as radios and supplies for the police department.

That figure will jump to \$16,000 in 2007.

Vehicles for the city's police department are done through the capital outlay and not a separate line item.

Bielser said the county buys new vehicles by setting money aside in a vehicle replacement fund.

In 2006, that fund had \$26,000 in it, and \$29,000 has been budgeted for 2007. She said the county also sets aside \$12,000 for prisoner care each year. Bielser said Sheridan County taxpayers will have paid \$32,000 for sheriff's office expenses, such as the city's commodity line item, over and above salaries, and in 2007 that figure jumps to \$33,500.

It will be from these numbers that city and county leaders will figure out whether merged law enforcement is viable for the Hoxie and Sheridan County.

requires approval by the Kansas Legislature. Kansas currently has only two counties, Riley and Wyandotte, which consolidated their law enforcement through legislative action.

In the event Hoxie and Sheridan County ever consider consolidated law enforcement, city and county leaders would look first at how such a move is authorized by state statute.

Two of the biggest obstacles of this type of system are the abolishment of the elected office of sheriff and the fact it requires a statutory change to implement it.

In order for a county commission to determine whether taxpayers would support such a change, commissioners would be bring the issue to a vote.

While currently not considering consolidation, Hoxie's two city commissioners, Jim Erwin and Troy Dewey, along with Horesky are seeking public input about whether to pursue contracting law enforcement with Sheridan County.

Anyone wanting to express an opinion about such a move can call City Clerk Jessica Spresser at (785) 675-3291 or their individual city commissioner.

This issue is on the commission's next meeting, Nov. 13, at the Hoxie City Hall, 1024 Royal Ave.

Pets, college students not good mix

MANHATTAN — College is an exciting time in a person's life, but it can also be stressful at times and, for those who are experiencing their first time away from home, lonely.

To make living away from home feel more like home, many students choose to get a pet. Most of the time it's for companionship, but sometimes it can be for protection too, said Kari Wallentine, Kansas State University Research and Extension veterinarian and animal behaviorist.

"Pets make great companions and research shows that interaction with animals helps lower a person's blood pressure and reduces stress, which can be good for a college student," she said.

"And a dog, no matter what size, can provide its owner with some protection just by barking. A dog's bark can act as an alarm system that alerts their owner when something is wrong and scares away intruders."

Dogs are not the right pet for everyone, and it's important that stu-

dents do their research before deciding on what species and/or breed is right for them, Wallentine said.

Students can learn more about pets via the Internet, library, or pet selection counseling.

Pet selection counseling, which is offered by some veterinarians, takes into consideration a person's current lifestyle and interests, living arrangements, financial situation and the amount of time they have to devote to a pet.

"Students also need to consider the lifespan of a pet," Wallentine said. "If they don't want to take the pet along with them after college, then animals that live for many years, such as cats and dogs, might not be the right choice for them."

Students who live in small apartments should consider the space requirement for a pet and how happy or comfortable it would be living in a small apartment, she said.

For example, a large dog would probably feel cramped in a small apartment unless the owner has plenty of time to take it on walks every day.

"Fish, birds, cats, and small dogs are pets that are better suited for apartments," Wallentine said.

She recommends students check with their landlords first to see what type of pets they'll allow.

The same can be applied for students living in dorms.

If the university allows small pets, dorm students may be happiest with a fish or small rodent, since they take up little space and are easy to care for.

Students who are thinking about getting a pet should steer clear of impulsive buying, do their research and remember that there are always unforeseen costs associated with pets of all sizes such as veterinarian expenses, bedding or aquarium supplies, grooming supplies, and licensing fees, she said.

ment and response times. Other disadvantages could include loss of revenue from vehicle identification inspections, loss of municipal court revenue and lack of enforcement of city codes.

Consolidated law enforcement requires dissolution of current offices and departments and creation of an agency whereby a board or commission appoints a director, establishes policy and approves the budget.

According to Judy Moler of the Kansas League of Municipalities, a law enforcement consolidation requires not only voter approval; it

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