

Weather
Corner



More snow

The forecast
Tonight — Scattered flurries after midnight. Partly cloudy with a low around 8. Blustery, with a north wind 15 to 20 mph decreasing to between 5 and 10 mph. Winds could gust as high as 30 mph. **Tuesday** — Mostly sunny with a high near 24. Northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Tuesday night** — Scattered flurries. Increasing clouds, with a low around 10. West wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Wednesday** — Partly cloudy with a low around 8. **Wednesday night** — Partly cloudy with a low around 8. **Thursday** — A 30 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy with a high near 30.

Temperatures
Sunday's high, 35
Low this morning, 1
Records for this date, 72 in 1920, -13 in 1951
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
January's precipitation, 0.63
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

Briefly

Commissioners to meet Wednesday

The Thomas County commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Wednesday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include a meeting with Donita Applebury at 9 a.m. on a resolution; abatements; Sheriff Mike Baughn; approval of Jan. 22 minutes; a letter from the Natural Resources Conservation Service on the Western Prairie RC&D office space at the Thomas County Office Complex. The meeting is open to the public.

Diabetes seminar Thursday

Citizens Medical Center in Colby will host a program on diabetes for the community. Dr. Richard Guthrie will present a "Diabetes Update" at 7 p.m. Thursday in the hospital cafeteria. Anyone interested in learning more about diabetes care is welcome to attend this free educational program. Dr. Guthrie is an expert on the care and treatment of diabetes. He is regarded as an international expert in the field and has authored many articles and books on the subject.

Singles dance Friday

The Colby Singles Dance will be from 8 p.m. to midnight Friday at the American Legion. Swing-N-Country is playing. The public is invited. The dance will be held weather-permitting. If in doubt call ahead at (785) 443-1773 or (785) 443-4046.

Archeology group to meet

The High Plains Chapter of the Kansas Anthropological Association will meet at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 4 at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. The public is invited. The program will feature Bob Blasing on "Prehistoric Use of Astronomy by the Pawnee." Nancy Arendt will also show video highlights of the 2006 KAA excavation near Council Grove. Information about upcoming archeology-related events, including the 2007 Kansas Archeology Training Program excavation in nearby Nicodemus, will be presented. A business meeting, including nomination and election of officers, will follow. For information, call Nancy Arendt at 460-6653

Coalition meeting set

The Thomas County Coalition, an agency with the goal of assisting children in drug/alcohol prevention issues, will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27 at Pioneer Memorial Library. If interested in attending or questions, call the Regional Prevention Center at 460-8177.

Homestead forms available

The Thomas County Clerk's office is reminding residents eligible to submit claims on Homestead property tax refunds and food sales tax refunds, that forms are available. "The Kansas Homestead program provides a property tax refund for eligible homeowners and renters who were residents of Kansas all of 2006," said County Clerk Shelly Harms. As Kansas resident the entire year, she said, persons are eligible if their total household income is \$28,000 or less and they were born before Jan. 1, 1951; were blind or totally and permanently disabled of all 2006 or have a dependent child who lived with them the entire year and was born before Jan. 1, 2006 and under the age of 18 throughout 2006.

Lottery could hold the key to casino gambling

TOPEKA (AP) — It's that time of the year again, when supporters of expanded gambling in Kansas are at the Statehouse once again trying to drum up support for casinos and slot machines.

But the beat may be different this year.

In the past, the gambling issue has stood on its own, with supporters touting it as a way to increase state revenues, while opponents view it as undermining society's morals.

This year there's a new wrinkle. Lawmakers must approve the continuation of the 20-year-old lottery, and failing to do that would be slaughtering a prized cash cow.

The lottery will dump \$67 million in state coffers in the current budget year, including \$42 million that finances most of the state's economic development efforts.

"Renewing the lottery is a critical thing. I don't think you can sink

the lottery," said Sen. Pete Brungardt, R-Salina. "It's overwhelmingly popular and part of Kansas life."

Gambling supporters see the lottery's popularity as a way to enhance their chances, either by bundling the two bills together or working out a deal with legislative leaders to guarantee a vote on gambling in return for supporting the lottery.

The idea is that legislators waffling on gambling but backing the lottery might go ahead and vote for the bundled bill.

Kansans are used to gambling. Aside from the lottery, there's wagering on horse and dog races and four American Indian casinos in northeast Kansas. There's also gambling boats in Kansas City, Mo., and Indian casinos in Oklahoma.

"The gambling industry is getting to be slowly but surely a part of

American life, which explains why there is an attempt every year, because there's the feeling that the incremental process of acceptability one day will lead to success," said Bob Beatty, a Washburn University political science professor.

Expanded gambling has been debated and discussed since the early 1990s, always falling short. Often, gambling interests got greedy — fighting among themselves for slices of the potential pie — which cost them votes.

In past years, gambling bills started in the Senate on the theory the votes were there and once senators approved a measure, pressure would build on the House. This year is different.

"We've been out front the last couple of years and we decided to let the House go first if they're willing," said Senate President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton.

Last year, Senate leaders thought they had enough votes to pass a gambling bill. But one senator reneged on his promise, dooming the bill and leaving the leadership more than a little embarrassed.

Gambling supporters say they've picked up support in the House after November's elections. But House leaders aren't so sure.

"We have an untested body. They haven't voted on such things. I don't even know how my committee will vote on it," said Rep. Arlen Siegfried, chairman of the Federal and State Affairs Committee where the lottery and gambling bills have been assigned.

Siegfried, R-Olathe, hasn't decided when the committee will consider either bill, but didn't think much of the idea of merging them.

"We want to move the lottery first if we can," he said. "The lottery is established. If you would marry the two bills and it goes down, we are in a big mess."

Rep. Tom Burroughs, D-Kansas City, sees it differently.

"There is some risk involved, but the gaming issue needs to be decided," Burroughs said.

Burroughs is among the backers of a bill allowing a casino in the Kansas City, Kan., area and another in southeast Kansas plus slots at pari-mutuel horse and dog tracks in Kansas City, Frontenac and

Wichita, all subject to voter approval in their home counties.

He's wants a "packaged deal" of either the two bills bundled or assurances from House leaders of a separate vote on gambling at the same time.

"There's a number of legislators willing to vote no on the lottery if gaming isn't part of the package, including myself," he said.

Some might call it strong-arm tactics. Others call it smart politics.

"It may be a chance for legislators to go to voters and say this brings money to the state," Beatty said. "It might be worth trying early on because they can always come back with a bill dealing with just the lottery."

Still others see it as a gambit fraught with perils.

"It wouldn't be advantageous to clutter that up with gambling and casinos," said Sen. Phil Journey, R-Haysville. "A lot more people will be voting against the lottery with casinos than without casinos."

But not everybody buys into the doom-and-gloom prophecy.

Faced with a Drinking Problem?

Perhaps

Alcoholics Anonymous Can Help

Meetings are Open to the Public

City Hall Basement

Mondays & Thursdays - 8:30 p.m.

Inmates seeking women via the Internet

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A Wichita man whose crime spree with his brother left five people dead and one seriously injured is looking for a supportive woman — even though he currently sits on death row.

"An intelligent (career woman if possible) woman with an open mind and a big heart," reads a personal ad for Reginald Carr on a Web site run by the Canadian Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

Carr and his brother, Jonathan, were sentenced to death in December 2002 after they kidnapped five people from a Wichita home in 2000 and fatally shot four of them execution-style on a soccer field.

A fifth woman also was shot but survived.

The Carrs also were convicted of

first-degree murder in the death of a woman who was shot four days before the soccer field slayings.

Assistant County Attorney Kim Parker, who helped prosecute the Carrs, told The Wichita Eagle that Carr's search for a female friend was "sickening."

"He can continue to manipulate people who would answer this ad. It's gruesome," Parker said.

But Parker said Reginald Carr was popular with women even while in jail awaiting trial for his crimes.

"Women had sent nude pictures of themselves and other letters, little greeting cards," she said.

The appeal of such inmates is not unusual. Dennis Rader, the infamous BTK serial killer, was overwhelmed with correspondence

while in jail, including marriage proposals and money.

Reginald Carr's personal ad says he is a "hopeless romantic" seeking "a 'mature woman' who has time to correspond with someone who enjoys writing a lot.

"I enjoy reading, drawing, writing & reading poetry, working out and conversing about politics," it says.

Although Kansas prison inmates are not allowed to use personal funds to solicit mail through Web sites, they often have people outside of prison post the information for them, said Frances Breyene, spokeswoman for the Corrections

Department.

That is what happened in Carr's case — the Canadian Web site solicits letters for death row inmates, appealing to their sympathy for the inmates' living conditions.

"Death row inmates are alone in a cell 23 hours out of every day. Often the highlight of their day is when they receive mail, a brief reprieve from the outside world in an otherwise lonely and isolated existence.

A few words, a postcard, and the fact that you took a moment to write can mean a great deal. You can make a difference," the Web site says.

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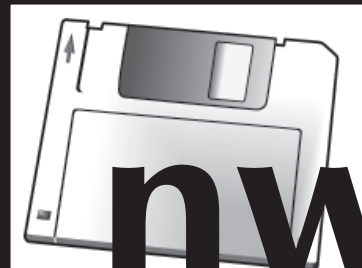
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