


Weather Corner



The forecast
Tonight — A 20 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy with a low around -1. Wind chill values between -3 and -13. North wind around 5 mph.
Thursday — Partly cloudy with a high near 25. Wind chill values between -4 and -14. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south-west.
Thursday night — Partly cloudy with a low around 12. Southwest wind between 5 and 15 mph.
Friday — Partly cloudy with a high near 42. West wind around 15 mph.
Friday night — Partly cloudy with a low around 18.
Saturday — Partly cloudy with a high near 41.
Saturday night — Mostly clear with a low around 18.
Sunday — Mostly sunny with a high near 45.

Temperatures
Tuesday's high, 12
Low this morning, -5
Records for this date, 74 in 1945, -9 in 1936
Precipitation past 24 hours to 8 a.m. today, 0.00
February's precipitation, 0.00
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

Fire case a mistrial

LAWRENCE (AP) — A mistrial was declared Monday in the trial for the Lawrence man accused of setting an apartment fire that killed three people.

Judge Jack Murphy declared the mistrial in the trial of Jason A. Rose after prosecutors tried to introduce the testimony of a surprise witness.

Rose is charged with three counts of felony murder and one count of aggravated arson for the October 2005 fire that killed three residents of a 76-unit apartment complex.

Defense attorney Ron Evans asked for the mistrial, saying that at this late date — five days into Rose's trial for arson and murder — there wasn't enough time to review and prepare for the unexpected evidence. The surprise witness was not immediately identified.

Murphy set a new trial date for April 30.

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Briefly

School serving barcue supper

Heartland Christian School will be serving a barbecue pork supper during the Colby Community College basketball game from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, in the basement of the Community Building. Free will donation will be taken.

Pancake feed Sunday

First Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth St., will hold a pancake feed from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday at the church. A free will offering will be taken, with proceeds going to mission projects.

Soup dinner in Atwood Sunday

A community come and go soup dinner to benefit Mary Fahrenbruch will be held from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sunday at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 808 First St. in Atwood. A free will offering will be taken.

Courthouse, landfill closed Monday

The Thomas County Courthouse and landfill will be closed Monday, Feb. 19, for President's Day. Both will re-open for business Tuesday.

School changes announced

Colby Public Schools one-hour late start Wednesday has been canceled. Buses will run their normal routes.

Also, there will be no school for students and staff Friday, Feb. 23. This is an incentive day for the students and staff because the district met the requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress.

'Daffodil Days' begins

American Cancer Society Daffodil Days run through this month. The deadline to order is Saturday, Feb. 24. The daffodils will arrive in Colby around March 5-7 and will be available for pick-up at Sompelace Special, 185 W. Fourth St. To

order, or for more information, call or e-mail Cathy Harrison, Daffodil Days coordinator, at 460-2501, 462-2331 or harrison@st-tel.net.

Families wanted

High Plains Mental Health Center is searching for families to help with its new program Homeward Bound. The program will serve children with emotional and behavioral problems and their families in crisis situations. Participating families will provide a home and daily needs for children from overnight to several weeks. Single people are also asked to help with such children.

"Colby is a hot sport for this service," said program manager Audrey Harper Schoenberger. She can be reached at (785) 628-2871 or aschoen@hpmhc.com. Also, Becky Kirchhoff, a program social worker, can help interested people. Kirchhoff can be reached at (785) 346-2184 or rebecca@hpmhc.com

Harsh weather affecting Sherman County's equipment

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Harsh winter conditions are being blamed for taking a toll on heavy equipment in Sheridan County.

Sheridan County Road and Bridge Director Bob Schwarz met with Commissioner David Zimmerman, Keith Kennedy and Ron Schamberger Monday about purchasing new cutter edges for road graders.

"Two hundred should have got us through a year, or a normal year," Schwarz said.

Cutter edges are the part of the grader that meets the road to push the snow.

Two hundred cutter edges were purchased in December at a cost of \$39.40 each, but Schwarz said of those 200 only 40 remain. He said current road conditions are destroying the 6-inch by 8-foot by five-eighth-inch blades more rapidly in years past.

The commissioners asked Schwarz to compare costs, including any discounts which might be available if blades were purchased by the semi-truck load.

Schwarz said he continues talking with Federal Emergency Man-

agement officials about money which could reimburse the county for clean up of the Dec. 28-31 snow storm.

"We met last week and they have all the information and I have 60 days to change it in case I need to add something," Schwarz said.

Schwarz said one of the county's 11 graders has engine problems. The commissioners asked Schwarz to talk with area grader sales companies to determine whether it is more cost effective to repair or replace it.

"It has 13,000 hours on it and has never been touched," Schwarz said.

Zimmerman and Kennedy met Tuesday afternoon for a special meeting to talk about a disabled road grader.

Road and Bridge Director Bob Schwarz said he talked to Murphy Tractor of Dodge City and Berry Tractor of Garden City about leasing a grader while the one he talked about at Monday's commission meeting was being repaired.

Schwarz said Murphy Tractor could lease the county a grader for \$6,000 a month.

He said should the county decide to purchase the same grader, 100 percent of the lease money would be applied to purchase price.

Schwarz said the purchase price of a new grader is about \$200,000.

Schwarz said the grader which needs its engine rebuilt has been transported to North Platte, Neb., and a leased one could be delivered from Dodge City by Thursday.

The motion to lease a grader was approved.

In other news ...

Sheridan County Register of Deeds Kari Weis asked the commissioners to clarify the amount of money reimbursed for mileage. Weis said she thought the rate per mile was 48 cents and Schamberger agreed.

Weis had a copy of a county resolution stating the commissioner set mileage reimbursement at 43 cents per mile rather than 48 cents per mile.

Weis asked the commissioners whether they cared if she donated \$100 out of her budget to help pay for vendors and refreshments for an upcoming Northwest Kansas State Register of Deeds Meeting. The meeting is in June at the Comfort Inn in Colby. The commissioners told Weis to talk to the other counties involved and determine how much they were donating.

Weis said work in her office had slowed down due to winter gas and oil production and title and deed work. She cut back the hours worked by Susie Newell. Newell is now working four days per week.

Also meeting with the commissioners was Sheridan County Noxious Weed Director Gary Reitcheck.

He gave the commissioners a copy of the 2006 noxious weed report required by the state. According to the report, Sheridan County has an estimated 12,755 acres with noxious weeds present.

According to the report, there are 9,552 acres of field bindweed; 2,551 acres of musk thistle; 10 acres of Johnsongrass; 231 acres of bur ragweed; 411 acres of Canada thistle; and one-tenth acre of hoary cress. These totals include private, county and state land.

Reitcheck also asked the commissioners to sign a contact between the county and the Kansas Department of Transportation agreeing the county would treat state highway right-of-ways for noxious weeds. Once treated, the state will reimburse the county the cost of chemicals, plus \$16 an hour for an operator and \$23 an hour for use of a one-ton truck. The commissioners signed the contract which runs through Dec. 31.

Snowy sliding



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Snow on the ground in Hoxie's walking park made a place to play Saturday for children. Storms which dumped snow and ice on the area Dec. 28-31 created a winter wonderland making places for sledding throughout northwest Kansas.



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