

Weather Corner



Clear and warmer

The forecast
Tonight — Mostly clear with a low around 47. Southeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming west.
Thursday — Mostly sunny with a high near 80. North wind between 5 and 10 mph.
Thursday night — Mostly clear with a low around 51. Northeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southwest.
Friday — Mostly sunny with a high near 81. West wind around 5 mph becoming southeast.
Friday night — Mostly clear with a low around 53.
Saturday — Sunny with a high near 86.
Saturday night — Clear with a low around 54.
Sunday — Mostly sunny with a high near 89.
Temperatures
Monday's high, 65
Tuesday's high, 75
Low this morning, 43
Records for this date, 98 in 1911, 30 in 1909
Precipitation last 24 hours, 0.00
May's precipitation, 0.11
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

Briefly

Barefoot trees, more still available

The Thomas County Conservation District has remaining bareroot trees, to be sold at the reduced cost of \$1 per tree. Many varieties are still available. Please call 462-7482, ext. 3 for questions.

Slavens offering sports physicals

Slavens Family Practice, 1535 S. Range Ave., will offer free athletic physicals for middle school and high school students in Thomas County from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 16. For information, call 460-8000.

Water well testing available

The Northwest Local Environmental Protection group would like to remind residents of have their private water wells tested, especially with recent moisture and standing water. The group provides free water well testing for nitrates and bacteria. Call 462-8636 for an appointment.

Basketball camp planned

Eagle Basketball Camp for youth in third through eighth grades will be held from 9:30-11:30 a.m. May 29-June 1 at Colby High School. Deadline to register is Thursday. For cost and more information, contact Derek Bissitt and 462-8083 or 460-5300.

Red Cross offers training

The Thomas County Red Cross is offering the following training in May: Shelter Operations: 6-9 p.m., Thursday and Friday, and Disaster Response: 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, both at Thomas County Office Complex Meeting Room, 350 S. Range Ave., in Colby.

Property taxes due May 10

The Thomas County Treasurer's office is reminding taxpayers that the second half of the 2006 property taxes are due by May 10. For questions, call (785) 460-4520.

Stamp Out Hunger food drive May 12

The Colby Post Office will participate with Stamp Out Hunger food drive Saturday. All donations collected will go to the Genesis Food Bank in Colby. Those who want to donate can leave a sturdy bag containing non-perishable foods such as canned soup, canned vegetables, pasta, rice or cereal next to their mailbox prior to mail delivery May 12. Mail carriers will collect the donations and deliver them to Genesis.

Hydrant flushing continues

The Colby Fire Department began flushing hydrants within the city this week as part of its spring testing, said Sean Hankin, assistant fire chief. The testing could temporarily cause rusty water from faucets. Each year the fire department cleans the hydrant systems after the winter months to make sure the lines are clear and operational. The entire process takes about four to six weeks. For questions or concerns, call 460-4454.

Man looks for something normal after tornado passes

From "TORNADO, Page 1

heard it, but we felt the atmosphere shift."

That something was the tornado. It hit Greensburg at about 9:45 p.m.

The house the Gundlings were at was far enough from the storm not to be seriously threatened.

After the storm had passed Gundling went to Greensburg at about 11:30 p.m. He said the town was covered with light from construction-site flood lights, vehicle headlights and flashlights.

"That town was lit pretty good," he said.

Those kind of light sources have limited range. Gundling said he really didn't comprehend the amount of damage done until he returned Saturday morning.

"It was a lot larger with daylight's gone but you could see nothing was left in town. We left Greensburg at 6:45 Friday. Five hours later it was all gone."

He said video and pictures of Greensburg afterward still don't

grasp the damage.

"Your mind looks for something normal," he said.

The church Gundling preached at was destroyed and the house they lived in sustained major damage, although it was still standing. He said those who attended the church plan to rebuild the church. Since it was built, during Gundling's time there, there have been leaks in the roof.

"They've said now we can build a church that doesn't leak," Gundling said.

Gundling said the friends he has in Greensburg really have not talked about the future of the town.

"They are still in triage," he said. "I'm 31 with four kids. Would I rebuild? That's tough."

College Drive Assembly of God Church is organizing teams of volunteers to help with clean up of Greensburg. Gundling said when those kind of groups will be allowed to enter town is still undetermined. He said he hopes the first team will be able to help Friday.

Thomas County sends help

The Thomas County Sheriff's Office sent four deputies to help in Greensburg. Sheriff Mike Baughn said his office was contacted Saturday by Pratt County Sheriff Vernon Chin.

Baughn sent Undersheriff Jason Moses, Deputies Ken Patton, Sheri Lee and Tanya Christensen and reserve deputy Dennis Allison. Baughn said he consulted with county commissioner Ken Christiansen about sending help.

"Help was requested and we responded," Baughn said.

Lee shared her experiences in Greensburg. The deputies left Saturday morning and all but Moses were back in Colby Monday. Moses helped get communications back online and the others helped provide security.

Lee said they helped guard entrances to town Sunday and Monday, and helped let residents back into town. Two deputies were assigned to each street corner to check people in.

Residents had to show proof of residence, and the address where they were going was written on the windshield of their vehicle.

"It's quite an experience," Lee said. "I don't want to see anything like that again."

In 10 years with the sheriff's office, Greensburg was her first experience with helping with such a disaster.

"The damage widespread and indiscriminate. One bar was left standing on the main street. A block down, a liquor store suffered no damage but a house next door was flattened," she said.

The sheriff's office is on standby if more help is needed.

Two Colby firefighters also helped. Training officer J.L. Ellis and firefighter Matt Christensen were at their first day of a Kansas State Firefighter Association school Friday in Lakin. They received a request for help from the incident

commander Friday and helped with search and rescue from 11 p.m. Friday until 4 a.m. Saturday.

"It was chaotic. Most people got out of their homes on their own," he said.

They also went house to house in a three-by-10 block area with search and rescue from Garden City.

"Being from Kansas, I've seen tornado damage but nothing on the scale of what I experienced in Greensburg," Ellis said.

After helping there, he returned to finish school in Lakin.

Thomas County emergency personnel helping other departments in times of need has become a tradition. During Hurricane Katrina, the sheriff's office was on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's list but was not called. Last year, the office sent help to Hoxie after Sheridan County Sheriff James L. Johnson was killed.

President takes a look at Greensburg's damage

From "VISIT," Page 1

reaction to disasters since Hurricane Katrina, when a bungled response became a turning point in Bush's presidency."

The response to this particular case was absolutely phenomenal," declared R. David Paulison, the

Federal Emergency Management Agency director, en route to Kansas with Bush. Bush stopped at a tractor dealership, where the building was gutted and the plows were mangled. It had been a major employer in town. He freely dished out hugs.

The surrounding neighborhood

revealed a car stuck tail-first out of the top of a house. Trees were ripped of all limbs, looking like mere stakes in the ground. A spray-painted sign said politely: "Please pardon our mess."

The president ambled down the road to a house with no roof, almost slipping as he picked his way across a chunk of metal on the lawn. He briefly grabbed a chain saw, ripping it into action for the cameras and other media that accompanied him.

"How are you all?" Bush said as he moved among residents.

Greensburg has been known for its friendly charm, right down to the old-fashioned soda fountain at the

drug store.

The town's proud claim to fame is the Big Well, considered the largest in the world to be dug by hand. Now the fountain is gone, the well buried in debris. Despite the tragedy, emergency officials know the death toll could have been much worse. An emergency warning about 20 minutes before the tornado hit helped people scramble to safety.

Humane society asks boy be charged with cruelty

WICHITA (AP) — The Humane Society of the United States is asking that a sixth-grader who stabbed three ducks to death be charged with animal cruelty.

The Wilber Middle School student allegedly used a pencil last week to kill a mother duck and two ducklings that had nested near the school.

The Humane Society said it did not want the 11-year-old to be jailed, but it wants to be sure he receives "the intervention crucial to preventing future recurrences of violence," said Mary Lou Randour, the group's professional outreach coordinator and a Maryland-based psychologist.

"A conviction of animal cruelty would not only convey to the student the serious nature of his alleged crime," Randour said, "but would also help ensure that he remains under psychological counseling and observation."

District Attorney Nola Foulston said Monday that her office was investigating the case.

"It is incumbent upon us to dig

deeper, not only out of concern for the welfare of animals but for the welfare of our children," Foulston said.

An animal cruelty charge, she said, isn't the only way to ensure that the boy gets counseling or treatment.

The boy was suspended last Wednesday, and school officials say a hearing will determine whether he will get to return to school. They say he admitted to classmates that he mutilated the ducks.

Foulston said the case could be filed as a "child in need of care" case, but that depends on what the investigation reveals about the student's actions, behavior and home life. Generally, child in need cases involve children abandoned, neglected or abused by a parent.

"With these cases you need to look not only at the alleged act itself but at the underlying problems that may have led to that act," Foulston said.

Randour said people who abuse animals often eventually commit violence against people.



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The Public is invited to a **FREE:**

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May 13th, 2007 ~ 8 to 10 a.m.

At the First Baptist Church, Colby
Corner of Grant & Webster (In the Fellowship Hall - Educational Wing)

Come enjoy a traditional country breakfast, as our gift to you.

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