

Weather Corner



Cloudy, breezy

The forecast
Tonight — Partly cloudy with a low around 47. South wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Friday** — Isolated showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high near 75. Breezy with a south wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent. **Friday night** — A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1 a.m. Partly cloudy with a low around 52. Breezy, with a south wind 10 to 20 mph becoming west. Winds could gust as high as 30 mph. **Saturday** — A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high near 76. North wind between 5 and 10 mph. **Saturday night** — A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy with a low around 48. **Sunday** — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly cloudy with a high near 77. **Sunday night** — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy with a low around 52. **Memorial Day** — A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m.

Temperatures
Wednesday's high, 73
Low this morning, 47
Records for this date, 98 in 1953, 43 in 1966
Precipitation last 24 hours, 0.12
May's precipitation, 0.51
A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

Briefly

Monument School reunion Sunday
The Monument alumni school reunion will be at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 27, with a potluck dinner at the school. All graduates, teachers and those who attended school are encouraged to come and renew old friendships.

Commissioners to meet Tuesday
The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday at the courthouse. Items on the agenda include approval of payroll and bills; a presentation from Sheriff Mike Baughn on security at the Law Enforcement Center; appointment of Jim Engel to the incident management team; estimate from Roofmasters Roofing to replace the courthouse roof. The meeting is open to the public.

Ladies golf Tuesday
Ladies golf is at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Meadow Lake Golf Course. Registration is at 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$5 for the green fees and \$5 for the game.

Courthouse, landfill closed Monday
The Thomas County landfill will close at noon Saturday and reopen for normal hours Tuesday, for Memorial Day on Monday. The courthouse will be closed on Monday, .

No Monday trash pickup
The City of Colby will not be running sanitation routes on Monday in observance of the Memorial Day weekend. Residents who normally have garbage collected on Monday are asked to leave it curbside on Tuesday, May 29. The sanitation department will pick up Monday and Tuesday routes on Tuesday. For questions, call 460-4420.

Babysitting clinic planned in June
The Thomas County Health Department and the Thomas County Extension Office will be holding a two-day babysitting clinic Wednesday and Thursday, June 27-28 in the Activity Room #2 (upstairs) at the Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St. The class is for anyone who has

completed the fifth grade or older. The cost is \$25 which includes supplies and snacks, said Diann Gerstner, Thomas County Extension family and consumer sciences agent. Registration packets may be picked up at Thomas County Health Department, 350 S. Range Ave., or the packet can be downloaded from www.oznet.ksu.edu/thomas under publications. The registration deadline is Friday, June 22. For information call Gerstner at 460-4582 or email: diann@oznet.ksu.edu.

Master Gardeners available
Thomas County at the present time, does not have an agent, but the Thomas County Master Gardeners will be in the extension office from 9 to 11 a.m. every Thursday to answer questions anyone has and to identify specimens. Plant specimens or questions can be left any day of the week, but the gardeners will be in the office on Thursday. Also, people may email their questions to gardenaid@yahoo.com and one of the Master Gardeners will get an answer out as soon as possible.

Emergency technician classes taught in Colby

From "HELP," Page 1

With volunteer numbers low, Gatlin can teach the basic level classes here in Colby, and has four in training now. Also, three current volunteers recently passed the advanced training.

Finances are always an issue, too.

Two years ago, there were some

problems with bills because the price of insurance had gone up. That has improved with more people using Health Wave, insurance offered through the state for children, and Medicaid. The service also now utilizes a billing company.

Sometimes, however, it is hard to get a bill paid. When dealing with a transient, they try to bill their insur-

ance if they have any. If not, they are considered self-pay and bill directly to the person's address. That normally works, but there have been cases where they cannot find the individual, and must absorb the cost of the run.

Depending on the services required and the mileage involved, the cost varies. Rinehart said the

more they provide, the more it will cost.

Rising fuel costs are another concern.

"That affects everything, and not just the ambulances," Gatlin said.

Oxygen masks and other plastic supplies are made from petroleum. As the cost of oil goes up, so does everything else.

"Things are not getting cheaper," he said.

The two ambulances weigh about 12,000 pounds each, and on a good day, get 10 miles per gallon. They run on diesel. The services also has a Trailblazer SUV used when road conditions are bad, or when four-wheel drive is needed. It runs on gas, and does get better mileage.

Rod Run to feature concert, pancake feed, other activities

From "ROD RUN," Page 1

starts his show at 7 p.m. Afterward, 1950s Bop Shop music with Bill Haley's Comets will take the stage at 8 p.m. Tickets will be available at select locations and at the door.

The car show part of Rod Run is open to street rods, classics, cus-

toms, muscle cars and special interest. Registration begins at 5 p.m. June 8 at Sonic and Montana Mike's. Car registration continues from 8:30 a.m. to noon June 9 at Sixth Street and North Franklin.

Saturday, June 9, starts with a pancake feed at 7 a.m. at Colby Community Building. Free-will

donations will be accepted and proceeds will benefit Colby's Pickin' on the Plains bluegrass music festival scheduled in July.

Saturday afternoon, those who registered cars will be competed in a horseshoe pitching contest. At 4 p.m., people can take a guess at how long it will take for an engine with-

out oil in it to quit running. Golf cart races will also be held.

Plans are being made for a church service at 9 a.m. June 9. A poker run will begin at 10 a.m. and awards for the cars will be given out at noon. After the awards, a barbecue will be held at the former Jaycee's Center near Country Club Drive and East

Fourth Street.

For information, contact Jon Pope at Peoples State Bank, P.O. Box 869, Colby, Kan., 67701 or telephone at (785) 462-2224 or Brandon Booi at Taylor Motors, 1000 Taylor Ave., Colby, Kan., 67701 or telephone at (785) 460-3317.

Sheridan County hospital strives for improvements in 2007

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

Despite a difficult financial year in 2006, the administrator of Sheridan County Health Complex is optimistic about a better 2007.

"We had a very good April," Joe Stratton said. "A lot of it is from inpatient days, but you can't create that."

Stratton said while last year's \$446,524 loss could have been offset with the \$475,000 in a reserve fund, complex trustees opted not to use reserves as a stop gap measure. "If we gobble up our reserves

then we'll be out," Stratton said.

The 204 new patients at Hoxie Medical Clinic helped the financial picture at the complex made up of the 25 bed hospital, medical clinic, assisted living center and long term care facility.

But, Stratton said an improved April and growing medical clinic patient base is not enough to keep the complex moving forward.

"We talked with the county commissioners about needing more taxpayer money and we'll be on the agenda again in mid-June," Stratton said.

Since 1990, Sheridan County

Health Complex has received an appropriation of \$325,000, or about 6 percent, of the total \$4.7 million budget. Since then, taxpayers have not voted to increase that appropriation, but Stratton said it's going to take spending money to bring money through the complex doors. "A CAT-scan would help provide better care," Stratton said. "We wouldn't have to send people down the road for healthcare. Urgent care patients go down the road and don't come back."

Stratton also said a CAT-scan machine would help doctors and nurse practitioners in providing "on

site" care for those needing scans done in emergency situations and those wanting to doctor in Hoxie. He said it is going to take a county-wide effort to see the value of having Sheridan County Health Complex in Hoxie and how its \$200,000 monthly payroll pumps money into the county's economy.

"Of the 120 people the complex employs, 85 of them are in a full-time status," he said.

Trustees Richard Krannawitter, Charles Schwarz, Craig Cooper, Randy Farber and Ronnie Kauk at their annual meeting April 16 supported the idea of continued im-

provements for the complex.

Stratton said the state fire marshal told him the wooden awning in the central courtyard, located between the hospital and long-term care wings, needed a water sprinkler installed. Instead of installing a sprinkling system, the trustees decided a retractable patio cover was a better option.

"The wooden awning was old, and basically the retractable awning was just as expensive and we hope it will be up by June 10," Stratton said.

A bid submitted by Colby Canvas in the amount of \$6,840 was approved.

Another improvement to the complex is installation of a required fresh air return in the boiler room. A bid of \$6,531 from Glassman Corporation of Hays was approved.

And, as part of ongoing improvements to acute care patient rooms, a bid of \$4,155 from Direct Supply of Milwaukee, Wisc., was approved for new window blinds in the hospital. The blinds will compliment the "Adopt-A-Room" project whereby hospital staff members and volunteers in the community provide labor and supplies to upgrade hospital rooms.

Other new business at the annual meeting included the annual scholarship award given by the trustees. Three year veteran employee Amanda Rall of Golden Plains High School was awarded \$500 toward her college education. Rall has served the complex as a nurse's aide while attending high school in Rexford.

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.

Church sanctuary builder becomes target of state regulating board

MAYETTA (AP) — When 83-year-old Eldon Ray agreed to oversee construction of a sanctuary for the Mayetta Christian Church, he felt he was doing something good.

But a state regulating board saw it differently and accused him of acting as an architect and engineer without a license — igniting one of Kansas' strangest bureaucratic disputes in recent years.

Ray's plight, which included a \$500 fine from the Board of Technical Professions, began last fall as the two-year project was nearing its end in this eastern Kansas town of about 360 people. It didn't end until early May, when state lawmakers stepped in on Ray's behalf.

Short but sturdy, Ray isn't the typical 83-year-old. He helped paint the sanctuary, and helped put up its walls and wood trim for the windows. He said he took on the project to ease the loneliness created after his wife of 63 years, Leane, moved into a nursing home. His face lights up when he talks about their lives together — hunting, fishing and camping, their two daughters, and how Leane went along when he played guitar in area bands.

The sanctuary is a source of pride for Ray and the non-denominational church's 80 members. News reports praised his efforts, including the one that helped land Ray in

trouble when it characterized him as an "architect."

"We were all happy and joyous and then we had the rug pulled out from us," said the Rev. Gerald Haney, the church's pastor. "We felt like we were nailed to a cross of bureaucratic confusion."

The board, which licenses and regulates architects, engineers, land surveyors, geologists and landscape architects, feels it was doing its job — safeguarding public safety and preventing unlicensed people from practicing technical professions.

Its action was spurred by a complaint in September from the Kansas chapter of the American Institute of Architects, whose executive director attached a copy of a news story and said she believed the project required a professional architect and engineer.

"The board doesn't do things without reasons," said the board's attorney, Mark Bennett Jr., of Topeka. He referred questions to Chairman Joe Johnson, a Wichita architect, who didn't return four messages left on his office answering machine.

In October, the board wrote Haney that it had received a complaint and asked for the name of the architect and engineer for the

project. Church attorney Dennis White, of Holton, wrote back saying the church didn't believe any members had performed technical services and that the project followed local building codes, using local contractors.

"No one held themselves out as a professional and the drawings were certainly not of professional quality and did not include specifications," White wrote.

Included with that letter was a statement from Ray and his apology for not knowing an architect was needed when the church got the building permit from the city, which is 15 miles north of Topeka with about 360 residents. Ray also invited the board members to attend the church.

"When a person apologizes, don't you give them a little bit of leeway?" Ray said. "Having an architect and engineer doing a public building is a good thing, but it's got to be handled with common sense."

In a January letter, Bennett said the board's complaint committee believed Ray had served as an en-

gineer and architect "without the benefit of licensure." It informed Ray he was being fined \$500 and directed him to sign an agreement saying he had engaged in architecture and-or engineering.

Ray refused.

"I wasn't being an architect or engineer," he said. "I couldn't design if my life depended on it."

Ray said he drew a floor plan of a sanctuary of nearly 3,000 square feet, for 150 people, with a cathedral ceiling and a large arched glass window behind the altar framing a large shade tree swaying in the breeze.

But the drawing was only a starting point, and changes were made as the plan evolved.

The sanctuary replaced the original church in use since 1896. Atop the new structure is the large bell that was in the old church steeple.

Ray's attorney, Theresa Barr, of Lawrence, wrote Bennett in March, saying the case took "a great toll" on Ray. She urged leniency — and no fine.

"He certainly has paid his dues

for the situation," she wrote.

Bennett replied that the board's complaint committee would agree to say Ray "is alleged" to have served as an architect and engineer but wouldn't waive the fine.

Last month, the church paid the fine for Ray. Haney said the church has passed inspections by both an architect and engineer.

"Eldon was just trying to do something good, something to occupy his time since his wife was in the nursing home," Haney said. "The building filled his time and was a tremendous catharsis for him."

Then the Legislature intervened, adding language to a spending bill ordering the board not to spend any money through June 30, 2008, "to conduct any proceedings or enforce any orders relating to services performed" by Ray. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed the bill Monday and didn't veto the provision.

"It freezes everything. It tells the agency they can't do anything until we have had a look at it," said Rep. Joe Patton, R-Topeka.

Bridal Registry

Jessica Stephenson & Aaron Dempewolf

June 1st, 2007

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