

# Lawsuit filed over funeral picketing

TOPEKA (AP) — As planned by the Legislature, Attorney General Paul Morrison filed a lawsuit asking the Kansas Supreme Court to rule on whether a funeral picketing law enacted last month is constitutional.

The lawsuit filed Thursday amounts to a test case to obtain a ruling from the state's highest court. The law was crafted not to take effect unless its constitutionality was upheld either by the Supreme Court or a federal court.

"This lawsuit is the first step toward giving Kansas a funeral picketing statute police officers can enforce," Morrison said. "We wholeheartedly believe that the underlying provisions of the funeral picketing law are constitutional and this suit is the way we get the law to take effect."

The Supreme Court doesn't rule on whether a law is constitutional unless someone brings a legal challenge, which Morrison did to get the case before the justices.

"As I promised during the session, we will do everything in our power to protect grieving families from disrespectful intrusions during their time of grief and mourning," Morrison said.

The law says protesters can't be within 150 feet of a funeral one hour before, during or two hours after the end of the service. Violators would face up to a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.

The law also makes it unlawful to obstruct any public street or sidewalk and allows family members to sue if they feel protesters defamed the deceased — an exception to the general rule of law that one cannot libel or slander the dead.

The next step for the court is to consider Morrison's request for an expedited hearing. He asked the court for a ruling by July 1, and failing that, to hear the case in early September. The court doesn't sit in August.

The law was prompted by the Rev. Fred Phelps and his Westboro Baptist Church followers who protests at funerals, many of them for soldiers killed while on duty. They say the deaths are God's punishment for the nation harboring homosexuals and their protests are a form of religious expression protected by the Constitution.

"We know this is wrong. It violates the Constitution. The only question is whether the court will let them get away with it," said Shirley

**“As I promised during the session, we will do everything in our power to protect grieving families from disrespectful intrusions during their time of grief and mourning.”**

— Paul Morrison  
Kansas Attorney General

Phelps-Roper, the church's attorney and daughter of Fred Phelps.

She said if the law is upheld, it won't stop the protests because the church pickets beyond the boundaries set by the law. She said church members have protested at 281 military funerals in 43 states since June 15, 2005.

"These people are so filled with hatred that they are blinded by it. They hate us because they hate their God," Phelps-Roper said. "All this shucking and jiving to find a way to make it go away, they have brought the wrath of God on their heads."

When the Legislature enacted the bill, members included the provision that it wouldn't take effect until after it had been declared constitutional to lessen concerns that Phelps and his followers would file a legal challenge, win and collect attorney fees from the state.

Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, came up with the idea of getting a court ruling.

"The whole purpose is to be proactive. Everybody knows there are First Amendment issues in regulating any protest activity," Schmidt said. "When the lawsuit is over, we hope we have a definitive statement on the funeral privacy statute. That is what we need. Bringing a preemptive lawsuit is the way to do it."

Kansas is among 38 states to have enacted laws dealing with protesting at funerals, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Such laws have been challenged in federal courts in at least three states.

In March, a judge upheld significant portions of Ohio's law and in January a judge refused to bar Missouri from enforcing its funeral protest law. But Kentucky's funeral protest law was struck down in September.

## Safe travel tips offered Memorial Day weekend

With Memorial Day weekend and the summer travel season nearly here, the Kansas Department of Transportation reminds travelers that it provides travel information resources to assist them in planning their trips and as they travel.

The Kansas 511 Advanced Travel Information System and <http://511.ksdot.org> can help make trips safer and less frustrating.

By calling "511" from anywhere in Kansas or toll-free (866) 511-5368 from anywhere in the U.S., travelers can get specific road conditions, construction detours, and travel weather information for Interstate, US and Kansas state highways, as well as Kansas Turnpike routes.

With updates every 15 minutes, Kansas 511 can be a resource to help keep travelers informed about changing weather conditions during all seasons.

Kansas 511 received nearly 24,000 calls and almost 28,000 people visited the transportation department's companion 511 Website during the tornadoes and rain storms that resulted in flooding in 20 counties in Kansas earlier this month.

Information is provided 24 hours a day and is free from a landline phone.

For cellular phone users, the call will most likely count against their minutes, but no roaming fee should be involved.

With summer being the height of

road construction projects, summer travelers are more likely to encounter detours, road closures and/or traffic through construction sites.

By calling 511 before traveling, callers can find out if planned routes are impacted by road work and can make alternative plans as needed.

Kansas 511 also provides similar information for Nebraska, and Nebraska 511 provides information for Kansas.

Travelers may also access Colorado travel information by calling "511" from anywhere within Colorado.

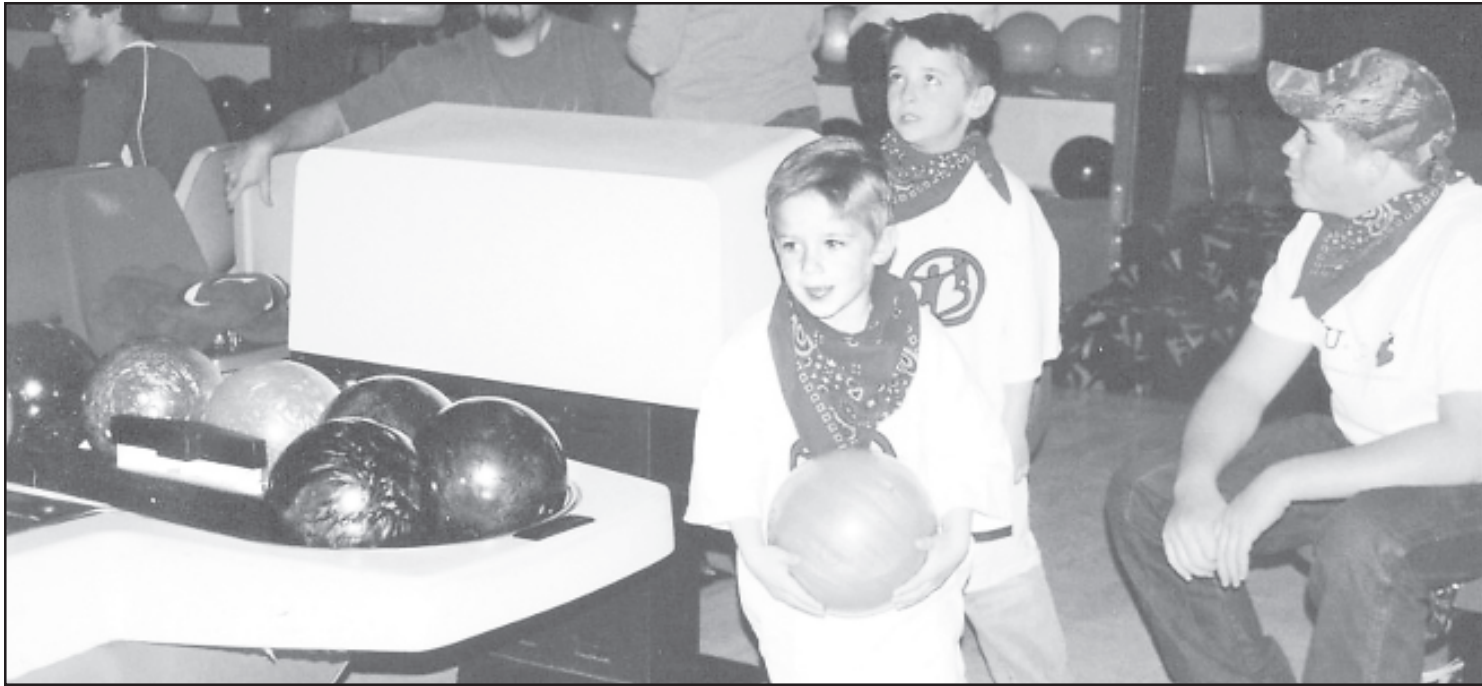
However, Colorado 511 is not yet accessible outside of the state. Kansas 511 provides phone numbers for callers to access road weather information in Missouri, Oklahoma and Colorado.

Road condition information is entered by transportation department crews across the state.

The same road condition and more detailed construction/detour information are also available on the internet site at <http://511.ksdot.org> or through the state transportation department's main website, [www.ksdot.org](http://www.ksdot.org), under "Road Conditions."

Specific information for the Kansas City metropolitan area can be accessed at [www.ksccout.org](http://www.ksccout.org). A link is also provided from this site for statewide information under "Contacts and Links — Transportation Links."

## Bowling for Kids Sake



Courtesy photo

*Bowl for Kids Sake* generated close to \$20,000 recently with proceeds going to the Thomas County Big Brothers Big Sisters organization, said Diane Stithem, executive director. *Bowl for Kids Sake* is the organization's largest fundraiser each year, providing needed money to continue the efforts of the mentoring program, which helps boys and girls at risk. As in year's past,

teams met at Colby Bowl and Fun Center, turning in pledge sheets and bowling two games with free pizza and pop. It is also an event that "littles" can participate in as well as others interested in having a lot of fun while helping a worthwhile cause, Stithem said. For information on becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, volunteering, or to make a donation, call 465-9125.



### Worship in the church of your choice this weekend.



**MINGO BIBLE CHURCH**, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Pastor Chris Shubert. Sunday School: 9:30AM - all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

## Schedule of church services

**ASCENSION-ON-THE-PRAIRIE EPISCOPAL**, Rev. Don Martin, College Drive & Wheatridge Rd., 462-3041, Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m. every Sunday. Evening Prayer, 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, September through May. Christian Education for Youth, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, September through May

**COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD**, Pastor, Jeremy Gundling, 245 W. College Dr. - 462-8234, Early Service - 8:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship - 10:45 a.m.

**BEREAN CHURCH**, 1000 S. Franklin, 460-2763, [www.colbyborean.com](http://www.colbyborean.com); Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Awana Clubs, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Middle & High School, Wednesday, 7 p.m. @ the Heartland Christian School Gym

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**, (Affiliated with American Baptist Churches USA) Carroll H. Morony, Pastor, 615 W. Webster, 462-2867. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.; Family Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening Serendipity: 7:00 p.m.; Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

**COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH**, Pastor Tom Huffman, 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m.

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**SACRED HEART CATHOLIC**, 462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 462-6342, Worship, 11:00 a.m.; Adult Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Kid's Club for kids age 3-5th grade meets first Wednesday of the month from 5:15-6:45 p.m.; Youth Group for 6th-9th grade meets the first Wednesday of the month 6:30-8:00 p.m., and the second Wednesday 7:00-8:00 p.m.

**WESLEYAN CHURCH**, 320 W. Pine - 462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**, 1145 S. Franklin - 460-6605, President Gary Slavens, 460-2656; Rocky Robbins, 1st counselor, 460-1101; Tim Wilson, 2nd counselor, 785-846-7796. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 462-3571.

**COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**, Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 460-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. [www.colbyumc.org](http://www.colbyumc.org)

**REDEEMING LOVE MINISTRIES, INC.**, 345 N. Franklin, Dr. W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Saturday Evening 7p.m. Worship, Equipping Class, Sunday, 10a.m., Sunday worship, 11a.m., Wednesday, R.L.M Training Centers (Bible School), 7p.m.

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**, 510 E. 4th, Jay Kelley, minister, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Eve. Worship 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

**COLBY EVANGELISM CENTER**, Rev. Robert Cooper, 815 West 3rd - 462-2062, Sunday School 9:45; Sunday service 10:00 and 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Friday Youth Power Hour at 7:00 p.m.

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**, (Disciples of Christ), Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, 385 W. 3rd - 460-2718, Sunday Morning Worship at 9:00 a.m.; Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. E-mail: [fccolby@st-tel.net](mailto:fccolby@st-tel.net)

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**, Rev. John L. Schmidt, East 5th & Country Club, 462-3497, Services, Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sunday; Sunday School and Adult Bible Class 9:15 a.m.; Services, 10:30 a.m. Visit us at [www.trinitycolby.com](http://www.trinitycolby.com)

**OUR SAVIORS LUTHERAN CHURCH**, Brewster, Sunday worship 9:00 a.m.; 2nd Sunday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

**PLEASANT HOME CHURCH**, Pastor, Charlie Busch, 694-2242, 3190 Road 70, Edson, Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Evening service, 6:00 p.m.

**LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH**, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m.

**WINONA METHODIST CHURCH**, Rev. Sheryl Johnson, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:15 a.m. (CDT)

**BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.

**THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF, REXFORD**, Joan Dingwerth, Director, 687-2565

**REXFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH**, Rexford, Pastor Lane Purcell, 687-3305, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

**BREWSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH**, Mike Pinkelman, Pastor, Brewster - 694-2720, Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Wed. mornings 6:30 a.m. - Men's Bible Study, Wed. 7:00 p.m. - Children's Ministries (Royal Rangers/Missionettes), Wed. 7:15 p.m. - Intercessory & Prayer, Thurs. 4:00 p.m. - Women's Bible Study

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