



Weather
Corner

Thursday night: Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 50s. South winds 5 to 15 mph.

Friday: Sunny. Highs in the lower 80s. South winds 10 to 20 mph.

Friday night: Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 50s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday: Sunny. Highs in the mid 80s.

Saturday night: Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s.

Sunday: Mostly sunny with a 20 percent chance of rain showers. Highs in the mid 80s.

Sunday night: Mostly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s.

Monday: Breezy. Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 80s.

Monday night: Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s.

Tuesday: Partly sunny. Highs in the mid 80s.

Tuesday night: Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 60s.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 80s.

Wednesday's high: 86, low, 50

Officials with the City of Colby's Public Works Department will no longer track the average water usage since summer is coming to an end.

Current temperatures are available by calling (785) 460-8367.

Preventing injury, death focus of safety week

MANHATTAN — Numbers always tell a story. For agriculture, the story line contains some harsh statistics:

- In 2007, 715 deaths and 80,000 disabling injuries were attributed to agriculture.
- The 2006 death rate for farmers and farm employees was 28 in 100,000, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- The 2006 injury rate for farmers and farm employees was 6 in 100.

As agriculture continues to be one of the most dangerous occupations in the world, the National Safety Council annually shines a spotlight on farming and ranching during National Farm Safety and Health Week, which begins Monday and continues through Friday.

“The Farm Safety Week theme emphasizes the value of safety and wellness . . .”

John Slocombe,
Extension farm safety specialist

This year's theme is “Farm Safety - Protect YOUR Investment.” Agriculture's death rate ranks first among all occupations, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Mining ranks second with 27 work deaths per 100,000 employees and construction is third

with 10 deaths per 100,000 workers.

“The Farm Safety Week theme emphasizes the value of safety and wellness to all agricultural producers,” said John Slocombe, Extension farm safety specialist at Kansas State University.

“We want to remind farmers of the need to be safe and stress the importance of protecting hearing, lung function, vision, skin, and the musculo-skeletal system.”

Workplace injuries are expensive and inconvenient.

For farmers it is estimated that four work days are lost for every injury.

Meanwhile, the daily chores of feeding and caring for livestock, and planting, tending and harvesting crops continue.

Slocombe noted that up to 60 percent of farm injuries occur when working with livestock. Most other injuries happen during crop production with machinery incidents accounting for most injuries.

Most farmer deaths involve tractors.

The overwhelming majority of injuries occur among workers aged 45 and older. The average age of U.S. farmers is 56.

According to the National Institute for Farm Safety, there is a bright spot — the number of agricultural deaths and injuries has fallen gradually during the last four years.

That decline is attributed to safer equipment and increased safety awareness, Slocombe said.

Editor's Note: K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans.

Kansas health agency to seek smoking ban

WICHITA (AP) — A state board will push again next year for a big health plan that includes an increase in tobacco taxes and a statewide ban on smoking in public places.

The Kansas Health Policy's proposal are likely to meet with some resistance from legislators because of their cost. The recommendations would phase in a \$243 million increase in spending on health care programs over four years.

Marcia Nielsen, the authority's executive director, conceded that legislators are unlikely to pass the proposals in a single package.

But, Nielsen told The Wichita Eagle for a story Wednesday,

“It's an important message that all these pieces fit together.”

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius already has said she expects to push again next year for a comprehensive health care plan that includes higher tobacco taxes. She has advocated such an increase to finance health programs since 2004.

Last year, the authority proposed — and Sebelius endorsed — a 21-point plan, also with an increase in tobacco taxes and a statewide ban on smoking in public places.

The proposal initially would have increased the tax on a pack of cigarettes by 50 cents, to \$1.29, then adjusted the tax for inflation.

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Buffalo soldiers honored

TOPEKA (AP) — Adrian Cruz acknowledges that before she began working at Fort Leavenworth, what little she knew of the Buffalo Soldiers came from hearing the famous Bob Marley song.

She and other Kansans gathered Wednesday at the Statehouse in hopes of seeing that today's young people don't have the same knowledge gap.

Cruz, the fort's community relations officer, and about 70 people participated in a ceremony honoring the Buffalo Soldiers, members of African-American units first formed by the Army after the Civil War.

Her younger brother wore replicas of the uniform soldiers wore during the American Indian wars on the Great Plains.

“These were honorable, brave,

courageous men,” Cruz said after the 90-minute event. “To expose kids to that — it gives them a sense of pride in who they are and where they come from.”

The Kansas Fever Committee, a group that tries to increase public awareness of African-Americans' history, sponsored the event. It was held on the 140th anniversary of the start of the Battle of Arikaree, fought in eastern Colorado between the Army and Plains Indians.

The Buffalo Soldiers were so named by the Cheyenne, who had never seen black soldiers before the tribe began fighting them. Marley's reggae song touched on what he saw as the irony of soldiers who faced discrimination fighting Indians who also were mistreated by whites.

Biotech corn, soybeans encroaching on wheat acres

WICHITA (AP) — Biotechnology that allows more profitable corn and soybean crops to thrive in arid fields is encroaching on traditional wheat acreage across the Great Plains, industry experts say.

Corn and soybeans varieties whose transgenic traits allow them to adapt to drier climates are making those crops more competitive for farmers to grow than wheat.

Not only has biotechnology moved those crops west, but it has boosted their yields, said Dusti Fritz, chief executive officer for Kansas Wheat, a cooperative venture of the Kansas Wheat Commission and the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers.

“It is in climates that had never seen production of those crops before,” Fritz said.

“That is true not only in Kansas, but if you think about the line of states from Texas all the

way into North Dakota and Canada, it is true throughout that productive belt.”

Irrigated corn acres are now common in western Kansas, where just 10 years ago little corn was grown in the region. The latest transgenic varieties may speed the transition.

Some of the new varieties of biotech corn, for example, reportedly can grow with 50 percent less water, dramatically reducing costs for irrigation, Fritz said.

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Woman climbs tree
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