



Weather
Corner

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

Saturday: Sunny. Highs in the lower 80s. Southeast winds 5 to 15 mph.

Saturday night: Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 50s. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.

Sunday: Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 80s. Southeast winds 10 to 20 mph.

Sunday night: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 50s.

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

Monday night: Partly cloudy. Lows around 60.

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

Tuesday night: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the lower 60s.

Wednesday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70s.

Wednesday night: Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the lower 50s.

Current temperatures are available at 460-8367.

Shaping a point

ANN MINER/Prairie Museum of Art and History

Dr. Jack Hofman, University of Kansas archeology professor, demonstrated tools and techniques used to shape rock into scrapers, points and other stone tools in prehistoric times. About 30 people attended his lecture, sponsored by the local chapter of Kansans Anthropological Association, Saturday at the Prairie Museum of Art and History.

Preschool idea hits snag

TOPEKA (AP) — Jessica James' house looks every bit like a preschool.

Her family room is painted bright yellow and filled with blocks and other toys, while her dining room is dark green with murals of prowling jungle animals.

Seated in little chairs pulled up to short tables, the children under her care carefully placed and sometimes piled beans onto lines of glue drawn on construction paper in the shapes of the letters B and C.

"Like bumblebees buzzing and crunchy, crunchy cookies," prompted James, stressing the B and C sounds.

James has been working with young children for 20 years — at times in a center and now in her home. But she gets nervous about the future when she hears Topeka Unified School District officials talk about taking a more expansive role in early childhood education.

James — joined by three other concerned child care providers — recently asked school board members to "stay in your lane."

"They've already got problems in the school system," James said as children played. "Why would they want to add onto that?"

The district this year has been fixing its sights on early childhood education. Nationally, preschool has become a focus, with at least three states offering classes for all 4-year-olds. In Kansas, a Governor's Summit on Early Childhood last year showed interest in early childhood programs crosses party lines.

The idea is to take advantage of the early years, when children's brains develop rapidly.

Proponents of more preschool say that much of the battle public schools face begins long before children walk in the door for kindergarten.

"We end up paying much higher prices later on for remediation costs and special education costs when everything we know about brain science and brain development tells us within the first five years, that is your greatest opportunity," said school board member Patrick Woods.

School board member Janel Johnson, however, is sympathetic to the child-care operators' concerns.

"We don't have to provide everything," said Johnson, who urges the district to focus on children in kindergarten through high school. "We can find someone who is good at doing that, and we partner with them."

The problem, Woods said, is that many children don't get a preschool education. The district, which offers limited preschool programs for children with special needs or those considered at-risk, maintains a waiting list. It also has a waiting list for its Parents as Teachers program — in which families of young children receive home visits from an educator who offers parenting advice and checks to make sure kids are meeting developmental milestones.

A committee created by the school board recently laid out goals for improving early childhood education — a document that is going to be pored over again as the district launches a long-range plan.

As is, the committee suggests such ideas as taking family education into neighborhoods through community centers and churches and creating a mobile learning center. Also in the mix is the dream of an early childhood center — a facility that could provide resources for families and classroom space for expanded preschool offerings.

Currently, the district leases space for some of its classrooms and for its Parents as Teachers program, which the plan would expand.

Even if the district expands its offerings, Woods said, it wants to work with existing providers.

"If they'd look, they'd see the crux of the plan is really around collaboration and partnership," Woods said.

Even if the district increases the number of preschool classrooms, Woods said programs would be optional. And many parents, he said, might prefer a private setting that would offer extended care while they are at work.

Norton escapee in Denver

A Norton prison inmate who walked away from a work crew on Tuesday, and apparently assaulted an elderly Norton woman and stole her car has been arrested in Denver, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation said this morning.

The KBI released a statement saying that the Denver Police Department had arrested Christopher E. Zorn, 46, and he was awaiting extradition back to Kansas.

The KBI reported a warrant for Zorn was filed in Norton County District court for aggravated escape, aggravated battery, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated burglary and felony theft.

A 1987 Mercury Sable believed to have been stolen from a woman Zorn assaulted in Norton was recovered at an I-70 rest area east of Deer Trail, Colo., the KBI reported.

Norton County Sheriff Troy M. Thomson is waiting for Zorn to appear in court in Colorado to see if he chooses to waive extradition back to Kansas.

Chris Zorn

back to Kansas. If extradition is refused, he said, the process of obtaining a governor's warrant will be started.

The KBI issued a statewide bulletin on Wednesday for officers to be on the lookout for Zorn, who was in prison on theft and aggravated burglary charges from Sedgwick County.

Tuesday Zorn, an inmate of the Norton Correctional Facility, walked away from a work crew located on the west side of Norton, the KBI reported.

Thomson said within minutes of the initial report, officers from a number of departments including the sheriff's Department, Norton Police, Kansas Highway Patrol, Wildlife and Parks, and the Department of Corrections, began a ground and air search.

A K-9 unit from the Department of Corrections was brought in.

Thomson said it appears Zorn entered the home of an elderly woman in Norton, assaulted her and stole her car. The woman's injuries were severe enough to have her transported to a trauma center in Wichita, where she remains, listed in stable condition.

We, the undersigned, endorse and support Sheriff Mike Baughn as the best choice for Sheriff on the November 4th General Election ballot. We have both worked with Sheriff Baughn for many years and know that he is the prime candidate for the Office. Please write-in MIKE BAUGHN for Sheriff, darken the oval to the left of his name and re-elect Mike as our Sheriff!

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Campaign Manager
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