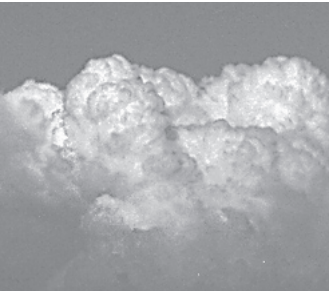




Weather
Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of light rain showers. Patchy fog after midnight. Lows in the lower 40s. Light winds.
Friday: Patchy fog in the morning. Cloudy with scattered light rain showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 60s. Southwest winds around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation 50 percent.
Friday Night: Mostly cloudy in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 40s. Light winds.
Saturday: Sunny and warmer. Highs in the upper 70s. Northwest winds around 10 mph.
Saturday Night: Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 40s.
Sunday Through Monday Night: Mostly clear. Highs in the upper 70s. Lows in the upper 40s.
Tuesday: Sunny. Highs in the upper 70s.
Tuesday Night and Wednesday: Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 40s. Highs around 80.

Wednesday: High, 55; Low 45
Precip: Wed. 0.50 inches
Month: 1.40 inches
Year: 21.93 inches
Normal: 17.71 inches
(K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
Friday 7:35 a.m. 7:36 p.m.
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

School budget cuts may garner new lawsuit

TOPEKA (AP) — Cuts in aid to Kansas public schools are generating talk of another lawsuit over education funding, after the state backed off previous commitments because of its budget problems.

Attorneys who sued the state successfully in the past are consulting with school districts about the cuts, both said Tuesday.

In 2005 and 2006, the Kansas Supreme Court ordered legislators to increase education spending dramatically.

This year, the state has cut funding for schools by about \$130 million, reducing their base aid by \$215 per student, or 4.8 percent. Under a 2006 law, that aid was supposed to continue increasing to at least keep up with inflation.

The Supreme Court had said the law fulfilled the Legislature’s duty under the state constitution to provide a suitable education for

every child. Some educators now question whether the state is meeting the mandate and are willing to consider more litigation.

“It’s an option that’s on the table that our board will consider if this continues,” said Richard Atha, superintendent of Garden City’s schools.

Wichita lawyer Alan Rupe, the lead attorney in the previous school funding lawsuit, said he and the other attorneys are sharing information with school officials who are evaluating their options following the budget cuts.

“Nobody likes lawsuits, so it’s not without some hand-wringing that those kinds of decisions are made,” Rupe said. “No decision has been made at this point.”

Aid to schools consumes 52 percent of the state’s general revenues, and many legislators — particularly Republicans — argued

that it had to be trimmed to keep the budget balanced this year. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Kevin Yoder, an Overland Park Republican, noted that other programs saw deeper cuts.

Rupe said legislators could reverse tax cuts granted in previous years to provide new dollars for schools. But Yoder and other Republicans contend that raising taxes will slow or halt any economic recovery.

“This comes back to school districts attempting to use the court system to impose tax increases,” Yoder said. “We all know the money isn’t there, and we can’t deficit spend.”

Dodge City Superintendent Alan Cunningham said the district cut \$4.5 million in spending, both to make up for cuts in state aid and to be able to renovate its aging middle school. He said it has post-

poned buying new textbooks and cut training and travel spending, and has managed to avoid laying off teachers.

He said if cuts start hurting instruction, “That is probably what will push any group over the edge.”

“I don’t know if we’re there yet,” he said.

Liberal Superintendent Vernon Welch said his district is trying to be realistic about the state’s finances.

“I know those guys are trying hard up there to find money for education and make their state run, also,” he said.

Atha said filing a new lawsuit is a last resort, but he also said he’s disappointed that legislators don’t appear to be complying with the obligations imposed by the state Supreme Court.

And Rupe said: “It does surprise me that their constitutional memory is fairly short.”

City council to hire pool design firm

From “POOL,” Page 1

The city will also pay McElyea and his personnel for the final design, construction documents, and bidding services if the ballot is approved. This amounts to 7.5 percent of total construction costs. In addition, the city will pay McElyea and company for inspection costs (construction administration services, facility start-up, and construction observation). This will amount to 1.5 percent of total construction costs.

Armstrong said the city would pay Aquatic Design Consultants \$14,500 for the initial planning phase of the pool project. She said this number reflects the \$5,000

the company will be paid initially plus the estimated five trips McElyea will be making to Colby. If the ballot doesn’t pass, McElyea will not be making any trips to Colby.

Armstrong said Burbach would have charged about \$14,260 for the initial planning phase of the pool project. She said their design would have reflected 6 1/2 percent of total construction costs and four percent of total inspection costs.

Councilmen Omar Weber said pinpointing where the pool would be located before the sales tax vote could influence the way people vote on the issue.

The city council and the committee have yet to identify a location to build a new pool.

Corps of engineers to study Missouri river

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Army Corps of Engineers has scheduled public meetings in South Dakota and Kansas to kick off a study to compare modern uses of the Missouri River to those that were authorized by the federal Flood Control Act of 1944.

The first meeting will be Oct. 1 in Fort Pierre, S.D., followed by a session Oct. 8 in Kansas City, Kan.

The U.S. House passed a bill

earlier this year that included \$25 million for the study. Congress would have to approve any changes to the 1944 law.

Downstream and upstream Missouri River basin residents have long been at odds over the corps’ management of the river. Downstream interests want water for barge traffic, while those upstream put a priority on other uses such as recreation and wildlife habitat.

Hostage taker charged with two felony counts

TOPEKA (AP) — A fugitive from Colorado was charged in Kansas on Wednesday with kidnapping and other crimes for allegedly taking a newlywed couple hostage at home in a small town outside Topeka.

Jesse Dennis Dimmick, 23, of Aurora, Colo., faces two felony counts of kidnapping, and one felony count each of theft, aggravated robbery and possession of drug paraphernalia. The Shawnee County district attorney’s office also charged him one misdemeanor count of battery. Each kidnapping charge carries a possible penalty of anywhere from 4 years and 11 months to 20 years and seven months in prison.

No hearing in Shawnee County District Court has been set, and District Attorney Chad Taylor is asking Dimmick’s bond to be set at \$1 million. Dakota Loomis, a spokesman for the district attorney, said Dimmick remains at Stormont-Vail Regional Medical Center, recovering from being shot in the chest during the Sept. 12 hostage incident in Dover, about 15 miles southwest of Topeka.

Dimmick is also being held on a warrant from Colorado, Loomis said. Dimmick is wanted there in connection with the slaying of a 25-year-old man found in a motel in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

According to court records, Dimmick did not yet have an attorney Wednesday.

Loomis said while Taylor’s office is working with the Arapahoe County, Colo., district attorney’s office, but they’ve not figured out which state’s criminal case will go forward first. A message left after hours with the Colorado prosecutor’s office was not returned.

“We’re happy to move for-

ward,” Loomis said.

Authorities have said Dimmick fled Colorado in a stolen vehicle and was spotted by sheriff’s deputies in Geary County, about 50 miles west of Topeka. They said he wrecked that vehicle and fled on foot. A second suspect with him, Shayne Miller, 35, was captured in Salina and has been returned to Colorado, according to the Kansas attorney general’s office.

Authorities said Dimmick stole a black Chrysler van in the Junction City area and started a high-speed chase that ended in Dover.

He went off a road through town, ran through two front lawns and crashed the van outside the home of Jared and Lindsay Rowley. Family members said he forced his way into the house with a knife and held the couple against their will.

Loomis said the battery charge stems from Dimmick having physical contact with Jared Rowley while entering the house. He said Dimmick is charged with aggravated robbery because he had a weapon and used the Rowleys’ personal items, including a cell phone, without intending to give them back. The theft charge stems from the stolen van.

Dimmick also had a glass pipe used for smoking drugs in his possession, Loomis said.

Family members said the couple tried to make Dimmick comfortable, watching television and even spreading blankets and pillows on the floor of their bedroom so that he could rest. After more than two hours, he fell asleep, and they left the home.

Authorities have said officers then stormed the home, and Dimmick was shot in the confrontation that followed.

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