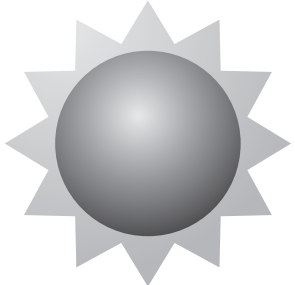


Weather
Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 43. West wind around 5 mph.
Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 79. West wind between 5 and 10 mph.
Saturday Night: Clear, with a low around 49. West wind 5 to 15 mph becoming south.
Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 81. Breezy, with a north wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.
Sunday Night: Clear, with a low around 45.
Monday: Sunny, with a high near 73.
Monday Night: Clear, with a low around 46.
Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 82.
Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 52.
Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 82.
Wednesday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 49.
Thursday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a high near 68.
Thursday: High, 61; Low 45
Precip: Thursday 0.11 inches
Month: 1.51 inches
Year: 22.04 inches
Normal: 17.71 inches
(K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
Saturday 7:36 a.m. 7:34 p.m.
Sunday 7:37 a.m. 7:33 p.m.
Monday 7:38 a.m. 7:31 p.m.
(U.S. Naval Observatory)

Government
may buy out
Kansas town

WICHITA (AP) — A possible buyout of residents in a former southeast Kansas mining town has moved one step forward in Washington.

On a voice vote Thursday, the Senate approved an amendment giving the Environmental Protection Agency authority for the buyout in Trecree.

About 70 families live in Trecree, where zinc and lead were mined for decades. Many residents are hoping for a buyout, saying the contamination makes it impossible to sell their homes.

The amendment was introduced by Sens. Pat Roberts and Sam Brownback of Kansas and Oklahoma James Inhofe of Oklahoma.

The Senate added the measure to an appropriations bill for the Interior Department. The Senate bill will have to be reconciled with the House version, which doesn't have the Trecree amendment.

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LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES!

School administrators discuss dropout prevention

From “DROPOUTS,” Page 1

dropouts not only influence their individual future but have a huge impact on a community’s economic, social, and civic health. She said that dropouts are three and a half times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested. In fact, 75 percent of prison inmates in our country are high school dropouts, she said. Kansas suffers a cost because of dropouts, Noble said. There were 3640 dropouts in Kansas in 2007, and that figures out to \$946 million in lost lifetime earnings for that class of students alone, she said. Each student who graduates

from high school instead of dropping out will save Kansas an average of \$12,939 in Medicaid over the course of their lifetime, Noble said.

One positive note that Noble shared was that our region of the state has had a consistently low dropout rate over the last five years when compared to the rest of the state, only three to four percent.

Administrators don’t know the exact reasons why students in our region dropout, Noble said. From national surveys, they know that there are four areas most commonly the cause: life events, fade outs, push outs, or failing to succeed. She said on

a survey of 500 dropouts across 23 states, five reasons were given: classes weren’t interesting enough, missed too many days and couldn’t catch up, spent time with people who weren’t interested in school, had too much freedom and not enough rules (in school), or was failing in school.

Noble had the group share ideas and concerns pertaining to our region. She asked what was working here and what isn’t and what challenges young people face here that might cause them to dropout. Most common concerns mentioned among the group were school budget restrictions, poverty, lack of support and direction, and that

students don’t often see the relevance of what they are learning.

“All we’ve done today, leads up to the Summit in October,” Noble said.

“We will take the information gathered from all these regional conversations and use it to help develop our action plan,” she said.

The Kansas Drop-Out Prevention Summit will be held from 8:30 a.m., to 4:30 p.m., Oct. 20, at Wichita State University. Cost is \$12 for adults, youth ages 21 and under are free. There will be separate tracks for youth and adults. Visit the web site for registration information.

Federal government will have more swine flu vaccine on hand

WASHINGTON (AP) — More swine flu vaccine will arrive the first week of October than officials previously thought — between 6 million and 7 million doses.

That’s roughly double earlier predictions, and most will be the nasal spray version called FluMist, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said Thursday.

Lots of flu shots will soon follow: About 40 million vaccine doses will arrive by mid-October, with between 10 million and 20 million more arriving each week, she said.

The government wants people most at risk from swine flu — or the 2009 H1N1 strain — to be first in line for the initial doses. They include pregnant women, the young — from age 6 months to 24 years, and people younger than 64 who have flu-risky conditions such as asthma.

One caution: That first-arriving FluMist is only for healthy people ages 2 to 49, so many of the high-risk will need to watch for the shot version.

The vaccine itself will be free — the government bought it with taxpayer dollars. However, some

providers may charge a fee to administer it; administration fees for regular flu vaccine often are in the \$20 range.

But Sebelius said her office has been urging doctors and other vaccinators not to charge an administration fee. It’s another step to speed vaccinations especially of the poor and uninsured for whom even a modest fee could be a disincentive.

“We’re trying to lower the barriers as much as possible,” she said. “We can’t order them not to charge.”

Niche crop can pay off for area farmers

NICODEMUS (AP) — A new “it” grain is blooming in the fields of northwestern Kansas.

Teff has a ready-made market of Ethiopian expatriates hungering for a taste of home with virtually no supply of the grain for their beloved injera bread. Teff packs more protein per pound than wheat. And because it produces gluten-free flour, it could open a buffet line of breads and pastas to people with celiac disease.

It also can withstand drought and floods and, so far, it hasn’t fallen prey to pests that bedevil other Midwestern crops.

Ethiopians have long adored the grain, raising it by hand in their highlands and making it the country’s staple cereal.

“People will definitely buy it,” said 52-year-old Gillan Alexander, a Graham County farmer who is among those experimenting with a crop that is ancient in Africa but new to Kansas.

But can America reap its harvest?

Size, it turns out, matters. A grain of teff is only slightly larger than the period at the end of this sentence. Walk through a field that Gary Alexander — a cousin of Gillan’s — has planted in wheat, and all the challenges of mechanizing teff production begin to show.

Start with the ground. Squint closely enough and you see that some of the tiny reddish seeds have fallen to the dirt, lost for any chance of harvest. In fact, the word “teff” translates to “loss” in the Ethiopian language of Amarigna.

The grass has begun to shed its seeds partly because the plants have matured at dramatically different rates. Some are bright green shoots just starting out, while others are browning in retreat.

No sooner does it reach maturity than the soft stem bends over. Modern farmers call it lodging, and they don’t like it. They prefer crops with good posture that stand up for vacuum-like harvest machinery.

Teff has proved all the more troublesome because even at full growth, it can vary in height by a foot

or more. When teff is harvested, far too much chaff ends up with the Lilliputian grain.

“You can tell how the Ethiopians get the seed by whacking at this stuff by hand,” 62-year-old Gary Alexander said. “I don’t think my hands will last that long.”

He has pieced together two-by-fours and window screen to devise a sieve, and it works well enough. So it’s possible, but not yet practical, to harvest teff commercially.

Ethiopian farming of teff only supports a national per capita income of \$800 a year. To make the payments on Kansas farmland, to cover the cost of 21st-century farm equipment and to leave a little profit at the end will require something more efficient.

“So far, it’s been too labor-intensive,” said Josh Coltrain of Cloud County Community College.

Coltrain has been hired by the Kansas Black Farmers Association to oversee a project paid for by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to determine whether teff has potential in America’s breadbasket.

Just a few hundred acres have been planted so far, scattered among several farmers in an area where one person sometimes tends more than 1,000 acres. Grants issued through the Solomon Valley Resource Conservation Development Area since the test plots were first planted in 2005 add up to less than \$200,000.

The grain’s promise, Coltrain said, doesn’t come in its yields. Farmers can get perhaps three times as many bushels per acre from wheat. But the premium paid for teff — at a few health food stores and groceries that cater to African immigrants and to Ethiopian restaurants — could quickly make up for the smaller bounty.

“I get calls all the time from people wanting to buy it from us, mainly for Ethiopian restaurants and bakeries,” he said. “I have to tell them we haven’t got everything figured out yet.”

Coltrain thinks it ultimately will be a good Great Plains crop.

September a great time to divide Kansas peonies

MANHATTAN — By tradition, September is peony division time in the central United States.

“Of course, if they’re happy in their planting site, peonies would just as soon stay there indefinitely — for decades. In fact, if you divide them anyway, you get two kinds of payback. You have more peonies. But, they’ll really drag things out and take about three years to return to full bloom and size,” said Ward Upham, Master Gardener coordinator for Kansas State University Research and Extension.

Early fall is best for dividing mid-plains peonies, he said, because the plants are essentially dormant by Sept. 1, even though their leaves are still green.

“I actually remove the foliage before I divide a peony,” Upham added. “That makes handling the plant and locating its pink, below-ground buds much easier.”

The horticulturist listed the following as the next steps in the process:

- Dig out the entire plant.
- Shake and wash off as much soil as possible, so the plant’s pink buds or “eyes” are visible.
- Use a sharp knife (the roots are tough) to cut the root ball into divisions, each of which has three to four buds.
- Select a planting site that receives a half-day or more of full sun. Dwarf-type peonies will need at least two feet between plants. Standards will need 4 feet.
- Plant divisions with their pink buds about 1 inch below the soil surface. With buds set more than 2 inches deep, peonies often won’t flower ... ever.
- Firm the soil often as you fill the planting hole, so it cannot settle later and pull the plant down with it.
- Water in well. Then water again through fall and winter to keep the soil moist.
- After the soil freezes, add a mulch of compost, straw or the like to protect the weakly rooted division from winter’s freeze-thaw cycles — which can heave relatively new plantings out of the ground.

State to export \$425 million in winter wheat

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansas officials expect to sign an agreement with a Taiwanese trade delegation for the purchase of \$425 million worth of the state’s wheat.

Gov. Mark Parkinson planned to have a signing ceremony Friday with an eight-member delegation of government and business leaders from Taiwan. The event is to be in the Kansas Senate chamber.

The agreement is to purchase the hard red winter wheat in 2010 and 2011. It’s the first such agreement between Kansas and Taiwan dealing with wheat since 2003.

The Kansas Department of Commerce said that last year, Kansas exported more than \$1.2 billion worth of wheat, corn and sorghum.

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