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Texas storm reaches Colby on Thursday

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A tropical storm that flooded parts of Texas and Oklahoma struck Thomas County a glancing blow Thursday, bringing low clouds, cool temperatures and light moisture.

Thomas County was on the very edge of clouds thrown out by Tropical Storm Hermine as it dissipated over Texas. Chris Schaffer, an intern with the National Weather Service in Goodland, said the storm was more intense in Oklahoma and Texas.

Schaffer had been monitoring the storm for the past several days in order to make aviation forecasts. The service's concern in this area, he said, was low visibility from the clouds or fog and high winds. Winds Thursday afternoon were still around 17 mph but tapering off. The clouds dissipated

about 6 p.m.

Further south, several people were killed and more swept away as flash floods washed out roads. Storm damage knocked out the municipal water system in Holland, Texas, and rescuers had to pull more than 100 people from partially submerged cars across the state. The weather service reported winds blowing as fast as 137 mph.

According to the weather service, Hermine was first spotted as a tropical depression in the southwestern Gulf of Mexico early this week. It was given tropical storm status as it intensified on Monday. It was the eighth named storm of the 2010 hurricane season, but it never reached hurricane strength.

Hermine made landfall in northeast Mexico late Monday. It moved north into Texas the next day. It began to lose strength as

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Burning with school spirit



Colby High School students gathered at Dennen Field for the annual homecoming bonfire Thursday night. Students had to create a fake bonfire last year due to high winds, but this year

the weather cleared up in time for the students to have a real one. The Colby High football team faces Hugoton tonight at 7:30 in the homecoming game.

ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Colby Grade School students trooped past an installation art project by the first and second grades between the grade school and intermediate buildings on Wednesday.

Colby Grade School artists create pint-sized installation

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It may not be quite the same scale, but Colby first and second grade art students made installed their version of artist Christo's "Running Fence" this week.

Running Fence is a 24 1/2 mile fence made of nylon fabric that Christo Javacheff, a Bulgarian-born American artist, and his wife Jeanne-Claude

installed across two California counties in 1976.

Art teacher Trish Starbuck said she had the students studying Christo's projects, especially Running Fence, and other kinds of installation art.

"Installation art adds objects to a space to transform an area and make you look at it differently," she said.

The Colby students' version was made of wooden tongue depressors and installed along the con-

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Transportation agency contracts e-mail virus

TOPEKA (AP) - The Kansas Department of Transportation says a computer virus forced a brief shutdown of its e-mail system.

The agency says the virus infected 55 of its 2,600 computers Thursday afternoon. All of the computers are expected to be operating normally by the end of the day Friday.

The department says the virus was spread through

an e-mail with the subject line, "here you have." Clicking a link in the e-mail infected the computer, which then began sending e-mails to everyone on the recipient's contact list.

Thursday night, a prominent warning on the agency's website cautioned users not to open any e-mails from department contacts with "here you have" in the subject line.

Commission release report cards for state judges up for retention

Earlier this month, a group of lawyers, judges and citizens released their recommendations on 53 Kansas judges up for retention on this year's ballot.

The Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance released their recommendations on Sept. 1. The 13-member panel conducts surveys of lawyers, witnesses, victims and fellow judges for each judge on the ballot. Questions include whether or not the judge writes clear opinions, whether they render decisions without regard to possible criticism and their behavior in court. According to commission spokesman Randy Hearrell, the commission has surveyed more than 185,000 people.

For each judge, the commission gives an approval rating from judges and lawyers based off the surveys. They report the percentage of lawyers and judges who recommend retaining each judge and they give an average score out of 4, similar to a school grade average.

Neither Municipal Court Judge Richard Ress nor District Court Judge Glenn Schiffner are up for retention this year, they will be on the ballot in 2012.

Four Kansas Supreme Court Justices are up for retention this year. The commission recommends retaining all of them.

• Carol Beier, who has drawn controversy recently over her support of abortion rights, had a 91 percent approval rating from lawyers and a 96 percent rating from district judges. Beier received a 3.55 out of 4 from lawyers and scored above a 2 from each of the other categories. Beier, from Kansas City, has been on the court since 2003.

• Dan Biles, from El Dorado, scored a 94 percent from lawyers and 95 percent from judges. Biles is the newest member of the supreme court. He was appointed in 2009, the final judicial appointment of outgoing Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

• Marla Luckert of

Goodland, received a 90 percent approval rating from lawyers and the highest rating of the four supreme court justices from fellow judges, 98 percent. Luckert joined the court in 2003.

• Lawton Nuss received the lowest rating of the four from lawyers, 84 percent, and 92 percent from judges. Nuss was marked down particularly in categories of clarity and opinion writing, but praised for preparedness and demeanor while in court. Nuss, from Salina, is currently serving as chief justice after the death of Robert Davis in August.

There are also seven appeals court judges up for retention, Michael Buser, Nancy Caplinger, Henry Green, Stephen Hill, Thomas Malone, Patrick McAnany and Melissa Standridge. The commission is recommending all these judges be retained.

Full results of the surveys can be downloaded at www.kansasjudicialperformance.org.

Briefly

Convoy to parade through town

The Kansas section of the World's Largest Convoy, a fund raiser for Special Olympics, will parade through town at 11 a.m. Saturday down Range Avenue, Fourth Street, Franklin Avenue and Davis Avenue before heading to the fairgrounds. For information, call Jane Mentlick at 443-1682.

Church plans fish fry Sunday

Trinity Lutheran Church plans a fish feed to benefit the Orphan Grain Train charity from noon to 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the church. The Christian volunteer organization gathers food, clothing and medical supplies for people around the world. For information, call the church office at 462-3497.

Sign up for food by Monday

Prairie Land Food sign up is open until Monday

at State Farm Insurance, 905 E. Fifth St. Delivery will be Saturday, Sept. 25, at the Sacred Heart School gym. For information, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579.

Walk, run for Recovery Month

The Thomas County Coalition will hold a 5K Awareness Walk/Run for Celebrate Recovery Month at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Colby Community Building. For information, call Melany Wilks at 460-4470.

Foundation plans fun shoot

The Citizens Foundation will have a benefit fun shoot at 9 a.m. Sunday, at the Colby Gun Club, four miles west on U.S. 24, one mile south and one mile west. There will be help for novice shooters. Registration is \$50. Proceeds will go for medical equipment and education at the hospital. For information, call Tama Unger at the foundation, (785) 460-1214.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

Orchestra looking for players

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra plans a meeting for new and returning members at 7 p.m. Monday in the Colby Community College band room, with a rehearsal will be from 7:30 to 9 p.m. New musicians are not required to audition; just show up. For information, call President Mary Shoaff at 462-2159.

Flu shots available Sept. 22

The Thomas County Health Department will have

a flu immunization clinic from 2 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 22, at the 4-H building on the Thomas County Fairgrounds. For information, call 460-4599.

Church plans mission auction

The Colby United Methodist Church will hold a dinner and auction to raise money for missions at noon Sunday, Sept. 26, at the church. The church is looking for items to auction. These can be dropped off from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the church, 950 S. Franklin Ave. For information, call the office at 460-2761.



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