

Weather Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 52. Northeast wind around 10 mph becoming southeast.
Saturday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 82. Breezy, with a south wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.
Saturday Night: A 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 62. Breezy, with an east wind 20 to 25 mph decreasing to between 5 and 10 mph. Winds could gust as high as 30 mph.
Sunday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 87. East wind between 5 and 10 mph.
Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 61.
Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 84.
Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 60.
Tuesday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 87.
Tuesday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 60.
Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 83.
Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 60.
Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 87.

Thursday: High, 69; Low 49
Precip: Thursday None
Month: 0.12 inches
Year: 5.32 inches
Normal: 9.84 inches (K-State Experiment Station)

Sunrise and Sunset
Saturday 6:17 a.m. 9:11 p.m.
Sunday 6:17 a.m. 9:11 p.m.
Monday 6:17 a.m. 9:12 p.m. (U.S. Naval Observatory)

Colby Water Use
Thursday 2,569,000 gal. (Colby Public Works)

Drunk cyclist crashes bike into police car

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Police say a woman cyclist is facing a drunken-driving charge after striking a police cruiser with its lights and sirens on. City police say the woman was later treated for minor injuries. Authorities say the officer was responding to a downtown emergency when the crash occurred at about 2 a.m. May 29. The woman's name and age were not immediately released.

Area to see effects of arts cut

From "CUTS," Page 1

fewer shows this year. Those remaining shows will be held in central locations while some of the outlying communities will have to do without, she said, because of the cost, technical requirements and poor attendance at some past shows. The association isn't the only area organization to get grant money from the commission. The Kansas Music Teachers Association got \$4,284 for operational support in Thomas County last year. Sue Taylor, director of the Prairie Museum of Art and History, said the museum has also gotten some grants from the commission over the years, including one where local citizens harvested vegetables while artists painted the scene. The museum also got a grant for a landscape architect to do a site plan. "We used it, but we didn't rely on it," she said. The commission awarded \$7,256 in grants to Decatur County and \$6,930 to Sherman County last year. The arts budget veto came at the end of a legislative session filled with budget cuts, but the arts commission funding was one item the legislature wanted to keep. Brownback had initially issued an executive reorganization order to close the commission - one of several he issued to eliminate or consolidate state agencies. The Senate voted to reject that order earlier in the session, the only one of seven orders rejected, but once the final budget was submitted, the governor made several line-item vetoes, including the arts commission.

Sen. Ralph Ostmeier said he suspected Brownback was going to make the veto. "I didn't see him bluffing," he said. The governor called the veto a cost-saving measure, but Ostmeier said the \$689,000 set aside for the arts wasn't much compared to other budget items. "That's not even a rounding error with some of the funding we throw around here," he said. On June 1, the day usually reserved for a short closing ceremony, the House took a vote to override the veto. State Rep. Rick Billinger voted to override, saying state and federal support for the arts is more important in western Kansas than in eastern Kansas where there are more private donors. The override needed 84 out of 125 to get the needed two-thirds majority. However, Billinger said only 94 House members had remained in Topeka for the formal adjournment ceremony last Wednesday. "The chances were slim to none," he said. Billinger said the vote was more symbolic in nature. "It was an opportunity to say we believe the arts are important," he said.

Since the override did not pass the House, the measure never reached the Senate, Ostmeier said. Billinger said he got more e-mails on the arts commission than any other issue in the legislative session. He said he heard from supporters and opponents of the arts commission, including many who said the Legislature should look at everything when deciding where to cut.

Slowing wind helps Arizona firefighters

From "WILDFIRE," Page 1

live in a very small house, the pain on people's faces is exactly the same," he said late Thursday. "Our hearts go out to those folks." Authorities suspect the 386,000-acre fire was sparked by a campfire. It is the second-largest wildfire in state history. Smoke from the burn operations puffed shades of black and gray in the hills above the town of Eagar as grass singed and trees lit up orange. Crews were trying to keep the flames from hooking around and making a run for Eagar and nearby Springerville, which have been evacuated. It wasn't clear when residents would be allowed to return to Greer and the handful of other communities in the mountain forest areas of eastern Arizona. About 2,700 mountain community residents and 7,000 in Eagar and Springerville on the edge of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest have fled the flames. Thursday was the first day that firefighters had favorable weather conditions and mild winds also were forecast Friday, before the return of gustier breezes Saturday. "Friday is a window to get stuff done so we're going to be hitting it pretty hard today," fire information officer Suzanne Flory said Friday.

Crews remained in the Greer area, where the fire was active, and built containment lines across the border in western New Mexico. The flames had yet to reach that state, but residents of the town of Luna were preparing to evacuate. New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez was scheduled to visit the area Friday to discuss fire preparations. A day ago, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer flew over burned areas in her state and met with evacuated residents in Lakeside. The fire has rekindling the blame game surrounding ponderosa pine forests that have become dangerously overgrown after a century of fire suppression. Some critics put the responsibility on environmentalists for lawsuits that have cut back on logging. Others blame overzealous firefighters for altering the natural

cycle of lightning-sparked fires that once cleared the forest floor. Either way, forests across the West that once had 50 trees per acre now have hundreds, sometimes thousands, and much of the landscape is choked with tinder-dry brush. The density of the growth has fueled immense conflagrations in recent years, like now burning in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. In the past, a 30-square-mile fire was considered huge. "And it used to be the loggers got right on it. Never in the past have you had these huge fires." Today, it's not uncommon for fires to exceed 150 square miles. An extremely dry late winter and spring contributed to the fire conditions, drying out the forest and allowing fierce winds to carry the flames into the treetops, where they spread by miles each day. Many in Arizona blame the legal battles that have erupted over old-growth logging that threatened endangered species such as the Mexican spotted owl. Since those disputes prevented regular logging that would have thinned the number of trees, the forests became overgrown, they say. Environmentalists insist that theory is just a scare tactic. "That's just wrong, flat-out wrong," said Bryan Bird of WildEarth Guardians, which has been involved in some of the lawsuits. "These people are misinformed or they're intentionally trying to scare people in a time that they're already terrified. It's pure politics."

Experts such as professor Wally Covington of Northern Arizona University, who has studied Western forests for decades, say the problems have been building for decades, and blaming lawsuits ignores those facts. Nearly half a million square miles of ponderosa and conifer forests are at risk across the West, he said. Historically, those forests were relatively thin, with grass and wildflowers growing beneath the canopy. Every two to 10 years, a fire would move through and burn out the undergrowth and small trees.

As the region was settled in the 1880s, cattle were brought in to feast on the grass, which limited fires and let small trees mature. Early foresters liked that, because they wanted the forest fully stocked with trees. And they began putting out fires early in the 1900s to help the trees grow, Covington said. As the forest got thicker, fires got harder to fight, and the U.S. Forest Service hired thousands of men to battle the flames. Small fires that reached into the treetops were first seen in Arizona in the 1940s. Over the following decades, the typical treetop fire went from a few acres to a few thousand to more than 10,000 by the 1990s. Then early in the 2000s, huge conflagrations emerged that turned hundreds of thousands of acres to ash. Sen. Jon Kyl, an Arizona Republican, says environmental lawsuits have put the nation's forests at risk. And in places where the Apache-Sitgreaves forest had been thinned, he said, crews were better able to control the fire. "So it does work," said Kyl, who has a cabin in Greer. "And we haven't been able to do as much of it as we would like."

The Forest Service has acknowledged the problem, setting up nine restoration projects across the West designed to let private industry thin small trees. In Arizona, the Four Forests Initiative is expected to help clear about 50 square miles a year and use the discarded brush for construction material. But the plan isn't off the ground yet, angering some, including Allen.

Spots still open in Relay for Life

From "RELAY," Page 1

team, call Irene Hartwell at 443-0974. After the team lap, the main relay will start. Each team will have one member walking around the Dennen Field track until the closing ceremony at 6 a.m. Saturday. During the night there will be entertainment by DJ Wayne Williams, the Colby Dance Team and Reed - a band consisting of Logan Barnes, Steven

Kerksiek, Blake McNinch and Austin and Bryan Scheideman. There will be a silent auction from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. and a live auction from 7:40 to 8:10 p.m. At 9:15 p.m. there will be a luminary service. Luminaries, decorated paper bags with a candle inside, are also still available at \$10 each by calling Hartwell at 443-0974. The event will end with a goodbye and thank you at 7 a.m. Saturday.

Kansas governor seeks new disaster declaration

TOPEKA (AP) - Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback has asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to declare a drought disaster in an additional 25 counties.

Brownback made his request Friday, his second to the USDA in seven weeks. The federal agency declared a disaster in 21 counties last month. The governor's latest request covers the Wichita metropolitan area and south-central Kansas. Kansas Water Office Director

Tracey Streeter said while many areas of the state have seen recent precipitation, beneficial rains have been isolated or absent in the counties covered by the declaration. The counties in the new declaration are Barber, Barton, Butler, Clark, Comanche, Cowley, Edwards, Ellis, Ford, Graham, Gray, Harper, Harvey, Hodgeman, Kingman, Lincoln, Norton, Phillips, Reno, Rice, Russell, Sedgwick, Stafford, Sumner and Trego.

Advertisement for Thomas County Community Foundation (TCCCF). Includes logo, address (350 S. Rançe Suite 14, Colby, KS 67701), phone number ((785) 460-9152), and a list of current grants available. Grants include funding for general public health, drug and alcohol use prevention, youth fund, beautification projects, youth outdoor skills, and general community needs. Applications due June 30, 2011.

LOCAL TV LISTINGS sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS. Includes a small graphic of a family and a building.

Monday Evening June 13, 2011. Table listing TV programs by time slot (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and channel (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, etc.).

Advertisement for Farmers & Merchants Bank of Colby. Features a mortgage interest rate chart showing rates as low as 3.75% (3.809% APR) for 15-year loans and 4.50% (4.534% APR) for 30-year loans. Includes contact information for Jacque Golemboski, Mortgage Officer.