



Thursday storms destroy farm buildings

By Kevin Bottrell

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

High winds kicked up a dust storm Thursday that forced authorities to close roads from Colby to the state line, while late night thunderstorms may have produced a tornado that ripped through a farmstead near Brewster.

Thursday was the third straight windy day for northwest Kansas. In the afternoon, reports of gusts up to 72 mph came in to the National Weather Service from a weather station near Bird City. Goodland, Leoti and Weskan all reported winds in the 60s. The Colby airport reported gusts in the 50s with sustain winds around 35 mph. Grinnell recorded the highest wind gust — 77 miles per hour — later in the night as the thunderstorms came through.

Those late-night thunderstorms, which passed through Thomas County around 11 p.m., produced more wind and dropped .43 inches of rain in Colby. Hoxie and Oakley reported hail up to .88 inches and Sharon Springs reported 1.25-inch hail.

The storm may have spawned either a tornado or damaging straight-line winds at Mason Krumrine's farmstead two miles east of Brewster. The area was under tornado and severe thunderstorm warnings beginning about 9 p.m. Several small wooden sheds were overturned while another was torn apart, with pieces blown into a nearby field. The roofs of two larger sheds were caved in, collapsing on farm equipment stored inside. Friends and family came to the farm this morning to help Krumrine make repairs.

Krumrine said he wasn't sure when the damage happened. When he and his wife heard the warning, they took shelter in their basement. Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist with the service's Goodland office said there was some rotation noted on the radar images in the area that night, which prompted the warning.

In Colby, Line Supervisor Rick Carter said there was scattered damage to power lines in the east and northeast parts of town by the afternoon wind. These caused power outages, including the stop-



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Several buildings, including this one that housed tractors and other farm equipment, were damaged or destroyed at Mason Krumrine's farm about two miles east of Brewster. The damage may have come from a tornado or damaging straight line winds spawned from a thunderstorm Thursday night.

lights at Fourth Street and Range Avenue, and the linemen were working to repair them all the way to the scheduled outage at 5:15 p.m. from Copeland Avenue to Smith Drive and from the First Street Annex to West Sixth Street. Public Works went ahead with the outage and had the power back up in about an hour.

The Department of Transportation closed I-70 at Colby going west to the Colorado border in

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Corn huskers gather in Oakley

Kansas' best corn huskers will gather at the Buffalo Bill statue in Oakley on Saturday for the State Cornhusking Competition.

This is the 40th year for the state contest. Huskers use only their hands to harvest as much of a row of corn as they can within a set time limit. They are judged on the weight of the corn they bring in, and any part of the husk left on the ear is deducted. Last year's competition also served as the national competition, with people coming from as far away as Indiana to compete.

The first event of the competition was the Open Class Corn Cook-Off today at The Cave in Oakley. Recipes were judged in three classes: side and main dish; breads and baked goods; or snacks, candies and

desserts. The dish had to include some form of corn in it.

Registration for the husking competition will begin in the field below the statue at 8 a.m. There are 11 different age divisions and a team event to compete in. The competition will begin at 9 a.m.

A farmers' market and bake sale will be set up in the gift shop, and new this year is a pumpkin carving contest with cash prizes. Later in the evening there will be an awards dinner at the Colonial Steakhouse.

Also part of the festivities is a Geocaching event. Geocaching involves using Global Position System devices to find hidden containers. Chachers will meet at 9 a.m., and the event will go all day.

Energy challenge winner to be revealed at ceremony

The winner of the Take Charge Challenge will be announced at an awards banquet on Tuesday, Oct. 25, in Topeka.

Last Friday was the last day for community events and other point-earning activities. Results have not been updated, but at last count Colby was in a close second place behind WaKeeney. Colby earned several thousand points from its pancake feed at the first station on Sept. 24, but may face stiff competition from Goodland, which earned points at its Flatlander Festival the same weekend.

There were four different challenges going in Kansas. Colby was a part of the northwest region, which pit the city against Goodland, Hoxie, Oakley and WaKeeney. The northeast region competition was between Baldwin City, Gardner, Ottawa and Paola. The university region included Manhattan and Lawrence and the southeast region was Chanute, Fort Scott, Iola, Parsons and Pittsburg.

According to the challenge website, the competition save about 67.5 billion BTUs of energy and \$1.27 million from lightbulb switches.

Standing watch



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

A police officer stood watch at a road closed sign on U.S. 24 Thursday afternoon. The roads going west were closed because blowing dust reduced visibility to less than a half-mile in places.

Lieutenant governor outlines state's plans for Medicaid overhaul

By John Hanna
The Associated Press

TOPEKA — A plan for overhauling Kansas' Medicaid program will push to cut the state's nursing home population and reorganize agencies, but it won't narrow eligibility requirements to reduce the number of people covered, Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer said Thursday.

Colyer, a surgeon and former state senator, is leading a Medicaid task force for Gov. Sam Brownback's administration. The Republican governor has said he wants to reduce the costs associated with medical care for the needy while improving services, and Colyer said the administration will release its plan by the end of

October.

The lieutenant governor discussed the broad outlines of the Medicaid plan during an interview with the Associated Press, saying it will be designed to tackle a "fragmented" system for providing care for the elderly and disabled and poor families. He said Brownback's administration will ask the federal government for a "global waiver" of Medicaid rules to give the state as much flexibility as possible.

"Everybody agrees the current system is so troubled that we've got to make major changes," Colyer said. "There's complete consensus on that."

Administration critics have worried Brownback will try to make it

tougher for Kansans to qualify for Medicaid coverage or reduce the payments to doctors, clinics and hospitals that provide services to program participants. Colyer said any payment reduction to health care providers is "a last resort."

"We are not going to cut people off of Medicaid," Colyer said. "Secondly, we are not looking at giant across-the-board rate cuts."

The state's Medicaid program covers about 330,000 people, about 12 percent higher than it was a year ago. Overhauling Medicaid is a major initiative for Brown-

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