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Elevator collapses in Oakley

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Part of the Frontier Ag grain elevator in Oakley collapsed Tuesday, destroying two bins and spilling several thousand bushels of corn, which knocked over nearby railroad cars and blocked the Denver-Kansas City line of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Pappy Lies, emergency manager for Logan and Gove counties, said that no one was hurt when the concrete tubes at the southeast end of the elevator collapsed about 2:22 p.m. Corn spilled out onto a nearby Union Pacific railroad track, derailed eight or nine empty alcohol tankers and closing the track.

Lies said another six tank cars west of the spilled corn were full of liquid nitrogen, but those did not derail. The elevator is just west of downtown Oakley. Access through the downtown area was open, but some streets around the elevator were blocked off.

In the collapse, the bottom part of the two bins was destroyed and the top part was hanging at an angle. Grain

spilled out onto the cars, which were tipped over by the flow and buried the tracks.

Troopers from the Kansas Highway Patrol, deputies from the Thomas and Gove county sheriff's offices, emergency managers from Logan, Thomas and Russell counties, Oakley city police and firemen, the Kansas Department of Transportation works and others came to help, Lies said. On Tuesday afternoon, they were blocking off nearby streets to hold back bystanders. People were walking up to the scene or pulling up in cars to look at the damage. A Highway Patrol airplane flew over the area.

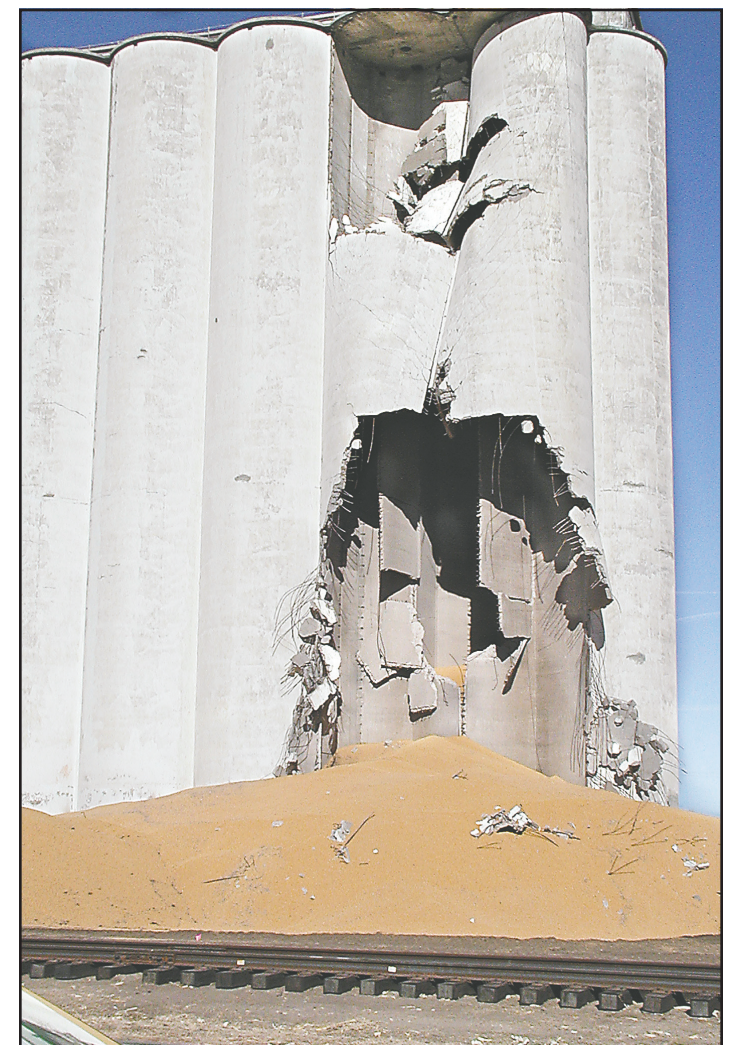
"Our job is to keep the scene secured," Lies said Wednesday morning. We've worked closely with U.P. and the facility."

Mark Davis, a spokesman for Union Pacific in Omaha, said that the rail cars were cleared from the track by about 1:30 a.m. and railroad crews were laying 500 feet of temporary track, called a shoo-fly, around the site of the collapse to get their trains running. He said that the track should be ready by 5

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When two bins of the Frontier Ag grain elevator in Oakley gave out yesterday afternoon (above), enough grain spilled out to knock over several rail cars on the Union Pacific tracks just south of the elevator. By this morning, Union Pacific workers were laying a "shoo-fly" track around the spill (right photo) this morning. The cars had been cleared away, but workers weren't being allowed to approach the elevator itself until a structural engineer can assess the soundness of the rest of the elevator.

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City, county offices to close for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is almost here, and most of Colby will shut down Thursday to celebrate the family holiday.

City Hall will be closed Thursday and Friday. The sanitation trucks will not operate Thursday and Friday routes. Thursday's trash was to be picked up this morning, said Public Works manager Omar Weber, while Friday's trash will be picked up Monday. The commercial trash truck will

not operate Thursday or Friday, but it will pick trash again on Saturday.

Thomas County offices will also close Thursday and Friday. The landfill will be open again from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Most organizations in the Thomas County Office Complex will close Thursday and Friday as well.

The Pioneer Memorial Library will close Thursday and Friday,

then will operate under regular hours Saturday and Sunday. The Senior Progress Center was to close at noon today and be closed Thursday and Friday. The county transportation van will not run until Monday.

State offices, such as the K-State Research-Extension Center and the Colby Workforce Center, will close Thursday and Friday. The Veterans Affairs Office and the U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture Service Center will close Thursday only. Post offices will close Thursday, but mail service will resume Friday and Saturday.

Students at all area schools, including Colby Community College, will be off the rest of the week.

Most restaurants will close Thursday, including City Limits, Montana Mike's and El Dos de Oros. These restaurants will re-open Friday. Village Inn will be

open from 6 to 11 a.m. Thursday and will have normal hours Friday. McDonalds will close from 10 p.m. Thursday to 6 a.m. Friday.

All banks, including the Dillon's branch of Farmers and Merchants Bank, will close Thursday and People's State Bank will close Friday as well.

Walmart will remain open Thursday and Dillon's will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., but

both pharmacies will be closed. Palace Drug also will close Thursday.

Most fuel stations, including Oasis Travel Center, Pilot and Loves, will be open Thursday, but Hi-Plains Co-Op will be closed Thursday and Friday.

