

Weather



National Weather Service

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 16. Southwest wind around 10 mph.

Tuesday: Scattered flurries between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 49. Breezy, with a southwest wind 10 to 15 mph becoming north 20 to 25 mph in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph.

Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 17. West wind 5 to 15 mph.

Christmas Day: Sunny, with a high near 46. West wind 5 to 15 mph.

Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 18.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 45.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 21.

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 56.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 23.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 53.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 21.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 36.

Table with weather forecasts for Friday through Sunday, including high/low temperatures, precipitation, sunrise/sunset times, and moon phases.

City plans to heat water tower

From "CITY," Page 1

whether to use Utility Service or one of three other companies to repaint the tower, or just set aside \$50,000 each year and then paint the tower when it needs it. Utility Service bid the project for \$465,000. Cunningham Inc. bid \$339,339, Jetco Limited \$588,900 and AmCoat Painting Technologies \$607,430.

At the last meeting, when the council tabled a decision on which company to go with, McGreer expressed reservations on using Cunningham, the company with the low bid. He asked the council to hold off so he could check references. This time, he said that about half the references he checked were good and half were not. He suggested hiring a construction supervisor if the council decided to choose Cunningham.

Utility Service was the only company offering to take full responsibility for the maintenance of the tower over an extended time. The company would take over painting and maintaining the tower. The city would pay \$52,566 a year and could cancel the contract at any time.

McGreer, who worked with the company under a similar contract when he was city administrator at Grant, Neb., pointed out that the company takes full responsibility for the upkeep of the water tower, and has to fix anything that goes wrong with it, short of a catastrophe not related to maintenance.

"Someone shoots a hole in the side of the thing, they come up and weld it shut," he said.

Councilman Mike Hake admitted he is biased against that sort of agreement. If the city has enough money saved up over the years, he said, then

the council will be able to make its own decisions about what to fix on the tower. He pointed out that the city would put aside about the same amount of money as it would pay Utility Service each year.

"The thing is, I'm more comfortable having it in my bank account than theirs," Hake said.

Jake Dugger a representative of Utility Service, said the company could iron out details in the contract, such as how long the company will be able to go without painting the tower.

Technology Director Mike Albers told the council the tower was built in 1981 or 1982, and McGreer said it had its last paint job in the late 1990s. McGreer said the tower could last indefinitely if the paint is kept up-to-date, but that the tower has been ignored long enough that it is past any sort of warranty.

In other business, the council:

• Decided to work on a master plan for walking trails rather than trying to get a grant to work on the trails. McGreer pointed out that Sue Evans, a member of the Thomas County Coalition, had asked the city to seek a grant to extend the trails. But he said the city would probably have to pay around \$50,000 to have a good chance of getting the grant, plus design and engineering costs.

• Voted to use \$30,000 set aside for overages or other issues regarding the new city water meters to help pay Johnson Controls, the company did the water meter project. The city originally borrowed the money as part of the financing agreement for the project.

• Accepted a bid for \$640,914 to retrofit all six engines at the city power plant from Farabee Mechanical Inc.,

a Hickman, Neb., firm that specializes in working on water tanks. The city decided to retrofit all six engines, and will pay between \$85,000 and \$127,000 each.

McGreer pointed out that two companies returned bids out of the three that the city sent out. Farabee's was lower than the engineer's estimate of \$800,000, and the other bid was \$817,057.

He said the city will run the engines on "emergency status," only when power is needed, from April 2 until the project is completed. This is actually much the same way the city has been operating, McGreer said, adding that it costs more to operate the plant than to buy power. The project is required to keep the plant up to Kansas Department of Health and Environment and Environmental Protection Agency standards. All six diesel engines have to be retrofitted for the plant to run over 100 hours a year.

"In my opinion, we spend money or shut down," he said.

"No, we can't do that," said Mayor Gary Adrian.

• Decided to refinish, rather than replace, the playing floor of the Community Building. City employees did some research on the floor, and McGreer told the council they could not find a time that the floor had ever been completely refinished. As far as they know, it is original to the building.

Recreation Director Dane Olofson said he found the floor could be refinished for \$8,000 to \$10,000. McGreer suggested the city take the money from the capital reserve fund, which he said has enough to replace the floor if necessary.

Jail design needs input from agencies

From "JAIL," Page 1

len Beck, author of the jail's demographics study released Monday. After those talks, he said, he feels that a mix of four-person and one-person cells would be most appropriate.

In two-person cells, Finley explained, one prisoner is always dominant and cellmates tend to get into more fights because of their relationship dynamics.

In four-person or six-person cells, the inmates interact differently, easing conflicts. Finley said he did not feel comfortable with six-person cells because it might be tough to maintain control when inmates do get into

fights.

Steele said Finley's opinion was important "because he's got the boots on the ground."

"I would like to see a bigger exercise area," suggested Taylor. "Those people need to get out and move around so they can at least get a little bit tired for the night."

Taylor said some exercise equipment, such as barbells, can be unsafe in a small jail, but there are options that aren't as easily used as weapons.

Commissioner Paul Steele asked if exercise areas have to be outdoors or if they can be enclosed. Taylor said an exercise area can be inside, outside or both.

The group also discussed options for providing meals for inmates.

Regulations require that inmate meals meet certain dietary guidelines, said Finley, but there are companies that provide food service management for small jails, hiring local folks to make meals on-site based on dietary guidelines.

The current jail's "kitchen" is a converted cell that also doubles as a laundry room, said Finley.

Inmates are fed TV dinners, which meet dietary guidelines, but the jail's freezer space is so limited that during peak times, jailers must go to the store each day to buy more.

Businesses to be closed for Christmas, Christmas Eve

From "CLOSED," Page 1

closed on Christmas.

Starbucks will be open from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Christmas and from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Other area businesses that are closed on Christmas will be open for at least part of the day on Christmas Eve, including, Walmart, which will

be open all day; the pharmacy will be open until 6 p.m. Dillon's, including the pharmacy, will be open until 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Palace Drug will be open from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. and Dollar General will be open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. The Colby Bowl and Fun Center will be open until 4:30 p.m.

Government offices will also be

shutting down. The K-State Research Extension, the Senior Progress Center Veterans Affairs Office The U.S. Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Thomas County Conservation District will be closed on Christmas and Open on Christmas Eve.

City Hall and the city public works department, the Thomas County Of-

fice Complex, Thomas County Landfill and the Thomas County Courthouse will also be closed both days.

Banks in town will be closed on Christmas and open until noon on Christmas Eve, including Bank West, People's State Bank, Sunflower Bank, The Bank and Farmers and Merchants bank, including the Dillon's location.

Briefly

The deadline for Briefly is noon the day before. Items submitted in the morning will be set up for the following day, space available. The deadline for Monday's paper is noon Friday.

Church offers class on divorce

A 10-week program of hope, healing and support for women experiencing divorce will be offered from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Monday evenings from Jan. 6 through March 10 at the Colby United Methodist Church. Women of all faiths are welcome. Call Lynette Ball at (785) 675-8606 to enroll or for information.

Church invites all to free lunch

Come and bring a friend to a free "Joyful Blessings" meal from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday at the First Baptist Church, Webster and Grant. Everyone is welcome. For information, call Radonda Buford at 462-2804.

Methodists plan Christmas potluck

The Colby United Methodist Church plans a Christmas potluck meal and fellowship at noon Wednesday. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share, along with a favorite board or card game. For information, call Kim Barnett at the church, 460-2761.

Trash crew off Christmas Eve

Colby city offices will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and city workers will be off. The residential trash route for Tuesday was to be picked up today. The Wednesday route will be collected on Thursday.

City sanitation trucks will not be running on New Year's Day, Wednesday, Jan. 1, either. Residential trash will be picked up on Thursday, Jan. 2. For information, contact Omar Weber at the Public Works Department, 460-4420.

The Thomas County Landfill will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday for Christmas Eve and Christmas, reopening at 9 a.m. Thursday. For information, call Larry Jumper at 462-8139.

Tree of Hope supports shelter

A Tree of Hope supporting the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter is at the Farmers and Merchants Bank. For a donation of \$10 for providing homeless animals with food and shelter this winter, your pet or loved one's name can be on a keepsake magnet displayed on the tree. Call Angie Harris at 460-1078 for information.

Mingo church plans service

The Mingo Bible Church will have its first Christmas Eve candlelight communion service at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, open to everyone. For information, call Pastor Tom Peyton at 462-2992.

Church women selling fresh nuts

The women of Ascension Episcopal Church are selling fresh holiday nuts, including pecans, walnuts, cashews and variety packs. For delivery, call Martha Hullett at 462-2505, or pick some up at Colby Canvas.

Foundation applications due

The Thomas County Community Foundation will accept applications for its fourth-quarter grant cycle until Tuesday, Dec. 31. Grant areas include children, education, literacy, cultural, senior citizen services, beautification and more. Go to www.thomascountycommunity-foundation.com for an application or call Executive Director Melinda Olson at 460-9152 if you have questions.

Foster parenting classes set

Foster parenting classes by TFI Family Services will begin Wednesday, Jan. 6, in Colby, with the time and location determined by interested families' schedules. Call Vicki Beiser at (785) 443-0650 or (800) 279-9914.

LOCAL TV Listings logo with "Sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS" text and a building illustration.

Table of TV listings for Tuesday Evening, December 24, 2013. Columns include time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and various channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, etc.)

Graphic with silhouettes of people cheering and the date "Wednesday Evening December 25, 2013".

Table of TV listings for Wednesday Evening, December 25, 2013. Columns include time slots (7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30) and various channels (KAKE/ABC, KBSL/CBS, KSNK/NBC, etc.)