

Tribland five-day forecast

Art by Kadi Kimberly, 7, Juniata Elementary



**PARTLY CLOUDY**  
**TODAY**  
High: 40 Low: 29  
Wind: South 10-15.



**SNOWY SATURDAY**  
High: 31 Low: 15  
Wind: North 10-15  
A 90 percent chance of snow with up to 7 inches.



**PARTLY CLOUDY**  
**SUNDAY**  
High: 29 Low: 11  
Wind: West 5-10



**PARTLY CLOUDY**  
**MONDAY**  
High: 22 Low: 4



**SUNNY TUESDAY**  
High: 24 Low: 14

Today's weather records

High: 68 in 1956  
Low: -7 in 1919

Local weather

High Thursday . . . . .34  
High in 2010 . . . . .35  
Overnight low . . . . .11  
Overnight low in 2010 . . . . .10  
Precipitation last 24 hours . . . . .00  
December precipitation . . . . .00  
December 2010 precipitation . . . . .00  
Year to date precipitation . . . . .26.11  
Jan. to Nov. '10 precipitation . . . . .26.62  
Snowfall last 24 hours . . . . .00  
December snowfall . . . . .00  
December 2010 snowfall . . . . .00  
Season to date snowfall . . . . .trace  
Season to date snowfall 2010 . . . . .10

Local

FAULTY SWITCH CAUSES DELAY

A faulty switch on a piece of machinery in the Hastings Tribune's mailroom caused delays in Thursday's delivery of the newspaper. The electrical problem resulted in the Tribune being delivered past the 5:30 p.m. deadline to many subscribers. "We would like to apologize to all of our customers for the delay in delivery service Thursday," Hastings Tribune marketing director Ryan Murken said. "Due to circumstances beyond the control of Tribune staff, carriers or drivers, Thursday's newspapers were delivered later than usual. We apologize for the late delivery and are working to ensure that customers receive the best service possible. "We would also like to apologize to all of the Tribune carriers and drivers who were affected by Thursday's delay. We appreciate the effort that they put in to get the papers delivered." Any subscriber who has questions or concerns about daily delivery should call the Tribune at 402-462-2131.

State

FUGITIVE COW ON THE LOOSE

**PLATTSMOUTH** — Residents in Plattsmouth are being warned to be on the alert for a 1,500 pound cow that is on the loose. KETV-TV reported that animal control officers have been trying for three months to track down the cow. Residents who have seen the cow say it only comes out at night. And because it's black, it's hard to see at night and resident Pat Jones says it's scary because you can't see it until it's right in front of you. Animal control officer Sue Baker says she believes the cow fell off a cattle truck. In the meantime, farmer Jessica Vallery says she's using one of her own calves as bait to try and attract the rogue cow.

PUSHUP ABUSE CASE

**WYMORE** — A 44-year-old Wymore man has been sentenced to a year of probation for harshly disciplining his 7-year-old son. Beatrice radio station KWBZ says John Hintz was sentenced Thursday. He pleaded no contest to negligent child abuse in October. Authorities say Hintz forced the child to do pushups with closed fists on rocks while Hintz placed his foot on the child's back after learning the boy had stolen a candy bar. When the child could no longer do pushups, Hintz forced him to run until the boy got blisters on both feet.

TROOPER INJURED IN CHASE

**OMAHA** — An Iowa state trooper is recovering after a truck smashed into his cruiser during a chase from Council Bluffs, Iowa, into Omaha. The Iowa State Patrol says the chase began Thursday morning when the trooper tried to stop the truck in Council Bluffs. The truck sped away, with the trooper in pursuit. The truck then turned around, going to wrong way on the South Expressway, hitting the trooper. The trooper, whose name has not been released, was taken to a Council Bluffs hospital with non-life threatening injuries. The truck, which had been stolen, continued after the crash before being stopped by several troopers in south Omaha. The 36-year-old driver, Carl Eugene Pelander of Council Bluffs, and his passenger, 25-year-old Katherine Elizabeth Lynn, were arrested. The Associated Press

Thermo King first to receive HU funds

COMPANY TELLS BPW  
MONEY WILL HELP SECURE  
96 NEW JOBS

**BETSY HERRMAN**  
bherrman@hastingstribune.com  
The Board of Public Works approved \$600,000 Thursday for Thermo King Corporation in exchange for the company's promise to add 96 jobs, retain 220 existing jobs and invest \$4.1 million in the Hastings facility. BPW Chairman George Anderson called the agreement "a stunning success" for Hastings. The funds will come from \$3 million the board set aside earlier this year from the \$12.1 million gas

rate stabilization fund to offer incentives to new and existing companies that create jobs in Hastings. The board and Hastings City Council approved agreements with the Hastings Economic Development Corporation that allow HU to expend those funds over the next five years and reduce electric demand charges by up to \$2 million from the \$9.18 million electric rate stabilization fund. HU can also distribute \$500,000 to HEDC from the gas rate stabilization fund for publicity and promotion. HEDC administers the funds, and any project or business seeking funding must first get approval

from the BPW. "This is exactly what I was hoping we would be able to do with the funds from this," Anderson said. "This is a good solid business that has been here. The next one that comes along might be somebody brand new. It might be a lot more risk we're going to take. I think it is probably pretty low-risk and a heck of a lot of return for the community." The Thermo King agreement approved Thursday grants the company a performance-based forgivable loan with the following terms: Thermo King will add 96 new jobs, and retain them and 220 existing jobs for a minimum of two years from the time the 96th position is

hired. That period will begin no later than July 12, 2013, and end no later than July 12, 2015. The agreement also says Thermo King will invest \$4.101 million in the Hastings facility, with \$375,000 dedicated to facility upgrades and \$3.7 million for new equipment. The company also will transfer and install equipment worth \$10 million from a plant that is closing in Louisville, Ga., to Hastings. The company announced in July it would close its Louisville facility and transfer bus and shuttle product assembly to Hastings as part of an ongoing effort to consolidate manufacturing and improve facility utilization. Please see HU/page A6



In this Nov. 28 photo, Luke Muller, 12, talks with his father, Matt Muller, while operating a tractor as they work on their family farm near Martha, Okla. Farm kids have spent generations performing chores on the family farm. But now the U.S. Department of Labor is proposing regulations that would make many of those activities illegal for some farm kids under age 16.

No more jobs for teens?

FARMERS WORRY ABOUT NEW LABOR RULES

**JOSH FUNK**  
The Associated Press  
**MAHA** — From tending cattle to driving tractors or ATVs, 15-year-old Taylor Muller and her three younger brothers have always done what they could to help the family's farming business. "Most kids my age don't even have jobs," said Taylor, who assists her father at one southwest Oklahoma farm and her grandparents at another. "We already know what hard work is."

Many other young kids won't be allowed to do those kinds of chores if the U.S. Labor Department approves new rules on children working in agriculture. While the Mullers would likely be exempt because it's a family business, the proposed rules would prohibit most children under age 16 from driving tractors, using power equipment, working with livestock in certain circumstances and doing work at heights over 6 feet.

Federal officials say the rules are needed because farming is one of the nation's most dangerous occupations, but many farmers say children learn important life lessons and might develop working on farms or ranches. Muller's dad, Matt, says he worries about what the new rules

might mean for the future of farming. "It's very disheartening to me," he said. "Farming is not just a business. It's a way of life." Michael Hancock, the assistant administrator for policy at the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, said the rules covering child farm workers haven't been updated in more than 40 years and that changes are needed to address the dangers of working with tractors and other large farm machines. Farming, he said, is "the single-most hazardous occupation, as measured by fatalities, for children." Nearly 29 out of every 100,000 farm workers in the U.S. die on the job, according to the National Safety Council. Among workers ages 15 to 24, the rate is about 21 deaths per 100,000 workers. Statistics for workers younger than 15 aren't available because there isn't enough data on them.

Hancock compared the proposed rules, which mostly apply to farm employees between the ages of 12 and 16, to those prohibiting a teenager from operating a meat slicer in a restaurant or a cardboard compactor in a grocery store. "There's any number of things kids can do on a farm that will be totally unaffected by these regulations," Hancock said. For instance, he said, they can still detassel corn, haul hay and feed cattle.

Hancock also said he supports the proposed exemptions in the rules for children working on their parents' farms or on farms where a

parent is a main operator. "If the parents are responsible for what goes on on that farm, they're uniquely able to judge those risks," Hancock said. Nebraska farmer Shane Meyer worries those exemptions won't cover someone like him because the farm with about 2,500 hogs that he runs near Beatrice, Neb., is owned by someone else. The rules may not be much of a problem for Meyer's boys, who do yard work and help care for the hogs, because one is already 16 and the other will turn 16 next year, but they would make it hard for him to hire any of his employees' or neighbors' kids. "It's not the farms that are going to suffer. It's the kids," he said.

Agricultural groups say the parental exemption raises a lot of questions because many farms or ranches today are technically owned by limited liability corporations or other entities even if they are run by families. They say the proposed rules simply aren't clear about how they would apply to various ownership structures. Matt Muller, who grows wheat and cotton on about 2,000 acres near Altus, Okla., said young cousins and nephews have helped out on his farm, but that might not be possible under the new rules. Plus, he wouldn't be able to hire neighbor kids. He also wonders how his children would be affected if he and his wife switched the ownership to a limited liability corporation.

Please see TEENS/page A6

Disabled woman alleges assault

**WILL VRASPIR**  
wvraspir@hastingstribune.com

The case of a 42-year-old Hastings man accused of sexually assaulting a mildly mentally handicapped woman was sent to the district court. Harold M. Lee Jr. of 1120 E. South St. No. 5 faces one charge of first-degree sexual assault. Adams County Judge Michael Offner bound over the case after a preliminary hearing on Thursday.

Allen Sedlak, a detective with the Hastings Police Department, testified that the police were contacted after it was discovered the alleged victim, a 38-year-old Hastings woman, was pregnant. Sedlak testified that he didn't believe the woman was capable of consenting to sexual relations. He described the woman as low-functioning and passive. The woman is under guardianship of her mother and has been since 1998.

In a 1998 psychological examination, the woman was determined to be low-functioning and incapable of providing for herself. The exam diagnosed the woman with a mild to moderate mental handicap, alcohol abuse and an adjustment disorder. A 2011 exam confirmed the findings of the 1998 report and claimed she was sexually abused as a vulnerable adult.

Sedlak testified the alleged victim told him that she and Lee had non-consensual sex in a car at Lake Hastings about the time the child would have been conceived. She said the two had been in an off-and-on sexual relationship since 1992. At one point, the two lived together when the woman's mother kicked her out of the house. Lee came forward as investigators tried to determine the father of the baby. "Lee was claiming he was the father and wanted to do the blood test," Sedlak testified.

Sedlak testified he spoke to Lee about the relationship and incident at Lake Hastings. Lee said the sexual relationship was consensual and didn't believe the woman couldn't make decisions for herself. Please see ASSAULT/page A6

Single donation of toys will impact dozens

**SHAY BURK**  
sburk@hastingstribune.com

A single anonymous donation to the Goodfellows toy drive will impact dozens of children this holiday season. On Monday, Chief Goodfellow Ryan Murken received a call from an employee at Hometown Variety, 620 W. Second St., requesting a toy donation pickup. When he got to the store, Murken was shocked to see dozens of plastic bags lined up, one after another, full of toys for Goodfellows. "It was more toys than you could ever imagine," he said. "It took us three trips to get it all into my car. My SUV was full."

The large donation all came from one donor, someone who chose to remain anonymous. "They couldn't have selected better stuff," he said of the donations. "It's everything from infant items like rattles for the smallest of children up to board games and stuff for older kids." There were Barbie dolls and baby dolls, Matchbox cars and action figures. And there were items for infants, which Murken said is always needed but often forgotten. While infants don't necessarily need toys, they do need bibs, bottles, teething rings and other items. "We want it to be mostly toys, but these things are great for babies," Murken said.

This donation, like many others made to the Goodfellows program, was made anonymously, so Murken has no one to thank. He said knowing that a person, family or group was willing to take both the time and financial resources to make such a donation makes him feel really good. "This is why I keep saying that sometimes this thing just takes your breath away when you see the generosity of people," he said. "It really does make you feel good about the community you live in. These people aren't doing it for any other reason than they have a love of their community and for their fellow people."

Goodfellows

Toys and cash donations are accepted at the Tribune offices, 908 W. Second St. Checks can be mailed to the Tribune, Attention Goodfellows, P.O. Box 788, Hastings NE, 68902. Donations also may be dropped in the Tribune subscription payment box located in the parking lot north of the Tribune building. Donations list In memory of Hazel & Leonard Baumgartner . . . . . \$20.00 In memory of Lucille & John Thelmer . . . . . \$20.00 Roman & Evelyn Hines . . . . . \$25.00 Wilma J. Price . . . . . \$25.00 Michael & Rachelle Johnson . . . . . \$50.00 Total . . . . . \$1,640.00

