

THE COLLEGIAN

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Winfield, Kan.

Weekend Weather

Source: noaa.gov

Friday Scattered T-Storms
75°/67°

Saturday T-Showers
78°/62°

Sunday Few Showers
67°/52°

Briefs

Movie Night

Tonight is the first movie night of the semester. Movies will begin at 9:30 p.m. at Cowley Cinema 8, south of Winfield on U.S.-77. Students must bring ID for admittance. Concessions are available for cost. Movies that will be showing are "Babylon A.D.," "Disaster Movie," "Death Race," "Mirrors," "Bangkok Dangerous," "House Bunny," and "Tropic Thunder."

Activity Showcase

The Activity Showcase will be at 8 p.m. tomorrow in the Java Jinx.

Poster Sale

Beyond the Wall posters will be on campus from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday in the student center.

Sports Schedules

Volleyball

The Jinx Jamboree will begin at 8 a.m. Saturday in Stewart Field House.

Football

The second annual Builder Fest will be all day Saturday. The Moundbuilders will play the University of St. Mary at 7 p.m. at Sonner Stadium.



Brian Nelson/Collegian photographer

Dennis West, Siloam Springs, Ark., passes time fingering his guitar Sept. 9 while awaiting the Sept. 17 kickoff of the Walnut Valley Festival. West arrived at the Winfield fairgrounds Sept. 7 to park his camper. West has attended the festival routinely since his first visit in 1978.



Brian Nelson/Collegian photographer

Approximately 550 campers, buses and trailers await the Walnut Valley Festival. The festival, also known as Bluegrass, is a five day annual music event. Five stages offer a variety of performers, joined by an estimated 100 food, craft and music vendors. Some campers arrive nearly a month in advance.



Brian Nelson/Collegian photographer

Hugh McKnight, Amarillo, Texas, and Kevin Mitts, Prairie Village, tell jokes at the campgrounds. McKnight and Mitts arrived in Winfield a week ago for the Walnut Valley Festival.

Waiting for a land rush

By Katie Gomez
Staff reporter

Campfires are burning. Musicians are strumming guitars. People are starting to gather at the Winfield Fairgrounds. The Bluegrass festival is still a week away.

The Walnut Valley Festival, or Bluegrass as the locals call it, is the largest event in Winfield. It occurs every year during the third week of September.

According to the Walnut Valley Headquarters, Winfield's population doubles during the festival, bringing in almost 16,000 attendees.

Bluegrass is a five day festival that brings visitors from all over the country and the world to unite for a common passion: music. Across the fairgrounds, five stages feature different performers. The music ranges from acoustic and blues to folk and even Irish. There are championships for instrumental performance such as bluegrass, banjo, and old time fiddle. The festival also features more than 100 food, craft, and music vendors.

Bluegrass is one of the largest camping events in Winfield. Most of the visi-

tors, including those from Winfield camp at the fairgrounds throughout the festival.

Bob Flottman and his wife, Sam, both of Winfield, are in charge of putting up the flags that line the two entrance gates. These flags represent the diversity of visitors from different states and countries.

"We've had guys from England and we have writers and stuff from magazines from overseas, a lot of pickers, a lot of players," Bob said. "We've got some from Italy, some from France, and different places like that. Some of em' don't speak real good English but sometimes some of us don't either."

Although it's officially a five day event, attendees start gathering at the fairgrounds almost a month in advance to secure prime camping spots.

This year, campers were not allowed into the fairgrounds until Aug. 21 to line up for the Land Rush, which begins at 7 tomorrow morning. This is the time that die-hard visitors can enter the campgrounds, stake their claim, set up their campsites, and begin camping.

See Rush, page 3—

Should it stay or should it go?

· The legal drinking age is debated among all ages

By Kenna Corley
Staff reporter

It may be the hottest topic on campus as students debate the legal drinking age. Should it be lowered or should it remain at 21? Across the country, campuses are divided.

The debate was launched in July 2008. The Amethyst Initiative statement was drafted by John McCardell, president emeritus of Middlebury College, and eight college presidents to reopen the public debate about the legal drinking age. The statement does not outline a policy change but states that 21 is not working as well as the public may think.

Chancellors and presidents of universities and colleges across the United States support the Amethyst Initiative. Those who support the initiative believe the legal drinking age of 21 has created a culture of dangerous binge drinking.

Those who have signed the statement are asking elected officials to weigh the consequences of current alcohol policies and to invite new ideas on how best to prepare young adults to make responsible decisions about alcohol

use.

As the debate continues into the school year, the topic has been considered in Winfield.

Dick Merriman, president, said, "I understand the perspective the presidents are presenting, but I'm a skeptic about it. I think that the problems with underage drinking are going to stay the same."

Many college presidents know that underage drinking occurs on their campuses and strive to diminish the problem. Richard H. Brodhead, president of Duke University in Durham, N.C., is one of the 129 leaders who signed the Amethyst Initiative. The website includes one of his reasons for signing.

He said, "The current law has not prevented alcohol from being available, and drinking is widespread at all American colleges, and at younger ages as well. But at colleges and universities, the law does not have other effects: it pushes drinking into hiding, heightening its risks, including drunken driving; and it prevents us from addressing drinking with students as an issue of responsible choice."

Students can choose if

they want to drink alcohol or not. Prohibiting alcohol consumption to people under the age of 21 who choose to drink will not stop them from getting alcohol. Lacie Holbert, undecided freshman, said, "Everyone's doing it, whether it's legal or not. So they might as well make it legal now."

Jessica Dibble, marketing senior, said, "It's 21 now, and we're trying to lower it to 18. After a while, they're going to try to lower it to 16. We had to wait until we were 21 so they should too."

The International Center for Alcohol Policies is a not-for-profit organization that offers information and advice on alcohol policies. According to the ICAP, when you turn 18 you can vote, marry, buy tobacco products, take out a loan, hold office, strike binding legal contracts, serve on a jury, pay taxes and even adopt a child.

But the biggest debate on this issue is the fact that once you are 18, you can enlist, serve, fight and even die for your country. But you can't buy a beer.

"I'd lower it. You're 18, dying for your country but

See Drinking, page 6—

Blocked off



Kenna Corley/Collegian photographer

Students are blocked from the sidewalk outside of Mossman as it receives a concrete makeover. The construction is due to the campus becoming ADA accessible with complete handicapped accessibility.