

2nd blizzard socks western Plains in less than a week

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The second blizzard in less than a week hit the western Plains yesterday, leaving travelers snowbound in motels and emergency shelters along hundreds of miles of closed highways.

The Kansas National Guard helped stranded travelers under the authority of a disaster declaration issued for the first storm. Wind up to 50 mph made it feel like 30 below zero.

About 460 miles of Interstate 70 was closed from Salina, Kan., to Watkins, Colo., just east of Denver, and the Nebraska Roads Department closed 225 miles of I-80 from Lincoln to North Platte as blowing snow reduced visibility to zero. I-25 in Colorado south of Parker also was closed for a time but reopened during the night.

Most other roads in western Kansas were impassable, and all roads in and out of Broken Bow, Neb., were closed. Fourteen state and federal highways in eastern and southern Colorado were closed and Loveland Pass was blocked by a snowslide.

The Oklahoma Panhandle also had blowing snow and low visibility, but the only road closed was U.S. 287 from Boise City to the Colorado border, which was blocked to keep people from entering Colorado's blizzard area.

The Kansas National Guard worked to rescue stranded motorists around Garden City, where all roads in and out of town were impassable. The Guard's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Ralph T. Tice, was snowbound in Hays.

Blizzard warnings were posted for much of western Kansas and central Nebraska, the same area battered by last week's storm, while winter storm watches were issued for today in central and northeastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota. Up to 12 inches of snow had fallen in western Kansas by midday, with drifts as high as 6 feet in Wichita County, but eastern Kansas had rain and a flash flood watch.

Wind gusted to more than 50 mph at Goodland, Kan., and Broken Bow, Neb. Temperatures fell into the single digits over the northern Plains and into the 20s as far south as the Texas Panhandle, combining with the wind to produce wind chills of between 15 below zero and 30 below from Minnesota into Nebraska and western Kansas.

The National Guard Army at Garden City, Kan., housed 62 motorists and about 70 more were at a gymnasium in Deerfield, west of Garden City, said Staff Sgt. Keith Lehman. Electricity failed late Friday at Deer-

Peru's army chief doubts coup rumors

LIMA, Peru (AP) — The army chief sought to dispel rumors of a coup attempt following enactment of a law that creates a single Defense Ministry to oversee Peru's fiercely independent military branches.

"There are no serious disagreements between the military and the government," Gen. Enrique Lopez, the army commander, said Friday. He said the army will respect the constitution.

After heated debate, the Senate on Thursday night gave final approval to the law, submitted by the governing Aprista Party. President Alan Garcia has 180 days to name a defense minister. The post replaces three Cabinet-level ministries each headed by officers of the army, air force and navy.

Coup rumors spread across Peru, which has been under military rule for much of its modern history.

Observers saw the measure as an effort by the government to gain more control over the armed forces, which have toppled three civilian governments since 1945 and which last ruled from 1968 to 1980.

Students flock to Daytona Beach

Spring break revelers ignore Fort Lauderdale

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Thousands of sun-starved college students have shifted the annual spring break party headquarters in Florida, choosing hotels and beaches in Daytona Beach instead of traditional Fort Lauderdale.

"I've been here 24 years and I've never seen crowds like this," said police Capt. Noel Ouellette.

Officials first predicted 375,000 students, up from 315,000 who came here last year.

"But after all is said and done and the fat lady sings, it will be close to a half million," said Ouellette, noting that many of the students may have come because MTV, the music video channel, is broadcasting from Daytona Beach for the second year in a row.

Ouellette frequently flies over the 23 miles of beach and was amazed at the crowd on a recent Sunday.

"There was sand down there," he

said, "but you just couldn't see it."

Daytona Beach appears to be reaping the benefits at the expense of Fort Lauderdale, one of the nation's top spring break meccas but which began protesting the annual strain.

"Fort Lauderdale didn't want them. That's why they come here," said Debra Taylor, a shop manager in Daytona Beach. "Hardly anyone ever mentions Fort Lauderdale."

What most students do mention is partying.

"This is the biggest partying city around," said Todd Mansker, 22, who drove with two other students nonstop from Ball State University in Indiana. "I've seen it all over the last couple of days."

"This is my last hurrah," said Ron Gregg, 24, who recently graduated from Ohio University in Athens. "I've

been here five days now just drinking and falling down. I'm hitting all the bars and catching the contests. It's a good time."

The influx of students has been good for business. Officials estimate the visitors will spend a total of \$102 million here during spring break, which lasts another two weeks.

Luther Cato, manager of the Si-Si Motel, said his small motel a block from the beach was full every night.

"I don't know if I can survive another spring break," said Cato as he repaired plumbing damaged by students. But he added, "We haven't had any big problems."

Fort Lauderdale hoteliers were busy taking cancellations.

"I don't think there is any hope of recovery," said George Gill Jr., who owns the two largest beach hotels, the

Yankee Trader and Yankee Clipper.

"It's a disaster area. There's signs all over the place — vacancy, vacancy, vacancy," said Lou O'Neill, who manages the Berlin Beach Motel.

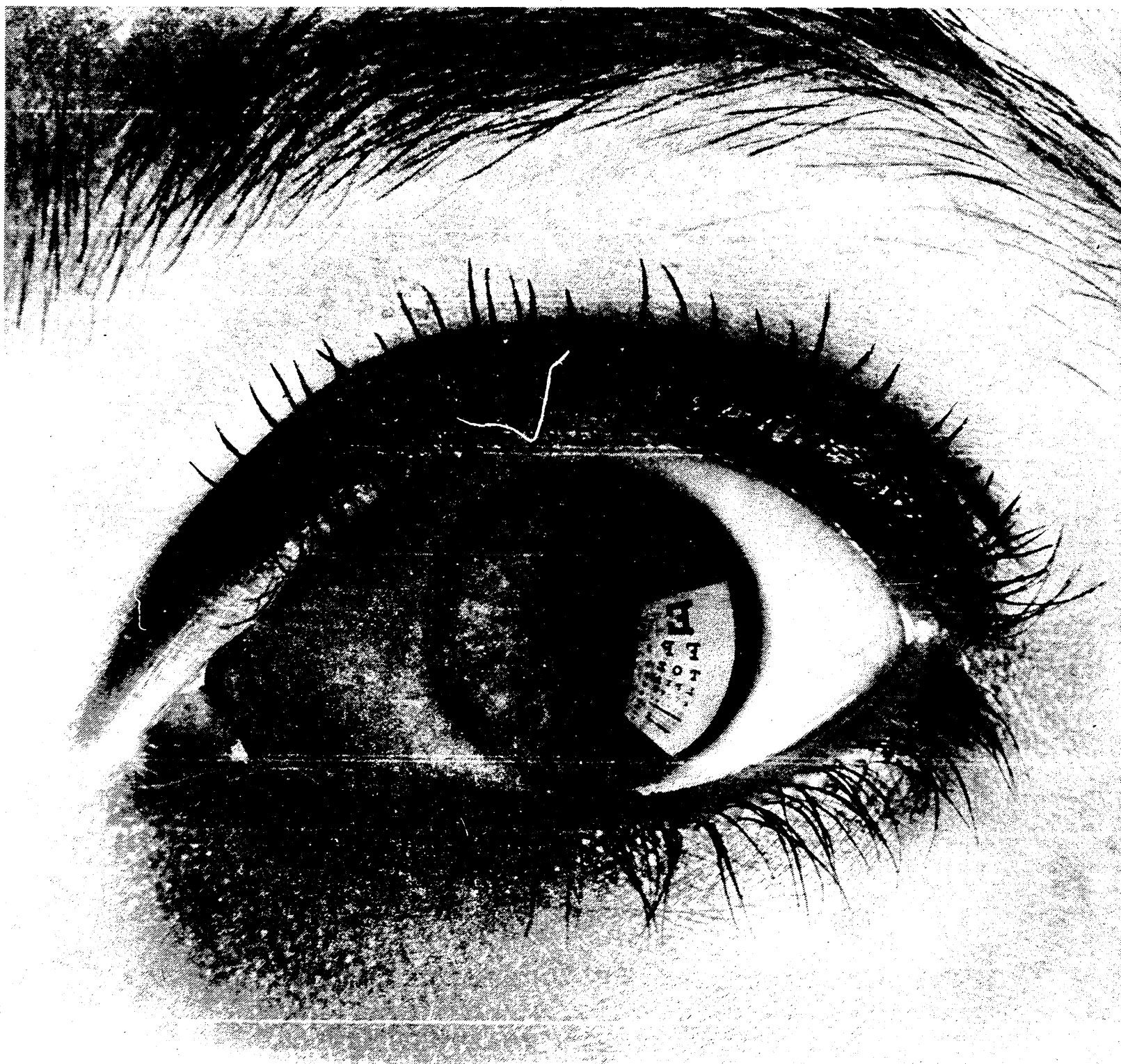
Despite the large number of students here, only about 1%, some 3,200, will have any contact with police, said Ouellette, and most of that will be for minor infractions.

Two students have died in the Daytona area this year. One died in a fall from a motel balcony and another was struck by a car. Six have fallen from balconies this year and three were seriously injured.

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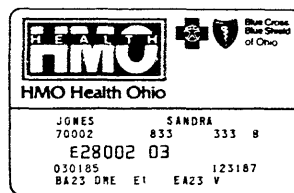
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