

# Goodland receives money to assist new firm

GOODLAND — The Kansas Department of Commerce said late last week it has approved \$200,000 in economic development assistance to help the City of Goodland and Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp., which is opening a new plant here.

The city will use the money to provide a loan for equipment and working capital to Aircraft Seal and Gasket, a California based manufacturer of custom parts for the aerospace industry.

Herb Menold, president of Aircraft Seal and Gasket said he was pleased the state approved the loan and that it will help in the expensive front-end of the startup of the Goodland plant.

He said a ribbon cutting is planned for Thursday, Feb. 19, and that besides the state and local offi-

cials he expects his partners, Doug Moody of Wichita who was the partner in the idea two years ago to move the plant to Kansas and several of the Menold family members to attend.

“Things are going pretty well as we continue to build the infrastructure,” Menold Said. “I am in Goodland today because we got the first machine running, the mixer, and are close to running the calendar.

“It is going very well from my perspective. It takes a lot of time and effort to get these pieces of equipment in operation.

“The state help has been great in getting the incentives in place and helping us get our supply lines set up. As soon as we get up and running it will be more evident. All the

people from the state and area have been great to work with in getting this move underway.

“Chuck Lutters, Kendall Cooper and now Andy Laue have been hired to help get the equipment up and running,” Menold said. “It will take a few more weeks to get ready to hire more people and get the plant producing.”

Menold said Laue will be the chief financial officer for the corporation, and will oversee all three locations with his headquarters in Goodland.

He said this is possible today with the communications networks. He said the telephone system and computers were delivered Thursday he expects the three sites to be networked this week.

The state grant will create a mini-

um of six jobs within a two-year period, the state said. The Small Cities Community Development Block Grant money will be matched with \$100,000 of private financing from Aircraft Seal and Gasket. The city commission approved the grant request at their meeting on Dec. 1.

Doug Bruggeman, with the Northwest Kansas Regional Planning and Development Commission in Hill City, told the city commission the \$200,000 is much less than the maximum of \$750,000 under the loan program. The city is sponsoring the loan application, but is not responsible for repayment even if the firm doesn’t pay the state.

“The loan requires one job to be created for every \$35,000 borrowed,” Bruggeman said. “For Air-

craft Seal and Gasket, it would be about six jobs for the \$200,000 loan amount.

“The loan will be at 4 percent for five years. The loan specifications are established by the state, and the company is required to provide collateral as well as a \$100,000 match.

“The \$200,000 they are getting for will be matched with \$100,000 from the company and they agreed to create six jobs, with four being middle to low income jobs. They will have two years to spend the money and create the jobs.”

The commission approved the application on a 4-0 vote. When the meeting opened, it was noted that Commissioner Chuck Lutters was absent. Bruggeman and City Manager Ron Pickman said Lutters did not want there to be any question

about a conflict of interest since he took the job as plant manager with Aircraft Seal and Gasket.

“This economic development loan through the state is something the city has never applied for,” said Pickman, “but in this instance it is helpful we were able to qualify for this program to help a company open a plant here. The people of Kansas pay this money in and it is good to get some of it back to help stimulate our local economy.”

The Community Development Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing administers the block grant program in rural areas. Economic development grants are given to cities or counties which, in turn, loan the money to private businesses to create or retain permanent jobs.

## Scammers targeted

WICHITA (AP) — The state attorney general’s office has found more than 600 incidents of elderly or disabled people being scammed since it began concentrating on the problem last year.

Attorney General Phill Kline’s office began earmarking scam complaints from elderly and disabled people last March. It has flagged 667 such reports through January.

Since the attorney general officially formed the Vulnerable Adults Task Force last November, it has recovered \$3,688 dollars for consumers through January.

One victim was an 82-year-old Kansas City area woman who suffered from dementia. The woman, who lives on a fixed income, donated about \$2,000 to nonprofit groups who continued to contact her. The woman couldn’t remember that she had already donated.

A member of her family noticed and called the task force. When it contacted the nonprofit groups, “the legitimate groups were very quick to return the money,” said Whitney Watson, director of communications and personnel for the attorney general’s office.

Mary Tritsch, associate state director of AARP Kansas, said one of the most prevalent scams hitting seniors is lottery solicitations. Seniors are told by phone or letter that they’ve won a lottery — often in a foreign country — but that they have to send in a portion of their winnings to receive the prize.

“People are falling for it,” Tritsch said. Her message to consumers: “If you have to send in money, you didn’t win anything. You shouldn’t have to clean out your bank account to win a prize.” The task force has not tracked complaints long enough to identify any specific pattern.

## Art studio busy place



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Colby High School junior Jennifer Jumper worked on her clay pot in the high school art studio this morning. Students in the studio were building clay coil pots while others worked on painting a mural in the hall. The students are in Mrs. Roberts’ art class

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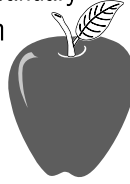
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