

# Goodland's hospital logs 15 complaints last year

**By SHARON CORCORAN**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
GOODLAND — One unhappy patient can cost a hospital \$400,000, Director of Patient Relations Brenda McCants told the Goodland Regional Medical Center board earlier this week and they need to respond swiftly and completely when a patient is disappointed.

In a presentation about the role of patient relations, McCants listed the ways she receives complaints, the steps she takes to resolve problems and what the board can do to help.

She went through figures showing how one dissatisfied customer can cost the hospital money because that person tells others who tell others about the problem.

The hospital had 15 complaints registered with patient relations in the past year, McCants said, with a potential loss of \$1.6 million.

"In my book," she said, "one complaint is too many."

McCants said it is better to know about the complaints and do something about them than to think there are no complaints.

"I would like zero," she said, "but would rather have these and know concerns are being met. This is part of quality."

Looking at the census and considering the changes the hospital has been through, McCants said, she thinks the number of complaints is low.

McCants said the complaints reach her by phone, in surveys, during patient visits, and from community members, staff and board members.

She said she worries that people are complaining to others but not reporting the problems, so they aren't being dealt with.

"I often hear," she said, "I don't want anyone to get in trouble. Will they treat me differently when I come back for care?"

McCants said she hopes the staff would be more professional than that, and she would take measures to prevent such a response. That would definitely be a problem, she said.

The director said some people send anonymous letters rather than reporting an incident. She said she appreciates the input, but would like a chance to deal directly with the complainant.

"Anonymous letters are great," McCants said. "They give us food for thought, things we can work on. But they are hard to respond to."

Most of the concerns, she said, have been about confidentiality and attitude, and communication is an issue.

McCants said when she receives a complaint, she contacts the patient right away to let them know the hospital takes the complaint seriously and will do some-

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Brenda McCants, patient relations

thing about it. Then there is an investigation, she said. Among the questions, she said, are: What is the desired outcome? Is additional information needed? What other staff members should be involved in resolving the problem?

Efforts are made to come up with a solution, McCants said, between what the patient's ideal outcome would be and what the hospital can do. The information is compiled in a monthly report for hospital staff and administration to use to improve future care.

Figures are compared to previous months, she said, and suggestions are made to possibly change policy.

Some patients may contact board members, McCants said, hoping that action will take place immediately. If that happens, she told the board, they should contact her or Administrator Jay Jolly about it. She said they will contact the patient to let him know they are investigating the complaint.

It's important to create good, positive public relations, McCants said, considering the potential loss from one dissatisfied customer. She went through a formula, showing that if one patient complains to nine to 10 other people who then tell others, it can affect up to 63 people.

If one-fourth of those who hear about it choose to go elsewhere for care, she said, then 16 people are affected. Assuming that each of those people will need \$25,000 of medical care in their lives, she said, that complaint would cost the hospital \$400,000.

Among the patient relations-related issues the hospital needs to deal with, McCants said, is understanding people's values. The patient's view, she said, is "if they are poking inside my body, I want to know what they expect to find."

She said good patient relations are also important for the hospital to compete with others in the area.

"It's easier for the competition to imitate what we do than how we do it," she said.

McCants said she encourages those who have complaints to become part of the solution. If they volunteer to work, she said, they can have an impact at the hospital.

# Goodland's city commission looks at tax hike

**BY TOM BETZ**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
GOODLAND — A raise for city employees, an increase in property taxes and a \$2-per-month hike in water bills are included in the budget for next year which will be presented for City Commission approval at 5 p.m. Monday.

The budget would increase the city's property tax by 3.87 mills, or about 7.7 percent, and raise base water rates by \$2 per month. City employees would get a 75-cent-an-hour raise, about \$1,500 a year for each worker.

The property tax raise will mean the bill on a \$50,000 home will go up by about \$22.24 per year.

The city commission spent two nights earlier in July reviewing departments' budget requests and came to a consensus on the budget, which is what will be presented in an open hearing at the beginning of the meeting Monday.

City Manager Ron Pickman said the raise request for city employees is about the same as the total of 5 percent that was in this year's budget.

"This year, the commission approved a 1 percent cost of living raise," Pickman said, "plus a merit raise of up to 4 percent based on performance."

"An employee had to do better to

get more than the 1 percent, and had to be almost perfect to get the additional 4 percent."

He said raises this year for 61 employees averaged about 2-3 percent, including the 1 percent cost of living.

"The money not used in the raises carried over into the budget for next year," Pickman said.

For the proposed raise for next year, Pickman said they took the total of the employees and figured 5 percent, but then the formula was changed.

"We did not feel the straight percentage was being fair," Pickman said. "With the percentage, the guy making \$45,000 would get a raise of \$2,000 and the guy making \$15,000 would get \$750."

"The proposal for the 75 cents an hour is to give everyone the same amount of money, and would be \$1,506 a year or \$130 a month. We felt that would be fairer to the laborer, and keeps the gap between the top and bottom from getting larger.

"It is a 5 percent raise, but this way the top may get 1-1 1/2 percent but the bottom will get the full 5 percent."

The total cost for all 61 employees would be \$95,000, with half coming from the city utilities and the other half from the general fund,

Pickman said.

Transfers from the utility departments are supposed to help offset the costs, Pickman said, but when transfers can't be made, the general fund — which comes from taxes — has to bear the brunt.

Pickman said the water fund is running in the red. Mayor Rick Billinger and Commissioner John Garcia suggested the base monthly rate be raised by \$2 to bring the fund into balance, and the other commissioners agreed.

Pickman said some additional changes had to be made besides the base monthly raise, and that the \$2 a month will not be enough to totally solve the water fund problem.

In other business Monday, the commission:

- Will consider an ordinance to raise the property tax to cover the proposed increase in the budget for next year.

- Consider ordinances adopting the uniform offense and traffic codes by reference. These will include the changes in criminal and traffic offenses that were passed by the state Legislature.

- Consider an ordinance adopting procedures for governing meetings, and one repealing existing provisions in the city code. The procedures would include new guidelines for conducting city business, aban-

doning "Roberts Rules of Order," which is what the City Commission is supposed to follow.

Pickman said the airport runway lighting project was ahead of schedule despite the rains. He said the workers arrive on Monday and work through Friday morning.

The street sealing was completed before the rains, but Pickman said the contractor will have to come back and redo the blocks on 17th between Clark and the railroad tracks. The City Commission meets upstairs at the City Administration Building, 204 W. 11th.

The meeting and the budget hearing are open to the public.

## ESTATE SALE

426 SMITH DR., COLBY

July 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>

Friday 12pm-8pm  
Saturday 8am-6pm

- Solid wood 3 piece Broyhill bedroom set
- Solid wood dining room table w/2 leaves and 4 chairs
- Lazy Boy hide a bed
- Sofa and 2 matching chairs
- Some Antiques
- Yard Tools
- Numerous mechanical tools & wood working equipment
- Pine Hutch
- Antique China Cabinet
- Dishes and Glassware
- Franciscan "apple" Dishes


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**Sale Time**  
**10:00 a.m.**


**HOUSE AND CAR**  
**WILL SELL AT 2 P.M.**

**AUCTION LOCATION: Fairgrounds in Oakley, Kansas**


We will sell the following list of household items, antiques, collectibles, and real estate at public auction at the fairgrounds in Oakley, KS on:

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 2004**


**HOUSEHOLD ITEMS**




Hotpoint 23.4 cu. ft. refrigerator, egg shell white, like new




GE electric cooking range, double oven, one oven is self cleaning




Wards chest type deep freeze, 18 cu. Ft., white




Whirlpool auto. washing machine, heavy duty




Whirlpool electric dryer, heavy duty




4 piece set, couch, loveseat, chair, footstool



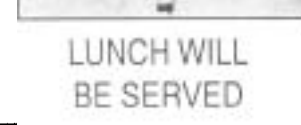
Recliner



Couch



Occasional chair



2 Swivel rockers

Leather rocking chair

Dirting room set, 5 chairs, 1 captains chair, china cabinet, chairs have cane backs, 2 extra leaves

Curved glass china cabinet

China cabinet

Bookcase

4 dining room chairs on casters

Round table

4 Piece queen size 4 poster bedroom set, like new

Twin bed

Single bed

Chest of drawers

Round table

Home made end table

End table

Zenith console color TV w/remote

Writing desk

Singer electric sewing machine in cabinet w/chair

Stereo w/radio & 8 track player

Pole lamp

Touch lamp

Table lamps

Floor lamps

Hanging lamps

Hall tree

Kirby Generation II vacuum sweeper

Electric coffee maker

Food processor

Radios

Dustbuster vacuum

Brass candle holders

Wool blankets

High chair

Fans

**ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES**

Oak round dining room table

Oak buffet

Curved glass china cabinet, over 100 yrs. Old

4 Piece bedroom set, Waterfall design

Kitchen cupboard

Oak rocking chair

2 Bentwood chairs

3 Oak chairs

Wooden sewing rocker

Square topped parlor table

Singer treadle sewing machine

Cedar chest

Milk glass Alladin kerosene lamp

Kerosene lamp

Table lamp

Salt & pepper collection

Pink depression pitcher w/6 glasses

6 Yellow depression glass sherbets

Yellow depression glass bowl

6 Ruby red glasses

Fenton glass basket

Clear glass bowls

Sugar bowl w/spoon 1937

2 Gas irons

Cast iron seat

Cast iron kettle

Cast iron boiler

Cream cans, 15 gal. & 10 gal.

Razor blade sharpener

Shoe last

Lard press

Horse collars

Hames

4 Steel hayrack wheels

Collectible farm items

Sewing box stand

Daisy butter churn No. 8

2 gal. crock

National wash board w/glass board

Sadiron

1847 Rogers Bros. silver plate 8 place setting silverware

Bell collection

Brass horse collection

Bird cage

Hand crank ice cream freezer

Coors schooner mug

Coffee pot

Picture frames

Crock jug

Guitar

State plate collection

Whatnots

Costume jewelry

Records

Coaster wagon

**MISC. ITEMS**

Omega heavy duty bench grinder

Bench vise

Porch glider

Metal storage cabinet

6" Aluminum step ladder

Dishes, pots and pans, silverware, sewing supplies, linens, luggage, tins, vases, books, Christmas decorations, garden tools, garden supplies, carpenter tools, shop tools, and many other items too numerous to mention.

8" Aluminum step ladder

Aluminum step stool


Tomato holders

Chick brooders

**REAL ESTATE**

**503 Freeman Ave., Oakley, KS**

Real Estate will sell at 2:00 p.m.



**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** All but North 10 ft. of Lot 12 and all of Lots 13 and 14 in Block 17, Glick's Addition to the City of Oakley, Kansas.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:** Ranch style home with 3 bedrooms, family room, 2 full baths, utility room, furnace room, kitchen w/eating area, dining room, den, and living room. 3,371 sq. ft. of living area. Steam heat and central air conditioning. 1 year old asphalt roof. Two gas fireplaces. Sun room and 1 car attached garage. Exterior walls are stone. No steps.

**TAXES:** Sellers will pay all of 2003 and prior taxes, 2004 taxes will be prorated. 2003 Taxes: \$1,959.14.

**POSSESSION:** Day of closing.

**TERMS:** Ten percent (10%) down day of sale, balance due upon receipt of merchantable title, upon closing day. In the event Title Insurance is issued, buyer and seller will split cost of title insurance premium.

**HOUSE IS SUBJECT TO SALE, PRIOR TO AUCTION DATE.**

WaKeeney Real Estate Agency is working for the seller and seller only.

**SELLERS: HEIRS OF LEO & AMELIA OTTLEY**

**WaKeeney Real Estate Agency**

**in cooperation with Ray Stithem Auction & Real Estate**

**320 Josephine WaKeeney, Kansas 67672**  
**Leon Fabrizio, Broker - 743-6370 or 5663**  
**For information Contact Leon Fabrizio, 743-6370 or 5663, Bob Ottley, 785-672-3391, Bernie Ottley, 785-824-3333, Bill Ottley, 785-743-2457.**  
**Viewing of the home on Friday, August 6th, 1-4 p.m.**

**AUCTIONEER'S NOTE:** Would make a very good retirement home. There are no steps.

**VEHICLE**

1988 Dodge 600 SE 4 door car, 20,927 actual miles, auto. trans., radio, A/C

**Terms: Cash**

Announcements made day of sale take precedence over printed material. Not responsible for accidents or theft.

**Sellers: HEIRS OF LEO & AMELIA OTTLEY**

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