




Weather Corner



Tonight...Mostly cloudy. A chance of light rain showers and snow showers in the evening... Then scattered flurries after midnight. Lows in the mid 20s. Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph. Chance of measurable precipitation 30 percent.

Thursday...Partly sunny in the morning then becoming mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 30s. Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph. Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 20. West winds 10 to 15 mph.

Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 40s. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph. Friday night...Mostly cloudy. Lows around 17.

Saturday...Partly sunny. Highs in the lower 40s. Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 15.

Goodland teen named runner-up in pageant

By Sharon Corcoran
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Goodland Star-News

A Goodland High School junior was chosen first runner-up in her first time at the Miss Teen Kansas U.S.A. Pageant, surprising even herself.

Brooke Lennington, 16, daughter of Carol Lennington of Goodland and Rich Lennington of Syracuse, went up against 32 girls from across the state at the pageant Dec. 13 to 15 at the Lied Center on the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence.

Surviving three days of rehearsals, evening gown and swim suit competition and the interview, she said, she listened anxiously as the top 15 girls were announced. Just as she thought she wasn't going to make the cut, they called her name.

When they announced the top five, she was the first one called and was so shocked she just froze. But she recovered and was able to answer three questions asked, ended up being the girl who would replace the winner if she is not able to serve her term. She's hoping, however, that won't happen.

"I think it's really sad," Lennington said, "when ones

who win get into trouble. I don't want to get the crown that way."

She says the idea that p a g e a n t s are all about s h a l l o w , pretty girls is an inaccurate stereotype. Anyone who wants to do pageants should give it a try, she said; you learn a lot.

Lennington said she has learned to do interviews a lot better than she did before and has seen shy girls gain a lot of personality from the experience. And she said the contestants were glad to see Jessica Colonna of Leawood win.

"We wanted someone to win who is real," Lennington said. "With some girls, we were like, 'They met with too many coaches.' They were so rehearsed."

Lennington grew up in Goodland and says she was born in the house she still lives in. She has two sisters and a brother here: Nichole O'Brien, 22, who has two children, one nearly a year old and the other 2 months; Hunter Lennington, a fifth grader; and



Lennington

Sarah Lennington, 3.

Her mother, who works at Shear Dimensions, a Goodland salon, is able to help with her look. Her father, owner of two Syracuse businesses, Rich's Refrigeration and Cynthia's Pizzeria, sponsored her pageant run. Her grandfather, Harold Sullins of Syracuse, also provides support and attended the pageant.

"Normally you get sponsors to pay for your expenses," Miss Lennington said, "but I had my dad do it since he has two businesses."

She said she hopes to have more sponsors for her next competition.

"I saw all these girls with a long list of sponsors at the pageant," she said, "and I only had two."

Though this was her first trip to this pageant, it was not Lennington's first competition. She started three years ago, competing in the junior teen division of the National American Miss, a small pageant in Wichita.

"Top 15 is all I got," she said.

Lennington said she got into pageants because she wanted the crown.

"It's pretty," she said. "As a little girl, that's what I wanted. Now that I'm more grown up, I realize that pageant contestants

have a chance to be role models."

Lennington said she would have loved to win the pageant at Lawrence, so she could represent Kansas at Pasadena, Calif., and compete against 49 other girls from across the country. She plans to try again next year and hopes to compete in other pageants as well.

One she would love to compete in is the Miss Kansas Pageant, where the winner competes for the famous "Miss America" title. It's a big scholarship pageant, Lennington said. She received a \$6,000 scholarship to Newman University for first runner-up in Lawrence but would like to have more.

She said she may attend the University of Kansas and hopes to become a news anchor or possibly a talk show host.

"I think it would be cool to have a talk show on TV," she said.

She was hoping to be in the top 15 at the pageant and thought for a moment she wouldn't make it.

"I was called 12th," she said. "By then, I thought I wasn't going to be called."

But then she was called first for the top five.

"I couldn't move for a few seconds," she said.

Then she realized she should have paid better attention during the rehearsals.

"They taught us top-five stuff," she said, "and I kind of tuned that out because I didn't think there was any chance. They called me first, and I wasn't sure where to go."

Before going to the pageant, she trained with Krista (Burr) Hamilton and Jessica Kannady, both of Goodland, and Liz Plunkett of Syracuse.

And she takes modeling classes at Models and Images in Wichita. They help you learn to walk better and stand better, she said. She had heard a lot about the classes from Chris Baumfalk, a 2006 Goodland graduate who also went to Models and Images and has some modeling experience.

Lennington would like to share her pageant experience.

"I would like to start a pageant here," she said, "not necessarily for girls my age, but for little girls."

Being runner up was no snap, she added, but she was a shoo-in for the Miss Northwest Teen Kansas title at Lawrence.

"I was the only girl from northwest Kansas who did it," she said.

Coach upset Senators propose extending school finance to 2010

From "WRESTLERS" Page 1

It makes it difficult to recruit good athletes, and even when you get them, it's hard to keep 'em."

Lampe even went as far to say as the Jayhawk rules are biased toward the lower and lower middle classes.

"The Jayhawk Conference is extra discriminatory toward middle and upper middle class people," said Lampe. "Low income families have it made with federal aid and all the money we can give them. Middle and upper class families just have to come up with the money on their own. We have no chance of landing people in that tier."

If the Jayhawk restrictions didn't make it tough enough to recruit, Lampe also feels he is bogged down by the school's inadequate facilities.

"I was promised a new workout facility in 2000 and we still don't have one," said Lampe. "The first thing recruits want to see when they arrive on campus are your workout facilities. We're the only college I know of in America that doesn't have a weight room, and there probably isn't a high school that doesn't have one. It makes recruiting tough."

Lampe, who is by far the longest-tenured coach at the college, has three wrestlers competing at the next level, and one, Daniel Cormier, who finished fourth in the 2004 Olympic games in Athens. Things appear to be headed in the right direction this year with a top five team ranking and five wrestlers ranked in the top 10 in the country in their respective weight classes, but Lampe warns this type of success can only continue for so long under these conditions.

"Hopefully, things start to swing the other way," said Lampe. "Right now, are athletic programs are in a pretty tough spot. I don't care how good the coach is, if you don't have the athletes, you aren't going to be successful."

TOPEKA (AP) — Senate Republican leaders proposed Tuesday extending the state's current education funding law to 2010 with a \$65 million increase for public schools.

The proposal would increase spending by 2.2 percent, meeting a state mandate that future increases match the increase in the Consumer Price Index. The increase equates to a \$59 increase in the base aid for each student, with \$37 million going to school districts and \$28 million going for related increases in contributions to their employees' pensions.

Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, of Independence, Senate Vice President John Vratil, of Leawood, and Education Committee Chairwoman Jean Schodorf of Wichita offered the proposal.

"We have a one-time opportunity to stay ahead of the school finance curve," Schmidt said. "If we let that opportunity slip by, we'll be right back in the morass that we were before."

The current three-year school finance plan expires on June 30, 2009. It was passed in 2006 to satisfy a Kansas Supreme Court order to increase public school spending. Schools will get an additional \$122.7 million for the 2008-09 school year, beginning July 1, for total state funds estimated at nearly \$3.3 billion.

Schmidt said by approving a fourth funding year, school officials could plan hiring teachers and establishing new programs.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said she shares those concerns and is interested in what the senators are suggesting. She said she's talked to House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, an Ingalls Republican, about the idea. "Multiyear funding has been successful, allowing teachers and districts to plan for the future," Sebelius said. "I will have a proposal for some additional enhancements in the fourth year."

House Education Committee

Chairman Clay Aurand said the Senate proposal starts the discussion about what comes next in school funding, but legislators should proceed cautiously.

"My concern has been that if revenue falls off, if you can't deliver on something that was promised, that might be worse than going year to year," said Aurand, a Courtland Republican.

"There will come a time when we will run short. I'm not sure this is, 100 percent, the way to go, but it seems like a reasonable plan to look at."

Aurand said future funding debates may center on revenue for specific purposes, such as increasing teacher salaries

and mentoring to keep enough personnel in the classroom.

Education Commissioner Alexa Posny said such issues are behind a request to boost the 2008-09 increase by an additional \$26 million, or \$41 per student. She said districts are competing against other states and professions for quality teacher candidates.

"There is a tremendous teacher shortage that we know is going to occur," Posny said.

She said 42 percent of teachers leave after the first seven years, with another 32 percent able to retire in the next five.

Schmidt said the commitment legislators made in 2006 to increase funding and address concerns

raised by the courts is paying off, though the improvement can't be quantified.

"My instinct is that our public school system is better than when we started this process. I'm willing

to move forward on that belief," Schmidt said.

Posny said gains have been made, especially in closing gaps among different groups of students that were the target of the Supreme Court case.

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