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Grinnell senator wins 40th District

By Kevin Bottrell

The Goodland Star-News
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The tale of two incumbents running for one seat came to an end Tuesday with state Sen. Ralph Ostmeier of Grinnell soundly defeating Sen. Allen Schmidt of Hays in the general election.

With all of the 224 precincts in the 40th District reporting unofficial results

early Wednesday, Ostmeier captured 66 percent of the vote to Schmidt's 34 percent. Sen. Ostmeier had 21,666 votes to his opponent's 11,311. Results for Ellis, Logan and Decatur counties were still incomplete.

Ostmeier apparently carried almost every county in the district, which contains about 71,500 people. He won by a large margin in the rural counties, but Schmidt carried his home county, winning 6,285

votes in Ellis County to Ostmeier's 6,182. In Thomas County, Ostmeier got 2,485 votes in incomplete returns, while Schmidt got 869.

Turnout was up across the district. In Sherman County, which had 69.3 percent voter turnout, election workers nearly ran out of ballots.

Sen. Ostmeier, a two-term incumbent, and Sen. Schmidt, who was appointed after the resignation of 36th District Sen.

Janice Lee in 2010, were thrown into the same district during the reapportionment process earlier this year. The 40th District was reduced from 17 counties to 13 1/2, but took in Hays and Ellis County, long considered to be a Democratic stronghold.

Sen. Ostmeier is a farmer and rancher in Grinnell. After serving two terms in the state House of Representatives, he was elected to the Senate in 2004 and re-

ected in 2008.

He has served on the Natural Resources, Local Government Rules and Regulations and Energy and Environmental Policy committees.

Ostmeier defeated Norton County Commissioner John Miller in the Republican primary election by a hefty margin, 64.4 percent to 35.5 percent, 7,396 votes

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County looks for land owner

By Christina Beringer

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Thomas County Commissioners told Register of Deeds Lora Volk on Oct. 31 she could stop re-researching a parcel of land near Levant after she and Mary Burleigh of the appraiser's office spent time trying to find out who owns the property.

No bigger than half an acre and only about 100 feet across in the largest section of the triangular-shaped piece of land, it has been discovered that there apparently is no definite owner on record for the parcel that is situated between Old U.S. 24 and the Mid-States Port Authority Railroad just east of County Road 11 in Levant.

Discovered after a person expressed interest in buying the property, Volk, Burleigh and both of their offices have spent a considerable amount of effort going through deeds, records and surveys dating back to the 1930s.

The burden of proof in deter-

mining who actually owns the property will fall to the interested buyer, who, if serious about buying it, will have to pay for a land survey to be done, explained Property Valuation Division Appraisers Anna Porter and Melanie Rowilson, who have been contracted to perform appraiser work here in the absence of a permanent county appraiser.

The surveys that have been used thus far in research, said Rowilson, are strictly for appraisal use since they are only accurate in evaluating property valuations for tax purposes.

Although property lines are shown on the map, they are not deemed accurate for this kind of use.

Burleigh said the land's definite owner dates back to the 1930s when a large section there was owned by only one person. But, after the highway was built through the property and parcels began to be divided among other

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Car on interstate hits deer Tuesday

The dangers of motorists hitting deer were highlighted Tuesday morning when a car carrying two adults and a baby girl hit one Tuesday morning, sending one of the passengers to the hospital.

The Kansas Highway Patrol said a Ford minivan driven by Usiel Mendoza-Castillo, Commerce City, Colo., hit a deer at 5:45 a.m. on Interstate 70 at mile marker 41.5, about four miles west of Levant.

Mendoza-Castillo and the baby were uninjured, but the other pas-

senger, Maria Cruz Castillo-Mendoza of Longmont, Colo., was treated and released at Citizens Medical Center.

"This is the high time for deer," public resource officer Tod Hileman said. "This time of year, people need to slow down around dusk and dawn, and around wooded areas."

Hileman said half of the car versus deer accidents the highway patrol deals with occur in October, November and December.

Dogs get baths, too



Sylar Bowers (left) and Michelle Cottenmyre spent their Saturday raising money by giving peoples' dogs a bath. Members of the Student Veterinary Technician Association had a pet wash in the college's Ag/Vet Tech Building.

Hospice Services to hold annual auction

By Christina Beringer

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Members of the Hospice Services Inc.'s advisory board are encouraging people to dress up and join them on Saturday for their annual auction. The theme is Saturday Night Fever.

Starting at 5:30 p.m. at the City Limits Convention Center, there will be a social hour, dinner, auction and dance to support the organization that provides home health care for

patients.

Tickets can be purchased at the door or earlier by calling member LeAnna Soehner at 462-1095. They are \$35 per ticket or \$240 for a table of eight.

Soehner said they have a wide variety of items in the raffle that are geared toward women this year.

The raffle, which is called "Pamper Me," is for a spa package, Kitchen Aid mixer, a necklace, \$100 Starbucks gift card and 31 party bags.

She said there will also be silent- and live-auction items in addition to the raffle.

Since 1993, Hospice Services in Thomas County has served patients in their homes and nursing homes, said member Lacey Brott.

And all of the auction's proceeds will stay in Thomas County to support local patients' needs.

"We just really want to have everyone who attends the hospice auction to have a lot of fun

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Holiday open house



Tenley Glad (left), owner of Emerald Editions, talked with Joann Stephens about items in her shop Saturday during the business' Holiday Open House at 145 W. Third St. Glad held

the open house Saturday afternoon and evening as well as Sunday afternoon.

KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press

Storm brings outages for battered states

By Colleen Long and Frank Eltman

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The nor'easter that stymied recovery efforts from Superstorm Sandy pulled away from New York and New Jersey today, leaving hundreds of thousands of new people in darkness after a blanket of thick, wet snow snapped storm-weakened trees and downed power lines.

From Brooklyn to storm-battered sections of the Jersey shore and Connecticut, about 750,000 customers — more than 200,000 from the new storm — in the region were without power in temperatures near freezing, some living for days in the dark.

"We lost power last week, just got it back for a day or two, and now we lost it again," said John Monticello of Point Pleasant Beach, N.J. "Every day it's the same now: turn on the gas burner for heat. Instant coffee. Use the iPad to find out what's going on in

the rest of the world."

But most were just grateful the new storm didn't bring a fresh round of devastation.

"For a home without power, it's great. It came through the storm just great," said Iliay Bardash, 61, a computer programmer on Staten Island without electricity since last week. "But things are not worse, and for that I am thankful."

Nearby, Vladimir Repnin emerged from his powerless home with a snow shovel in his hand, a cigarette in his mouth and a question from someone cut off from the outside world.

"Who won? Obama?" he asked.

He didn't like the answer.

"The Democrats ruined my business," he said, referring to his shuttered clothing manufacturing firm.

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