


weather report

42°
at noon



Today

• Sunset, 5:43 p.m.
Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:11 a.m.
• Sunset, 5:44 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 26 degrees
• Humidity 50 percent
• Sky partly sunny
• Winds northeast 14 m.p.h.
• Barometer 30.03 inches and rising
• Record High 82° (1972)
• Record Low -13° (1948)

Last 24 Hours*

High 66°
Low 25°
Precipitation —

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy, low upper 20s, wind southwest 10-15. Tomorrow: Partly sunny, high lower 60s, wind southwest 10-15.

Extended Forecast

Thursday night: Mostly clear, low in upper 20s. Friday: Mostly sunny then becoming cloudy, windy, high in mid 50s. Friday night: Very windy, partly cloudy, 30 percent chance of snow, temperature falling upper 20s by midnight.

(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.62 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.48
Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
Corn — \$1.87 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.91
Loan deficiency payment — 8¢
Milo — \$1.60 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.90 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.90
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.02
Millet — \$3.25 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$9.63 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$.16
Confection current — \$16/\$8 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$26 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

Soldiers gain on terrorists

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — U.S.-led coalition troops have gained the upper hand after killing at least half the al-Qaida and Taliban forces holed up in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan in the biggest joint offensive in the war, the U.S. commander said Wednesday.

Several hundred more American troops were deployed in the rugged terrain of Paktia province — bringing their number to more than 1,000. Also arriving were fresh forces from their Afghan allies. Working at altitudes sometimes about 10,000 feet, they engaged in continuous firefighting with al-Qaida fighters and cleared several enemy caves.

“We’ve got confirmed kills in the hundreds,” Maj. Gen. Frank L. Hagenbeck told a press conference Wednesday at Bagram air base north of the capital Kabul.

Two legislators talk taxes, education

One says state can spend less

By Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News

Sherman County’s state legislators, Sen. Stan Clark and Rep. Jim Morrison held a “town hall” meeting Monday for about 12 voters, who talked about school funding, possible tax increases, and trying to preserve social programs.

After they were done, two statewide candidates, Tim Shallenburger, state treasurer and candidate for governor, and Phill Kline, a former member of the Kansas House of Representatives and candidate for attorney general, talked about their backgrounds and their qualifications for the jobs they are seeking.

Rep. Morrison told the audience it will be hard for the state government to cut what it spends on social programs.

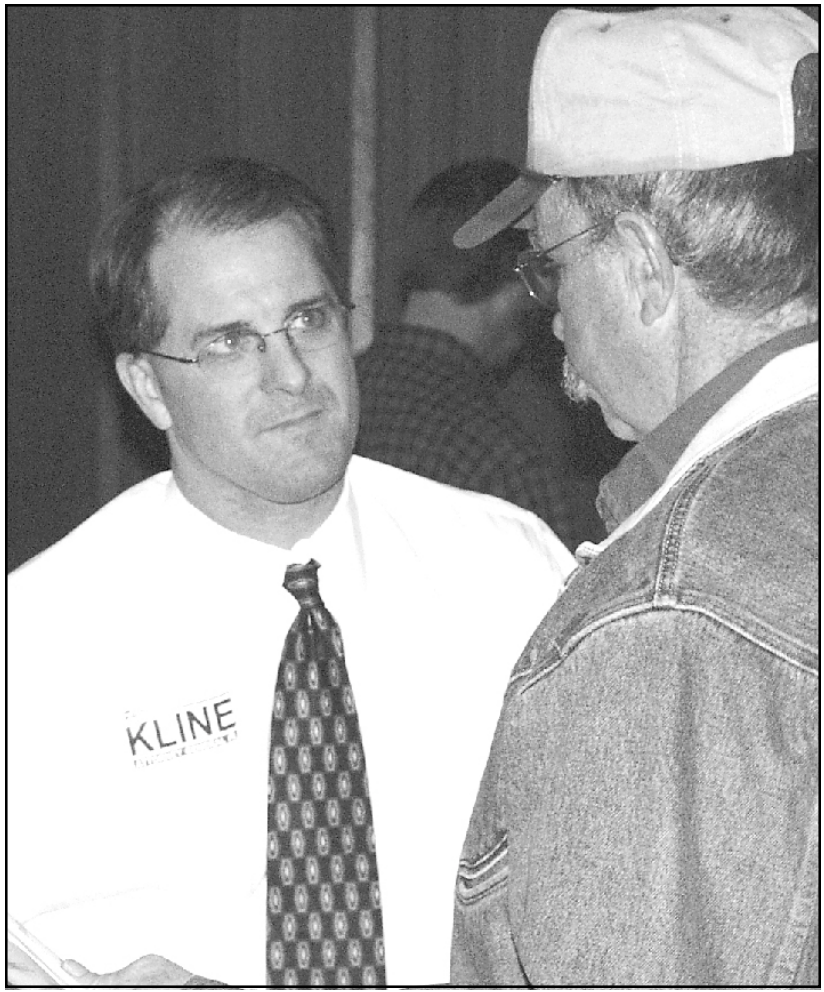
“I’ve been talking for a long time about how the government spends too much money,” Morrison said, “but that’s just rhetoric. We’re not going to cut much between now and summer.”

Sherman County residents get a little less than \$3,000 on average from transfer payments like Medicare and Medicaid, Morrison said, so cuts would hurt here.

“We have to be careful cutting,” he said. “I’m not necessarily opposed to a tax increase. I will not cut services to people.”

He said for the current social programs to continue, money will have to be raised somewhere. If the state doesn’t raise taxes, he said, local governments will.

“I’m getting testy about this,” he said. “You might end up getting it worse



Phill Kline, a candidate for Kansas Attorney General, spoke to a Goodland resident Monday at the Elks Lodge.
Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

locally than you would from the state.

“The fight for me is that we’re going to keep the programs we promised.”

Morrison said the state has to find a way to “get money into the hopper.”

His suggestions included selling state property which is infrequently used, beefing up Highway Patrol operations stopping the flow of drugs and giving more of the drug money recovered

to local governments.

“There is a bill in appropriations,” he said, when asked if the House is working on the idea.

The state has many ways to save money, Morrison said. For one, he said, it is unfair what state employees, including himself, paid on health insurance deductibles compared to most private policies.

“A single person only has to pay \$10,” he said. “Does that seem fair?”

He said the state should cut perks to state employees and find cheaper phone cards for employees to use.

“There are hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of minutes being charged on these phone cards,” Morrison said, adding that the current cards charge between 7 to 25 cents a minute.

“The state is very inefficient when it comes to spending money,” he said.

He told the audience the state stopped mailing paychecks in an effort to save money, but now they pay to make an electronic deposit to the employee and to mail receipts for the checks.

“It just isn’t very sensible,” he said.

Sen. Clark talked about relations in the Senate since it passed the redistricting bill.

“It’s been wonderful,” he said. “There has been a civility there hasn’t been before.”

He told how two senate members, on opposite sides of the political spectrum, argued the no-fault divorce bill, which failed.

“These two argued bitterly for and against the bill, as complete opposites as could be,” Clark said. “But when it was all over, they hugged each other.”

He said Senate members have been communicating like they never had before.

“It’s wonderful to see people actually care,” Clark said. “I’ve been thrilled and tickled.”

He talked about nursing home care, saying traditionally churches and families have helped picked up the bill for nursing homes, but once the state government started putting a little money into them, the volunteers disappeared.

The state picks up the bill once the

Politicos skip water meeting

By John Milburn
Associated Press Writer

LAWRENCE — What was billed as a town hall meeting of gubernatorial candidates discussing water policy turned out to be a one-woman show Tuesday.

“I’ve never been at town hall meeting all by myself,” Attorney General Carla Stovall told participants at the 19th Annual Water and the Future of Kansas Conference.

“I’m kind of excited. I hope I can hold your attention.”

But the absence of the other candidates was no laughing matter to Mike Hayden, the former Kansas governor now awaiting confirmation as the state’s secretary of wildlife and parks. He said it is important for those running for governor to develop positions on water issues.

Kansas State University and the Kansas Geological Survey sponsored the conference, which drew about 200 people at a Lawrence hotel.

Stovall, her fellow Republicans Tim Shallenburger and Bob Knight and Democrat Kathleen Sebelius had all been expected at

See WATER, Page 7

Board to mull offer for gym

Auctioneer has high bid for \$15,000

By Rachel Miscall
The Goodland Daily News

Though Goodland School Board members agreed Monday that a \$15,000 bid for the Edson gymnasium is probably the best offer they’ll get, they decided to give it more thought before selling.

A couple of years ago, a group from Edson asked the board to give them the district-owned gym for a community center.

Members said they would sell the gym, where Goodland athletes practice and sometimes play games, but the Edson group never returned with an offer.

The board is facing budget problems this year because lower enrollment will likely mean less money from the state, and decided to sell the gym.

Members opened three bids at their regular meeting, none from the Edson group.

The high bid from Tom Harrison, branch broker for Homeland Real Estate in Goodland, was triple the second-highest offer, but included a stipulation that could cost the district more in the long run.

Harrison, also a co-owner of TNT Auction, bid \$15,000 on the gym and offered to rent it to the district for \$325 a day.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said athletes have used the gym about 30 days this year, which would mean the district could pay almost \$10,000 a year in rent.

Selby said that the high school remodeling project forced the district to use the Edson gym more this year because furniture was stored in the high school gym.

Harrison, who attended the meeting, said he would be willing to negotiate the \$325 figure.

A bid for \$5,025 came from Mike Miller, owner of Miller Construction, which did a majority of the work on the remodeling project, and Rick Billinger, a city commissioner. They offered to rent the gym to the district for \$6,500 a year.

Brent Hostetler of Seibert, Colo., bid \$1,714, and didn’t include an offer to rent.

The board said they were leaning towards Harrison’s bid. His price originally included the water well, pump and pressure tank near the old Edson school, but Superintendent Selby said those aren’t owned by the district. Harrison said he will put in a new well.

He said TNT Auction plans to spend \$3,000 for a floor covering so the company can hold auctions in the gym without damaging the wood surface. Harrison said his main goal is preserving the gym, which would be available to the Edson community.

“I just want to see it left as a gym,” he said. “I don’t want to see it torn down.”

Member Ron Schilling, who lives in Edson, said no one called him with an opinion about whether the board should sell the gym. He said he thinks the community can’t afford to buy it or maintain it.

Selby said the district paid \$14,000 for utilities at the gym last year.

Kathy Russell, who was acting as president because Dick Short was out of town, said they should take some time to consider the offers before selling the gym. Selby said members either have to accept one of the offers or reject all of them and start a new round of bidding.

Mike Campbell also missed the meeting because he was out of town, and Eric Gray said he felt Short and Campbell should be able to have their say.

Ben Duell agreed, but added that it would be nice to have a business in the vacant building.

Schilling said the board isn’t likely to find a better offer than Harrison’s.

“I think the building is worth a lot of money,” he said, “but to whom? To me, I think it’s time to move.”

Other members agreed that it was probably the best offer they’ll get, but the board decided to wait until their meeting on March 18 to talk about it more.

Interpretating dance



Kennedy Dinkle (left) and Austin Shelly, both 3, practiced their dance number, “Micky Mouse’s Birthday Party,” at the Goodland Activities Center on Tuesday. They are in a class taught by Cheryl Schwartz.
Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

Group may fix vetoed map

Bipartisan coalition making changes to Senate redistricting bill

By Joshua Akers
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — A coalition that pushed a redistricting plan through the Senate expects to offer another proposal in the wake of a veto from Gov. Bill Graves.

Democrats and conservative Republicans in the coalition said some small changes could be made to improve the bill, which redrew the 40 Senate districts.

However, Democrats backed off a promise that the coalition would send Graves the same map he rejected.

“I don’t think you can assume anything at this point,” said Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka. “Obviously, the veto puts us in a position where we’ve got to continue talking about this issue, so we’ll go back in and see what the thinking is.”

Drafted by the Senate’s 10 Democrats and 11 of its conservative Republicans, the redistricting map was presented as debate was under way in the chamber on a version endorsed by the Senate Reapportionment Committee.

The coalition pushed its plan to passage on a 21-19 vote over the objections of top Senate Republicans, including President Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson. The House approved it last week, sending it to Graves.

In a lengthy veto message, Graves suggested the plan’s legality was questionable because of some of the changes it made in existing districts. He also raised the issues of fairness and the way the measure came to a Senate vote — without the usual committee hearings and floor debate.

“This bill did not go through that pro-

cess, and received no review by any committee or by the general public,” Graves said in a statement accompanying his veto message to legislators.

Coalition members said their plan left the cores of existing districts intact — including those of most incumbent Democrats. Critics suggested the plan drew other districts, especially in Johnson County, to help conservative Republicans.

The coalition’s map placed Sens. Janis Lee, D-Kensington, and Larry Salmans, R-Hanston, in a new northwest Kansas district.

Lee and other Democrats said that would give her a better chance in 2004 than the Kerr-backed map, which paired her in a district with a fellow

See SENATE, Page 7