

weather report

36° at noon

Today
• Sunset, 7:11 p.m.
Tomorrow
• Sunrise, 6:28 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:12 p.m.

Midday Conditions
• Soil Temperature 53 degrees
• Humidity 35 percent
• Sky partly sunny
• Winds north 20-30 m.p.h.
• Barometer 30.23 inches and rising
• Record High 86° (1996)
• Record Low 0° (1936)

Last 24 Hours*
High 79°
Low 36°
Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast
Tonight: partly cloudy and colder, low 15-20, winds north 5-15 m.p.h.
Tomorrow: partly sunny, high 40-45, low upper 20s, winds east 5-15 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast
Thursday: mostly sunny, high lower 60s, low mid 30s. Friday: partly cloudy, high upper 60s. Saturday: partly cloudy with chance of showers and thunderstorms.
(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon
Wheat — \$2.73 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.60
New Crop — \$2.69
Corn — \$1.85 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.83
Loan deficiency payment — 16¢
Milo — \$1.56 bushel
Soybeans — \$4.08 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.12
Loan deficiency payment — 80¢
Millet — \$3.25 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$8.95 cwt.
NuSun — \$9.10
Loan deficiency pmt. — 43¢
Confection current — \$16/\$8 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$27
(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.
U.S. warns Israel tourists

WASHINGTON — The State Department, citing a “deteriorating security situation,” warned Americans today to defer travel to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza and said dependents of American diplomats in Jerusalem were being encouraged to go home.
“The potential for further terrorist acts remains high,” the travel warning said. “The situation in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza remains extremely volatile with continuing terrorist attacks, confrontations and clashes.”
Similar warnings to Americans to stay away from Israel were issued in December and January. The statement today was coupled with an announcement that dependents of U.S. diplomats and other American workers at the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem were authorized to go home at government expense.

Alco closing ‘not good for business’

City leaders say it's time to plan future

By Rachel Miscall
The Goodland Daily News

When Goodland’s Alco Discount Store closed without notice on Thursday after 77 years downtown, no one seemed glad to hear it.
Alco was an “anchor store,” city leaders and Main Street business owners said. Its closing means another empty building downtown, fewer customers and maybe even a drop in population. They said it could lead to other stores shutting down.
Employees said they weren’t expecting the store to close and some may be forced to take jobs elsewhere. Customers said they may have to leave town to buy products Alco sold.
Everyone agreed that it’s a sign Sherman County could disappear someday if public officials, business owners and residents don’t work to find a solution.
City Manager Ron Pickman said he thinks the answer is for city, county and school officials to work together to bring in businesses and families.
Ron Harding, executive director of the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce, said the closings will continue until government officials and business owners decide to invest in a program to aggressively recruit companies.
Alco, owned by Duckwall-Alco Stores of Abilene, shut down Thursday morning. After a meeting with visiting bosses, employees put strips of brown paper and “store closed” signs over the glass front entrance. Company officials said the store — which opened as a Duckwall in 1925 and became an Alco in 1970 — wasn’t making enough money and they’ve found a quick closing is best.
There had been rumors for years, but Alco employees said people were shocked when district administrators arrived early Thursday to close the store.
Down Main Avenue, merchants shook their heads.
“Alco closing was very discouraging,” said Linda Knott, owner of Knott Just Books, 1102 Main, half a block north of Alco.



Ray Griffin, a worker with Commercial Sign Co. in Colby, helped remove lighted signs Monday from the building that used to house Alco Discount

Store. The store closed Thursday after 77 years in downtown Goodland. Griffin said he wasn’t sure where the signs were going.

Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

She said it was a surprise to her.
“I’d heard rumors since Wal-Mart came in,” she said, “but after a while you get complacent and say, ‘Oh, that’s just a rumor.’”
Employees, who had recently helped move in spring merchandise, said they had no idea the store was closing until the supervisors told them at a meeting first thing Thursday morning. They said they have the choice of working for 30 days to clear out the store and then transferring to another location, but the closest is 30 miles away in Burlington.
Richard Schwasinger, the senior Alco employee here at 25 years, said he was out of town and didn’t know the store had closed until he read the story in the newspaper. Schwasinger works part-time at the store and teaches retailing at Goodland High School.

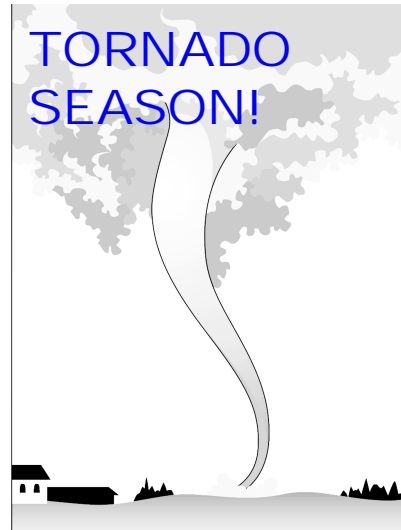
“It was a nice shock,” he said, adding that he may start working at the Alco in Burlington during the summer.
Schwasinger said he thought the closing will impact all downtown businesses. He said shoplifting and employee theft contributed to the closing.
There are other empty stores downtown and other businesses have come and gone, but city leaders say Alco’s closing is a wake-up call that something needs to be done to ensure Goodland’s future. They say downtown can survive with an aggressive economic development program if city, county and school officials band together.
Pickman, who was out of town last week, said he didn’t hear Alco had closed until Sunday night and it was a complete surprise. He said the closing will mean less money for the city from

utilities and the sales tax.
If customers can’t find the same products in Goodland, he said, they will go elsewhere and the city will bring in less money from the sales tax.
“Hopefully, that won’t happen,” he said, noting that other downtown shops will likely be able to offer the same items Alco had.
Pickman said city officials will try to figure how much money the city will lose, including what the company paid in utilities.
“They were a major user,” he said, adding that the city basically has to pay the same amount for electricity no matter how many customers are using it.
“It’s just one less customer to help pay,” he said.
Pickman said Alco’s closing could produce a “domino effect” downtown,

causing other stores to close, one after the other. He said he’s seen it happen in other area cities, but noted that Goodland’s downtown has a strong foundation.
“I think we have enough stability on Main Street,” he said. “That won’t happen here.”
Alco was considered an “anchor store,” Pickman said, because it was on a corner, was well-established and brought a lot of customers downtown. Shoppers from Goodland and surrounding areas may no longer have as many reasons to visit downtown, he said, noting that could hurt other stores’ business.
Barbara Aten, co-owner of Aten Department Store, 1103 Main, said the

See ALCO, Page 6

County counting on storm spotters for warnings



By Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News

If you like to watch the weather and want to help save lives and property, Sherman County needs you at a storm spotter class at 7 p.m. Thursday at the National Guard Armory.
There are parts of the county where there are no spotters, said Mary Messamore, county director of emergency services.
“I know some parts are sparsely populated,” she said, “but there are people living there.”
Farms and cattle could be damaged by weather, she said, and it is important to have warning when storms are on the way. Most spotters live in Goodland,

she said, and more rural spotters are needed.
The National Weather Service holds the class every year to train people to spot dangerous weather. The class is free, and anyone interested in weather can come, said Senior Forecaster Mike Lammers.
People who attend will be certified as official storm spotters and will be able to call in storms to the weather service, Lammers said. Spotters monitor storm development and report hail size, wind gusts, funnel clouds and tornadoes.
“Reports from the field are very helpful,” Lammers said. “Sometimes the radar just doesn’t show us everything

we need to know.”
The class is about two hours long, Lammers said. There will be videos of past storms in Sherman County, safety rules, and students will learn how to use what they observe to help the weather service.
Topics will include thunderstorm stages, hail, wind, wall clouds, tornadoes and flooding.
The class will help people recognize dangerous weather, rather than weather which just looks bad, Lammers said.
“Sometimes a cloud formation might look like there might be a tornado coming,” Lammers, “but it might be fine. It’s hard to tell without training.”
Going to the class is worthwhile,

even if you have gone before, Lammers said.
“It is a good refresher,” he said. “People can forget things.”
The class is held at the armory, Messamore said, because she never knows how many people will show up. Previous classes have had anywhere from 40 to 90 people.
“It makes it hard to plan,” she said.
There is no test to pass to get a three-year certification.
“Just absorb as much as you can,” Lammers said. “We don’t want to grade you; we just want to teach you.”
There will be another class at 6 p.m. Mountain Time next Tuesday at St. Francis high school.

Group pushing map despite threat of veto

By Joshua Akers
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — A bipartisan coalition is pushing a revised Senate redistricting plan despite the threat of another veto from Gov. Bill Graves.
Senators put off debating the bill during a morning session today, but planned to take it up later in the day.
Today’s debate is the second time the Senate has taken up a bill redrawing the boundaries of its 40 districts to reflect shifts in population in the 2000 census.
Graves vetoed an earlier plan drafted and passed by the coalition, which includes the Senate’s 10 Democrats and 11 conservative Republicans.
“The governor’s belief is that the map as drawn now is not finished,” Don Brown, Graves’ spokesman, said Mon-

day. “He believes it will be finished by the time it gets to his desk.”
Graves said Friday he would veto the map if some minor changes weren’t made.
The latest map answers one of Graves’ concerns — that the map he vetoed was never considered by a committee nor presented for public comment.
But the new version retains features that Graves had found objectionable, such as the creation of a new, seventh Senate district in Johnson County in a way many believe would favor a conservative Republican over a GOP moderate supported by the governor.
However, Johnson County was no longer of concern to some members, including Majority Leader Lana Oleen.

Internet change delayed one week

Customers of **nwkansas.com** Internet service won’t have a new supplier Wednesday after all.
The change, scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, has been put off because of problems at the new provider, Southwestern Bell Internet Service.
Steve Haynes, president of Nor’West Newspapers, which operates **nwkansas.com**, said Bell had called Monday and said there were problems with the Internet Protocol (IP) numbers which had been assigned to the service last month.
“Without knowing for sure that Bell could make the system work,” he said, “we have decided to wait a week.”
The new date for the changeover is next Wednesday, April 10, Haynes said.
“Bell gave us Internet addresses last month,” he said. “It took several weeks for people in Houston and Fort Worth to assign them. Then Monday, a new person called and said they wouldn’t work. They apparently were numbers for a connection in Kansas City, but we will connect in Topeka.”
“We’re pretty disappointed by the delay. We have notified all of our customers about the wrong numbers, spent

quite a bit of money, scheduled people to work overtime to prepare for the change. But it’s better to find out now than make all the changes and have the system not work.”
Customers will be notified of the correct numbers to put into their domain name service (DNS) setting by letter and e-mail later in the week, he said. In the meantime, they should not make any changes in their settings and they should definitely not install the incorrect numbers provided in a letter last week.
Tom Betz, director of Internet services, said **nwkansas.com** is switching its wholesale service provider from Carroll’s Web out of Salina to Bell, partly to get better system reliability and speed.
Carroll’s service to the former CJNetworks system in Kansas was shut down last month because of a billing dispute between the Salina firm and its supplier.
“We are sorry for the inconvenience to our customers caused by this delay,” Betz said. “It’s totally out of our control. We planned carefully for the change, but apparently there was a mistake in Houston.”
“We’d rather wait, though, than have a major mess this week.”