


weather
report

61°
at noon



Today

• Sunset, 4:25 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:47 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:24 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 36 degrees

• Humidity 29 percent

• Sky mostly sunny

• Winds north 22-29 m.p.h.

• Barometer 30.01 inches and falling

• Record High 72° (1932)

• Record Low 1° (1952)

Last 24 Hours*

High 61°

Low 22°

Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: mostly clear, low mid 20s, winds north 15 m.p.h. Tomorrow: mostly sunny, high mid 40s, low lower 20s, winds northwest 10-15 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast


Sunday: partly sunny, high near 50, low upper 20s. Monday: partly cloudy, high mid 50s. Tuesday: cloudy, high upper 30s, low lower 20s. Wednesday: clear, high near 40, low upper teens.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets



Noon

Wheat — \$4.00 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.05

Loan deficiency payment — 0¢

Corn — \$2.54 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.26

Loan deficiency payment — 0¢

Milo — \$2.26 bushel

Soybeans — \$5.29 bushel

Posted county price — \$5.21

Loan deficiency payment — 0¢

Millet — \$14.00 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$12.35 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Confection current — \$17/\$7 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$16

(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.

Army evacuates injured tourists

MOMBASA, Kenya — An Israeli army team today began evacuating tourists injured in the deadly suicide bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel.

Kenyan police said they picked up 12 people for questioning in connection with the blast and a simultaneous missile attack on an Israeli airliner.

The death toll in the bombing rose to 16 as rescue workers recovered the body of another Kenyan today, a health official said. The blast at the Paradise Hotel killed 10 Kenyans, three Israelis and the three suicide bombers.

Gilad Millo, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said 235 tourists, including 15 injured in the blast and the bodies of the three Israelis, were flown home today. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon sent his official plane to carry some of the Israelis.

Bargain hunters hit stores early

By Anne D'linnocenzio
AP Business Writer

Bargain hunters woke before dawn to head to stores and malls as the holiday shopping season opened today, hoping to take advantage of early bird specials on hot toys and electronic items like DVD players.

In a scene that played out across the country, about 500 people lined up at a Wal-Mart store in Abington, Mass., before the discounter opened its doors at 5 a.m.

Among the early risers was Donna Gramazio of Brockton, Mass., who came out to buy bikes and a battery-operated toy Jeep that was on sale for \$197.

"I wanted to get my shopping done all in one day," she said.

Sheila Sherlock of Whitman, Mass., was buying lots of toys, including a Playdough set, two Gameboy games that were \$44, marked down from \$69.99. She also scored a VCR/DVD player for \$98 and a computer printer for \$28.

"It's exciting," Sherlock said. "People just race for the door."

One of the first in line at a Wal-Mart in Manville, N.J., was Jackie Hawkins, 45, who showed up nearly two hours before the 6 a.m. store opening. She was in search of a Nintendo Advanced Game Boy. Meanwhile, Joan Muniz, 48, was excited about a 27-inch television she got for \$148.98.

In Bismarck, N.D., Wendy Anderson, 37, came out of K-B Toys with two large bags stuffed with items, including a Hasbro Fur Real Friend.

"I pretty much ran through the store. Eleven minutes to shop, save \$200," she said gleefully.

At K-B Toys at the King of Prussia Mall in King of Prussia, Pa., there were about 75 people in line before the 5 a.m. opening.

Among them was Cherie Schroeder, 36, who was in search of a Fisher-Price car garage and a Crayola "trace and draw." She found them.

"They're really hard to find. I've looked at three other stores," she said of the Crayola kits.

She was also on the lookout for a skateboard ramp on sale for \$17, from \$30.

Despite the crowds that showed up for the specials, analysts believe consumers will be tight-fisted this year.

"Sales will be intense. Consumers will turn out in full force to the mall, but there is a general feeling that consumers are going to be reticent," said Kurt Barnard, president of Barnard's Retail Trend Report, based in Upper Montclair, N.J. "They will look at the price tag before they look at the product."

The nation's largest merchants have protected themselves with lean inventories so they won't have mounds of leftovers on Dec. 26. But stores might also have the opposite problem — finding themselves with not enough merchandise if consumers decide to splurge.

After all, shoppers pleasantly surprised retailers last holiday season with last-minute buying binges that resulted in better-than-anticipated results.

But so far in November, merchants haven't seen encouraging signs.

The Washington-based National Retail Federation predicts total holiday retail sales, which exclude restaurant and auto sales, will increase by 4 percent to roughly \$209.25 billion. That would make it the weakest increase since 1997.

According to the Gallup Organization, which surveyed 3,000 consumers, Americans are projected to spend \$769 on gifts this holiday — about \$51 less than last year, which in turn was lower than 2000 and 1999.

Some shoppers' financial worries were evident.

"With the economy, holiday shopping becomes more of a struggle each year," said Michele Fry, 39, of Manville, N.J.

Last holiday, retailers had \$201.2 billion in sales, up 5.6 percent from 2000.

While the Thanksgiving weekend starts the shopping spree, it no longer is the busiest period of the season. Last year, the weekend accounted for 8.4 percent of holiday sales. The busiest period



Shoppers were out in large numbers throughout the city today, taking advantage of the special Christmas sales and kicked off the traditional holiday shopping season. At J.C. Penney's (above), Trudy Hare of Tribune picked up gifts. she said she comes to Goodland about twice a month to shop. Other Penney shoppers (right) were standing in line and checked out special clothing sales.

Photos by Bill Wagoner
The Goodland Daily News



was the last week before Christmas. Some retailers are using new gimmicks to get shoppers into stores. Abercrombie & Fitch, aiming at the youth market, will have male models clad only in underwear greeting shoppers at stores in major cities today.

Emergency relief fund established to help local families

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News

It's been more than a month since sports editor Doug Stephens, 23, walked out of *The Goodland Daily News* to pick up some film, and he hasn't been heard from since.

Since then, there's been no official word about him, though he is listed with police as a missing person, and he has not contacted his wife, Amanda.

Many of people have asked about Stephens and how his family is doing, and what help they might need.

When Stephens left, his wife said, he had just cashed his paycheck. He took all of the family's money and their car.

Amanda Stephens is taking care of the children, Sunnie, 2, and Wayne, 11 months. The family has received some help from Genesis and the state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, as well as private citizens.



Sunnie and Wayne Stephens

While this has helped, Amanda says there are many things she is not able to handle. She has been looking for a place

to move to which would cost less than the family's current rental, but does not have the money for a deposit. She has contacted the Northwest Kansas Housing Authority about their apartments on Cattletrail, and has been told she is at the top of the waiting list. However, that is not a sure thing, and she has been looking for other locations as well.

The Sherman County Community Foundation has formed an emergency relief fund, and the Stephens family will be one of those the fund can help, said Schyler Goodwin. Gifts can be left at Bankwest either specifically for Amanda and the two children, or to help build the fund for other Sherman County citizens who experience drastic changes in their life.

Goodwin said there are four categories for gifts. There is a general endowment fund, which takes money invested

and uses only the interest generated. There is a general expense fund, which uses the money to aid families without developing any continuing income.

Then there is a directed endowment fund and a directed expense fund. The directed endowment fund takes money which has been donated for a specific purpose or person and will be invested to build an ongoing fund where only the interest is used. The directed expense fund is not invested, and the gifts will be given to those specifically indicated by the donor.

Goodwin said he established the fund with a donation of \$100. The gift was

given specifically to assist Amanda Stephens and her children through the holiday season.

All donations given to the Sherman County Community Foundation are tax deductible.

Amanda Stephens said the social services people had her fill out papers to try to track her husband down for child support, but there is no report on that effort so far.

She said he had a check she had written to get new license plates for their car, and it was cashed in Arizona. She said Doug's father in Arizona maintains he has not heard from his son, however.

Talks about trash service, zoning change on city agenda

The Goodland City Commission plans continue its talks on a county takeover of trash service and will vote on an ordinance amending part of the city zoning code on home occupational use permits when it meets at 5 p.m. Monday.

The commission will respond to a request from the Convention and Visitors Bureau for the city to advertise in the annual Sherman County guide, and vote on a franchise agreement extension between the city and Southwestern Bell Telephone Co.

The commission will hear a report on economic development and authorize the mayor to execute a grant agreement between the city and the Kansas Division of Aviation.

City Manager Ron Pickman will talk about a request for additional recycling containers for newspapers, and the commission will vote on an ordinance to protect the city's water supply and a resolution consenting to the city's membership in the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency's Mutual Aid Program.

Women's Open paying economic dividends

HUTCHINSON (AP) — The U.S. Women's Open golf championship could continue to pay economic dividends for the area, with an Arizona developer considering a 600-acre planned community in eastern Reno County.

The development would feature 550 single-family homes and 200 condominiums and town homes built around an 18-hole public golf course.

"We want this to be a successful, free-standing community," said Lane Neville, broker for the Scottsdale,

Ariz.-based Land Advisor Corp., which has the land under contract. "This is in the very preliminary stages, but we are very excited about this."

Neville, a graduate of Hutchinson High School, said his interest was sparked by publicity from last summer's golf tournament at Prairie Dunes Country Club.

Development requires a zoning change to permit housing, commercial and development and public use. Two groups of property owners have filed

requests with the Reno County Planning, Zoning and Utilities Department to have the land rezoned to fit the project.

Reno County Commission Chairman Larry Sharp said he learned of the project Wednesday.

"This is exactly the thing Reno County is looking for — additional development in the unincorporated areas of the county," Sharp said. "I think the unincorporated areas have a very appealing landscape that could evolve into unique subdivisions like this one."

No closing plans for sunflower plant despite drought, lower yields

By Rachel Hixson

Drought slashed sunflower yields this fall, leaving farmers to speculate that Goodland's sunflower-seed crushing plant might lay off workers or close, but company officials say that's not in the plans so far.

Greg Doll, manager of the Northern Sun plant west of Goodland, wouldn't comment on rumors that the plant will soon shut down for nine months, other than to say that the plant will stay open. He referred questions to Archer-Daniels-Midland, or ADM, corporate

headquarters in Decatur, Ill.

ADM owns Northern Sun and hundreds of other plants in 26 states and other countries. It also owns the Collingwood Grain elevator in Goodland and other elevators across the country.

Northern Sun buys sunflower seeds from farmers and crushes them to make animal feed and vegetable oil. ADM is a world-wide agricultural processing giant, and its plants process sunflowers, soy beans, cocoa, wheat and other grains.

Larry Cunningham, senior vice-

president of corporate affairs in Decatur, said this summer's drought severely cut sunflower yields in north-west Kansas and Northern Sun is struggling to find seeds. But, he said, the plant is still buying seeds and producing a product and there are no current plans to shut it down or lay off workers.

The drought spanned most of the U.S., Cunningham said, and affected all crops this year. Goodland's plant isn't the only one feeling the strain, he said, adding that a team at ADM is looking for ways to cut costs at most of its 275

processing plants. Could that include closing plants and laying off workers?

Cunningham said he's not sure. "I hesitate to say that," he said. "It's not on the drawing board."

"With tight raw material supplies, we have to look at what our options are. It's a matter of reviewing all of our operations and finding out what local supplies are. It's not a question of looking at Goodland by itself."

The team reviewing operations doesn't have a deadline for solutions, Cunningham said, and if the Goodland

plant is closed or workers laid off, the company probably won't make a public announcement.

One thing is for sure, if the drought continues through this summer, ADM plants will be hurting.

"Without question," Cunningham said, "we need a rebound of the sunflower, canola, corn — all of the crops."

The bottom line is, the future of Northern Sun — like the rest of the farm industry — could depend on the weather.

"Get us some rain out there, will you?" Cunningham said.