

weather report

85°

noon Monday



Today

• Sunset, 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday

• Sunrise, 5:31 a.m.

• Sunset, 8:14 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 78 degrees

• Humidity 32 percent

• Sky mostly sunny

• Winds southwest 9 mph.

• Barometer 30.07 inches

and steady

• Record High today 106° (1954)

• Record Low today 48° (1987)

Last 24 Hours*

High Sunday 94°

Low Sunday 64°

Precipitation none

This month .41

Year to date 8.69

Normal 11.49

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, high near 91, low near 61, winds northeast 5-8 mph. Wednesday: Mostly sunny, high near 91, low around 63, winds east northeast 5 mph.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Mostly sunny, high near 93, low around 64. Friday: Mostly sunny, high around 95, low around 64. Friday: Mostly sunny, high around 95, low around 64.

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

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.96

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$2 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.99

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$5 bushel

Soybeans — \$6.06 bushel

Posted county price — \$6.19

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Millet — \$5 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$9.70 cwt.

NuSun — \$10.70 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Confection — Ask

Pinto beans — \$25

(Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



Parrot art on display

Randy and Debbie Whitmore of Goodland visited with Sky Keith at the Art Center gallery opening of his parrot paintings, "Parrot Life." Keith's work will be on display through Saturday, Aug. 6. Photos, story on Page 8.

Brick repairs at courthouse OK'd

A small workforce will be using long ladders and equipment at the Sherman County courthouse to replace the old mortar and stop some leaks.

Matt Deloney of Mid Continental Restoration from Fort Scott told county commissioners he had a crew working on the high school, and could move to the courthouse when that was completed.

He said having the crew in Goodland could save the county \$1,500 because of the cost of moving the equipment back later. He told the commissioners the courthouse repairs could be completed in six to seven weeks.

The commissioners recessed their meeting on June 30 and went with Deloney to look at problem areas where the mortar has been damaged by freezing and thawing. He showed them a problem on the roof which has caused leaks.

He told the commissioners he could build a retaining wall to solve the problem. The estimate for the total work was \$76,408, plus \$1,500 to build the retaining wall.

When the meeting was reopened, Commissioner Chuck Thomas made the motion to have Mid Continental Restoration repair the courthouse. Commission Chairman Mitch Tiede seconded the motion. Commissioner Kevin Rasure abstained from voting because of a potential conflict of interest, so the

motion passed 2-0.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Gave Rasure permission to have three crab apple trees removed from behind the courthouse, and to work with the city on an electrical problem at the courthouse.

- Turned down a request from Fred Stasser to use the 4-H building at the fairgrounds for religious services on Sundays. The commissioners did not feel comfortable with a long-term arrangement. Deputy Clerk Mary Ann Snethen said the county does not have a lease for non-profit organizations to use the building.

- Approved the new state reimbursement rate of 40 cents per mile for employees who use their vehicles on county business, effective as of July 1.

At their meeting on Tuesday, the commissioners:

- Approved a \$25 donation to the Pioneer Memorial Library in Colby after a request from the Western Kansas Prairie Resource Conservation and Development agency. Tiede said he had checked with Sandy Rogers with the Sherman County Conservation District office, who said they use the library frequently.

- Approved a resolution to hire Terry Ballard as part-time county

See COUNTY, Page 11

Brewster cemetery to get county money

Sherman County commissioners will add the Brewster Cemetery to the list getting county money without cutting the budget for the Goodland and Kanorado cemeteries.

Commissioners agreed at their meeting June 30 to have a new agreement drawn up to include the Brewster Cemetery, which is in Sherman County, in a resolution that allows spending county money on any cemetery in the county.

While the city of Brewster is in Thomas County, the cemetery is across the county line to the west, in Sherman County.

The commissioners felt since the cemetery is in the county, the county should help with the upkeep and maintenance as they have done for the cemeteries in Goodland and Kanorado.

The current resolution gives 90 percent of the income from a tax levy to Goodland and 10 percent to Kanorado. Commissioner Mitch Tiede made a motion to have a new reso-

lution drawn up giving 80 percent to Goodland, 10 percent to Kanorado and 10 percent to Brewster.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the change would not reduce the amount of money each cemetery receives because the county can increase the tax rate to add the Brewster Cemetery.

The cemetery levy, now less than a full mill, currently brings in \$50,000 for the cemeteries.

The commissioners could raise the levy to a full mill. That would bring in \$62,000 a year, Rumpel said. Goodland could receive up to \$49,000 and the other two would receive \$6,200 each, she said, but a tax increase isn't necessary to include all three cemeteries.

"This does not change the amount the county can levy for cemeteries," she said. "Because the valuation has increased, there is room to change the distribution without costing the taxpayers any more money."



Rodney Lorentz and Ron Durbin Jr. wrestled a 20-foot ladder into place on the front wall of Goodland High School, as Ron Durbin (left) caulked the windows. They are members of crew from Midcontinent Restoration of Fort Scott which has been repairing the bricks at the school, and will be spending six weeks doing the same type of repairs at the Sherman County Courthouse.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Budget woes mean rates, taxes will go up

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

City water and electric bills and city property taxes will be going up next year as city commissioners try to fill some serious holes in the budget.

Officials estimate all the increases combined will cost citizens about \$22 a month.

At the end of a long budget session Wednesday, one of two the commission held, Mayor Rick Billinger said he thinks the budget is the best guess everybody has with the changing economic conditions.

"Any place where we could save a mill?" he asked as the meeting

adjourned about 11:30 p.m.

No one had an answer.

Tuesday and Wednesday, commission spent about nine hours talking to department heads about the next year, and about 90 minutes trying to find the best way to handle deficits in the water, electric and general funds.

The city commission faced tough decisions at budget time last year, increasing sewer and water rates and raising the property tax by over 2 mills. However, to balance the water budget, they commission had to dip into reserves.

Commissioners decided then to ignore an imbalance in the electric

rates, where the base charged is at \$28 per megawatt hour while the city's cost is at \$32.

The actual tax bite at the end of last year was less than expected, because the county valuation grew by \$1.75 million. City Clerk Mary Volk said that reduced the city property tax increase by about 3 mills. The commission had approved a 3.6 mill property tax increase when the budget was done in August.

This year, the commission faced more of the same decisions in the budget process, plus the threat of much higher power rates.

Electric seemed the easiest to fix despite the fact it showed \$409,000

in the red based on the budget figures. Volk said the problem is not knowing how much power will cost after the Sunflower Electric contract expires in May. There are indications the co-operative could double its charges.

Mayor Rick Billinger asked when rate adjustments have to be made to bring the electric department revenues up.

Volk said the commission should do a rate study and look at what might be needed. She said it could be done later in the year, but the numbers have to be plugged into the budget.

"How often can we change the

rates?" asked Commissioner Josh Dechant.

"As often as we have to," Volk replied.

"We need that wind power to help," Commissioner Annette Franklin said. "We've got to think out of the box to make this happen."

"It is scary," Billinger said. "What if the cost is even higher than what we are thinking. It could be that \$500,000 may not even be enough."

"Especially with the way things are going, and crude (oil) hits \$60 a barrel," said City Public Works Director Chuck Lutters.

See BUDGET, Page 11

City approves Eagle Scout's flagpole project

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The new Cherry Ave. entrance to the city will be complete with a 50-foot flagpole when it is finished this fall.

The flag pole, Matt Rohr's Eagle Scout project, will be built on the east side of Cherry Avenue across from Pioneer Park and behind the new entrance signs being built this summer.

Rohr showed city commissioners plans for the flag pole at their meet-

ing Tuesday, and said that he had checked it out with Darin Neufeld, the engineer on the Pioneer Park project from Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates.

Public Works Director Chuck Lutters said he would be working with Rohr on the project.

"I need his help because I don't know how to do the welding," Rohr said. "I hope to have the project approved and completed later this summer."

Mayor Rick Billinger said he felt

was a good plan, and the other commissioners agreed. They gave permission for Rohr and Lutters to proceed.

"I want to commend you," Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said, "for sticking with Scouting for this long. It is good to see you reaching the Eagle Scout level."

Mayor Billinger read a proclamation for the Kansas Shrine Bowl, declaring July 30 as Shrine Bowl Day. It honors Goodland's Brock Lohr, who will play in the game, and

Rohr and Breanna Taylor, who will play in the special Shrine Bowl Band.

Art Nelson from the Goodland Shrine Club introduced the music students and family members who were at the meeting.

Bob Russell, an area farmer, asked the commissioners if they were interested in having someone farm the land where the new High Plains Museum is being planned out by the east exit from I-70.

Billinger said the city was inter-

ested, but that they would have to find out how much the taxes would be if the land were farmed.

Russell said he did not want to pay the taxes, but offered to farm the land and give the city one-third of the crop delivered at the elevator.

Billinger said the city clerk would check out the cost of the taxes and they would let Russell know if the plan would work.

During a budget work session

See CITY, Page 11