

weather report

45°

noon

Thursday

Today

- Sunset, 4:38 p.m.
- Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:39 p.m.

Middy Conditions

- Soil temperature 31 degrees
- Humidity 47 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds southwest at 7 mph
- Barometer 29.66 inches and falling
- Record High today 71° (1927)
- Record Low today -14° (1942)

Last 24 Hours*

- High Wednesday 43°
- Low Thursday 28°
- Precipitation —
- This month —
- Year to date —
- Below normal .03 of an inch

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy, high near 29, low around 13, 70 percent chance snow, 1 to 2 inches new accumulation.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Mostly sunny, high near 36, low around 13. Sunday: Partly cloudy, high near 38, low around 18. Monday: Mostly sunny, high near 44, low around 18. Tuesday: Mostly sunny, high near 47, low around 23. Wednesday: Partly cloudy, high near 50.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

Snowdrift derails plow, engines

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Busting through snow drifts Tuesday, two Kyle railroad engines and a snow plow derailed west of Kanorado, burying the plow in the snow and nearly tipping the first engine over.

"It was quite a ride," said engineer Bill Morris of Goodland.

Dave Shields, conductor on the train, said it was a thrill, but not one he wants to repeat.

Morris said the three engines behind the plow were busting through the drifts from the weekend snow storm. He and Shields took over in Colby. He said the plow had come through from Phillipsburg on Monday.

Morris said he was being cautious at road crossings with the plow and engines. Two track crews were working ahead to clear the crossings before the plow got there.

He said the plow plunged off the track just past the west Kanorado crossing, but he did not know if anything at the crossing caused the problem.

The plow traveled about four car lengths before stopping. Morris said it was a sudden stop when the plow dug into the ground and the engine tipped over about 30 degrees.

The plow was attached to a flat car, and crews were working around it on Wednesday to repair the section of track bent and twisted in the derailment.

Kyle called in a crew from Hulcher Services, a derailment response service, who had equipment in North Platte, Neb. The Hulcher crew brought two boom Cats to lift the engines and guide them back onto the rails.

Morris said he brought two more engines from Goodland to help pull the others back and bring them all back to Goodland. Those engines, which had come through the storm



A snow plow and two engines on the Kyle derailed west of Kanorado on Tuesday, burying the plow and flat car and nearly tipping over the first engine. The back half of the second engine was also off the rail. Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News



Kyle Railroad track crews worked Wednesday to repair a section west of Kanorado where a snow plow and two engines derailed on Tuesday. The track was repaired by Thursday morning. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

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Governor tours plains after big storm

Headed in to tour the blizzard zone, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and her entourage had to divert to Goodland because the state plane couldn't land in Colby.

The governor came to tour western Kansas after declaring it a disaster because of the snow, accompanied by Congressman Jerry Moran, Adjutant General Tod Bunting and Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky.

The good news from the storm is the moisture, Moran said.

Meeting the governor here was a delegation from the Sherman County Farm Bureau, including Greg, Amy, Nichole and Blaine Sederstrom, Gerald and Linda Franklin, Jeff and Hazen Deeds, and Raquel and Taylor Tomsic.

The governor asked the kids how they liked missing school and what they thought of all the snow. The group quickly loaded and left for Colby. There were no stops planned in Goodland.

The group drove to Colby in a van provided by the Goodland National Guard Army and escorted by the Kansas Highway Patrol.



Gov. Kathleen Sebelius asked how Nicole Sederstrom (bottom left) and Raquel Tomsic liked all the snow. The governor's airplane had to land in Goodland as it was not able to land in Colby. Also pictured are Greg Sederstrom and son Blaine. Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

In Colby, the governor met with officials and residents at the National Guard Army. She continued to

Ulysses by airplane. During the storm, Sebelius declared 39 counties in western Kansas disaster areas.

Sebelius talked with Thomas County Emergency Management Director Jim Engel about the conditions

in the county and surrounding area.

Engel said the road situation there is good, and there have been no major accidents, but Rawlins and Logan counties were still having problems.

"We've got it good compared to some counties," he said.

Now that people have been taken care of, he added, livestock are the concern. Some stockmen can't get to their herds because of the snow, and in some cases, they haven't been fed in up to five days. The National Guard was getting ready Wednesday to do what it could to get feed to the animals.

"We're looking at a five-county area," Engel added.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong thanked Sebelius for the use of the army, where the city is housing three fire trucks after the roof at the firehouse collapsed under the weight of snow Sunday.

She told the governor ice and rain contributed to the collapse. The incident caused no problems with the department's ability to respond to emergencies. Goodland and Oakley were ready to lend a hand if needed.

Goodland, Oakley Co-ops plan merger

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News

Stockholders of Goodland's Frontier Equity Co-op will be voting on a merger with Oakley-based CO-AG Inc. next month.

Both Frontier and CO-AG are farmer-owned cooperatives of roughly equal size. Frontier did around \$46 million dollars in business in the past year and CO-AG did \$43 million.

Frontier came into being when Goodland Co-op bought out the Brewster and Bird City co-ops in the 1990s, said Brian Linin, chief financial officer. The Atwood petroleum co-op became part of Frontier in July.

CO-AG was formed in 1994 with the merger of co-ops in Grinnell, Menlo and Rexford.

CO-AG approached Frontier in October to look at working together, said Brad Ray, head

of information technology for the Oakley-based firm. They had an interim manager and knew he did not intend to stay.

It became apparent that merging would be the best, he said, after the accounting firm Lindburg & Vogel of Hays did a thorough study of the companies and recommended the merger.

An informational meeting for Frontier Equity members will be at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 31, at the Goodland Elks Lodge, 1523 Arcade. CO-AG's meeting will be at 5 p.m. Mountain Time on Monday, Jan. 29, at the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center, 703 W. Second, Oakley.

Voting will take place on from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 7, at the Elks Lodge in Goodland and 3 to 5 p.m. at the service center in Oakley. It will take a two-thirds majority of the members voting of each cooperative

for the merger to pass. If approved, the merger would take place on Thursday, March 1.

"The merger would be a good thing," said Brent Linin, president of the board of directors of Frontier Equity and father of Brian Linin. "It would spread out risk from crop failure over a larger area."

"The business would be able to buy fertilizer, chemicals and tires in a larger quantity, getting a better price, and help create marketing opportunities for farm products."

"It would be in a better position to deal with competition from a larger regional or national businesses while maintaining local control and individual farmers' equity. Costs of borrowing money and insurance would also decrease with more size."

Frontier and CO-AG have both grain, fertilizer, chemical, custom application, seed, feed, petroleum and shop facilities. Frontier

has a convenience store and a Carquest parts store. CO-AG has a man in Salina who helps find markets for grain that is stored on the farm and an Internet and computer maintenance business in Oakley. They also do aerial crop spraying out of Oakley.

"I think the merger will pass here," said Brent Linin.

He said both co-ops are in good financial shape though the drought has made that difficult. Both made money in 2006. He said CO-AG has struggled a little more with the drought.

Frontier chief Brad Cowan will be the general manager for the merged cooperative and will remain in Goodland, a joint announcement said.

"A good manager is hard to get," Linin said.

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local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$4.15 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.40
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0c
 - Corn — \$3.53 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.33
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0c
 - Milo — \$3.18 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$3.18 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$5.88
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0c
 - Millet — \$7 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - NuSun crop — \$13.40
 - Pinto beans — \$19 (new crop)
- (Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

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Pond slopes great fun

The young and the young-at-heart gathered at the "slopes" of Pioneer Park with snow discs and inner tubes Tuesday to enjoy the fruits of the weekend's blizzard. See photo on Page 9.