

# New truck purchased through state plan

**By Tom Betz**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
Sherman County commissioners spent an hour last Tuesday going over tabled bids for a new pickup for the sheriff's office, and came back later in the day for another hour before deciding to try the state-operated Partners plan to buy a Chevrolet Silverado pickup for \$22,713.

The commissioners decided to have the Silverado delivered to Herl Chevrolet and will pay Herl \$500 for handling the deal, plus the dealer will get \$150 for dealer prep that is included in the price.

The commissioners decided not to buy a

second pickup right now, but could get one later in the year. They agreed to allow Sheriff Kevin Butts to take bids to sell an older pickup once the new one is delivered.

Sheriff Butts said he had nothing against the Ford, but felt the department got better mileage and a better ride from its General Motors pickups.

Butts had a revised bid from Dan Brenner Ford he presented to Commissioners Chuck Thomas and Kevin Rasure at the meeting last Tuesday morning. Commissioner Mitch Tiede was absent at that time.

Butts said the state Government Services Agency price through the Partners program

for a Ford pickup is \$23,128, and Brenner bid \$23,629, which included a \$500 payment from the county. That was still about \$900 more than the Chevy through Herl.

Brenner was at the meeting and said he would be willing to take the old pickup in for trade and then the price would be \$10,629.

The commissioners thanked Brenner for his bid, and asked Sheriff Butts if he had prices from the other dealers without a trade in.

Thomas called Jay Herl at Herl Chevrolet and asked for a price without the trade. Herl said the price for the pickup he had located

was \$27,200, but that if the county ordered a new one, it would be \$25,500 without trade.

Butts said he talked to other sheriff's departments, including Greeley County, that had used the partners program, and felt it was good because it did save several thousand dollars. He said he talked to the dealers about the program because the county could have a pickup delivered to a specific dealer and they would get a \$150 fee included in the price for dealer prep. Butts said other counties who have used this program have paid the dealer about \$500 for handling the transaction on top of the \$150.

The commissioners recessed the meeting until 4 p.m. when Tiede could be present.

When the commissioners reconvened in the afternoon, Tiede said he had a price from Steve Sitton at Finley Motors without the trade for \$27,750. The commissioners went back over the options and the prices.

Tiede said it was a complicated decision because the bids were not comparing apples to apples.

The Partners program is a free service provided to state agencies and local governments through the Kansas Highway Patrol, said Kurt Haffner of the state patrol office in Topeka.

# Area legislators update voters on current session

**By Tom Betz**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
A small group of citizens gathered at Hank's Café early Saturday morning to talk with their state representative and state senator about bills pending in the current session in Topeka.

Rep. Jim Morrison and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer met with about 10 people in their first stop of the day at 7 a.m. Ostmeyer thanked Sherman County Farm Bureau for sponsoring the meeting.

City Commissioner Josh Dechant and County Commissioner Kevin Rasure were among those present.

Ostmeyer reported that Sherman County's bill to allow citizens to decide on electing county commissioners at-large had been approved unanimously in the House Election and Government Organization Committee and was on the calendar to be passed out of the House on Monday. He said Commission Chairman Chuck Thomas did a good job of answering the committee's questions, and that it was good to have a county representative at the hearing.

Morrison said it is always better to have someone from a county at a hearing to give the committee a face to see and hear from.

Ostmeyer said the bill should be in the Senate by Tuesday, and he would see that it keeps moving through committee there. He said he felt it would be passed quickly and put on the consent agenda, as it was in the House, because he did not



State Rep. Jim Morrison (left) talked to a small group of citizens about the "transparency of government" program his committee is working on in Topeka. Morrison and State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer stopped at Hanks' Cafe early Saturday for the first of five stops on a one-day legislative tour.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

know of any controversy about the request.

Morrison said his Technology Committee is working on a "transparency in government" bill to really allow the citizens to find out what their state government is doing and spending money for.

He said it will take more than a year to accomplish, but the effort should allow citizens and even state employees to get information on road contracts, purchasing by agencies, salaries and the Regents uni-

versities.

Morrison said one thing his committee wants to do is to encourage standardized accounting systems across the board so people can find the same information no matter what agency they are looking at.

Morrison said his committee has subpoena power, and that it will take three to four years, but he expects to be able to bring to light criminal activities in some agencies.

"I know the vulnerabilities of the

agencies and offices," Morrison said. "I have hacked the state system, but right now I can't use the information. We will have a grand jury-type system to reveal the practices being done in awarding state grants, road projects and Medicare payments. The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is doing their own investigation as well.

"It is a fun committee to work on, and there are a number of people involved in the process."

Ostmeyer said he was concerned

about a proposed statewide smoking ban, and would like to have a committee this summer look at the implications for small businesses.

"I think we need to be very careful," he said. "We have to remember that the smoker has rights, too, and we need to find a way to give the small businessman who wants to have smoking customers a way to do that."

Ostmeyer said he tried to add the Republican River to an enhancement program for the Arkansas River in the southwest. He said he is worried about people buying water rights, adding that he thinks the state needs to find ways to conserve water and such measures could help recharge the aquifers over a period of years.

He said the school finance issue has been quite this year, and the focus seems to be on the Regents universities and colleges, which are asking for \$700 million to fix up older buildings.

He said the Legislature is asking the Regents what happened to the \$10 million they were given a few years ago for maintenance.

He said it appears that most of the questions are about the University of Kansas and Kansas State University.

Ostmeyer said the Senate renewed the state Lottery, taking out the sunset clause off, which forces the Legislature renew the operation every five to 10 years.

He said he did not agree, and he felt the Legislature ought to watch that money. He said he would not be

surprised to see something about expanded gambling added to the bill before it gets through the session.

Ostmeyer said he supported a voter identification bill because of a number of voting fraud instances in the last election.

Under the bill, a person wanting to register to vote for the first time would have to produce a birth certificate.

Morrison said the state franchise tax is being repealed over the next three years. He said he wanted it gone now, but the measure will cost the state about \$40 million a year in revenue.

Morrison said the "Alexa's Law" has been passed by the House that defines a fetus as a person so a person who kills the mother would face a second murder charge for killing the unborn baby when the mother was six or more months pregnant. He said another bill that has passed would restrict the robotic telephone calls where people are being called by a computer.

Bill Stoick, owner of the Super 8 Motel, asked if there was any more push to close the Tourist Information Center west of Goodland. Stoick said he hopes the state keeps it open because he sees it as a great economic boon to the county.

Ostmeyer said he did not think the tourist centers would be closed.

The two legislators headed out to Colby at 8 a.m. for their next stop on the day. They were to finish up in Palco that afternoon.

# Manufacturer recalls two brands of peanut butter

If you have a jar of Good Value or Peter Pan peanut butter at home, check the lid to see where it was made.

Chances are slight that you'd get sick — only 300 cases have been reported nationwide out of millions of jars being recalled in 39 states — but stores and the manufacturer don't want you taking any chances. You'll get a refund.

The manufacturer, food giant ConAgra, issued a recall notice on Thursday for possible salmonella contamination. The company said to check lid for the plant number of 2111.

The product was made at its only peanut butter plant in Sylvester,

Ga., said federal investigators.

The recall included smooth and chunky styles produced since May. Great Value is the store brand at WalMart, but not all of their brand of peanut butter is made by ConAgra.

"We have pulled all of the peanut butter with bad lot numbers from the shelves," said Jodi Lapolice, assistant manager for Goodland's WalMart Supercenter. "The jars on the shelves have been checked and are fine."

Lapolice said they heard about the recall late Wednesday or early Thursday.

"To get a refund, bring in the whole jar of peanut butter," she said.

"It doesn't matter how much is in it."

Manager Danielle Urban of Dollar General said they had pulled all the jars of Peter Pan off the shelves.

Urban said for a refund, consumers needed to send the lid to ConAgra, Box 57078, Irvine, Calif. 92619-7078. Her store is not making direct refunds.

ConAgra has a toll free number, (866) 344-6970, for people to call. A recording on that line tells you to send the peanut butter lid to ConAgra Foods, Box 3768, Omaha, Neb. 68183.

The first people that got sick were in August, said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Most cases were

in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Tennessee and Missouri, and only about 20 percent of those who got sick were hospitalized.

Most cases of salmonella poisoning are caused by undercooked eggs and chicken, officials said. The only known outbreak to be blamed on peanut butter was in Australia in the mid 1990s. That outbreak was blamed on unsanitary plant conditions.

Since peanuts are heated to germ-killing temperatures during the manufacturing process, officials said, the contamination could have been caused by dirty jars or equipment at the plant.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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## No foul play in death

Goodland police and an ambulance were called to the home of Anthony Amack, 29, at 302 Main about 5:30 p.m. on Friday.

Amack was unresponsive, and was pronounced dead at the scene, said Chief Ray Smee.

Smee said an autopsy showed the death was from natural causes, and there was no foul play involved. Funeral services are on Page 2 of today's Goodland Star-News.



Great homes at great prices, take a look at some of Cynthia's fine listings.

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