

weather report

39°



noon Monday

Today

• Sunset, 5:36 p.m.
Wednesday
• Sunrise, 6:21 a.m.
• Sunset, 5:37 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 31 degrees
• Humidity 59 percent
• Sky mostly sunny
• Winds southwest at 8 mph
• Barometer 29.74 inches and falling

• Record High today 74° (2006)
• Record Low today -9° (1962)

Last 24 Hours*

High Sunday 36°
Low Monday 19°
Precipitation —
This month .41
Year to date .95
Above normal .17 of an inch

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, high near 46, low near 25, windy with gusts near 35 mph.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: Partly cloudy, high near 41, low around 22. A 20 percent chance of snow. Thursday: Partly cloudy, high near 35, low around 19. Friday: Mostly sunny, high near 35, low around 21. Saturday: Sunny, high near 43, low around 19.

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

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$4.53 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.67
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Corn — \$4.12 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.98
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Milo — \$3.89 bushel
Soybeans — \$6.86 bushel
Posted county price — \$6.90
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Millet — \$7 hundredweight
Sunflowers
NuSun crop — \$15.35
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.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



County asks to amend election bill

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

A law doesn't always mean what you think it says, it seems, so Sherman County commissioners moved Thursday to ask the Legislature to amend a county measure up for a hearing in the Senate on Thursday.

The commissioners agreed to ask Sen. Ralph Ostmeier to add a second option to the bill allowing Sherman County voters to choose whether they want commissioners elected at-large, similar to city and school district elections, or to keep the commissioner district but have commissioners elected by a countywide vote.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he asked

for the special meeting because he wasn't sure what a bill that passed the House last Monday actually allowed Sherman County citizens to choose.



Tiede

Tiede said he thought the county had asked for a bill to allow the citizens to choose to keep the commissioner districts but vote for the commissioners countywide.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the current language allows for the commissioners to be elected at-large, but does not include the districts.

Tiede said several people called him saying they did not think the bill gave the voters the option they wanted.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he had

people say keeping the districts, with a countywide vote, was what they thought the county was asking for.

The commissioners called Mike Heim in the office of the revisor of statutes in Topeka, which draws up all bills, to ask about the wording.

Heim said the bill allows citizens to vote on all commissioners at-large. He said it does not include an option to keep the districts.

Tiede said he wanted to keep the districts, and asked if the bill could be amended.

Heim said it could be amended in the Senate, but then would have to go back to the House.

Rasure said he would like to keep the at-large option as it is written, and add an option to allow for commissioner districts with

a countywide vote.

Thomas asked Heim if he thought there would be a problem in amending the bill.

Heim said he did not see a problem, adding that he would draft the amendment to be presented at the committee hearing at 12:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) on Thursday.

He said because of the amendment, the bill could not be placed on the consent calendar, but would have to go through full floor action.

Rasure asked that the amended language be faxed to the county clerk so the commissioners could see the new wording.

Heim said he would do that, and would let Sen. Ostmeier know what the commissioners had asked.



Diesel instructor Ron Kaus (right) checked a connection on an engine with two of his second-year students, Justin Dole (left) from Rush, Colo., and Casey Waggoner from Satanta.

Steel gets erected for diesel addition

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The steel framework is going up at the new diesel technology building at Northwest Kansas Technical College, thanks to the warmer weather last week.

Contractor on the project is Miller Construction of Goodland. Owner Mike Miller and his crew were getting the steel skeleton of the main sections of the 60-foot-by-140-foot addition bolted into place.

Miller had poured the concrete floor before the big snowstorms hit in December, so it was ready for the steel as soon as the snow melted.

A second addition on the south side of the building will house two new classrooms and a new entrance lobby.

Ron Kaus, second-year diesel instructor, who moved to Goodland last year, said he and first-year instructor Gary Unger, who came from Oberlin, share what used to be a technical laboratory as a classroom. As part of the improvement, he said, the old classroom on the south side of the shop was taken out.

"We share the space and it gets pretty crowded," Kaus said, "but we will be glad to have the new classrooms and shop additions to help our students."

Gary Barricklow, who heads the diesel program, said the addition will

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Mike Miller (left), owner of Miller Construction, worked Wednesday with two members of his crew to get a steel corner post in place on the southeast edge of the shop expansion on the Diesel Technology building at the Northwest Kansas Technical College. The addition will add room to work on up to eight trucks or four-wheel-drive tractors and two larger doors to handle the bigger vehicles.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Sewer rate procedure changed

Homeowners' sewer rates, usually based on water used in December, January and February, won't be figured until late spring this year after the City Commission changed an ordinance to allow later readings.

That means people who usually water lawns and wash cars in March and April may be paying a high price this year. They'll not only be charged for the water, but their sewer bills could be higher for an entire year.

City Clerk Mary Volk told the City Commission last Tuesday that with heavy snow, the city was not able to read the water meters in December and January.

She said the commission changed the ordinance to allow the city to use readings from February, March and April when the weather does not allow water meters to be read over the winter.

She said the meter readers were working hard to get them done before the end of February.

"In years when the weather permits us to read the water meters in December and January, we will use the basic months," Volk said, "but when we get these winter storms, we will use the expanded months to determine the average sewer bills."

Volk said this is the first time she can remember when the city was unable to read the water meters over the winter.

City Manager Wayne Hill said having to use the expanded months could raise the customer's sewer bill if they have to water a lot in March and April, but said with the moisture level ahead of normal, people shouldn't need to water as much and the difference would be smaller.

Volk said the city hopes to use the meter readings from January, February and March for this year's calculations. She said the city was unable to get the meters read in January, got part of them read in February and hope to use March.

"We want to keep it as close to winter time as we can," she said. "We know if people have to water a lot in the next few weeks that could raise their water consumption and that would raise their sewer bills. When we cannot read the meters through the snow, we believe the water usage will be lower and we can get a good average before they have to start watering lawns."

In other business, the city commission:

- Adopted a resolution naming Bankwest, Peoples State Bank, First National Bank and Western State Bank as places to deposit city money.

- Approved a low bid of \$6,198, from High Plains Office Supply for a copier. The other bid was from Topside Office Products for \$9,550.

- Received word that Goodland has been named a Tree City USA for the 28th year. Hill said the city plans to celebrate National Arbor Day.

Winter blasts area, closes all highways

Winter swept through northwest Kansas once more, starting Friday night and continuing through Saturday afternoon.

Winds up to 54 miles per hour whipped up snow, dropping visibility to less than a quarter of a mile at one point, said Scott Lockhart of the National Weather Service office in Goodland. With all the fuss, though, Goodland received just 1.5 inches of snow.

I-70 was closed westbound out of Goodland by 6:30 a.m. Saturday and east from Denver about the same time. At 7:57 a.m., Lt. Kevin Winston of the Kansas Highway Patrol closed the Port of Entry at Kanorado.

At 8 a.m. Saturday, K-27 was closed from Goodland north to the Nebraska state line. The road eventually was closed from Tribune north to the state line. By 10:45, I-70 was closed westbound from Colby.

By 6 p.m., the road was closed from Salina west to keep hotels from filling up, said Kristen Brands, district spokes-

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Two medals for Cowboys

Junior T.J. Hawkins wrestled Jake Tech of Abilene in the first round of state competition, winning the match 9-6. Hawkins and classmate A.J. Stephens led the Cowboys, finishing fourth in the tournament. See photo, story on Page 10.

