

**weather report**

**55°**  
 noon Monday

**Today**  
 • Sunset, 5:43 p.m.  
**Wednesday**  
 • Sunrise, 6:11 a.m.  
 • Sunset, 5:44 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**  
 • Soil temperature 30 degrees  
 • Humidity 36 percent  
 • Sky mostly sunny  
 • Winds north at 5 mph  
 • Barometer 30.32 inches and steady  
 • Record High today 82° (1972)  
 • Record Low today -13° (1948)

**Last 24 Hours\***  
 High Sunday 51°  
 Low Monday 20°  
 Precipitation —  
 This month trace  
 Year to date .98  
 Below normal .01 of an inch

**The Topside Forecast**  
 Today: Partly cloudy, high near 59, low around 27.

**Extended Forecast**  
 Wednesday: Partly cloudy, high near 57, low around 31. Thursday: Partly cloudy, high near 62, low around 29. Friday: Partly cloudy, high near 59, low around 26. Saturday: Mostly sunny, high near 57, low around 29. Sunday: Sunny, high near 62.  
 (National Weather Service)  
 Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400.MHz.  
 \* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local markets**

**Noon**  
 Wheat — \$4.54 bushel  
 Posted county price — \$4.65  
 Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
 Corn — \$4.03 bushel  
 Posted county price — \$3.83  
 Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
 Milo — \$3.78 bushel  
 Soybeans — \$6.58 bushel  
 Posted county price — \$6.57  
 Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
 Millet — \$7 hundredweight  
 Sunflowers  
 NuSun crop — \$16.40  
 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.)

**inside today**

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



**Cowgirls lose to Colby**

Senior Lindsay Schields tried to find someone to pass to in substate action against Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays on Friday. The Cowgirls won the game, but lost to Colby on Saturday. See story, photos on Page 11.

## Citizens grill city on fire issues

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Citizens grilled city commissioners Thursday about when they first knew volunteer firemen wanted the fire chief fired, and what they did to try to keep the 12 volunteers from turning in their resignations Feb. 20.

The letters were to be effective Monday, leaving the city with only a dozen hastily recruited replacements to run the fire department.

The commissioners and city manager said they received a letter from the volunteers late in January asking that the fire chief be removed because he had "humiliated and embarrassed" the fire department. The volunteers said they no longer felt safe under his leadership.

Fire Chief Scott Gilmer, riding in a rescue truck, responded to calls on I-70 during a snowstorm the night of Jan. 20. Gilmer was taken to the Sherman County sheriff's office by a state trooper to take an alcohol breath test.

City Manager Wayne Hill put Gilmer on 30-days unpaid suspension because the test showed an alcohol level of .026, just above the limit in city policy.

About 30 people attended a 45-minute public forum Thursday with the Goodland City Commission to ask about the status of the city fire protection and the training of replacement volunteer firemen.

Commissioner Dave Daniels, who asked for the special meeting, said he felt it would be good to have citizens ask questions and hear from



At a training session last Tuesday evening, Fire Chief Scott Gilmer showed new volunteer firemen how to operate a heat-imaging unit used to find hidden flames or possibly someone trapped in a

house. The recruits faced an intensive training schedule, learning about the fire trucks and watching videos about how to handle structure fires and how to operate rescue gear.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

the commissioners about the dispute. All 12 volunteer firemen turned in resignation, effective Monday, to protest the city manager's decision to reinstate Fire Chief Scott Gilmer.

"We took an oath to enforce city policies," Daniels said. "There are people who want us to take actions outside the policies."

"We are following the policies and all city employees are given the

same treatment. "The volunteer firemen are good men, and I appreciate their work. I am sorry this happened. I would like to see some of them come back."

Mayor Rick Billinger opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m., asking City Attorney Jeff Mason to explain the ground rules on what could be discussed.

Mason said personnel matters are confidential and the commission

may discuss them in closed session. He said he had copies of city personnel policies and a proposed fire protection agreement with Sherman County.

Billinger said the commissioners do not hire or fire any city workers, except the city manager. He said that is why they have a manager, who is in charge of all the city employees.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she had faith that the city

was making the right decision.

"We are trying to do the best for the people we represent," Commissioner John Garcia said. "We have to evaluate where we are at as a commission. Every problem has a solution, and we have to find the best one possible."

"I ask people to give the commission the room to see how the deci-

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*Drive, layup...*



Cowboys sophomore Travis Angelos drove into the basket for a layup against the Thomas More Prep-Marian Monarchs in the substate championship Saturday. Angelos was the high scorer for the Cowboys with 18, finishing with two driving lay-ups in the final minute. The Cowboys lost 63-49. See story, photo on Page 12.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

## Hospital gets extension to file veterans-clinic plan

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Goodland Regional Medical Center will have more time than expected to respond to a Department of Veterans Affairs request for proposals on an outreach clinic.

The hospital received the request on Wednesday, two days late, Administrator Jay Jolly said at a board meeting Monday, and then got a revised edition two days later. The proposal was due today, he said, but the deadline was extended to March 23 to give hospitals more time.

Besides Goodland, hospitals in Burlington and Yuma, Colo., are in the running for the clinic. The department's Rocky Mountain Region had planned to open the clinic April 1, Jolly said.

"I don't know if they're going to move that back," he said. "They have a lot to do too; they're going to run it."

The agreement with the hospital the government chooses, he said, will be a lease agreement for space. Veterans Affairs will provide the clinic staff.

Jolly said he was surprised the department planned to open the clinic so soon after requesting the proposals. They must already have staff ready for the clinic, he said.

The hospital is planning to offer space on the south corridor, Jolly said; Veterans Affairs wants a minimum of 1,780 square feet with three offices. The hospital has the room, he said, and it has telemedicine capabilities, which will also be a plus.

## Senators, congressman write letter of support

Two U.S. senators and the area's congressman wrote to the Department of Veterans Affairs supporting a Goodland location for a department outreach clinic slated to open this spring.

U.S. Sens. Pat Roberts and Sam Brownback and 1st District Rep. Jerry Moran sent the letter to Jim Nicholson, secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and James Floyd, acting director of Veterans Integrated Service Network 19.

The department sought proposals from three potential sites for the clinic, hospitals here and in Burlington and Yuma, Colo. The deadline for proposals is Friday, March 23, and the clinic was to open April 1.

"There is a real need for veteran health care services in this rural part of the country," the Kansas delegation wrote. "The community of Goodland and the Goodland Regional Medical Center in particular are committed in their efforts to answer the growing need and lack of access to veterans' health care."

"Many veterans in this area currently must drive at least 150 miles

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Jolly said the request for proposal wasn't what he expected.

"The thing that surprised me," he said, "was that there was little said about the community infrastructure. They're more interested in the facility, but we will go ahead and give them that information anyway."

"I think it's important to get that in, to let them know how much support there is in the community for health care."

If anyone wants to call the regional office in Denver, Jolly said,

it wouldn't hurt. It lets them know the whole community is behind it, he said. The number is (866) 301-9626.

The board approved a resolution to send in the proposal, making its support official.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced in Washington in December plans to put a clinic in one of the three towns. The agency said 4,000 veterans in a nine-county area are more than an hour's drive from government health care today.

## Melting snow brings cone zone

The calendar says March and that means the start of the spring street construction cone zones.

Work should begin this week on rebuilding 17th Street from the railroad tracks to Main, said Darin Neufeld, engineer for the project with Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates.

Neufeld said the contractor, Sporer Land Development of Oakley, would be moving equipment in on Monday, and expects to start work today or Wednesday on the south side of the street across from the High Plains Museum and north of the railroad crossing.

The first phase will be the south half of the pavement all the way to

Main. This is the side where the new storm sewer goes in, the engineer said, and most of the main lines are on that side of the street.

While the work proceeds, he said, half the road will be open to west-bound traffic from Cherry to Main.

"We will always have one lane of traffic to get to downtown," Neufeld said. "Getting back out of downtown, people will have to go west out to Cattletrail or K-27, or north and east of 17th."

He said the total project is supposed to take about four months, and the first half should be done in about six to seven weeks.

Phase 2 of the project will be the

intersection at Main and 17th, scheduled to be done before wheat harvest begins. Phase 3 will be the north half of 17th out to the railroad tracks.

Neufeld said once 17th street goes to one-way traffic, the parking at Hank's Café will be parallel until the third phase, when the north side of the street is blocked.

Neufeld said Friday he has heard from Bryant and Bryant of Great Bend, which did the intersections on Caldwell Avenue at Eighth Street and Armory Road. He said the crews are expected to move back in this week and start working on Caldwell on Monday.