

weather report

94°

noon Monday

Today

• Sunset, 8:07 p.m.

Wednesday

• Sunrise, 5:40 a.m.

• Sunset, 8:06 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 85 degrees
- Humidity 25 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds variable at 7 mph
- Barometer 30.13 inches and falling
- Record High today 110° (1940)
- Record Low today 53° (1953)

Last 24 Hours*

High Sunday	96°
Low Monday	63°
Precipitation	—
This month	.04
Year to date	7.48
Below normal	5.42 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, high near 94, low around 67.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: Partly cloudy and hot, high near 98, low around 63.
Thursday: Mostly sunny and hot, high near 99, low around 64.
Friday: A 20 percent chance of rain, partly cloudy, high near 94, low around 64.
Saturday: Mostly sunny, high near 89, low around 61.
Sunday: Partly cloudy, high near 90.

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

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$5.35 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.23
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Corn — \$3.19 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$2.92
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Milo — \$2.84 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$7.60 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$7.16
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Millet — \$7 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - NuSun crop — \$17.55
 - Pinto beans — \$25 (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



Rural fire cuts up cars

Sherman County Rural Fire Department and ambulance service volunteers did extrication training last Monday. Alex's Radiator donated two cars, said rural fireman Stan Duell. See photos on Page 3

Thieves betrayed by a tire track

By Sharon Corcoran

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Tire tracks, crime scene photos, a security camera video, all were instrumental in tracking down a pair of tractor rustlers — and discovering that the tractors and a stolen truck all apparently had been run through a shredder and sent to a mill to be melted down.

Law enforcement officers from three counties shared information as they discovered their stolen tractor cases were all related. Wallace County Sheriff Larry Townsend said they followed tracks from the Orié Ritter farm and knew which direction the thieves had gone after loading his tractor on a flatbed trailer.

A video from a surveillance camera in Goodland gave them a picture of the trailer and two men with Ritter's tractor, and tire tracks helped them identify the trailer.

"They took really good pictures at the site of the theft," Townsend said. "Combining that with information from Cheyenne County, we found the trailer we thought had been used in the theft. We knew the size and tire treads."

What threw officers at first, he said, was that the thieves didn't appreciate the value of the tractor.

"We thought the tractor would be resold to be used," Townsend said. "We didn't think of it being chopped."

He said they contacted sales, auction barns and used-tractor-parts dealers in a 300-mile radius and came up empty handed. After combining his information with what Cheyenne County Undersheriff Craig VanAllen had, Townsend said, they went to Denver and looked at salvage yards.

They found Ritter's tractor, two tractors belonging to Sam Goodale of St. Francis and a tractor belonging to Brent Cook of Edson had all been taken to Western Metals Recycling, tying together cases from Sherman, Cheyenne and Wallace counties.

Agencies in the three counties did most of the investigation, Townsend said, but the Kansas Bureau of Investigation helped early on, and Doug Murphy of the Quad-County Task Force helped with interviews. Goodland Police officer Doug Whitson and Sherman County Sheriff Kevin Butts also helped with in-



Security camera helped in cases

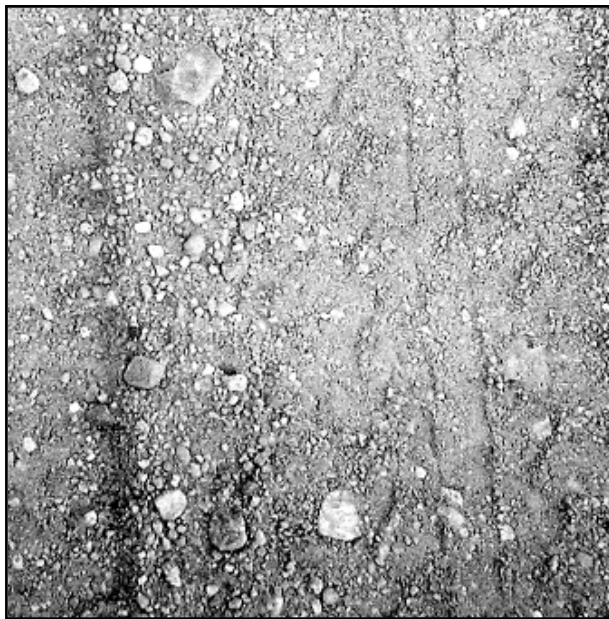
A surveillance camera at Western Metals Recycling in Denver captured Orié and Verna Ritter's tractor (above) being towed in on a flatbed trailer along with a pickup cab that actually was scrap metal. Tire tracks (right) where thieves loaded the Ritters' tractor on the trailer were instrumental in law enforcement identifying the trailer used for the thefts. The tracks had shards of glass from the tractor's windows, which thieves broke out to reduce the amount of drag from the wind as they drove to Denver.

terviews, Townsend said.

Townsend said he had been thinking a lot about the case and kept trying to think of ideas on how to solve it, then he woke up during the night and it came to him — maybe someone in Goodland had a surveillance

video. He called and asked several businesses and found a gas station that did. It was aimed to film people stopped at the pumps, he said, but it caught the thieves in a pickup towing a trailer with the Ritters' International on the flatbed.

It's kind of far away and at 10:30 at night, Townsend said, but it was enough to make out the tractor and estimate the size of trailer and compare it to the size of the tracks at the



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Victim lost leg, tractor

By Sharon Corcoran

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Orié Ritter was in the hospital in Colorado Springs having his leg amputated around the time his tractor was stolen, and his family didn't tell him about the theft until later.

Ritter, of Sharon Springs, is in long-term care in Tribune today. His wife Verna said the theft was among several events that made the last year pretty tough for the couple. She is 85, and he recently celebrated his 88th birthday.

Brent Cook of Edson, whose tractor was taken from the diesel repair department at the Northwest Kansas Technical College, said he didn't want to talk about the case yet.

"Things are still going on," he said. "I don't want to upset any fruit baskets."

The tractor was in the diesel technology department for repairs, said College President Ken Clouse, and the student had some wild idea and decided to steal it. It was crushed in Denver, Clouse said, and won't be retrieved.

Sam Goodale of St. Francis said he has been paying his son-in-law to farm for him since both of his tractors were stolen. One of them was a family heirloom, he said, and a truck that was taken from the same Quonset was one his father bought when Goodale was a boy.

Goodale says the fuel in his tractors was worth about as much as the thieves got for them, and he had put a new battery in one shortly before it was taken. After stealing his tractors and truck, the thieves padlocked the Quonset, he said, so it was tough to get in to check them.

The Ritters' tractor was sitting on their Conservation Reserve Program land with a seed drill hooked

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Board training helps district look ahead

By Pat Schiefen

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Goodland School Board members learned about working together and getting things done at a training session Saturday given by two experts from the Kansas Association of School Boards.

Doug Moeckel, a policy specialist, and Paul Getto, a board development specialist conducted the two-hour session.

Getto asked the board members, new and old, if they had any concerns. "How do you manage decline in student numbers?" asked board member Chuck Wilkens.

Getto said that almost all districts in the middle section of the country are getting smaller.

"The district had 2,100 students in the early 1970s compared to 914 presently," said board president Dick Short.

Goodland lucked out in the fact that it is located in I-70 and is a county seat, said Getto. Some of the smaller districts, such as Brewster, probably will cease to exist. Some already have.



Doug Moeckel (left) and Paul Getto of the Kansas Association of School Boards gave a training class Saturday for the Goodland School Board.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

He said that people feel they have more control over their schools in a small district. People

are "hard wired" to resist combing with other towns, he said, feeling that they will lose their identity. Small schools have a hard time hiring people to work for them and keeping them, he said, and are not able to offer the curriculum that they need to.

Home schooling and Internet schools will increase, he added, but students do not get the opportunity to develop the social skills they will need in the future.

To attract people to move into a district, he said, the area has to have housing and jobs.

Schools need to expand their outlook to include prenatal and infant care, Getto said. Kansas has high levels of rural poverty. When people enroll their kids at school and apply for free or reduced-price lunches, maybe someone should be there to help parents get medical insurance for their kids. Kids who go to the dentist and doctors are sick less and learn better, he said.

School board members need to remember that decisions of the board are made by a majority and not one person, he said. It is important that even if a person doesn't agree with the decision they should support the

board's decision. Trust is important.

If you have questions, he said, ask someone who has the answers. Keep confidential matters confidential. Be up front in your questions. Change takes time. Be a lifelong learner.

It's important to remember the job is all about the children and not about anyone's special interest.

Getto said that the board members need to make sure they have time for families, fun and friends.

How much information the board gets depends on what the board wants, Getto said.

Superintendent Shelly Angelos asked if anyone wanted more information for the meetings or if what they were getting was enough. All the members agreed that they were getting enough information.

She also asked if her e-mails during the weeks that the board didn't meet with information about that week were helpful. The board members said they would like to continue getting the off week e-mail.

"I got something new from the training," said board member LeAnn Friedrichs.

Fair kicks off with parade on Main Saturday

The Northwest Kansas District Free Fair kicks off Saturday with the annual parade moving up Main Avenue at 5 p.m.

The parade was shifted to Broadway last year because of the intersection construction on Main, but this year will be back on the traditional route.

The 4-H Ambassadors, who organize the parade, are planning for the line up to begin at 4 p.m. at Broadway and 17th. The parade will head up Main and end at the fairgrounds.

Events at the fairgrounds begin with the dog show at 8:30 a.m. Saturday.

There will be a modified tractor pull at 6 p.m. at the grandstands, and the carnival rides will be open at 7 p.m. that evening.

The fairgrounds will be open from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday for booth set-up.

Brad Shields, chairman of the home-owned carnival's board, said this will be the first time the new carnival building will be in use for

prizes and tickets.

There are no new rides this year, but some of the existing rides have had extensive rebuilding.

Shields said the carnival will be open Monday through Friday nights beginning at 7 p.m., and they will offer a wristband deal on Tuesday and Friday. He said it will be \$5 for the kiddy rides and \$10 for all other rides for the night.

With the reopening of Caldwell Avenue, the large parking lot to the southeast of the fairgrounds and east

of the new carnival building will be open. New, larger paved entrances will make this a better place to park to enjoy the entire fair.

Monday, judging begins at 8 a.m. for 4-H foods, arts and crafts. The horse show will begin at 9 a.m.

Family Fun Night and the hot dog feed sponsored by KLOE Radio and Eagle Cable will begin at 5 p.m.

The Fishing Hole opens at 7 p.m., sponsored by Bankwest of Kansas.

Tuesday is Farm Bureau Day, with check in for entries in all 4-H

and open classes from 8 to 11 a.m. The goat show will begin at 2 p.m., the rabbit show at 3 p.m., and the sheep lead and show at 4:30 p.m.

The kids pedal tractor pull will begin at 5:30 p.m. The Fishing Hole will open at 7 p.m.

At 7:30 p.m., in front of the arena, the Farm Bureau will present a free show featuring magician Rex Getz of Manhattan with "The Amazing Magic of Agriculture."

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