

## County trying to balance budget

By Tom Betz

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A draft of the Sherman County budget presented Friday included a big jump in road and bridge spending which split commissioners on how to keep the property taxes close to the current level.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the bottom line showed a mill levy of 56.235, about 4.6 mills or 8.2 percent higher than this year. She said with the increased valuation of about \$2 million, each mill will produce about \$65,895.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he saw no reason to raise property taxes. He asked Commissioners Chuck Thomas and Mitch Tiede if they wanted to raise the mill levy.

"Are we comfortable with this increase?" Tiede asked.

Thomas said he felt it was not unreasonable.

"I am not," Rasure said, adding that he would not vote for any increase.

"What are we going to do," Thomas asked, "cut every department back?"

Rumpel said she already had cut

## Rural fire district tax levy stays level

The Sherman County Rural Fire District budget and tax levy will be a hair under this year, county commissioners heard on Friday.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said she reworked the fire district budget and got it down to near what they had last year.

The district is a separate fund, she said, adding that she met with Fire Chief Alan David and Fire Board Chairman Marvin Duell to discuss the accounts. Rumpel said she got the accounts straightened out, put money in the district budget to start a building fund and put money aside for a new fire truck.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said the fire department really needs a new building with some parking for the men responding to fire calls. He asked about incorporating the ambulance service and asked if adding an ambulance would allow the county to use some of the money out of the health fund, which is supported by a special sales tax, to

pay for part of the building.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the problem is the ambulance people want to have the vehicle nearby. Commissioner Mitch Tiede explained that a lot of the ambulance volunteers work at the hospital, where the ambulances now are housed.

Thomas said he was thinking that with the extra runs the rural fire department is going to have now that it responds to rescue calls on I-70 and other rural roads, hazardous material spills, the Goodland Energy Center and Northern Sun industries. What about compensating a fire chief and using some of the money for that?

Tiede said the money is designated for a building, not wages.

Rumpel said the commissioners need to be aware of the bottom line, but if any money is not used, it

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year Rasure said. However, the department is estimated to spend about \$1.4 million this year, he said. The budget request is an increase of \$38,000 or about 4 percent, but Rasure said the difference between what is being requested and what is being spent is more than \$217,000 or about 8.5 percent.

"Repairs (for equipment) appear to be \$60,000 over what has ever been spent," Rasure said. "\$160,000 is what is being asked for."

"I asked about that," Thomas said, adding that Public Works Manager Curt Way had told him you either have to buy new equipment or fix what you have.

Rasure protested that there is about half a million dollars in the budget for new equipment. He said the special equipment fund has \$300,000 plus the road and bridge budget has \$200,000 for equipment.

Lease payments on current equipment show three next year for a total of about \$82,000 that would come out of special equipment, he said, leaving plenty for down pay-

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### weather report

**86°**

noon

Tuesday

Today

**Wednesday**

- Sunset, 7:15 p.m.
- Sunrise, 6:19 a.m.
- Sunset, 7:13 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil temperature 78 degrees
- Humidity 30 percent
- Sky clear and sunny
- Winds south 20 mph
- Barometer 29.97 inches and falling
- Record High today 100° (1946)
- Record Low today 41° (1962)

**Last 24 Hours\***

- High Monday 74°
- Low Monday 62°
- Precipitation trace
- This month 3.63
- Year to date 12.15
- Below normal 4.10 inches

**The Topside Forecast**

Today: Sunny. Highs in the lower 90s. Low upper 50s. Winds out of the south at 10 to 20 mph.

**Extended Forecast**

Wednesday: Sunny with highs in the lower 90s and lows in the lower 60s with winds out of the south at 10 to 20 mph.

Thursday: Partly sunny with a 10 percent chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 90s and lows in the upper 50s. Winds out of the southwest at 10 to 15 mph.

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

### local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$6.77 bushel
  - Posted county price — \$6.58
  - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
  - Corn — \$3.30 bushel
  - Posted county price — \$2.92
  - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
  - Milo — \$2.95 bushel
  - Soybeans — \$8.04 bushel
  - Posted county price — \$7.49
  - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
  - Millet — \$7 hundredweight
  - Sunflowers
  - NuSun crop — \$17.90
  - Confection — Call
  - 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

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## Cowgirl takes seventh

Brittaney Medrano fought to keep her lead on Caitlin Foy of Ogallala, Neb., and succeeded, finishing seventh, just .04 seconds ahead of Foy for Goodland at the home cross country meet Thursday. See photos, story on Page 9.



The Goodland Cowboys football team burst onto the field at Cowboys Stadium Friday through the cheering marching band, fans and cheerleaders. The Cow-

boys won the opener over the Rawlins County Buffaloes 25-8. See more on Page 10.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

## Cowboys defense shuts down Buffaloes

By Tom Betz

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The Cowboys defense took advantage of mistakes by the Rawlins County Buffaloes Friday and scored four touchdowns to win season opener 25-8 at Cowboys Stadium.

Neither team looked very good in the first quarter, with lots of yellow penalty flags flying, but in the sec-

ond quarter the Cowboys scored three times to lead 18-0 at the half.

In the second half, the Cowboys scored again, but with time running out the Buffaloes got a touchdown to cut the lead to 18-8. Goodland scored again in the final seconds to win 25-8.

Cowboys players hugged each other and jumped and cheered as the

clock ran out, giving the team a win to start the season.

"That felt good," said Cowboy Coach Jon Dansel as the players gathered on the field after the game. The team responded with a round of cheers.

"That is how you play defense," Dansel said, again to loud cheering. "We have some things to work

on," he said. "We have to practice hard and get another win next week."

Dansel said the game was a great job by everyone, praising the defense for helping make the win possible.

"I was really proud of how the defense played," Dansel said. "We had a lot of guys flying around making plays. Senior T.J. Hawkins had 14 total tackles in the game, which led

the team. He made a lot of nice plays."

Dansel said he felt the team had improved from the 3-7 season effort last year, and the boys' desire to win was evident.

The game started under sunny skies with a temperature of 83 and a 15 mph wind out of the south

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## Striping old U.S. 24 costly question for county

By Tom Betz

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Sherman County commissioners heard Friday that it could cost \$70,000 or more to put a strip down the middle of the new pavement on old U.S. 24 across Sherman County, something that people have been asking about.

Concerned about liability for maintaining the stripe and the cost of repainting it every few years, commissioners made no decisions.

The question of striping the road has come up before, but after the county chip-sealed the road several years ago, commissioners decided it would be too expensive to keep striping the 32 miles of road across the county.

However, Sheriff Kevin Butts told commissioners at the meeting on Aug. 21 he felt the new black asphalt made the road dangerous to drive, especially at night.

The commissioners asked Public Works Manager Curt Way to get estimates about what it would cost to stripe the road.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas, who lives near Edson, said he could understand what people were saying about driving the road at night.

## Road 16 project set to bid next year

Sherman County commissioners asked Friday what was happening with the engineering design for the one-mile stretch of County Road 16 that runs past the Sugar Hills Golf Club. The answer was, apparently not much.

Public Works Director Curt Way said he did not think Jerol DeBoer, engineer and owner with Penco Engineering of Plainville, was going to have the plans ready to bid before the first of the year.

Commissioners Mitch Tiede asked if DeBoer has contacted the landowners along the east side of the road to buy right-of-way to move the road over.

Way said as far as he knows, DeBoer has not talked to the people yet.

"We need the land part first," said Commissioner Kevin Rasure. "We told him that when we went out to look at the road."

Randy Toppliff, board member of the golf club, said there has been a lot of traffic on the road, including about 300 cars out for the high school cross country meet on Thursday. He said the road is getting rough, and that there is a high school golf tournament and a

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Way said Friday he had talked to two companies about the striping cost, and both estimated it would be 30 to 40 cents a foot for permanent type epoxy stripes.

He said that would be for one stripe down the middle at a cost of about \$70,000, but that did not include the expense to get a company to come to Sherman County to do the job. That also does not include any side stripes on the road or places where a solid yellow no passing zone would be required.

Way said he talked to a Federal

Highway Administration official who said new requirements are coming next year on reflectivity of paint for striping and for road signs.

"I understand the situation and it would be a good gesture," Way said, "but we do not have the daily traffic count to justify the striping and it could create more liability for the county."

Way said he talk to Tom Job of the Kansas Counties Association Multi-Line Pool, which handles the county's liability insurance. Way said Job told him there are not a lot

of court cases on highway marking, but that painting the stripes would appear to take away the "discretionary immunity" the county enjoys with an unmarked road. Basically, he said, once the road is striped, the county would have to keep it done.

Way said the commissioners should talk to County Attorney Bonnie Selby about the liability part and talk to other counties.

"If we do old U.S. 24, what about Eighth (Street) west of town?" Commissioner Chuck Thomas asked.

Tiede said it would be good to talk to Selby. He asked Way what the traffic count is on the road.

Way said the most recent numbers show the section from K-27 to Caruso west of Goodland having the heaviest traffic, but it does not come close to the 3,000 vehicles a day where striping would be required by state law.

Thomas suggested waiting until after the first of the year to see what the federal regulations do.

"We will do some thinking on that," he said.