

weather report

54°

noon Monday

Today

• Sunset, 7:04 p.m.

Wednesday

• Sunrise, 6:25 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:02 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 62 degrees
- Humidity 74 percent
- Sky mostly cloudy
- Winds out of North at 16 mph
- Barometer 30.37 inches and steady

• Record High today 99° (1895)

• Record Low today 37° (1989)

Last 24 Hours*

High Sunday 55°

Low Sunday 47°

Precipitation .47

This month .59

Below normal 4.46 inch

The Topside Forecast

Today: Sunny with the high near 79 and the low around 50 with winds out of the south at 5 to 10 mph.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: Sunny with a high near 84 and a low around 51 with the winds out of the south at 10-15 mph. Thursday: Mostly sunny becoming mostly cloudy with a high near 74 and a low around 47. Friday: Partly sunny with a high near 71 and a low around 45.

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

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$7.46 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$7.42
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Corn — \$3.18 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.01
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Milo — \$2.88 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$8.06 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$7.70
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Millet — \$7 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - NuSun — \$17.90 hdwt.
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Confection — Call
 - Pinto beans — \$25 (new crop)
- (Markets by Scouler Grain, Sigo Sun, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



Cowboys lose to Indians

Cowboys junior quarterback Travis Angelos (11) threw a pass to junior wide receiver Brandon Rome (3) for a short gain in the first half of a game Friday against St. Francis. The Cowboys lost 22-6. See story, photos on Page 10.

Crew begins gassing prairie dogs

By Tom Betz

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A few weeks ago it appeared a settlement was at hand in a county lawsuit against landowners in a 2 1/2-year battle over prairie dogs in southern Logan County.

Then, over the weekend, the struggle took another twist with the unannounced arrival of an extermination crew near Lone Butte.

Three four-wheel rigs arrived late Friday afternoon and the drivers began poisoning prairie dog holes in "control strips" on about 30 acres of land south of Russell Springs.

Exterminator Donald Walter of Tribune told Larry Haverfield he had a permit issued by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and orders from Logan County Commissioner Carl Uhrich to get the poisoning done.

"I was surprised to see them out there, as it was after 5:30 p.m. on Friday," Haverfield said Sunday. "It certainly makes it hard to do anything to get them stopped. Our attorney, Randal K. Rathbun of Wichita, said he was trying to get someone to listen, but being the weekend, he could not get a judge to issue an order to stop."

Haverfield said he thought about calling the sheriff but was uncertain what he could do in the face of the state-approved permit.

Haverfield, who owns about 6,720 acres of grassland and controls about 1,500 acres nearby owned by Gordon Barnhardt, has been in a running battle with the commissioners for more than two years over prairie dogs on his land.

Logan County filed suit against Haverfield and several neighbors in December asking the court to allow the county to go onto the lands to eradicate the prairie dogs, citing a 1904 state law.

The lawsuit was scheduled to go to trial last month, but the county's lawyer vacated the trial date, saying the parties had reached an agreement that would result in dismissal of the lawsuit.

Haverfield said he has never seen an agreement, and he understood that Donald F. Hoffman, the Hays lawyer whom Logan County had hired to handle the lawsuit, has quit.

When asked who had hired him to do the poisoning, Walter refused to say.

"There is no story here," he said Sunday afternoon as he rolled up to a prairie dog hole.

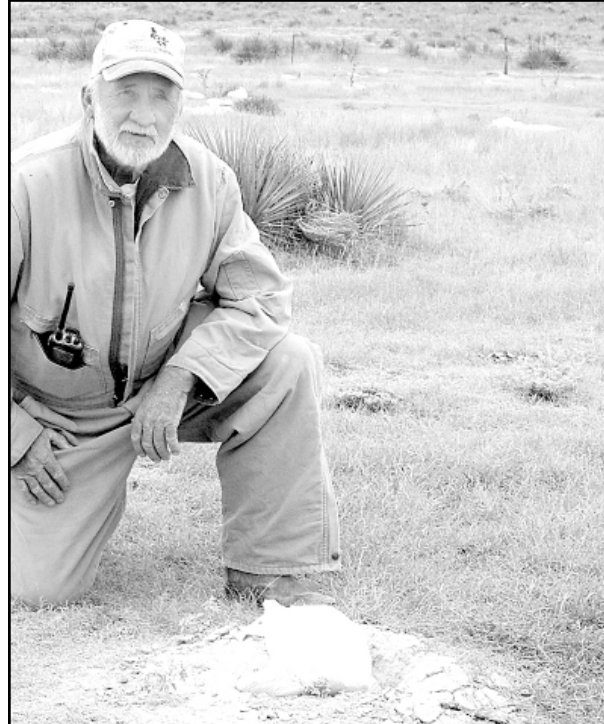
The permit was issued Sept. 4 from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks under the signature of Keith Sexson, assistant secretary for operations, allowing Walter to use aluminum phosphide for prairie dog control.

The permit indicates that it is a smaller amount of land than requested by Uhrich and Walter, covering about 100 acres total with 30 acres (100 yards wide by about three-quarters of a mile long) on Haverfield's land just east of Lone Butte, and 70 of Barnhardt's land (100 yards wide by about one and three-quarters of a mile on the east side of his property).



Donald Walter (above), an exterminator from Tribune, squirted water into a prairie dog hole Sunday afternoon on Larry Haverfield's land south of Russell Springs. Haverfield (right photo) knelt by one of the prairie-dog holes on his land. The white dots in the background are other holes that had been treated with aluminum phosphide to gas any occupants to death. Haverfield has been fighting with the Logan County commissioners to save his prairie dog population and reintroduce the endangered black-footed ferret.

Photos by Tom Betz
 The Goodland Star-News



In an effort to head off the poisoning more than a year ago Haverfield began building about six and one-half miles of border fences about 30 yards inside his fences to create buffers to reduce the prairie dog migration pattern and keep them within his land. Haverfield

said he poisoned these last year, and had been asking the county prairie dog man to poison them this year with Rozol, but that can't be used until Oct. 15. He said the county commissioners keep asking him to make the buffer zones wider, and that is why he believes the request was made for the poisoning of 100-yards.

Walter's crew worked Saturday and Sunday to finish poisoning of the strip on Haverfield's land, and was expected to move over to Barnhardt's that afternoon, but when the crew reached the county road, they turned north and headed back to Tribune.

Haverfield said when he asked Walter to stop the poisoning on Friday, Walter said he had a permit and had been told by Uhrich to get it done.

Haverfield said he had not been notified, even though he was told by Rathbun the settlement would dictate two days' notice if the county decided to poison.

The rancher said he had talked with Walter two days prior to the poisoning, asking if Walter would be interested in poisoning his 30-yard-wide barriers using zinc phosphide instead of aluminum phosphide.

Haverfield said that while the zinc phosphide is lethal to prairie dogs when they eat it, secondary poisoning to predators is considerably less than other chemicals. The poison being used on his land will kill virtually anything that is in the burrow because it creates a poison gas, he said, adding that he thinks this is a problem because prairie dog holes are used by other animals, such as burrowing owls, swift foxes, badgers and snakes.

Haverfield has two skulls — one a swift fox and one a badger — he found near the barriers where they were poisoned last year.

"They don't think they're hurting any wildlife," Haverfield said of the exterminators.

As Walter rolled up to another prairie dog hole, he reached out for a hose and squirted water into the hole. He then opened a can of pellets, counted out a few and dropped them in, placing a plastic bag full of wet sand over the hole.

"Is that a live hole?" Haverfield asked.

"Yes, it is," Walter said and moved on to the next hole.

Haverfield and a friend, Cliff Hillery of Scott City, were out looking at the barrier area before the poisoning began and said they had seen a lot of dead holes, and some even had spider webs across the entrance.

Walter and his crew appeared to be treating every visible prairie dog hole. Haverfield said, regardless of whether there was evidence it was inhabited or not.

Haverfield said the barriers were doing their job in most places, but said he had seen some live holes where the grass was not growing as tall as in other places.

Haverfield said he talked to Charles Lee, a Kansas State University Extension special-

See POISON, Page 8

Calm voices respond to your 911 calls

By Sharon Corcoran

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You start to feel an unbearable pressure in your chest.

Though you can barely lift your arm, you manage to pick up a phone and dial 911 and holler, "Help! I'm having a heart attack!"

A calm voice tells you an ambulance is on the way and then asks your name and age.

The calm voice is that of a "communication officer," a county dispatcher.

How did she know where to send the ambulance? Your address came up on her computer as soon as you called the 911 system.

Some people don't realize that happens, said Crissy Conger, Sherman County 911 director, and others think that as long as they call from a cell phone, the dispatcher can find them. That is not always the case, she said.

If the call is from a "land-line" phone, she said, the information is sent to the dispatcher's computer if they call the 911 line. But with mobile phones, she said, that is where location technology comes into play. Some older phones and older phone systems don't broadcast a location.

"People are under the impression we can always find them as long as they are calling on a cell phone," Conger said. "We are ready for the phone's location to come through on 911 calls, but not all wireless companies have the same technology." Sherman County Dispatch re-

ceives pinpointed locations from Alltel phones, she said, as long as the global positioning system is functioning, but from some wireless carriers, they only get information on which tower the call is being routed through. That gives them only a general idea where you are.

It's important for people to have the GPS feature on newer phones activated, she said, and to be able to tell the dispatcher where they are when they use a cell phone. Just in case.

Sherman County Dispatch was the first agency in Kansas to be able to pinpoint the location of a cell phone, Conger said, and not just get the tower it was hitting. That's big, she said, considering that was possible here before it was in Johnson County or any of the other larger counties. It was only a few years ago that pinpointing cell phone locations became possible here, she said.

But the system is not foolproof. A couple of winters ago, she said, a family was trying to get to Colby to finish their trip even though the roads were closed due to a blizzard. They tried to continue on old U.S. 24, she said, but missed the turn on the east edge of Goodland and went south past the Sinclair station, onto a county road south of I-70 and ended up stuck in a field.

The man called on an administrative line to ask for help, she said, and someone was sent. They looked everywhere east of town on the high-



Darcy Frazier, a dispatcher for Sherman County Communications, has been taking emergency and administrative calls in the basement of City Hall for three years. She entered information on the computer in front of her about a call and who responded Friday. Messages from other law enforcement agencies come in on the computer on her right; information, such as the address a call is coming from to the 911 system, appears on the screen to her left; and a map that shows the caller's location is on the computer to her far left.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

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