

Calm voices answer calls

CALLS, from Page 1

way, she said, in white-out conditions, but couldn't find the family.

She told the man to hang up and call back on the 911 line, Conger said, and they were able to pinpoint this location just south of I-70. When she asked if he had passed a gas station, he said he had about a mile ago, and finding him was then easy. But it would have been a problem, she said, if the cell phone wouldn't have had the GPS turned on.

Even from a home phone, she said, sometimes the location doesn't come through. The communication center has six administrative lines and seven 911 lines, she said, and calls are routed to certain lines based on which phone service they came from. For example, she said, all phones on S&T Communications are routed to one line, phones on AT&T to another and calls from cell phones come in on two other lines. Calls from Brewster and Kanorado come in on other lines.

Usually, when you call from your home or business, Conger said, your location is shown on a map on the computer, but every once in awhile, about one in 1,000 calls, that doesn't happen.

With cell phones, she said, it depends on the company and the GPS system. Deactivated cell phones can be used to call 911, she said, but their location won't be pinpointed.

Also, she said, cell calls are routed according to what tower they hit. So, for example, she said, if it's Mother's Day and a lot of people in the area are talking on their cell phones, a call may be bounced to another tower.

In that case, a call from St. Francis could hit a tower here, she said, and come in to Sherman County Dispatch. One time, a call made in

Tips to help dispatchers when you have to call 911

Things to keep in mind when making an emergency call:

- Dial 911 for emergencies. Call (785) 890-4570 for the Goodland Police Department or after hours to talk to a dispatcher about nonurgent situations.
- If you are calling from your home or office phone, dispatch will normally get your location, so if you call to report someone has broken into your home, you may not have to speak to give the dispatcher your location. If you are calling from a cell phone, you may have to give the dispatcher your location.
- On the road, pay attention to signs and landmarks, so you will be able to describe your location to a dispatcher in an emergency. Don't assume the dispatcher knows where you are even when calling from home — be ready to give that information in case it's needed.
- The dispatchers are there for you. Crissy Conger, Sherman County 911 director, urges people to call anytime they need help and anytime they think they see something suspicious, as the police and sheriff's officers cannot be everywhere.
- Most of the Sherman County dispatchers are certified emergency medical dispatchers. They can give detailed medical instructions over the phone while they wait for an ambulance. They have guide cards they follow according to the victim's complaint.
- Do not hang up unless the dispatcher tells you to. Stay on the line until they have all the information they need, especially if you called on a cell phone. Dropped calls and static can cause problems and the dispatcher may not get all the needed information. You may be asked to repeat things you have already said.

Goodland was routed to a dispatch office two counties away, she said, and the dispatcher didn't know what road they were talking about when the caller tried to give his location.

It's always important to know where you are, she said, and to tell the dispatcher if you're calling from a cell phone and which county you're in.

Another drawback of cell phones, Conger said, is that most of the time they cut out for a few seconds shortly after a call is made. Most of the time, she said, the dis-

patcher hears, "Hello. My name is (name). I'm at kkkrrrrr."

That's when the connection to the tower is relayed, she said; there's a delay, so it doesn't sound like the line is dead when the call starts, but when it does happen, it cuts out important information. She would like to eliminate that, she said, but hasn't been able to find a way to do that yet.

When people call on cell phones, she said, they should expect to have to repeat things when the call is cut out like that.

Collecting hazardous waste



Kenney Griffith (left), director of Sherman County Household Hazardous Waste, and Mike Jarmin (right) dumped oil-based paint into a barrel Saturday morning in the final collection of the year. Helping were Daryl West, county noxious weed director, and Lynn Abbott, a county road and bridge employee. Griffith said they took in 4,764 pounds and hauled 2,191 pounds to Hays for disposal. He said the total collection for the year was 11,869 pounds, and 3,351 pounds went to Hays. He said 4,698 pounds were tagged for reuse, mostly latex paint and some garden chemicals. He said 875 pounds was recycled here and 2,945 taken to the landfill.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Gassing prairie dogs begins

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-ist for wildlife damage control, who had recommended the 100-yard buffer strips. He said Lee told him he may come out today to look at how the work is being done.

In the permit, Lee is quoted as saying "... the department's intention is to facilitate the use of a legally registered product and to consider the impact on nontarget wildlife. This action is one that will allow our department to assess future use of aluminum phosphide in the area in question in Logan County."

A part of the more than two-year battle is Haverfield and Barnhardt's wish to reintroduce the black-footed ferret, an endangered species that is fighting to make a comeback. The ferret could be taken off the list if places can be found with enough prairie dogs, which are the ferret's main source of food.

The rancher and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service believe his land is the best possible location in Kansas.

berning auction in back

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Motor home fire on I-70



Sherman County Rural Fire Chief Alan David talked to two firemen inside a Winnebago motor home that caught on fire about a mile west of town around noon on Thursday. David said flames were shooting out the side window when firemen arrived. The fire was put out quickly, but the home, with a Minnesota tag, was rated a total loss. A Fed-Ex driver who was following the motor home called 911 to say the motor home was smoking and stopped to try to help. The driver of the motor home was uninjured, said Trooper Eric Hodges of the Kansas Highway Patrol.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Pins on sale!



Special color souvenir pins featuring the giant Vincent van Gogh sunflower painting on the big easel in Goodland are now on sale.

The Goodland Star-News

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