

Detective explains history of task force, answers questions

By Tom Betz
ntbetz@nwkansas.com
 The Goodland City Commission asked questions about the Quad County Drug Task Force at the meeting last Monday before voting unanimously to restore the \$5,000 annual funding for the police department membership.

Detective Doug Murphy assigned to the Quad County Drug Task Force answered the questions and gave the commissioners some history on the agency.

He said this is the second go-around for the task force. Police agencies in the original four counties got together back in 1991 and it ran for four years through 1995.

At that point, he said, the state expected the counties to pick up the full cost. That did not happen and the task force fell apart.

He said in 2000, the agencies got together and tried for another grant from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council with Gove, Logan, Thomas and Sherman counties and Oakley, Colby and Goodland.

He said Gove had to fall out, but Wallace County joined, and for a couple of years Greeley County was a member. He said the current members are the sheriff departments of Thomas, Logan, Wallace and Sherman counties and the Oakley, Colby and Goodland police.

Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn said the task force has been telling the state that four years was not long enough, and the state has agreed to keep their money at 50 percent. He said the task force applies each year for an economic hardship to receive a grant.

"We cannot put an end to drugs in four years," Baughn said, "and with the financial conditions the cities and counties, would not be able to come up with the money to run this without the outside help. We need this."

Murphy said the task force board comprising the heads of each agency makes the policy decisions. State

officials are pleased with the results shown by the group.

"We had an on site audit from the state," Murphy said, "and they said one of the reasons we keep getting the money is the statistics we have shown."

He said he got involved in an area-wide tractor theft case on an informal basis because there was some evidence there was a drug connection to the thefts, but the main mission is areawide drug sales.

"To be successful, agencies must take an active rather than reactive approach to the investigation of drug crimes," he said. "There is more involved to a drug investigation than simply taking a report and filing charges against the offender."

"Drug offenders are not bound by the same jurisdictional boundaries as law enforcement agencies are. By forming task forces and sharing the manpower intelligence gathering and investigative techniques and equipment, we are able to take a more active approach."

Commissioner John Garcia asked how many of the Goodland police officers are trained to use specialized equipment the departments have for surveillance and undercover investigation.

"Myself, Chief Ray Smee and a few of the other departments who have special equipment," Murphy said. "This is not something you can send everyone to school to train on. You have to be able to put the training to use."

He said the average street cop is good and came make a good case, but they have other duties and do not have the hours to pursue the cases.

Murphy said if Smee were to put a drug case together without the task force, he would have to commit everything to that one thing and there would not be anyone to patrol the streets.

"When we do this, people come from everywhere," he said. "You don't have that unless you are working together."

Sheriff Baughn explained the way the grant works. Brewster is the receiving agency, and he is the mayor and the county sheriff. He said the Brewster city clerk handles the paperwork.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks asked about educating children about the dangers of the drugs, an asked if Murphy does programs in the schools.

Murphy said most programs are done by the member agencies, but he has assisted and worked with them. He said he has done some programs for Kiwanis and Rotary clubs.

"Do you participate in the local searches," asked Commissioner Josh Dechant.

"I assist them any way I can," Murphy said. "I helped with the canine search at the Goodland High School earlier this year."

"I helped with the tractor case because there was a question of drugs involved."

Dechant asked what happens when a big money or drug bust is made on the highway.

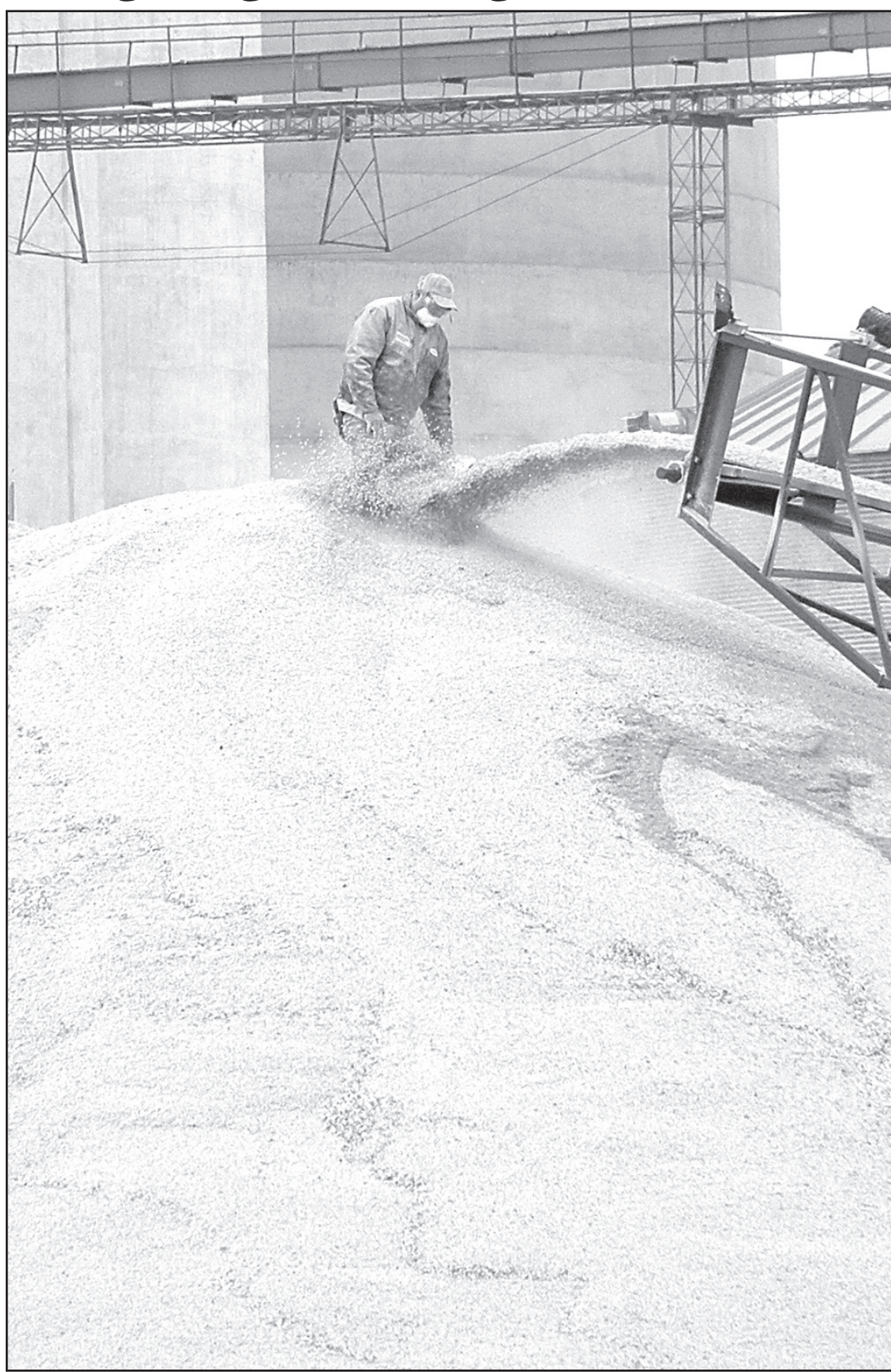
Murphy said he only gets called in those cases when they want his help, but that in cases handled by the drug task force, the money seized goes into the task force fund to pay for equipment. It cannot be used to pay salaries, he said.

Sheriff Townsend said he had a misconception when he first joined the task force that they might be able to pay their own way through seizures. He said the people they are dealing with are not rich.

"When Thomas County does a big seizure, it is usually a paid-off car that they can get several thousand dollars when it is sold," Murphy said. "We only get the beaters and can only get a few hundred dollars out of the car."

Murphy said the grant does not pay for a lot of things, such as an office, phone or a car. He said it pays employee wages, benefits, mileage and for some confidential informants.

Piling it higher and higher ...



A Ruleton Co-op employee stands atop a corn pile and deflects the incoming stream to spread the corn out. Recent rains have slowed the corn harvest, but estimates are it is more than half completed and the good weather this week should see it getting close to being wrapped up.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

City juggles street project list

STREETS, from Page 1

for the project.

Neufeld said the city cost of the project would be about \$80,000, plus the legal fees.

Daniels asked about the bidding process.

Neufeld said the commission could decide to use Miller Construction since there have already been two bids on the project. He said there

will be a slight increase in Miller's bid because the city requires bonding, which was not in the original bid. He said the city code requires bonding for projects over \$70,000.

On the rest of the project Neufeld said the plan is to take care of the streets first and then do the patching, curb and gutter, valley gutters and sealing.

The commission agreed the block of Seventh Street south of Walnut

should to be added to the list.

Neufeld said another area would be the section in front of West Elementary where parents drop off the kids and the buses line up. He said it might be a good idea to put a section of concrete along that part of the street.

The commissioners agreed to the additions including the plan for Enterprise Road.

Survey can help improve health care

SURVEY, from Page 1

Dechant said. "If a service is not available here, what can we do?"

She said that health care providers support the initiative.

"Providers are on the same track as we are," she said. "Everybody wants to have the best health care that we can in the area."

The surveys are completely anonymous, Dechant added.

"We have no way to track who says what," she said. "We did that so we don't have to worry about anyone being afraid to be honest — good or bad."

The Shine On Sherman County healthcare committee made a commitment to get community feedback on health care issues last December, she said, and started distributing the survey last month.

The surveys are available on-line

or at the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce office at 1002 Main St. Committee members have given surveys to large employers, including banks, businesses and the Goodland School District, she said.

For information or to obtain a survey, call Dechant at 890-7026 or the Chamber at 899-7130. The Web address to get the survey on-line is: www.questionpro.com/akira/takesurvey?id=779380.

matters of record

Goodland Police

The following crimes have been reported to the Goodland Police Department:

Sept. 25 — 11:42 a.m., 1006 Center Ave., Terrin Parish Keith reported criminal damage to property.

Sept. 26 — 9:14 p.m., 824 Main Ave., Carey McGuire reported motor vehicle burglary and a theft.

Sept. 27 — 1:28 p.m., 119 E. 12th, arrested Sherry Ann Robinson for theft from Prints and the Paper.

Sept. 28 — 8:30 a.m., 300 E. Ninth, City of Goodland reported criminal damage to property.

Oct. 1 — 6:38 p.m., 1607 Texas Ave., James Sheats reported a theft.

6:39 p.m., 204 W. 11th, arrested Dwight Aaron Melstrom for aggravated battery against Daniel Oikarinen. Case referred to county attorney.

Oct. 2 — 11:11 a.m., 1202 West Business U.S. 24, arrested Isaiiah Broadus for theft of motor fuel from Frontier Ag. Case referred to county attorney.

Oct. 4, — 2:16 a.m., 812 Washington Ave., arrest a juvenile and placed in protective custody on child in need of care. Case referred to county attorney.

Oct. 5 — 7:49 a.m., 1402 Main Ave., Kansasland Tire reported a theft.

District Traffic

The following fines have been paid in the Sherman County District Court:

Aug. 25: Frank H. Sowers was fined \$126 for failure to renew vehicle registration, \$300 for driving while license was canceled, suspended or revoked and \$300 for driving without liability insurance.

Aug. 26: Amber L. Williams was fined \$150 for speeding.

Aug. 27: Toshikazu Tanaka was fined \$156 for speeding.

Aug. 29: Balwinder Singh was fined \$166 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations.

Aug. 31: Lavinea B. Ramirez was fined \$150 for speeding.

Estelle D. Young was fined \$120 for speeding.

Sept. 2: James K. Sommervold was fined \$156 for improper parking.

Sept. 3: William H. Wallace was fined \$156 for improper parking.

Ray R. Yauk was fined \$138 for speeding and \$10 for not wearing a seat belt.

Sept. 4: Kathleen Powell was fined \$144 for speeding.

Sept. 5: Lou A. Woods was fined \$176 for being over weight limits on wheels and axles.

Sept. 10: John R. Odoherly was fined \$141 for being over weight limits on wheels and axles.

SAVE \$29⁹⁵!

Introductory Rate of \$120 ONLY through this October

Restore your vehicle's performance and fuel mileage

Frontier Ag in Goodland is now offering their new motor vac carbon cleaner system!

This unit cleans your entire fuel system - including the injectors from harmful deposits!

Get your vehicle running the way it used to and reap the rewards of better fuel mileage!

Make your appointment today at (785) 899-3505



Carquest & Frontier Ag Shop
 W Hwy 24, Goodland, Kan.
 Frontier Ags are also in Grinnell, Bird City, Menlo, Page City & Atwood.

Health Essentials

Natural Foods, Vitamins,
 Massage Therapy,
 Acupuncture & More

Natural Living Cottage
 & Wellness Center
 314 14th Street, Burlington, Co.
 719-346-4681

YOUR BUSINESS COULD BE HERE!

Call Jordie
 (785) 899-2338
 for more details!!



**Classifieds work!
 Call 899-2338 to place yours.**