

Well closed due to high nitrate content

By Tom Betz
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One of Goodland's city water wells has been taken out of service after testing higher for nitrate contamination than recommended levels, City Manager Wayne Hill told city commissioners last Monday.

Hill said Well No. 3, on the east side of Chambers Park, had tested high over the past few months. While it is not enough to put the whole system over state limits, he said, the city agreed to use the well only in an emergency.

He said the city may face more contamination problems in the future, and he would like to find the source of the nitrate problem.

It's possible the city may have to treat the wells, Hill said, and that might be a costly

process, depending on how the treatment is done. Now, he said, wells are hooked directly into the water system, but the ideal is to have separate collection and distribution systems with a treatment plant between them. The second way is to treat the water at each well, he said, but that would not be cheap.

Mayor Rick Billinger asked where there were problems other than at the most recent well. Hill said three wells have shown signs of nitrates in the past year, but are not above state limits.

He added that two show nitrates climbing.

Billinger asked what a treatment plant might cost.

Darin Neufeld, engineer from Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, who does most of the city's work, said he estimates

the treatment would cost about \$90,000 per well plus cost of \$1,000 to \$1,200 per month in electrical costs, plus filters and chemicals. He said the operation could cost as much as \$250,000 per year.

Hill said that depends on what each well is being treated for, because different contaminants would take different treatments.

Billinger asked if that is the only option. Neufeld said he thought the city could do a central treatment plant for about \$5 million.

Commissioner John Garcia asked about the contamination levels in the other wells.

Rich Simon, public works director, said the best wells are Nos. 8 and 9, near Army Road and by the airport beacon.

Hill said the city has transferred some water rights from well No. 11, which is

farther north east of the trap club. That well has been reduced because it appears to be pulling underground contamination from the area around the old city dump. He said they transferred the rights to well No. 9 because the city was overpumping that well.

Hill said the city will look at costs for a central treatment plant and an idea of where that might need to be located. The manager said he will continue to look for the source of the nitrate contamination because he wants to determine if it is a surface source that could be dealt with or something else.

Billinger said he was not sure Hill could find the source of nitrates, which can come from fertilizer used on crops and lawns, or from animal operations such as feed lots, among other things.

Simon said the city might look at buying water rights outside of town, away from the city. He was saying it might be more like seven miles away. Billinger agreed that is an option.

Neufeld said there are three sources for money available for a water plant or new wells, but a Community Development Block Grant would not work for the whole city could use because the city does not have a low enough income level except in certain neighborhoods.

He said the city could consider the state Health Department or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development loan funds. In that case, he said, a federal grant might cover 10 to 15 percent of the cost and the rest would be a loan for 40 years.

Neufeld said some cities have used all three to pay for water projects.

Santa coming Saturday

By Ramona C. Sanders
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Santa Claus is coming to town just in time to kick off the holiday season.

St. Nick will be strutting down Main Street on Saturday during the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce's annual Christmas parade, starting at 3 p.m. Immediately after that, he'll be having his photos taken with the kiddies at the Goodland Activity Center.

Santa will also be available for photo opportunities from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at Nu Phi Mu's 30th annual Food and Gift Extravaganza, formerly the Arts and Crafts Fair, at the Max Jones Field House.

The fair will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. that day. Visitors can shop at booths that offer everything from homemade crafts to photography services to cosmetics and housewares, said Nu Phi Mu treasurer and event chair Janda Linin.

"The timing is perfect," Linin said, "because everybody starts their holiday shopping around then."

She estimated that 40 booths will be selling their wares and about 500 people attend each year. A lunch

counter will offer the traditional sloppy joes and sloppy joe nachos. Baby-sitting services will be provided by the Goodland High School cheerleaders. The fair will also have a "Make-N-Take" area to keep kids busy making their own crafts.

The Food and Gift Extravaganza is a fund raiser for the group, a chapter of Beta Sigma Phi International, a nonacademic sorority. Linin said the money raised will be used to support school activities including athletic and music programs and kid-based events such as the library story hour and Big Brothers Big Sisters, as well as the Brianna Linin Scholarship Fund. Brianna passed away two years ago at the age of 5 as a result of brain tumor. A scholarship will be awarded to a college-bound high school senior in 2017, the year that Brianna would have graduated, her mother said.

"It's win-win for the whole community," Linin said, noting that the show helps vendors sell their products and helps the group raise money.

If you don't find what you're looking for at the Nu Phi Mu fair, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is also holding its 12th annual "We Did It"

arts and crafts fair from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. that same day.

VFW member and event organizer Carl Bowen said about 20 booths will have individuals selling items from their home-based businesses, including knickknacks, collectibles, wind chimes and other crafts. Refreshments will also be served at the free event. The VFW Hall is at 824 Main Avenue.

And if you want to take a break from shopping, there's still the parade.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Andrea Nelson said the annual Christmas parade will go down Main, beginning at 17th Street and ending at Eighth Street.

The parade will include floats from the Goodland School District, Northwest Kansas Technical College, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Eagle Communications and S&T Communications, among others, she said.

Goodland residents will also get to see horses and motorcycles in the parade, Nelson said, and a fire truck will replace Santa's sleigh. He'll be riding along with the Goodland Fire Department volunteers.

Equipment gets a boost



Workers from Colby-based Woofter Construction installed a heating and air conditioning unit Friday at First Baptist Church on Main Street.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Radio group helps with drill

By Ramona C. Sanders
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Goodland's amateur radio group played a big role in a Kit Carson County mass vaccination exercise last Thursday, helping provide communications for the emergency preparedness drill.

Police Chief Ray Smee, a member of the radio group, said the 13 or so members include law enforcement and National Weather Service employees.

"Our part was our ham radio group went over and supplemented their emergency radio communications," Smee said.

The mock emergency provided flu shots to about 800 people in the Colorado county and a test of preparation for a pandemic illness emergency, said Judi Mitchek with the Kit Carson Health and Human Services Department in Burlington.

The exercise, run by the state Department of Public Health and Environment, included law enforcement agencies and the Colorado Division



Members of the Goodland amateur radio club, including Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore and Goodland Police Officer Jim Gillespie, operated communications equipment Thursday as part of a Kit Carson County mass vaccination exercise in Burlington.

Photo by Jordie Mann/The Goodland Star-News

of Emergency Management.

County Emergency Manager Darcy Janssen said she invited the radio group to participate because she wanted to put mutual aid readiness to the test and see how well

groups from Colorado and Kansas would be able to communicate.

"The amateur radio emergency services, they were fantastic," she said. "They were just phenomenal and very professional."

By Ramona C. Sanders
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The annual open enrollment period for the Medicare prescription drug program begins Thursday, but with 52 plans available, seniors and the disabled may have a difficult time choosing what's best for them.

That doesn't mean they have to make an uneducated decision, said Carol Guyer, a certified senior health insurance counselor.

Beginning Thursday, Guyer will be on hand to offer advice on which prescription drug plan would best meet a recipient's medication needs and their wallets.

The open enrollment period for prescription coverage runs from Nov. 15 through Dec. 31. Enrollees can either keep their current plan or switch to another plan effective Jan. 1, Guyer said.

"Everyone who has (prescription coverage) needs, each year at this time, to review their plan to see if

it's the plan they need to be in next year or another plan that's less expensive," said Guyer, a registered nurse who retired from the Sherman County Health Department.

Medicare recipients should have received an enrollment packet by Oct. 31 outlining all of the 52 prescription drug plans, she said. Recipients can go to www.medicare.gov for information on all of their options.

"Each year, these plans change or several new ones come in," Guyer said. "A lot of seniors are confused about all of these changes."

For instance, Guyer said the least expensive plan will increase from the current \$11.30 a month in 2007 to \$29.30 in 2008. However, other plans are available at a lower cost.

Guyer said she will be providing assistance from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each Thursday and Friday at the Health Department north conference room. She said seniors should bring a list of all of their medications and their Medicare card and she will match

them with the best plan by entering their information into a computer program.

"You can't just sit down and compare all of these options," she said, "because it's mind boggling."

Guyer said she can also help Medicare enrollees understand their other benefits through Medicare and what they cost. Next year the monthly premium for Medicare coverage will increase from the current \$93.50 to \$96.40 and the hospitalization deductible will increase from \$992 to \$1,024, according to the Medicare Web site.

Medicare is a federal health insurance program that provides hospitalization, outpatient, physician and prescription drug coverage for people age 65 and over and for some disabled people under that age.

Guyer said Medicare recipients can just come to the Health Department at 1622 Broadway, make an appointment or ask questions beforehand by calling her at 890-5908.

corrections

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Come to the Nu Phi Mu's 30th Annual Arts, Crafts & Home Based Business Fair

Saturday, November 17, 2007

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Max Jones Field House
13th & Arcade
Goodland, Kan.

FREE ADMISSION

*Pictures with Santa
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

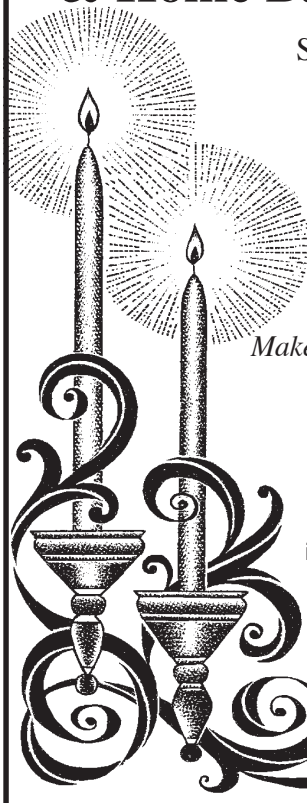
Make-N-Take Booth from noon to 2 p.m.

For kids of all ages

*Lunch Counter - All Day
Babysitting Available*

The fair offers a large variety of gift and food items - something for everyone on your list, including yourself. Come check out the many new exhibitors, local crafters and businesses.

Nu Phi Mu donates the proceeds from the fair to local families and organizations. When you shop at the fair, you help support those in the area.



Holiday Open House

November 17, 2007

9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Prairie Rose Floral Co.

1012 Main Street ~ Goodland ~ 890-7673 (Rose)



Beautiful silk arrangements, unique ornaments and gifts at affordable prices! [Bring this ad in for 20% off!]