

weather report



43°
noon
Thursday

Today

Sunset, 4:38 p.m.
Saturday
Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.
Sunset, 4:39 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 29 degrees
- Humidity 35 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds west 3 mph
- Barometer 30.00 inches and falling
- Record High today 71° (1927)
- Record Low today -14° (1942)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 29°
Low Wednesday 14°
Precipitation none
This month none
Year to date none
Below normal 0.02 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny with a high near 48, winds out of the west at 5 mph and a low around 25. Saturday: Mostly sunny with a high near 54, winds out of the west at 10-20 mph and a low around 27.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly sunny with a high near 50 and a low around 24. Monday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow or rain, a high near 45 and a low around 20.

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

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$8.97 bushel
Posted county price — \$8.58
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Corn — \$4.24 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.28
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Milo — \$4.03 bushel
Soybeans — \$11.15 bushel
Posted county price — \$11.36
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Millet — \$7 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$17.90 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Confection — \$30/\$20 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$25 (new crop)
(Markets by Scouler Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today



More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News

Hospital planning for busy year

By Sharon Corcoran

slcorcoran@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Regional Medical Center board approved a nearly \$18 million budget for 2008 at its meeting last Monday, anticipating a busy year for the hospital and the family health clinic.

The hospital is projecting \$17,694,600 in gross patient revenue for the year, compared to an estimated \$15,639,986 for 2007; \$6,544,600 in revenue deductions compared to \$5,531,891 this year; \$124,800 other operating revenue, compared to \$130,547 this year; \$12,390,600 operating expenses, compared to \$10,407,659; \$537,000 non-operating income, compared to \$516,701, with a \$578,800 net loss, compared to an estimated \$347,684 net income this year.

Hospital officials made a conservative estimate of some of the income and expenses

for the year, said Administrator Jay Jolly, planning with less income than the hospital may end up with and planning for bigger expenses.

For example, he said, the hospital's health insurance for employees increased by \$180,000, and the hospital had three other items with increases like that. And the hospital needs to replace some high-dollar technology items, he said, that would depreciate in three to five years, so is anticipating a big increase in depreciation expense.

Also, the "disproportionate share" payments were not planned in the budget, Jolly said. The last few years, he said, those payments have been available to hospitals who see a high percentage of patients on Medicaid, a state-funded health insurance, but they may not be available this year.

The hospital would lose about \$362,000 if

it doesn't get that, he said, adding that if the hospital gets some or all of it, it will be better off than the budget anticipates.

"We thought it would be better to not put it in," he said, "and be pleasantly surprised than to be counting on it and not get it."

The budget for the Goodland Family Health Center projects \$1,845,100 gross patient revenue for the clinic, \$442,800 in revenue deductions, \$100 other operating revenue, \$1,332,500 operating expenses and \$69,900 in net income.

The hospital plans to spend \$2,445,250 on equipment this year, which includes \$450,000 for a CAT Scan; \$442,650 for implementation and programming of the SMS system, the computer information system that ties the departments together; \$150,000 for an ultrasound machine; \$150,000 for a telephone system, wireless and wired; \$95,000

for a diesel generator; \$93,000 for the lab information system along with \$65,000 for a coagulation and Vitek interface; and \$89,000 for text transcription equipment.

The hospital's planned capital budget for 2009 includes a King Air 90 aircraft for \$1.5 million to replace the airplane used to fly in specialists from Denver, Hays and the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City. That price would include a trade-in for the plane the hospital has been using, said Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht.

The hospital budgeted for an average patient count of 8.7 per day for 2008, Precht told the board, and an increase in obstetric patients to 60, the same as in 2006. By Aug. 31, 27 babies had been delivered this year, and the hospital projects 41 by year's end.

See BUDGET, Page 8a



Fire Chief Brian James (top photo, front left) helped pickup five-inch hose from reserve pumper No. 3. Handling the repacking were volunteer fire fighters Scott Hilbrink (front right), Ora Garrett (center) and James Miller and Jeff Dinkel (left and right on the rig). Driving was Matt Breining. Dinkel (left, right photo) pulled the cap off a five-inch hose to release the water with the help of Garrett (right with wrench) and Miller.

Photos by Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News



City firemen complete annual hose testing

By Tom Betz

ntbetz@nwkansas.com

City fire department volunteers were out testing about 1,600 feet of five-inch fire hose Sunday morning on South Eustis Ave. on the Northwest Kansas Technical College campus.

Chief Brian James said hose testing is required once a year by the Insurance Services Office, which evaluates fire departments and helps set insurance rates, and the five-inch hose completed the testing for the year. He said the crew tested 12,000 feet of hose on all the city fire trucks, including 1.5, 2.5, 3 and 5 inch.

He said the five-inch hose was tested in three 100-foot sections, with the line capped and filled under pressure up to 300 pounds per square inch for three minutes.

"The fire standards say we can test at 200 psi," James said, "but we take it up to 300 to fully test the line."

James said they tested the 600 feet on the new pumper, 500 feet on engine 2 and 400 feet on reserve pumper No. 3.

In addition to the 100-foot sections, James said they tested four 25-foot "pony" sections carried on the rigs so firemen can hook up close to a hydrant.

James said the hose testing is part of annual system testing that needs to be done. He said the department just finished testing the city's 237 fire hydrants. He said they found about a dozen that are in bad condition, and these were put on a list to be replaced. He said in the summer, the hydrants will be repainted to show the amount of pressure each will handle.

The city fire department has all new people since the former volunteers quit in March, and the new fire fighters have been training hard to get themselves ready to handle the city's needs.

In October, the chief said, 11 of the 14 city volunteers took the Firefighter 1 test, and James said that six passed and are certified, with five planning to retake the test in February.

"With myself, that means we have seven certified firefighters," James said, adding that all of the volunteers are now certified in hazardous material awareness.

He said a couple of the volunteers who did not take the test are the pump engineers who handle the trucks.

Online university plans to open office

By Sharon Corcoran

slcorcoran@nwkansas.com

An online university plans to open an office in Goodland, offering students a chance to earn associate's and bachelor's degrees and a Masters in Business Administration through video classes, a work study program and even transferring life experiences to credit hours.

Harvest University, which started as a on-line education operation, plans to open an office in Goodland, economic development officials say.

Director Jeremy Jennings told the Sherman County Economic Development Council at its Dec. 18 meeting that he had talked to the university's director, who told him they would like to have a physical presence in Goodland.

They're looking for an office for enrollment, Jennings said, and will be adding faculty and staff. Open enrollment starts in April, he said, and they gave the development office certificates for \$2,000 in scholarships that he plans to give out.

"They approached us," Jennings added.

The university was going to put an operation in St. Francis, he said, but he told them about property in Goodland.

Students will be able to earn bachelor's and master's degrees, he said, and a lot of the university's programs will work with those at the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

Once they pick a location, he said, university officials plan to put up signs and advertise.

In an email with a promotional video attached, that University Director Laura Wing wrote to Jennings, she said: "Please view the video and also feel free to share it with others. We just want to get the word out that we have decided to start up in Goodland."

The university plans to hold an advisory board meeting Monday, Jan 21, he said. There are nine board members, said Wing, who has lived in Goodland almost 12 years, with all but one or two being from Sherman County, adding that she is waiting to hear for sure on one member.

The board members each got four \$500 scholarship certificates, she said, which they can either give out or use for themselves. Jennings is a board member, she said.

The university's mascot will be the Buffaloes, Wing said, and degrees will be offered in business, human behavior, arts and sciences and other fields. Associate's and bachelor's degrees will be offered in all areas, she said, and the university will offer a Masters in Business Administration.

Students can earn credits toward their degrees in several ways, she said, including attending traditional classes, video classes, transferring credits from another school, work study, life experience and even teaching a class in a subject they are proficient in.

Students can submit their life experiences, Wing said, and the university would convert it to credit hours. She said the operation started just as a "life-experience" univer-

sity on-line in April, operating under a different name, adding that she found that market was flooded and that the university couldn't offer the programs she was planning.

Wing said she dissolved that and was looking for a physical site and was considering St. Francis but got support in Goodland.

The university will encourage students to stay in Goodland, Wing said, and stimulate the economy here. One thing that will help with that, she said, is that business students will have to write a business plan to graduate.

If they use that plan to start an actual business, she said, they will get an additional 18 credits. She said she envisions students working

See ONLINE, Page 8a

Cowboys face Lakin

Greg Farris shot over the outstretched hands of a Wallace County Wildcat during a game in the Topside Tip-Off. The Cowboys are in action tonight at 7 p.m., as they face the Lakin Broncs at Max Jones Fieldhouse. See photo, story on Page 10a.

