

weather report

35°
noon
Thursday

Today

Sunset, 7:06 p.m.

Saturday

Sunrise, 7:06 a.m.

Sunset, 4:43 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 31 degrees

• Humidity 66 percent

• Sky clear and sunny

• Winds northwest 15 mph

• Barometer 29.90 inches and falling

• Record High today 70° (2006)

• Record Low today -17° (1963)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 41°

Low Wednesday 23°

Precipitation .1

This month 0.11

Year to date 0.11

Above normal 0.02 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly sunny with a high near 45, winds west 10-15 mph and low around 13.

Saturday: Partly cloudy with a high near 30, winds out of northwest at 15 mph and a low around 13.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Partly sunny with a high near 41 and a low around 15.

Monday: Mostly sunny with a high near 38 and a low around 16.

Tuesday: Chance of snow at night.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$8.33 bushel

Posted county price — \$8.11

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$4.32 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.40

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$4.11 bushel

Soybeans — \$11.09 bushel

Posted county price — \$11.34

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 Scoular 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

Mustangs lose opener

Audrey Titus fought a Burlington Cougar for the ball early in a home game for the Grant Junior High Lady Mustangs eighth-grade B-team game Tuesday at Max Jones Fieldhouse. The Mustangs lost the game. See photo on Page 11.

Fire chief hiring talk continues

By Tom Betz

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Sherman County Commissioners, members of the rural fire board and volunteer firemen tried for more than an hour and a half Monday to find ways to stretch the district budget to pay for a full-time fire chief without coming up with a solution.

The volunteers asked that Alan David, the Goodland rural fire chief, be named as full-time rural fire chief to oversee the Goodland, Kanorado and Brewster departments.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he felt it was a good idea, but asked if there would be enough money in the fire budget to pay him.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he was in favor of a full-time chief, which he said would be good for all three departments. He said he was concerned about fitting the salary and benefits in the budget.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he understood the need, but felt the county has not looked at all the options, and that they should be working with the city, which has a full-time chief, rather than increasing the district's costs.

David said he felt there is enough work for a full-time chief, and that a person in that position could help bring in more grants to pay for equipment and a new fire house.

Richard Allaman, a fire board member and farmer who lives in the district, said he felt it was the consensus of the board to have one chief over both the city and county departments.

Tiede said that is something that might be worked out down the road, but felt that for now, the county needs to have a full-time person to help the three rural departments with their paperwork and equipment needs.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the fire district has a separate tax levy and is a separate taxing entity. She said all the expenses of a full-time fire chief would have to come out of the district budget, and that the district presently has a 5 mill cap. She said the current levy of 4.7 mills brings in about \$190,000 a year, but the district has a budget of \$274,000 because of a large carryover from the previous year.

David asked if the county could split the cost with the district. Tiede said that would require the chief to have two sets of duties.

Rumpel said she did not know, but that someone who knows more about state budget law would have to answer that question. David said he would like to discuss the option with County Attorney Bonnie Selby.

Thomas said he thought the money could come from the existing budget, adding that he had not figured on having to pay all the employee benefits out of the district budget. He said that could make the district budget too tight to be able to continue to improve the equipment.

Volunteer fireman Stan Duell, owner of NAPA Auto Parts, asked if the tax levy could be raised. He said it would be good to ask those living in the fire district if they are willing to pay more to have better fire protection.

Rumpel said the district tax levy could be raised to 7 mills, which would bring in about \$80,000 more per year, with approval of district voters.

The commissioners said they would continue looking at the funding questions, and would be interested in what Selby could find out. No date was set for another meeting, but the commissioners said they would let the fire board and volunteers know when they have some information.

City, county plan joint meeting

By Tom Betz

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Goodland city and Sherman County commissioners will meet at 5 p.m. Monday to discuss common problems and hear about research from the Shine On Sherman County Government Alliance committee about areas of potential unification.

The joint work session at the City Administration Building was suggested by the city commissioners in December, and County Commissioner Kevin Rasure had been asking for a meeting from the county side.

City Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said at a city commission meeting Monday she had contacted Trevor Linton, who is on the Shine On Sherman County committee, about having someone from that group moderate the session to help keep the discussions on track.

Fairbanks said the committee has been gathering information from other towns, and had asked each commissioner for a list of their top 10 issues to form a basis for the agenda and a starting place for joint discussions.

Commissioner Dave Daniels said he felt the city would like to talk about the trash collection contract and knew there were other issues the two commissions could begin talking about.

City Commissioner John Garcia said he felt part of the discussion should be about what services could be moved toward unification for the interest of the taxpayers.

See MEETING, Page 9

Singing for your supper

Central Elementary music teacher Linda Lucas' music students entertained people at a soup supper at the school Monday night. Third-grade students (from left) Faith Teter, Abby Neal, Ashley Anderson, Joshua Smith and Makayla Schartz played guitar while the rest of the class sang "Home on the Range." The Central site council figured members served over 600 people, making around \$2,000 to purchase playground equipment.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Health fair in three weeks; blood draws next week

By Sharon Corcoran

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How's your health?

If you're wondering, you can get free and reduced-cost screenings for everything from your general health to such life-threatening diseases as cancer and strokes at the annual Sherman County Health Fair from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Goodland Activities Center.

The fair is put together by the Goodland Regional Medical Center, the activities center, the Sherman County Health Department, the Northwest Kansas Prevention Center and the Sunflower Extension District.

Blood profiles will be done at a reduced cost, and screenings for lead, cancer and blocked carotid arteries will be free. There will also be fitness demonstrations by Jessica Kannady's Right Combination Dance Studio at 8:30 a.m., Jason Unruh's gymnastics students at 9:30 and Wayne Luckert's Taekwondo students at 10:30. All are taught at the activities center.

"We're trying to make it more family friendly," said Larissa Coon, an occupational therapist at the hospital.

Many health-related booths will be set up, and two people will win bicycles donated by Wal-Mart, she said.

Anyone who wants to get a blood profile done for the fair need to go to the main lobby of the hospital to have blood drawn anytime from 7 to 9 a.m. Monday through next Friday. No appointment is needed.

For \$30, you get a basic blood chemistry profile, she said, and prostate and thyroid screenings can be added for \$15 each. For just a blood count test, the cost is \$10.

Before giving a blood sample, See FAIR, Page 9

Moran hears questions on farming, health care

By Pat Schiefen

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Congressman Jerry Moran stopped to talk with about 30 voters here Wednesday morning, fielding questions on agriculture and health care, which he said were two of the top issues in Washington this year.

The representative noted that disaster assistance for farmers had passed, and that the Department of Veteran Affairs increased the mileage reimbursement for vets who have to go to another town for health care from 11 cents a mile (started in 2002) to 28.5 cents a mile.

He said he was disappointed that Goodland did not get a VA outreach clinic for this area, although he thought that having one in Burlington was still an improvement for veterans who used to have to drive to Hays or Denver.

"I believe greatly in leadership," Moran said to the 11th class of Leadership Sherman County. "If good things happen in the community, the people make it happen."

"I also hope that the No Child Left Behind mandates will be repealed or reformed. Teaching is a noble profession. It is a challenge to keep and recruit teachers, and the No Child Left Behind Act has made that harder."

"In 2008, I hope to have worked on a satisfactory ag bill," Moran said.

Moran, who was on his way to catch a plane at the Denver airport after the holiday recess, said he always stops first in Goodland on his way back to Washington.

"I have always been impressed with the community and the ag community, with its younger set of farmers," he said.

John Golden, an area farmer and civic leader, asked if pinto beans will be part of the farm bill, and Moran said he is working on that.

Betty Jean Schields, a member of the Sherman County Farm Bureau board and farmer, asked about crop insurance and how much it costs. Moran said that farmers in Iowa, Illinois and Ohio say they do not want to be forced to have crop insurance and that has been a problem.

Moran said that he wants to keep direct payments for farmers and viable crop insurance in the farm bill. When Farm Bureau and other groups come to Congress to talk, he said, they need to go talk to members outside the areas so they understand the issues.

Ken Klemm, a buffalo rancher and part of See MORAN, Page 9