

weather report



27°

noon
Thursday

Today

Sunset, 4:51 p.m.
Friday
Sunrise, 7:04 a.m.
Sunset, 4:52 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 27 degrees
• Humidity 28 percent
• Sky sunny
• Winds northwest 12-20 mph
• Barometer 29.93 inches and falling
• Record High today 70° (1920)
• Record Low today -20° (1984)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 29°
Low Wednesday 7°
Precipitation none
This month .12
Year to date .12
Below normal .11 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with scattered snow flurries, high in the upper 20s, low around 7 and winds out of the northwest 15-30 mph. Saturday: Mostly sunny with a high in the lower 30s, low around 14 and winds out of the southwest at 10 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of light snow, high in the upper 20s and low around 8.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets



Noon

Wheat — \$9.22 bushel
Posted county price — \$8.81
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Corn — \$4.63 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.65
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Milo — \$4.42 bushel
Soybeans — \$11.29 bushel
Posted county price — \$11.49
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



Cowboys finish fourth

Senior Aaron Deeds finished second at 152 pounds at the Decatur County Invitational Wrestling Tournament Saturday in Oberlin. The Cowboys finished fourth in the tournament. See photos, story on Page 12.

City, county talking unification

By Tom Betz

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Unifying city and county services did not happen Monday night, but the city and county commissioners did agree to investigate what options might be available, and have a committee continue gathering information from other counties who have unified or voted down a unification plan.

Sherman County Commissioners Mitch Tiede, Kevin Rasure and Chuck Thomas joined City Commissioners Annette Fairbanks, John Garcia, Josh Dechant, Dave Daniels and Mayor Rick Billinger in a joint meeting held at the city commissioner room with a nearly standing room only crowd of interested citizens.

Members of the Government Alliance committee, which is one of the Shine on Sherman County action teams, opened the joint meeting and explained what they have found and what further information can be gathered with the support of the two commissions.

Brad Schields and Attorney Ron Vignery, spokespersons for the Government Alliance committee, opened the meeting. Schields said the committee had been doing some information gathering and was willing to continue gathering information if the two commissions were in favor of looking at the unification options.

Schields said five areas of in-



Sherman County Commissioners (left side of table) Kevin Rasure, Mitch Tiede and Chuck Thomas met with city commissioners (center table) Rick Billinger, John Garcia, Dave Daniels and (right table) Josh Dechant and Annette Fairbanks for a joint meeting Monday held at the city commissioner room with a near standing room only

crowd. Brad Schields (front) and Attorney Ron Vignery (out of the photo to the left) opened the meeting to see if the two commissions were interested in having the Government Alliance action team investigate the options for unification of city and county services.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

terest had been developed from surveys and interviews including city, county unification options, fire department unification, law enforcement unification, economic development, visitors bureau and chamber unification and beautification and road improvement in the city and county.

Schields said Greeley County has begun putting their unified system together that was approved by voters in November by a three to one margin. He said the plan is for committee members to meet with the Greeley County people in February.

"We have no power," Schields

said, "but we want to give you some ideas of what might be done."

"I am encouraged that the governing boards are willing to sit down and talk," said Vignery.

He said the historic reasons for all the levels of government have changed. He said checking with the school district 188 kids ride

school buses into town, and that is a much smaller number than it was years ago.

"Communication was part of the reason for the large number of governments," Vignery said. "We

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School board supports task force for future needs

By Tom Betz

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Superintendent Shelly Angelos told the school board on Monday she wants to assemble a task force to look at the future of the district in 3, 5 and 10 years and to make recommendations about how the district should cope with declining enrollment and aging buildings.

The school board members agreed it was something that needs to be done and approved the task force plan to begin the process this year.

"It is difficult to talk about this," Angelos said, "but we have two concerns we have to address. One is declining enrollment, which is expected to continue and the second is our aging facilities.

"I appreciate your concerns about the projects we do. The declining enrollment is a problem. Each student costs us over \$4,000 off the top.

"Our facilities, the cost to update, repair and renovate is becoming a reality. We have dropped to 3A in football and the public is realizing that as we look at the future."

She said she knows the board has to be careful of the timing of

any changes, and that everyone has to be aware of when the decisions are made and how long before the changes actually take place. She said she sees getting the discussion started now for changes that would be done in about two years.

"We have to educate the people and make sure we are taking care of our staff," she said. "There are a number of ideas out there and I have to talk to some board members."

Angelos said one suggestion was to sell the administration building because it was the best land we have. Another that has been mentioned is moving the junior high into the high school, where it was many years ago.

An idea is to have different grade levels, with West Elementary having kindergarten, first and second, that north have third, fourth and fifth, Grant have sixth, seventh and eighth. Move the administration to Central School with possibly preschool and special education there.

Another idea would be to go down to buildings by building an addition at North to have a kindergarten through sixth facility and keep the junior high.

"What do you do with the empty

school buildings," she asked.

She said some of the buildings need air conditioning such as Grant or North. It is a \$250,000 decision.

"Are we going to keep those buildings," she asked. "Are we going to hang onto West. We need to keep in mind where we are going."

Angelos said she recommended the board form a task force of around 11 people including a teacher or two, board member, administrator, superintendent, a classified staff person, one or two from the site councils, someone from the city, a contractor and possibly an architect.

"Their charge would be to study the issues and come up with tentative recommendations," she said. "We would hold town meetings to provide input and gather information. Have the task force review the meetings and possibly revise the recommendations. Then come back and report to the board as progress is made."

She said that getting as many people to buy in is critical.

"I personally feel we cannot stay with the status quo," she said. "We

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Missing lease payment made after delay request questioned

By Tom Betz

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Sherman County Commissioners approved paying the missing motor grader lease payment Tuesday to Bankwest after a commissioner questioned a request to delay the payment for a week.

Public Works Manager Curt Way told the commissioners at their meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 9, that a lease payment of \$26,906 for two years ago had not been made, and he wanted to know how it was missed.

The commissioners and county clerk staff had researched the missing payment and found that a check had never been issued even after a purchase order had been turned in to have the payment made.

Bankwest President Cara Daise told County Clerk Janet Rumpel that someone in the bank had extended the county payment, and that is why the county did not receive a past due notice. Daise said the bank would

waive any penalty or late fee.

Tuesday Commission Chairman Mitch Tiede said he and Way had visited with Daise at the bank, and that he felt things had been straightened out. Tiede said the current year's lease payment was to be issued on Tuesday, but that Way had asked to wait a week to make the other payment until he could see what the carryover will be and talk to the auditor.

Tiede said Daise said she would work with the county.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked why the second payment was not being made. Rasure made a motion to approve payment of the second payment of \$26,906 to Bankwest.

"I guess we could call Curt and have him come up," Tiede said. "I think we need to talk to Curt about it."

"Who is in charge of the money," Rasure asked.

"Curt is in charge of the special

machinery fund," Tiede said.

"I disagree," Rasure said. "That is our call. I have a motion on the floor to pay that bill."

"It is not costing us any interest," Commissioner Chuck Thomas said.

"We are no longer in charge of spending the money," Rasure asked.

"We should have confidence in Curt to handle this on his own," Tiede said. "I am sure he is going to take it out of special machinery. I do not understand why he is delaying that payment."

"The bill is owed," Rasure said. "You said at that last meeting that if it was owed we should pay it. Why don't we pay it?"

"Why don't we wait," Tiede said. "Curt wants to talk to the auditor and he will be here next week."

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said that when Way was at the meeting

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Stiff winds



Winds up to 36 mph on Wednesday morning caused the American Flag to really fly. The flag sat on top of a drilling truck belonging to B's Pump and Well that was working on the City of Goodland water well pump that quit working behind Wheat Ridge Acres Retirement Community on Kansas Avenue. Along with the wind the town got a small dusting of snow.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News