

weather report



35°
noon

Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 5:07 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 6:54 a.m.

• Sunset, 5:08 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 29 degrees
- Humidity 35 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds north 13 mph
- Barometer 30.07 inches and steady
- Record High today 78° (2003)
- Record Low today -21° (1951)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	32°
Low Wednesday	10°
Precipitation	none
This month	0.12
Year to date	0.12
Below normal	0.30 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly sunny with a high near 43, a low around 17 and winds out of the west at 5 mph changing to the north. Saturday: Partly sunny with a high near 38, a low around 18 and winds from the west at 5 to 10 mph changing to the south.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Partly sunny with a high near 46 and a low around 18. Monday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent change of snow. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$9.03 bushel
- Posted county price — \$8.96
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Corn — \$4.69 bushel
- Posted county price — \$4.61
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Milo — \$4.44 bushel
- Soybeans — \$11.18 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 Scouler Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news, views from Goodland Star-News



Cowboys finish third

Senior A.J. Stephens beat Luke Schroeder of Colby 10-4 in the first round of the Northwest Kansas League tournament Saturday in Colby. Stephens was champion at 140 pounds. The Cowboys finished third. See story, photos on Page 12.

Health Fair on Saturday morning

By Sharon Corcoran

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Whether you're worried about your health now or are trying to head off future problems, 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.

The fair will be from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday at the Goodland Activities Center.

It 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 and includes fitness demonstrations; screenings for lead, cancer and blocked carotid arteries; information from area businesses; and help with advanced

directives, legal documents allowing people to convey their decisions about end-of-life care ahead of time.

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.

Blood was drawn Jan. 14 through 18 for

the profiles; and the hospital's laboratory will produce the profiles, which will be available the day of the health fair for review with one of the Goodland Family Health Center doctors.

Free screenings at the fair include lead, cancer and carotid artery. The lead screening can be done with a finger prick on anyone 6 months or older. Members from the Kansas Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Prevention Program will conduct the tests and answer questions about lead hazards around the home.

Results will be sent to the hospital, which will then distribute them to participants.

Doctors from the University of Kansas Cancer Center will conduct cancer screenings at the fair. Two urologists will offer digital rectal screenings for prostate cancer,

which in combination with a prostate specific antigen test (offered for \$15 extra with the blood profile), is considered the best method of early detection.

A derma-scan, showing sun damage, and a bone density screening will be offered as well. The cancer center will also distribute materials explaining the screenings and other issues, including breast cancer early detection and colorectal self-screening.

The Goodland hospital's diagnostic imaging department will conduct carotid artery screenings. This service was popular last year, said Tina Goodwin, director of marketing at the hospital, with 47 screenings conducted. The department is offering 60 appointments this year, and they have all been filled.

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City officers train to carry taser weapons

By Tom Betz

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"Taser, taser, taser," Corporal Greg Kroskey said loudly before pulling the trigger and sending the two electrodes toward the back of Police Chief Ray Smee during a training exercise last Tuesday morning.

Smee was supported on either side by Wallace County Sheriff Larry Townsend and officer Jim Gillespie who kept the chief from falling forward and gently helped him down to his knees after the five second burst of electrical current ended.

"What did it feel like," was the question.

"Feels like electricity," Smee said. "Your muscles just tighten up and you have no control."

Smee said he felt back to normal in five to 10 seconds after the "hit" was over, and only had some minor soreness where the two electrodes had punched through the skin.

"I felt tired when they turned it off because it had tied up all the muscles in my body," he said. "I felt better in 10 to 15 seconds."

Kroskey had officer Gillespie remove the two probes from Smee's back and made sure there was no bleeding.

The Taser technology has been used in law enforcement around the country for about nine years, but Smee said he was not sold on the non-lethal weapon when City Manager Wayne Hill asked him about them last year.

"When the city manager approached me I was not sold on them," Smee said. "I had been talking to other chiefs and some were for it and some were not. Some of my officers felt we ought to get them, and the city manager said they had them in Guymon, Okla., where he had been before."

"I had a Master Taser instructor come out and put on a demonstration last year, and talked to him at length after that session. I made up my mind to put them in the budget and purchase them this year."

Smee said to get ready he sent Cpl. Kroskey to a certified instructor training program in Brighton, Colo., and Smee was the first to get a "hit" in the first training session held last Tuesday.



Police Chief Ray Smee rested on his knees (left photo) after taking a voluntary "hit" from a taser held by Corporal Greg Kroskey (above) as part of a training exercise last Tuesday. Smee rested on his knees for a few seconds before the two wired probes were removed from his back.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

"We had the first training session last week and one was held Tuesday," Smee said. "All of our officers have taken a hit to know what it feels like. Even City Manager Wayne Hill took a hit."

Smee said the department purchased five of the Tasers at a cost of about \$900 each, and there will always be one in each car. He said whoever is in that car they will have a taser, and they will hand it off to the next officer, or it will be locked up in the trunk so it is always with the car.

The taser looks sort of like a square gun with small yellow doors on the front and a laser sight to "paint" the target the officer is aiming at.

Kroskey said the two probes will spread out about eight degrees with the top one going straight and the second one out at an eight degree angle.

Once the two probes hit the target the five seconds of 50,000 volts im-

mobilizes the person. For training all the hits were taken in the back by the officers, but Smee admits that would probably not be the case if an officer has to use the weapon in his duties.

"I did not require the officers to take a hit to carry the taser," Smee said, "but everyone has taken a hit. It is a five second burst of 50,000 volts. It is not voltage that kills you it is the amperage. The taser is .00217 amps, which is below lethal at .005 amps."

"The two probes go into the skin with a half inch needle like barb, and even if the person is wearing thick clothing it can still cause the muscles to contract," Kroskey said.

Unlike the training session where Kroskey announced the taser three times before pulling the trigger, Smee said the officer may not be able to warn the person if they are coming at the officer.

"For the most part we want to give them a warning," Smee said. "We

can turn the laser on and paint the person with the familiar red dot, or do an electric arc display so they can see and hear it firing.

"All of that would be a use of force display to get them to cooperate without actually having to use the taser."

"If the person doesn't back off or comply we are going to taser you. We do not have to yell 'taser' three times, and if you are running at the officer he will not give any warning."

Five seconds is the normal hit, Smee said, but it could be done more than once or it could be shut off even quicker if the person complies. As long as the probes are in it can be turned on again. If the cartridge with the wires and probes is pulled off the taser can be used like a stun gun against a leg or other body part.

Smee said the department has a new policy and procedure that if a person gets hit in a sensitive area the officer could take them to the hospital emergency room to remove the probes. He said that might be if a probe hit a man in the groin or a woman if it hit a tender part of a breast.

Smee said Sheriff Townsend was at the first training session and took a hit, and that one of his deputies

was at the second session on Tuesday. Smee said he thought Wallace County had only one taser, but that Townsend was looking to possibly get more and that Kroskey would be the instructor.

As to when the officers use a taser Smee said the policy would be similar to the use of OC spray (a type of pepper-spray) or the expandable baton.

"If they have reason to use those they have the reason to use the taser," he said.

Smee said the officers will recertify and go through the training every year, but said the officers will not be required to take another hit, but rather practice on a target.

"I told them they did not have to take a hit," Smee said, "but I said if they found themselves having to testify in a civil case they would be able to say they knew what it felt like."

Smee said the only injury that came out of the training was that officer William Fulcher strained his shoulder when he got the hit, but was doing physical therapy for that.

The Sherman County Sheriff's department was equipped with Tasers last year, and have used them twice.

Fire board votes against full time chief this year

By Tom Betz

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Sherman County Commissioners continued to wrestle with the needs of the County Rural Fire department, but the County Fire Board has decided they do not feel there is enough money in the budget for a full time position.

The Commissioners agreed to look at more options including combining some other duties with a fire chief position as a potential solution, and to see about holding a special meeting in February with the county commissioners, fire board and city commissioners to explore mutual options.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he had the item put on the agenda to see where the question stood and knew that the fire board had met and voted not to have a full time fire chief.

"I am curious how the fire board came to the decision," Thomas said, "after saying a few months ago they wanted a full time fire chief. What do they feel is the solution?"

Marvin Duell, former fire board chairman

said he was not at the meeting.

Richard Allaman, fire board member said the main reason was they did not feel there was enough money to pay a fire chief.

"There might be money this year," Allaman said, "but not for next year."

"Any solutions as to who is going to do the extra work load?" Thomas asked.

One of the areas of concern is the federal requirement to have the Conservation Reserve Program land burned between Feb. 1 and April 15. Thomas said there is a lot of CRP land in Sherman County that will have to be burned.

"I realize it is going to take a lot of time and I wonder how we are going to cover what we can do with our volunteers," Commissioner Mitch Tiede said. "How are we going to get out to look at the burns?"

Thomas asked if any fire board members might be able to help.

A suggestion from the audience was to put a burn ban on.

Tiede said he had thought about that, and that legally the county could do that, but he

did not see how it would really help.

Assistant Chief Chris Bauman, who works for Aquila, said the burning will increase the calls quite a bit.

"I don't know what we can do," he said. "We (rural firemen) are looking at drafting something like a question list for central dispatch to ask those who are calling in."

"If there are no close structures and the area is pretty clear maybe we could go ahead and let them burn, but it there are any questions we would have to come check it out."

"We have had some questions from farmers about burning along highways and having the sheriff or state troopers come out to control traffic. We do not want to get into that at all. We have told them we want to discourage burning around the highways and the city. Some have said they want to know how we are going to keep them from burning."

"We need a formal policy that we can go from."

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said they will have to follow the county burn permit regulations.

Tiede said having a more formal policy would be good because it would be something that could be shown to the farmer.

Thomas said having the policy might satisfy the federal government about areas that we would not allow to be burned.

Bauman said they were working on something to bring to the commissioners.

Thomas asked if there had been requests to have the rural fire department at a burn site.

Bauman said there have been a couple of calls about small areas probably under 12 acres where they are close to trees or a homestead.

Tiede said they have several things that are changing, like Dorendo Harrell saying she does not want to do the bio-terrorism program any more.

Thomas said there is some money there that might be combined to help pay a fire chief to handle both, but said Harrell had said the federal government is cutting back on the money. He said she told him it takes about six to eight

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