

weather

report

66°

noon

Thursday

Today

Sunset, 5:53 p.m.

Saturday

Sunrise, 5:57 a.m.

Sunset, 5:54 p.m.

Midday Conditions

Soil temperature 43 degrees

Humidity 19 percent

Sky partly cloudy

Winds variable 3 mph

Barometer 29.81 inches

and steady

Record High today 84° (2003)

Record Low today -3° (1958)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 68°

Low Wednesday 33°

Precipitation none

This month 0.10

Year to date 0.71

Below normal 0.06 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain, a high near 47, winds out the north at 5 to 15 mph and a low around 27. Saturday: Partly sunny with a high near 45, winds north 10 mph changing to the east and a low around 26.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain, a high near 50 and a low around 35. Monday: Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of rain and a high near 46.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local

markets

Noon

Wheat — \$12.55 bushel

Posted county price — \$12.48

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$5.33 bushel

Posted county price — \$5.27

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$5.01 bushel

Soybeans — \$12.52 bushel

Posted county price — \$12.53

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, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside

today

More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News

Women learn self-defense

Officer Joni Showalter of the Goodland Police showed Teresa David how to avoid being taken down in an attack and how to turn the situation around and control the attacker as part of a woman's self-defense course. See photo on Page 3a.

At-large bill could be passed

By Tom Betz
ntbetz@nwkansas.com

A Sherman County bill to allow at-large voting for county commissioners died in the Senate last year, but Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer (R-Grinnell) said Wednesday it could be moved out of committee next week if the commissioners agree on the language.

If the bill doesn't have the support of the county, however, it might not move. Supporters would have to start over from scratch in the next Legislature. Commissioners could make their decision at their meeting Tuesday.

Commissioners talked about the bill on Tuesday, and asked County Clerk Janet Rumpel to get a current copy of the bill for them to review at the next meeting, which starts at 8 a.m. Tuesday.

The bill would allow voters to decide in an election whether all voters, rather than just those in one district, should get to vote in commission races. State law does not allow counties to vote at large, so at the suggestion of some citizens two years ago, commissioners asked the legislature for a change in Sherman County only.

The call for a change was sparked by a heated and contested county commissioner race two years ago involving Commissioner Chuck Thomas that included Darin Neufeld, engineer for Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, as write-in candidate both in the Republican primary and general election. Thomas narrowly survived both challenges.

In public forums held before the primary and the general elections candidates were

asked if they would support changing the county commissioners to be voted on at-large. Most said they would support asking the state to allow the citizens to make that decision through an election.

Rumpel said Tuesday she and her election workers had to deal with people who came to vote and got upset when they were told they could not vote in the commissioner race. She said more than one angry voter stomped out of the polling place.

The bill (HB2307) was introduced in the House last January, and passed 120-2 on Feb. 19. It went to the Senate Committee on Elections and Local Government.

The county submitted language last March to set up the at-large election option that would be decided by the Sherman County voters.

"We have plenty of time," Ostmeyer said last year when the Senate recessed without passing the bill. "The delay does not hurt because the issue would not be voted by the citizens until the general election in November."

Thomas said Ostmeyer told him last fall the language the county submitted had cleared up questions senators had, and he did not see a problem in getting the bill out of committee this session.

In December, however, Thomas said he felt the commissioners should get more public comment before asking to have it passed.

Ostmeyer said if the commissioners give the go ahead on Tuesday, he had talked to

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Class gets civics lessons

By Pat Schiefen
pjschiefen@nwkansas.com

What do you have when you mix seven people of different ages, backgrounds and jobs, but all want to learn about government and civic life? It's the latest class of Leadership Sherman County.

The class, seven Sherman County residents, spent a day a month from September through March learning about themselves, the challenges facing the county and how public life works.

The class is run through Sunflower Extension District, but has its own steering committee. Co-chairs for the year were Josh Dechant of Frontier Ag and Penny Nemechek of the Northwest Kansas Technical College, both graduates of the course.

Members of this year's class were Jeff Bhend of Scoular Grain, Jeris McCombs of UAP Chemical, James Miller of Eagle Communications, City Fire Chief Brian James, Donna Fenner of First National Bank, Dean Graber of Bankwest and Pat Schiefen of *The Goodland Star-News*.

Money to run the class comes from donations from area businesses and tuition paid for each member of the class.

The big event for the class was a road trip to Topeka to learn about state government. The class left on Wednesday, Feb. 20, and returned on Friday, Feb. 21, in a van furnished by the college.

Nemechek kidded the members that one thing leadership classes learned was togetherness. It seems that space was always an issue.

The van made its way east on I-70 passing sprouting wind farms west of Salina. Class member Fenner said that

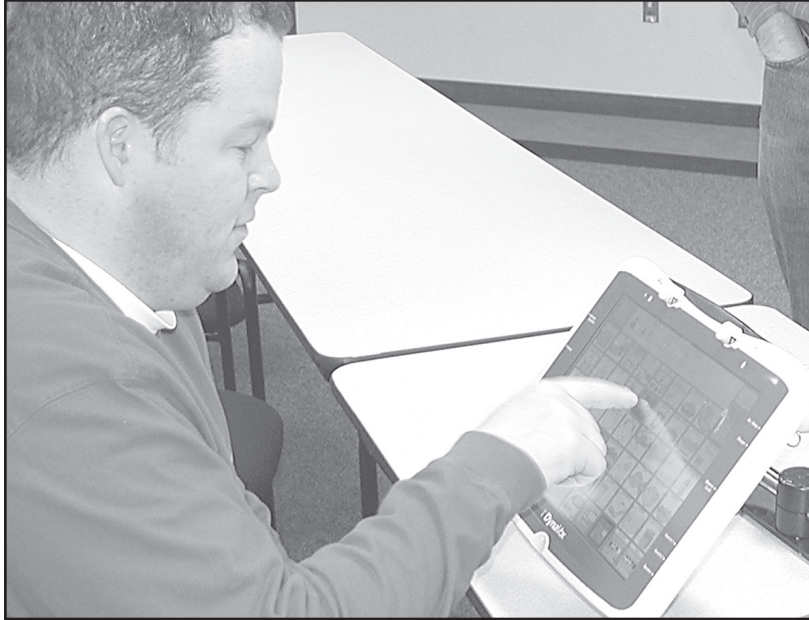
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Members of the 2007-2008 Leadership Sherman County (above) headed down the steps from the top of the dome of the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka. From the left are James Miller, Brian James and taking pictures are Dean Graber and Jeff Bhend. Bhend (below left) used a computer at the Capper Foundation that vocalizes for a person when they

can't. Graber (below right in middle) and James (right) retrieved objects that they removed from their pockets before they went through the metal detectors before entering the Kansas Judicial Center to talk to Supreme Court Justice Marla Luckert, originally from Brewster.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News



Meeting moved to Tuesday

By Tom Betz
ntbetz@nwkansas.com

About 50 pieces of land and mineral rights in Sherman County are being prepared for sale to collect property taxes unpaid over the past three or more years, but the process has been delayed for about three months waiting for lawyers to clear the title abstract.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure questioned County Attorney Bonnie Selby about the sale on Tuesday, asking if lawyer Jeff Mason had completed the abstracts as he had promised at the end of February.

Selby said she had not received any abstracts from Mason but that he had said he was close to being done.

Selby said she has been talking to another lawyer, Schyler Goodwin, who she said has agreed to hire to help with the tax sale preparation. She said he could finish the abstract work if necessary and between her and Goodwin, they could get them done.

Going through the abstracts is

Commissioners question tax sale delays

important to be sure the right person is being listed as the owner of the property or mineral right subject to being sold in the tax sale.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said having Goodwin finish the work might be a good answer.

"It is now March and we have been waiting for more than two months," he said.

Selby reported later in the meeting she had called Mason and he promised to have the abstracts done by Monday.

Selby said Wednesday that if she has the abstracts on Monday, she and Goodwin will move as quickly as the law allows to get the sale scheduled.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Agreed to donate \$1,000 to the Thunder on the Plains group for a Professional Bull Riders special event to be held on Aug. 6 during the county fair. Randy Whitmore co-chair of the local committee, was at the meeting Tuesday to ask for a donation.

He said the group is more than halfway to raise the money required to put on the event this year. The fair board has pledged \$12,000 to help plus pay for insurance and extra seating, he said.

Steve Duell, fair board chairman, said the board will be getting the ticket money for the Chute Out hopes to fill 3,000. Whitmore said the event will start at 6:30 p.m. and should last for about three hours, with some big-name bull riders already signed on.

- Heard from Duell that the old fence at the fairgrounds has been taken out. As soon as they can get some drill stem for the fence posts, he said, they will be looking for a Saturday to begin building a new fence. He said the steel and the metal sheets have arrived.
- Reviewed a burn plan for county Conservation Reserve Program land around the landfill southwest of town done by Fred Wedel at the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service office. Thomas said Wedel thought discing around the

edges would be a good measure, and recommended having someone with a disc stand by when the land is burned. Thomas said the area is divided in two burns.

Thomas said he talked to Randy Bellamy, a farmer who lives near the landfill, and he said he would disc the area and leave the equipment there until the county is ready to burn. Thomas said Wedel suggested having the rural fire department help and have a few county employees to help burn and control the fire.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said it would be good to have Bellamy go ahead and get it ready and have him call Thomas when the wind is right.

- If that is during the week, maybe we can go down there," Thomas said, "and Curt Way (public works manager) might be able to help with a few people."
- Tiede said it would be good to have four guys and one fire truck.
- Discussed an agreement for a

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