

Blood drive falls short of goal



Mike Briney gave blood at the Red Cross blood drive Wednesday at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church. Roberta Bretz, volunteer in charge of the Goodland Red Cross

office, said the team collected 98 units, missing the goal of 111 by 13. The next blood drive will be Tuesday, July 24.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Council tries to fill vacancy

By Tom Betz
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The Sherman County Economic Development Council is seeking nominations from people who would like to fill a vacancy, and will consider the names at the meeting on Tuesday, June 17.

The vacancy developed when Darwin McClung resigned as interim director and moved to Wichita. McClung was council vice-chairman, and Thursday the council voted to name Steve West of Western State Bank to fill that slot.

The council meeting was rescheduled from Tuesday to Thursday at Western State.

The council met in closed session for 20 minutes at the end of the meeting to discuss personnel matters and continuing efforts to select a new executive director. The council has been without a director since Jeremy Jennings resigned in February.

The council met in closed session with Helen Dobbs, who is managing the office. Chuck Wilkens, council chairman, said no action was taken afterward.

In the absence of a director, Dobbs reported on activity for the past month. She said the county microloan balance has increased to \$8,384, and that most of the loans are current.

She said beginning next month, any of the loans that are in arrears will be notified by letter that if they do not contact the office to make arrangements they will be approached by the county attorney.

In other activity, she reported the council books had been audited and were in order.

The Work Center has a new computer assessment program to offer to those looking for a job. She said the program can help a person find out what their interests are and what jobs they may be best suited for.

The office had responded to two inquiries from the State Department of Commerce, contacting real estate agents and owners of properties fitting the requests.

Asked for permission to buy an external hard drive to backup the data on the office computer. Two bids were taken from S&T Communications and Computer Solutions. The council approved the bid from Computer Solution for \$107; Don Newell, of S&T abstained from voting.

Asked for approval to buy a binder system for proposals the office sends out. Dobbs had bids from High Plains Office Supply for \$229 and from Topside Office Products

for \$190. The council approved the bid from Topside.

Agreed to purchase an ad in the *Ultimate Guide* for \$900 for half a page. Newell said the marketing committee had met that morning, and agreed the council needed to decide if they wanted to buy the ad. Wilkens said the guide will go to press the end of the month, and that last year 17,000 were printed and most have been handed out. Newell made the motion to approve the ad, and it passed unanimously.

Brought up a project being proposed through *The Hays Daily News* in partnership with *The Goodland Star-News* to have people in Sherman County select the 8 Wonders of Sherman County. Newell said he felt it was more of a Convention and Visitors Bureau project. West said he felt it would be good if the two split the project. Wilkens said he would talk to Donna Price, executive director of the visitors bureau, and bring the information back to the council at the June meeting.

Dobbs said she has been working with the Small Business Development Center from Hays, and helped with a sixth-grade program at the technical college.

Suggested the council consider taking the \$10,000 earmarked for beautification and put it in a special account with the Sherman County Community Foundation until the Shine On Sherman County beautification committee can develop a plan and raise the matching money. The council decided to look at this and find out if the money could be recaptured if the committee fails to do anything.

Asked about having a planning session to develop the goals for the council. West said the council needs to make a decision about a director and involve that person in the planning.

Said that three of the four grant projects have been completed, and that the council needs to advertise in June for a second round with the projects to be completed by the end of August. She said a third round could be advertised in September and the projects would be completed by November.

Asked about approving a bill for S&T directory advertising costing \$186. The council approved it with Newell abstaining.

Said the budget committee needs to meet because the council is scheduled to present its request for next year to the City Commission at 7 p.m. on Monday, July 7.

correction

An obituary for Paul A. Conger on Page 2 of the Tuesday, May 27, issue of *The Goodland Star-News*, reported incorrectly that he died May 24. It should have said he died Wednesday, May 21, 2008. This was due to a reporting error.

☆☆☆☆

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

Governor declares western Kansas a disaster

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed a disaster emergency declaration Wednesday for 62 counties in western Kansas struck by the thunderstorms, hail, lightning, tornadoes, high winds and flooding last week which killed at least three people.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with those impacted by these storms," the governor said. "Kansas weather can be dangerous, and we appreciate (those) who help with preparedness, response and recovery."

All counties from Republic County south to Sumner and to the west are included in the declaration: Barber, Barton, Cheyenne, Clark, Cloud, Comanche, Decatur, Edwards, Ellis, Ellsworth, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Harper, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kearney, Kingman, Kiowa, Lane, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Meade, Mitchell, Morton, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Ottawa, Pawnee, Phillips, Pratt, Rawlins, Reno, Republic, Rice, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Saline, Scott, Seward, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Sedgwick, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Sumner, Thomas, Trego, Wallace and Wichita.

The declaration activates the disaster response and recovery parts of the Kansas Response Plan. The declaration says the disaster period is ongoing and federal assistance may be requested.

Storm-related deaths

Three deaths have been attributed to the storms and tornados and a

fourth is being investigated.

Gary and Kimberly Whitlow of Rocky Ford, Colo., were found in a car in a field 13 miles east of Pratt on Saturday, May 24. Their car was picked up by a tornado Friday evening and thrown into a wheat field 150 yards north of a rest area on U.S. 54.

Osage County sheriff's officers were called to Osage County Lake on Saturday, May 24, where they found four people with possible lightning-related injuries. They were taken to Overland Park Regional Medical Center, where Nathan Eugene Sullivan, 20, died. An autopsy by the Shawnee County coroner confirmed lightning as the cause of death.

In Reno County, a 28-year-old man was killed in a one-car accident on a flooded roadway. The Reno County Sheriff's office is trying to determine if the accident was caused by the flooding.

"This storm system is another reminder of how quickly dangerous weather approaches in Kansas, and of the importance of having a weather alert radio and listening to local weather broadcasts as you travel to ensure you have time to get to a safe place," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, state adjutant general and director of Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "Our thoughts continue to be with the families affected, and we are assisting the counties in determining damages to infrastructure."

Damage estimates

Tentative damage estimates are in

excess of \$10 million, Bunting said. Most damage appear to be to public infrastructure, he said, and damages to private property will likely not reach the threshold to qualify residents for individual assistance.

Midwest Energy reported damage of about \$5.25 million to power lines in 10 counties where it operates, Bunting said. In Gove County, Western Rural Electric Cooperative had approximately \$225,000 in damage; and Ninnescah Rural Electric Cooperative reported \$4 million in Pratt County.

Decatur County officials estimate \$2.5 million in damages to private property, and it was unknown how much of that was uninsured. Officials are still assessing damage to roads and other public property.

Norton County officials report about \$500,000 in damages to roads and an unknown value on private property damage.

Phillips County has a preliminary damage estimate of \$500,000 due to washed out and flooded roads. Officials in Smith County estimate \$1 million in damages to public infrastructure.

In Sheridan County, communication systems repeaters were hit by lightning. Four homes were listed as destroyed, four sustained major damage and one had minor damage.

Gove County officials say that there is about \$4 million in damage

to private property, including 12 to 13 homes damaged by tornadoes. It was no known how much of that is insured.

Ellis County reported damages to public roads, a high school, water tower and a fire station. Two homes were destroyed and 25 damaged. One home was damaged in Ness County.

In Barton County, four to five power poles were knocked down, as well as some pasture fencing. One home slid off its foundations. No road or bridge damage was reported.

Pawnee County officials estimate there is approximately \$25,000 in damages to roads. Minor flooding was reported by homeowners.

Pratt County officials say there were some minor damages to roads and damage to five to eight homes, all of which were insured.

Comanche County reported one business destroyed and 45 homes damaged; most of those had roof damage. Other damage include farm buildings, sheds and irrigation systems.

A rural electric cooperative in Reno County reported some minor damage and one township needed to remove debris.

An apartment house was damaged in Sedgwick County and there was some minor flooding.

In Coffey County, high wind damaged some grain bins in the Lebo area.

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