

weather report

45°
noon
Thursday



Today

Saturday

- Sunset, 4:46 p.m.
- Sunrise, 7:05 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:47 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 29 degrees
- Humidity 51 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds northwest 10 mph
- Barometer 30.19 inches and steady
- Record High today 65° (2006)
- Record Low today -15° (1979)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	24°
Low Wednesday	-10°
Precipitation	none
This month	0.19
Year to date	0.19
Above normal	0.04 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny with a high near 4, winds out of the west at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 24. Saturday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of snow at night, a high near 44, winds out of the west at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 21.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly cloudy with a high near 38 and a low around 23. Monday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of rain and snow, a high near 44 and a low around 20. Tuesday: Partly sunny with a high near 44 and a low around 22. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

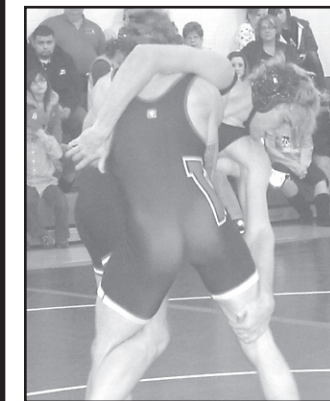
local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$7.32 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$7.17
 - Corn — \$5.72 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$5.69
 - Milo — \$5.57 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$13.02 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$12.89
 - Millet — \$5 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$25.05 cwt.
 - Confection — no bid
 - Pinto beans — \$18 (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



Mavericks lose dual

The first Mavericks dual held at Keirns Center on campus was not a great night for the local team. Maverick Caleb Crump (above) was in a tough match and was pinned. See photos, story on Page 10.

City development director hired

By Tom Betz

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An experienced economic development person has accepted the Goodland job, and is expected to be in town on Monday and attend the city commission meeting.

City Manager Doug Gerber said he was pleased that Michael Solomon of Lowell, Ark., had accepted the economic development director job.

“We had about 30 people apply,” Gerber said. “I phone interviewed 11 and we had personal interviews with four. Michael emerged as the clear cut top choice.”

“He impressed the commissioners and myself with his research of the city and bringing his family to the city before the interview.”

Gerber said Solomon has good

experience in economic development and the business experience in his background will be helpful. Gerber said Solomon had worked for J.B. Hunt trucking in Lowell and Tyson Foods in Fayetteville, Ark.

Gerber said it was impressive that Solomon had served two terms on the Lowell city county before becoming the city director of planning and economic development for the past three years.

In a short telephone interview on Tuesday Solomon said he is looking forward to moving to Goodland and beginning a new challenge. Solomon agreed to answer some questions about his background and experiences.

Q: I read your resume and it appears you have quite a history

in Lowell, Ark., I am wondering what led you to apply for the job in Goodland?

A: I do have a long history in Lowell. My wife Mary and I were looking for a new opportunity and chance to move to a new community where we could raise our children and help grow a community. I am excited about moving close to my boyhood home of Colorado Springs.

Q: I am wondering about your early education - where did you go to high school and did you grow up in Arkansas?

A: From the time I was 4 until I was 15, I lived in Colorado Springs. At 15 we moved to a suburb outside Washington DC in Annandale, Va. I graduated from WT Woodson High School. I came to Arkansas 20 years ago to attend the University of Arkansas (Go Razorbacks!) and never

left until now!

Q: What do you think intrigues you about coming out west to Goodland, Kansas?

A: The landscape and the people. I am excited to for my daughters to see where the food they eat comes from and to be in such a tight knit community. The thing that impresses me the most about Goodland is how the people have done a good job taking care of the town and adding amenities like the skate park and the swimming pool. I like the improvements made out at the airport especially to the hanger for Eagle Med.

Q: Did you visit Goodland before your interview with the city commissioners, and have you developed an idea about what you feel might be the economic development opportunities for Sherman County and northwest Kansas.

A: I brought my family up the weekend before the interview. We explored the city and took in the community spirit. I think Goodland offers great access on I-70 and would be an attractive spot for a company needing to be close to a major highway with half day transit times to major markets. I think there are great opportunities that arise from Northwest Tech and the fact the college is growing and providing an educated workforce. Goodland has a great Main street and I would love to see some more retail come into it. For the first few months I am in Goodland I want to talk with as many people as we can and get a feel for what the community would like to see come to Goodland and put together a plan to go in that direction.

See CITY, Page 5

City commission to fill vacancy Monday night

By Tom Betz

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A vacancy on the city commission will be filled on Monday at the city commission meeting, and four people have shown an interest in filling the position so far.

Under state law Rick Billinger's 20 years on the city commission ended when he was sworn in as the State Representative for District 121 on Monday in Topeka.

City Manager Doug Gerber said by state law the four remaining commissioners will select a replacement, and have 10 days from when the vacancy occurred to fill the position. He said under the law if the commissioners are deadlocked on the replacement the city attorney will break the deadlock.

One of the suggestions made by Commissioner Dave Daniels was if someone was interested in running for the commission in the upcoming election they might file a petition before the meeting on Monday. He said that would give the commissioners one way to determine who might be a candidate to fill the vacancy for the next two months.

A check with City Clerk Mary Volk on Wednesday showed four people have taken out petitions for the city election, and four of those might be interested in filling the vacancy. She said Bill Finley and Gary Farris have turned in their petitions. She said Randy Topliff and Jessica Kannady took out petitions, but had not turned them in by Wednesday.

Incumbent commissioners Daniels and Annette Fairbanks have turned in petitions to seek re-election.

The deadline for filing for the city commission is Tuesday, Jan 25, at the city office.

Mayor Josh Dechant said the meeting on Monday would fall within the 10 days and suggested the commissioners could come prepared to hash the decision out.

Gerber said an option is for the commissioners to appoint a caretaker who is willing to hold the position for the next three months, but does not want to run for the office.

Finley said Tuesday evening at the Northwest Tech Mavericks wrestling dual, he had filed because he felt it was time to give back to the community. He said he felt the city was in good shape and said he was interested in helping move the city ahead, but said he did not have a special agenda.

Gary Farris, Farris Manufacturing, was in the audience at the last commission meeting. He ran for the commission in 2005, and after the canvas Fairbanks won by one vote.

Topliff, owner of Overhead Door of Northwest Kansas and Weathercraft Roofing, was at the last commission meeting to indicate his interest.

Frigid temp didn't stop sledding



Frigid temperatures in the single digits did not keep everyone from enjoying the more than three inches of snow that fell on Sunday. Schools were closed on Monday and Steve Johnson and his wife Brandi (above) took their three children Max, Zion and Conner out sledding that afternoon at Pioneer Park. Once Brandi and one of the three got to the bottom they walked over to a fresh patch of snow and made snow angles.

Photos by Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News



School board hears about total cost of renovations

By Pat Schiefen

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Construction manager Mike Ayars from Ayars and Ayars along with Program Manager Cristy Joy and Project Architect Richard Hawks from Architecture Etcetera were at the Monday night school board meeting to talk more specifically about the renovations of North Elementary and the high school.

Ayars, Joy and Hawks were to be at the Community meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday night at the Goodland High School cafeteria. Dustin Avey, the bond consultant from Piper Jaffray, will also be there to

translate what a bond issue will cost taxpayers.

Two versions for the plans will be given. One will include basic pricing and the other will have upgrades.

Ayars had included the North Elementary renovations, the high school renovations, the remodel for Central Elementary to move the administration there, demolition of the Grant Junior High building, a new practice field near the high school's for football practice, asbestos abatement, information technology, furniture and contingency added for price increases of materials.

Board member Mike Cochran said he thought the public should be involved in the decision of which things are included in the bond.

Ayars said North Elementary would basically be a square building. The drop off for the buses would come off Arcade. The car drop off entrance would be on Walnut. The entrance for the kindergarten and preschool entrance would be on Fourth Street. The exterior he said would be broken up by awnings over the entrances with changes in the color of the exterior in sections. The windows would be high to let in light but for security students will

not be seen through them.

He said the current exterior of the building would be used as brick walls in the interior.

The movable walls in the current pods would be replaced with solid walls and each classroom for the younger kids would have a handicapped accessible restroom. Ayars said the bathroom would be unisex as little kids don't care if it is a boys or girls restroom.

The current building would handle preschool, kindergarten, first, second, administration, a gym for the younger students, the cafeteria and music rooms. The additional room

would be for the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, special education, bathrooms and a gym for the older kids.

The district hopes to apply to FEMA to get money to make the gym into a tornado shelter. FEMA will pay 60 percent of the cost to construct the shelter but requires the gym to have a concrete shell, have bathrooms and a generator.

Ayars said a preliminary number for the cost of the basic renovations to North Elementary would be \$7.9 million. Upgrades in the heating, cooling, flooring, walls and the tornado shelter would increase the cost to \$8.9 million.

County commissioners change meeting day to Tuesday

The Sherman County Commissioners changed the meeting times when they reorganized on Monday deciding to move to 8 a.m. on Tuesday.

At the request of Commissioner Larry Enfield the commissioners will hold the first meeting of each month at 6 p.m. on Tuesday at the Sherman County Courthouse. Enfield said he had people ask him about having the

commissioner meetings in the evening to allow more working people to attend.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said it will give the people a change to attend at least one meeting a month, and the commissioners will review how it is going after a few months.

The commissioners will meet on Tuesday's for the other meetings of the month, but will continue to meet on the last day of the month

to pay the bills.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the commissioners may hold the meeting at the end of the month on the following Tuesday if the end of the month is on a Monday, but have not decided that yet.

Commissioners Max Linin and Enfield were to tour the Road and Bridge Department on Tuesday afternoon with Butch Vandiver to

get a good feel for how things are going.

The commissioners will meet at 8 a.m. on Tuesday in the Commissioner Room on the main floor of the courthouse.

Monday is Martin Luther King Day, but the city and county do not close for this holiday. The banks, other state and federal offices including the U. S. Post Office will be closed.

