

County has plus shopping figures

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attended the WKREDA legislative dinner. The group provides a unified voice for a 54-county region, nearly half the state.

Solomon said he is always interested in talking to people about economic development ideas, and his office is on the second floor of the city administration building, 204 W. 11th, and he can be reached at (785) 890-4500.

Solomon said he has met Sam Mancini, who is working on a project to open a grocery store in the Wolak Building north of the city administration building, and said the contract has been signed by the city and is awaiting Mancini's signature.

nature. Solomon said he believes getting the grocery store open will help bring more regional business into Goodland.

Only 23 of Kansas' 105 counties have a positive pull factor, the state report shows; most are losing money to other counties. Some, like Neosho County in southeast Kansas, just dropped below 1 this year due to the economic downturn.

The state report lists other area counties as having pull factors less than 1. Cheyenne County has .62; Rawlins, .63; Decatur, .56; Sheridan, .80; Logan, .96; and Greeley, .69. Of these, only Greeley and Logan counties improved their pull factors last year.



Sheriff arrests two

On Sunday Feb. 20, at 3:24 p.m., Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks officers and Sherman County Sheriff's deputies issued two search warrants to the occupants living at 515 W. 15th St. In the search law enforcement officers recovered evidence pertaining to wildlife violations, felony firearms possession along with the possession of illegal drugs. Peter Hopkins, 39, and Rochelle Lucas, 43, both of Goodland were arrested by Sheriff's deputies. Sheriff Kevin Butts said the investigation is ongoing.

City approves incentives for 'The Basement'

CITY, from Page 1A

pass that on to other prospective tenants. It will help keep his rental rates down to the level people can afford to go in there and open a business, and that is what excites me about the building.

"We have lots of empty places, but for a specific type of business there is not a place to go. I don't have the money to build a building like I need so this is the best alternative at this point."

Mayor Josh Dechant thanked Fritz and Hall for coming and making the request.

He said with other requests the city has waived the utility connection fees and building permit fees, and have given a utility rebate after the business has been open for a certain number of months—usually a year, and the amount of rebate is

based on the number of employees the business expects to employ.

Hall said that is in the letter from Fritz and the number could be 10 or more depending on how things go, and she expects to employ more for her business as it grows.

Dechant said the city is excited for her and Fritz.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked if the commissioners had done this in the past.

Dechant said the city has an economic development incentives program. He asked Fritz if the connection fees and building permit fees have been paid.

Fritz said he has paid those to the city.

City Clerk Mary Volk said she would pay those back to Fritz if the commissioners approve waiving the fees.

"I will refund the fees," Volk said,

"but not a credit on utilities until the commission has authorized one. Usually after the business has been in business for a term decided by the commission."

Dechant said the city would look into the utility rebate, but asked the other commissioners about getting the connection fees and building permit fees waived.

Commissioner John Garcia said he was glad to see the new businesses and made the motion to waive the fees for Fritz.

Volk asked about the utility credit. Dechant said he thought the commission has done a rebate after the business has been open for a year.

Rasure asked if Fritz had to come back to ask for that or if the city staff can do that.

Volk said the city did an agreement with Sam Mancini, and with Paige Harper did it in the form of a

motion. She said with the Maverick Inn they were waiving the other fees and would do the utility rebate once the motel was open for a few months to determine the average utility bill.

Rasure asked if Fritz gets credit for the three months he has been working on opening the social club.

Garcia said he felt it would be better to wait until the social club and other businesses are open to determine the utility rebate amount.

Rasure agreed it might be good to wait on the utility portion until Fritz has opened to see what the average utility bill would be.

The motion passed 4-0 with Rasure, Garcia, Dechant and Annette Fairbanks voting in favor. Commissioner Dave Daniels was absent.

The next city commission meeting will be 5 p.m. on Monday, March 7.

March good time to prepare for severe weather

WEATHER, from Page 1A

as well as NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards.

Everyone is encouraged to treat the test warning as if it were an actual emergency and review preparedness procedures, Floyd said. Municipalities throughout the state are encouraged to sound their tornado sirens at that time.

The havoc caused by tornadoes in 2010 was surpassed by severe thunderstorms which can pack winds over 125 mph and hail greater in size than a grapefruit, he said. On Sept. 15, Kansas set a new record for diameter in regards to hail. The behemoth stone fell in West Wichita and the diameter measured a whopping 7.75 inches, easily surpassing the old record set in Coffeyville, he said. The stone in Coffeyville, will retain the record for weight, as the stone in Wichita was not able to be weighed until the following day and had sublimated.

Fortunately, 2010 was another relatively quiet year in regards to tornadoes across the state of Kansas, Floyd said. The state recorded 88 tornadoes, which is 28 above the average of 60 tornadoes since records began in 1950. However, Kansas was 8 under the 20 year average which is 96.

On a side note, which northwest Kansas county will be the first to reach 100 tornadoes since records began in 1950? It looks as though Sherman County has the lead with 99 tornadoes, but as we all know,

one outbreak can spring many counties to that lofty height, he said.

All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio is like having your personal tornado siren in your home or vehicle, Floyd said. We encourage Kansans to purchase a weather radio and have it programmed to their county and/or surrounding counties to receive severe weather warnings and information directly from the National Weather Service. Now is a great time to replace the back-up battery in your NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio so that you get severe weather information even if the power goes out, he said.

Storm spotter training classes in the Tri-State area will begin Tuesday, March 1, and wrap up on March 29, Floyd said.

The classes are open to people

of all ages who have an interest in learning more about High Plains' storms, weather safety or storm spotting. Classes are free and there are no prerequisites. One class will be held in each county on a weekday evening between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. Topics will include thunderstorm formation, organization and evolution, clouds associated with thunderstorms and their meaning for spotters, thunderstorm hazards, safety, what severe weather elements to report and how to report.

For Goodland and Sherman County the storm spotter and safety class will be at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 14, at the Northwest Tech Murray Center, 1315 Eustis.

Other northwest Kansas spotter

classes will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, at the Prairie Developmental Center 208 S. Fourth, Atwood.

Monday, March 7, at 5:30 p.m., Community Building Downstairs 285 E. Fifth, Colby.

Wednesday, March 16, at 5:30 p.m. at the St. Francis High School Cafeteria, 100 S. College.

Friday, March 25, at 6:30 p.m. at CAB Building, Fairgrounds south of Sharon Springs.

Saturday, March 26, at 4 p.m. at the Burlington Community Center, 340 S. 14th Street, Burlington, Colo.

Tuesday, March 29, at 6:30 p.m. at the EMS Building, Greeley Ave., west of K-27 in Tribune.

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Citizens of Sherman County:

What are the savings if we consolidate USD 352 into a 2 building district? You see, I have sat through this grueling process for the past 3 years, and I feel it is time for me to explain this complicated situation to the public.

This question has been asked at public meetings and is currently listed on the USD 352 website "The Facts - USD 352 Goodland - School Bond Issue".

Q: How much money will be saved?
A: The district estimates a reduction of \$450,000 per year in operating cost by moving from 5 to 2 school buildings.

Let us begin with the closing of North School. The closing of North occurred this year. By closing North, we saved \$170,000 (elimination of utilities, cooks, janitors, secretary, and library aides). This fall (August 2011), the School District will save an additional \$100,000 by the elimination of one administrator. By adding these two numbers together, we will have saved over \$270,000 by **CLOSING ONLY ONE BUILDING**. This is **more than half** of the total savings quoted.

Now, we must look at the remaining savings.

The following table explains the savings:

School Closed	Utilities	Wages
GJHS	-\$50,000	-\$90,000
West School	-\$50,000	-\$90,000
Central School	-\$30,000	-\$90,000
Administration Bldg	-\$10,000	\$ 0
	-\$140,000	-\$270,000
TOTAL SAVINGS	-\$410,000	

The following table explains the expenses to re-open North School and move Administration into Central School:

	Utilities	Wages
North School	-\$75,000	-\$160,000
Central School	-\$30,000	
TOTAL EXPENSES	-\$265,000	
NET SAVINGS	-\$145,000	

Are the savings of \$145,000 per year, to get us from a four building to a two building district, worth the investment of \$22.7 million. Yes, it will cost \$22.7 million dollars to complete this project. \$21.3 million is the total debt payment on the \$14.9 million bond. The district also has a \$1.4 million QZAB bond.

To complicate matters even more, we must discuss the current state of affairs of our State of Kansas. The State of Kansas spends approximately 60% of their budget on education. The State of Kansas has a budget deficit of approx. \$500 million that must be addressed. The State of Kansas has announced that \$75/pupil will be cut to all school districts for this current year. That equates to a \$122,000 cut from the USD 352's current year budget according to a board update by Superintendent Angelos. Governor Brownback has proposed a \$157/pupil cut to the base aid for next year (2011-12). That equates to \$255,000. The total of these numbers is \$377,000. The \$377,000 loss of funding will occur by next year, unless the legislators can create a miracle and find some money elsewhere. Who knows how it will all turn out, but you must realize that education will take a hit because it comprises more than 60% of the State's budget.

This same economic scenario that the State of Kansas is experiencing can be duplicated for the school district. What is the biggest expense that a school has? Personnel expense is by far the largest line item in a school's budget. It is true that a school has three areas that can be cut to save money. These three areas are personnel, programs, and facilities. A 2008-09 Cost by Building report presented to the Board of Education showed that the district spent \$333,203 in utilities for all buildings in our district for that year. This figure included the following expenses: telephone, water, sewer, sanitation service, exterminating service, heat and electricity. This is less than 3% of our \$13 million annual school budget. If you believe your salvation is in closing schools and consolidating to a 2 building district, I believe you may have been misled. Actually, I predict that the school board will have to make that hard decision on which person(s) loses his/her job or which program/extra-curricular activity must be cut. You cannot spend your way out of a financial crisis when your primary funding source, the State of Kansas, is broke. In a school district, the real saving is in people's wages... personnel. I don't like this either, but it is the cold, hard fact.

To top it off, Senator Ostmeyer and Rep. Billinger spoke in Goodland over the weekend. I directly asked them if they felt the State of Kansas would be a reliable partner in paying back a portion of the bond. It was reported that we could expect a 50% reduction by the State of Kansas. Thus, the State's 15% contribution to the debt payment will probably be 7.5%. This is still pending approval, but you can see the direction that the state is going.

I urge you to think hard about the economics. Do you want to put our community into this debt situation to save very little money? I believe we could consolidate into three buildings and have no debt. In closing, on June 14, 2010, the Board of Education voted to take this issue to a bond election. The motion passed by a 4-3 vote with myself, Philbrick, and Hendrich casting the dissenting votes. I am still opposed. I value the sustainability of my community for the next 20 years.

Amy Sederstrom
USD 352 Board Member

Paid for by Amy Sederstrom

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