

City commissioners approve highway sign

By Tom Betz
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City commissioners approved a plan to upgrade two signs on I-70 and place one on K-27 south of the K-27 and Business U.S. 24 intersection to welcome visitors to the city.

Leon Volk of Commercial Signs of Colby, has been working with the city on a sign plan and was at the meeting on Monday to get some direction from the commissioners.

The two signs on I-70 belong to the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Volk said the board has said it would be a good upgrade for their signs to add a skirt and end caps along with the new vinyl sign saying "Goodland - Kansas begins here."

Volk said he had talked to the Kansas Department of Transportation and these signs have a 150 square foot limit, but the limit does not include the skirt.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau has one about three miles east of town and about the same west of town on I-70.

Mayor Josh Dechant asked about the cost of doing the two signs and Volk said each would be \$10,500.

Commissioner Kevin Rasura asked if that would be the cost to the city or if the CVB was considering helping with the cost.

Volk said it was his understanding the CVB felt it was enough that they owned the signs and would allow the city to do the upgrades.

City Manager Doug Gerber said when he and Leon met with the CVB he did not push hard on the sign issue. He said he got pushed back on something else, and felt they wanted to get along.

Commissioner Dave Daniels asked if the CVB was going to pay the annual fee on the two signs.

Volk said he did not know if they paid anything, and have owned the signs for about 30 years.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks asked if the upgrades are more than what is there for the existing sign.

Volk said it would be the skirt,

end caps and would include a new vinyl overlay.

Rasura asked if the price includes installation, and Volk said it is total price.

Gerber said he felt it was good to steer the commission in this direction as it can be more cost effective.

Volk said a business cannot put up a new advertising sign on a federal highway, but the city can do official signs within three miles of the town. He said with the CVB owning the two signs the city could put up other official or directional signs, but that would take finding a landowner who would be willing to lease a site, and getting the KDOT permission to erect a sign. He said the city could put a directional sign as far away as Oakley.

Rasura asked if the city would take ownership of the two signs.

Gerber said he had not discussed that, but felt the CVB would continue being the owner.

Volk said the idea would be to have several signs like these to have a bigger impact along I-70 and to set Goodland apart.

The commissioners agreed the top priority was doing the two I-70 signs.

"I think the least favorable idea is the ones at the bottom of the ramps," Fairbanks said. "We want people to get off, and if they are on the ramps they have already gotten off."

Volk said these are not big signs, but feels they can be done right away to have them up before the travel season starts this year.

Commissioner John Garcia asked if the signs are lighted.

Volk said if electricity is available that could be done.

Dechant asked about using solar for lighting the signs.

Daniels asked if the city was wasting money on these, and how long they would last.

Volk said the basic sign should last 15 to 20 years, and the vinyl should be replaced about every three years.

Dechant asked about the cost of the new vinyl each time it is changed.

Volk said it would be about \$1,200 per sign.

Garcia asked about the price of one like the one at 19th and Cherry Ave. He said he would like to see one like that on K-27 south of the intersection of K-27 and Business U.S. 24.

Volk said the cost would be \$7,625 to match the sign at Cherry Ave. and 19th.

"I would like the commission to strongly consider that" Garcia said. "I want a sign to welcome people to Goodland. The other two signs are great, but I feel this is another step."

Volk said it would be a good location and especially at night if it was lit.

Dechant asked Gerber if there was money for the three signs with two for \$21,000 and the third for \$7,625.

Daniels asked if the commissioners had put any money in the budget for signs.

City Clerk Mary Volk said no money was set aside directly for signs. Gerber said he felt there were a couple of places in the budget where money could be found to pay for the signs.

Garcia made a motion for all three signs seconded by Fairbanks. Daniels said he was not sure about the third sign, but voted yes for the two on I-70. The motion passed 5-0.

Volk said the signs will make a good impression. He said it does not solve the image problem, but it helps.

Daniels asked about the existing sign on the northeast side of the intersection of K-27 and Business U.S. 24.

Gerber said that is not part of the plan.

Volk said that would be dealt with at a later time.



Carol Topliff talked about the flag given to Wheat Ridge Acres residents.

Flag given to residents

The Wheat Ridge Acres residents have been baking cookies to send to American troops serving in Afghanistan for the past three years and recently they received a thank you from the troops.

Carol Topliff presented the residents with an American flag from her son, Lt. Josh Topliff, who had been stationed in Afghanistan and had received a couple boxes of Wheat Ridge Acres cookies.

The certificate presented with the flag said "The flag was proudly flown over the skies of Afghanistan for Wheat Ridge Acres in support of Operation Enduring Freedom."

"It was carried aboard an E-8C JSTARS aircraft (Tail No. A1D28A) during a combat sortie over Afghanistan on Jan. 28, 2011. This mission provided radar and attack support to multinational forces."

The certificate was signed by Capt. Matt Sweetland, aircraft commander and Maj. Frederick Aldrich, mission crew commander. The plane was stationed at Al Udeid Airbase, Qatar.

Wheat Ridge Acres has been baking cookies for about three years at Christmas time and around July 4, and sending to the American troops overseas.

Brain drain topic of talk

Dr. Patrick Carr will be the first speaker of the year hosted by the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College. This will be Dr. Carr's second appearance in northwest Kansas to speak about the rural brain drain.

There will be two opportunities to hear Dr. Carr on Monday, April 4, and the events are free. He will speak at 10:15 a.m. (Mountain Time) in room No. 711 located in the Bedker Memorial Complex and at 6 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center located on the southeast corner of campus.

Dr. Carr is Associate Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, and is an Associate Member of the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood. He earned his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1998, and his research interests include communities and crime, informal social control, youth violence, and transitions to adulthood.

Dr. Carr is the co-author of *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What it Means for America*, and author of *Clean Streets: Controlling Crime, Maintaining Order and Building Community Activism*. He is co-author of *Coming of Age in America*, a book based on a comparative in-depth study of young adults funded

by the Network on Transitions to Adulthood.

He lectures internationally about rural development, community policing and crime control. Dr. Carr was one of the presenters at the Second Annual Rural School and Community Development Conference held at Northwest Tech in October in Goodland.

"Hollowing Out the Middle - The Rural Brain Drain and What it Means for America" is the product of Carr's research with his co-author Maria Kefalas. In 2001, with funding from the MacArthur Foundation, Carr and Kefalas traveled to Iowa to understand the rural brain drain and the exodus of young people from America's countryside.

The sociologists moved to "Ellis," a small town of 2,000 in Iowa. Ellis is a pseudonym used to protect the community and its residents' privacy. Ellis is typical of many small towns struggling to survive, and Iowa is typical of many states in the Heartland that are aging rapidly. According to Carr, one reason is many small towns simply aren't regenerating, but another is its educated young people are leaving in droves.

In Ellis, Carr and Kefalas identified the working-class "stayers," struggling in the region's dying agro-industrial economy; the high-achieving and college-bound

"achievers," who often left for good; the "seekers" who head off to war to see what the world beyond offers; and the "returners," who eventually circled back to their hometowns. Carr said what surprised them most was adults in the community were playing a pivotal part in the town's decline by pushing the best and brightest young people to leave, and by under-investing in those who choose to stay, even though these young people are their best chance for a future.

The co-authors concluded the emptying out of small towns is a national concern, but there are strategies for arresting the process and creating sustainable, thriving communities. They believe "Hollowing Out the Middle" is a wake-up call because 60 million Americans still live in rural communities and small towns, and because our nation's economic health and future is tied to the Heartland.

"The time we spent living in Iowa brought home to us the fragility of places that on the surface appear prosperous," said Carr. "One patch of bad luck - a shuttered factory or the realization there aren't enough children to keep a local school open - can bring a community to its knees." For more information about the lecture series contact Linda Davis-Stephens at (785) 460-5528.

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines have been paid in the Sherman County District Court.

March 2: Jeremy C. Yancey, speeding, \$198.50.

March 21: Natasha M. Jackson, speeding, \$176.50.

June 6: Shannon L. Mijangos,

speeding, \$176.50.

June 22: Corie L. Peay, speeding, \$182.50.

July 1: Samuel E. Walker, speeding, \$198.50.

July 6: Manue Ruiz, speeding, \$164.50.

September 2: Ronald D. Woodley, unlawful parking, \$198.50.

September 15: Shawn D. Page, speeding, \$182.50.

September 19: Chad C. Hansen, speeding, \$234.50.

October 11: Eric J. Hedges, speeding, \$168.50.

October 20: Robyn L. White, speeding, \$194.50.

October 31: Shayne M. Hildreth, speeding, \$168.50.

Brian T. kenny, speeding, \$174.50.

November 8: Jinnie Lee Williams, fail to yield at sign, \$168.50.

November 18: Efren Rangel, speeding, \$192.50; no child seat belt, \$60.00.

November 23: Nasiha M. Khalil, unlawful parking, \$180.00.

November 24: David A. Mendiola, unlawful vehicle registration, \$153.50.

November 27: Jason L. Sauer, no seat belt, \$5.00.

November 28: Kelsey M. Lind, unlawful parking, \$180.50.

Melissa R. Moore, speeding, \$234.50.

Chitra B. Poudel, speeding, \$174.50.

December 4: Henderson Hunter, speeding, \$216.50.

correction

In the headline on Page 3 of the Tuesday, March 8, edition of The Goodland Star-News it said the bluegrass group was to play in Oakley. It will play in Sharon Springs. This was due to reporter error.

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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.

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