

weather report

46°

noon
Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 7:52 p.m.

Friday

• Sunrise, 5:34 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:53 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 56 degrees
• Humidity 93 percent
• Sky cloudy
• Winds northwest 32-43 mph
• Barometer 29.87 inches and steady
• Record High today 97° (1941)
• Record Low today 47° (1953)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 69°
Low Wednesday 47°
Precipitation .06
This month .06
Year to date 3.92
Below Normal .74 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny with a high near 63, winds breezy out of the north at 20 to 35 mph and a low around 39. Saturday: Mostly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers after midnight, a high near 62 and a low around 39.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly sunny with a high near 59 and a low around 39. Monday: Mostly sunny with a high near 68 and a low around 43. (National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

Transfer station hours revised

By Tom Betz

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It took one weekend of phone calls to convince Sherman County commissioners closing the transfer station on Saturday afternoon and Sunday was a mistake, and Tuesday evening the commissioners voted to change the hours back to what it had been before.

Tuesday was the first evening meeting for the county commission, and Commissioners Max Linin and Larry Enfield had expected to have a crowd complaining about the transfer station hours.

Enfield said he had lots of calls about the transfer station over the weekend, and Linin said he had quite a few as well.

The commissioners had voted to close the transfer station on Saturday afternoon and Sunday at the last meeting of April after they had fired Margaret Russell as the supervisor.

Enfield said he had been trying to look at the

operation from a business perspective, and to try to save money by reducing the overtime at the transfer station.

"I realized after the phone calls there are some things the county does that cannot be looked at on a business basis," he said. "I talked to a lot of people about what we should do. The operation is making money and I think we need to go back to regular hours."

Butch Vandiver, interim public works manager, said he would like the commissioners to set the hours so he can get people out there. He said he has one full time person and is working some of the other road and bridge people to help fill the gaps.

He said he had asked to hire one person out there, but if the transfer station is going to be open seven days a week he would like to hire another person to help spread out the hours.

Enfield said he felt the county could look at adding two people at the transfer station.

Vandiver said when the transfer station was opened more than 15 years ago there were four people out there, and they handled the intake and hauling to the landfill. Today some of the load has been reduced by having the bailer for the trash that reduces some of the extra labor at the landfill south of town.

"I believe we have to have a landfill and a transfer station," Vandiver said.

Linin asked Vandiver his opinion on the weekend hours.

Vandiver said all day Saturday was busy, and especially on Sunday afternoons.

Enfield said when people talked to him about the transfer station he would ask about closing one day during the week, but was told the commercial trash haulers have schedules during the week.

"I asked one guy about closing one day during the week," he said. "He said he was a contractor and he did not know what day he

would need to haul stuff to the transfer station. If the transfer station is not open when people get there we will find stuff in the ditches."

Vandiver said they have already found trash in the ditches.

Linin made a motion to go back to regular hours with the transfer station open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Enfield seconded and it passed 2-0 as Commissioner Cynthia Strnad was absent.

Linin asked Vandiver why the transfer station doesn't take grain.

Vandiver said the transfer station does not take grain or grain dust because the county would have to have another place to put those items because of the fire danger.

"We made a mistake," Enfield said. "We found out quickly what the people thought."

"We have corrected it," Linin said.

Purple stripe celebrates Relay for Life



Goodland city workers spent the early hours of Tuesday painting a purple stripe down the middle of Main Ave. The stripe is part of the Relay for Life "Paint the Town Purple" as they work to raise money and get ready for the annual Relay for Life to be held Friday, June 3, at the high school track. More information inside today on Page 9.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Commissioners hear business updates

By Tom Betz

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Sherman County commissioners heard an update on economic development efforts for the past month at the meeting Tuesday evening at the Sherman County Courthouse.

Michael Solomon, city-county economic development director, said he wanted to keep the commissioners informed about what is happening.

He said one local business is planning an expansion and is working with a grant program through the state. He said the program is new, and the business will be working on a grant application for a rail spur. He said they are getting figures together about job growth.

On the grocery store Solomon said he had a good visit with Sam Mancini in Denver the last part of April. He said the new contractor has had people come measure the building and plans to start work in the next 30 days.

He said The Basement is open, and Rusty Fritz is trying to find a business to occupy the other part of the building.

He said the man looking to build a laundromat along K-27 is now in the financing portion of his project.

Another company is working on an expansion that will be about a 10,000 square foot addition to their facility.

He said the Northwest Tech project with Apple for a documentary on the iPad has been delayed until

fall. He said with the college getting close to graduation it was felt the timing would be better in August, and the documentary team will be coming out sometime this summer.

He said the concrete and asphalt company is trying to make a determination about having a base operation or staying with a mobile system.

On a couple of other items Solomon said he is working with a group of people about how to market the Rural Opportunity Zone program. He said he has been talking to the Western Kansas Economic Development Association about doing some joint marketing out of state. He said it would not make a big splash if he went to Denver or Colorado Springs with say six or seven jobs from Sherman County, but it would probably be a bigger thing if the group of counties went to Colorado with the possibility of 60 jobs for the region.

Enfield asked if Solomon knew how Northwest Tech was coming on the grant for the remodeling of the telephone building.

Solomon said he knows they are working on it, and he is looking for some possible business incubator tie-ins.

He said he was going to Kanorado on Wednesday to see if he could help with a grant for the senior citizen center.

"We keep plugging away," he said.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$7.67 bushel
Posted county price — \$7.95
Corn — \$6.02 bushel
Posted county price — \$6.63
Milo — \$5.86 bushel
Soybeans — \$11.95 bushel
Posted county price — \$12.57
Millet — \$5 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$31.75 cwt.
Confection — no bid
Pinto beans — \$28
(Markets by Scoular Grain, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



Cowboys win title

Cowboy catcher Ryder Kling (right) had a pep talk with Garth Helton in the sixth inning of the first game on Tuesday. The Cowboys won the conference title. See photos, story on Page 12.

Colby post office changes would affect Goodland

By Kevin Bottrell

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A proposed consolidation of the Colby mail processing facility could move mail pickup time at area Post Offices including Goodland forward by as much as three hours.

A.U.S. Postal Service official took great pains Monday to tell a group of about 50 postal employees, newspaper publishers, city officials, business people and citizens the Colby post office is not being closed.

Rick Pivovar, district manager for Nebraska and Kansas, said the service is studying consolidating the mail processing centers in Colby and Hays into the one in Salina as part of an overarching plan to combat crippling revenue losses over the past decade. The service held a public meeting Monday at Colby Community College to discuss the proposal.

Pivovar said anyone who has comments about the plan should mail them by May 24, to Consumer Affairs Manager, Central Plains District, Box 19904, Omaha, Neb., 68119.

If the proposal goes through, Pivovar said, the bottom line for customers is mail put in the blue collection boxes for any destination outside the 677 area — basically the nine counties of northwest Kansas around Colby — would go to Salina to be sorted. Mail going to addresses in this area would be sorted



U.S. Post Office District Manager for Kansas and Nebraska answers a question on Monday about specific outgoing mail collection times for rural towns in northwest Kansas under a study to move the mail processing to Salina.

Photo by Kevin Bottrell/Colby Free Press

in Colby, then sent to individual post offices.

The key change in the Area Mail Processing plan is the change in collection times to the rural post offices that currently send mail to Colby for processing. Goodland Postmaster Penny Sheldon was asked about the change, and said anyone wanting mail to go out the same day would have to have it to the Goodland post

office by 1:45 p.m., or earlier, rather than the current 4 p.m. The truck leaves at 4:40 p.m., but to make the truck most mail needs to be at the post office about 30 minutes before that.

Editor Tom Betz of The Goodland Star-News said the basic problem for the newspaper will be moving the production time up to meet the earlier collection time.

"Most of our customers are in the 677 postal area," he said, "but to get the same service we will have to figure out how to change our production to meet the new deadline to get the papers to Colby."

He said it will probably have a similar effect on other businesses in Goodland who have always used the 4 p.m. collection time to get mail out each day.

"If this new time goes into effect if the mail is not to the post office by about 1:30 p.m. it will not matter when you mail it," he said. "We went to the meeting because we had heard the collection time would change, and wanted to get the changes to be able to look at our options."

"We hope other businesses in Goodland take the opportunity to write to the Post Office person in Omaha about any problems the earlier collection times will cause."

Pivovar said mail going to be processed in Salina should actually get improved delivery to much of eastern Kansas — overnight instead of the current two-day service. However, outbound trucks will have to leave earlier, and mail not brought in before the deadline will go out the next day.

If a letter misses the early truck, he said, the mailer doesn't lose anything. The service will be the same as if it had made the truck today — two-day delivery in much of the state.

Some sample cutoff time:

• Colby: now after 5 p.m., change to 4 p.m. (Central Time)

• Brewster: now 6:20 p.m., change to 3:25 p.m. (Central Time)

• St. Francis: now 4:40 p.m., would change to 2:15 p.m. (Central Time)

• Goodland: now 4:40 p.m. (Mountain Time), change to 1:45 p.m.

Trucks with mail from Norton, now sorted in Hays, would leave at 3:30 p.m. instead of 5:30 p.m. (Central Time)

Pivovar said there would be no changes in delivery times, retail services, business mail acceptance or commercial rates. However, some carriers, especially those in rural areas, wouldn't be able to make it back in time to get outgoing mail onto trucks that night.

A letter announcing the public meeting said, incorrectly, the pickup times would not change. Officials said that's true in some of the areas under study, but not here. The letter did not get changed to reflect that — and news stories about the meeting as a result were incorrect.

Pivovar said the consolidation will save about \$99,000 a year at the Colby post office, mainly from reduced work hours. The consolidation would reduce afternoon work hours here by 2,269 per year. That's

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