

Goodland in first place in Take Charge Challenge

By Tom Betz
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The totals at April 30 show Goodland in the lead in the Northwest Kansas Take Charge Challenge "by a slim margin," the Efficiency Kansas web site says, and Monday the city commissioners heard and update and approved housing energy audit equipment at the city office as part of a continuing effort to help reduce energy use.

The Take Charge Challenge involves cities across the state competing against other cities in their region to win \$100,000 in energy improvements. Goodland is competing against Colby, Oakley, Quinter, WaKeeney and Hoxie.

"One thing positive is that Goodland is now in first place," said City Manager Doug Gerber at the meeting on Monday. "The success is due to the time and energy on this by Amy Thorson and Shauna Johnson."

He said the city program with Efficiency

Kansas the commission approved a couple of months ago means the city can now get some of the equipment to do energy audits, and after a short time the equipment would become city property.

Johnson said presently there is not an energy auditor in town, but the city could house the equipment at the office, and could have two sets. She said Russ Rudy of Ozawkie, who has been doing audits, is working on a program at Northwest Tech to have a class to teach energy auditing. She said the college would not have to buy the equipment and could use what the city has.

Commissioner Josh Dechant said he had Rudy come do an energy audit and he had all the stuff in his pickup. He said it was more complicated than the expected. He said having the equipment available through the city would be a help, good for the city and at no cost.

Johnson said it would give the city the lat-

est updated equipment. She said Rudy found some of his equipment was out of date.

Gerber said it is a great benefit from the program.

"Amy had someone on the phone the other day," he said, "and Rudy went to their home and showed them some simple things they could do in their home."

Johnson said from what she has seen the homes in the area have a big need for improvement.

Dechant asked if people can sign up for the energy audit even after the Take Charge Challenge is over in September.

Johnson said people can continue to sign up for audits after Sept. 30, but the audit will cost more than the \$100 as it is under the contest.

Dechant made the motion to approve getting the audit equipment with a second by Commissioner Annette Fairbanks.

Mayor John Garcia asked if the city was

going to rent or lease the equipment to an auditor.

Gerber said the staff has not decided how that would be handled.

Garcia said that is something to be decided, and felt it would be good for the city to have a policy.

Gerber said he felt it was a good program and felt it was something to help the city and the citizens.

Dechant said if the equipment needs to be updated the city could put the rental money in a special fund to replace the equipment.

Garcia said he would agree to a rental of \$50 per audit.

Dechant said he agreed and that the auditor needs to take ownership, and make the rental part of the price of the audit after the current contest is over.

Commissioner Bill Finley wanted to know if the auditor could take the equipment out of town and if so if there should

be a different price.

Garcia wondered if that would change the city's liability.

Dechant said he was thinking about things like batteries that have to be replaced.

"It depends on if you were going to take it across the state," Gerber said. "I feel we need to act like a regional hub and define the area we are serving."

Johnson said she liked the idea of taking a deposit like the city does with meters. She said she liked the \$50 for the audit, and would suggest the auditor be local.

"He could go almost anywhere," she said, "but he needs to be local."

Garcia said Gerber and Johnson can discuss the details, and said there was a motion on the floor.

The commission voted unanimously to approve getting the energy audit equipment.

Supers and Super Foods to change store names to Bella's Market

In an effort to better reflect the family and community focus of the markets, Super Foods and Supers is changing its name to Bella's Market, and will include the new store expected to open in Goodland in the fall.

"Right now Village Markets owns eight stores with six different names," said Sam Mancini, president and

managing partner of the store group. "This has caused confusion in our communities and extra cost to our advertising and store improvements."

"We are focused on being the best available store for our community to buy its groceries, find resources for eating well and to supply meaningful jobs to our community."

Over the past six months the company has implemented a significant operational and store improvement plan, he said. The company has promoted Alan Carman, a long time Akron resident, to the Vice President of Operations role. The company has installed a state of the art point of sale system to make customer checkout

faster and easier. The company has implemented a new website, www.villagemarkets.us and now www.bellasmarket.us, and it has planned or has started the replacement of several coolers and freezers as well as certain store remodels.

"We were worried the communities didn't realize our commitment to

them," Mancini said. "My belief is if it is good enough for my own family and for our investors' families, for my daughter or my mother, then it will meet our communities' standards. That is our benchmark. Bella, a longtime family first name, is my daughter's name. Our commitment is to our communities families, and to building our community and being a part of it."

Alan Carman, vice-president of operations said, "We are committed to our communities and have demonstrated that commitment by truly giving back to them. We aren't looking for a pat on the back for this giving, only for the awareness we are doing it and for our customers to remember when they shop with us it goes back to their community in both donations and taxes. We plan to keep doing it as

long as we can."

The name change will come with new uniforms and several events at the store throughout the year, Mancini said. Due to the cost of signage, the signs on the outside will be changed as the year goes along.

The company has implemented a Secret Shopper program whereby the store gets rated on certain metrics so the store manager can see where they need to focus training or store displays, he said.

Changing the name to Bella's Market just the start of something special for us, he said.

Village Markets owns stores Colorado stores in Akron, Wray, Haxtun, Stratton, Limon, Wiggins, and Walden (North Park), and a store in St. Francis. The company plans to open a new store in Goodland this fall.

No reports of equine herpes virus found in Kansas

Horse owners are concerned about several recently confirmed cases of Equine Herpes Virus in states across the U.S. including Colorado.

The virus has resulted in the deaths of several horses and led to the cancellation of one major equine event and speculation about others.

Colorado currently has six confirmed cases of the virus EHV-1. There are additional suspect cases in other states. For those horse owners planning on traveling to Colorado, the requirements for entry are a

certificate of veterinary inspection, recorded temperature, current Coggins test and an entry permit.

Kansas Livestock Commissioner Bill Brown, a veterinarian, has received no reports of virus cases in Kansas.

"We are closely monitoring the situation, and talking to other states in an effort to obtain the most current information", said Brown.

One Kansas horse was at the Ogden, Utah, event where the virus is thought to have originated, but the horse did not return to Kansas. The animal is under quarantine outside

of Lincoln, Neb.

Brown said he and other Kansas Animal Health Department officials have no plans to force cancellation of any equine-related events at this time. This could change pending new developments or confirmation of the herpes virus in the state.

The herpes virus is not transmissible to humans. The contagious virus causes respiratory disease, neurologic disorders and death in the equine species. The most common way for the disease to spread is through direct horse-to-horse contact. Clinical symptoms include

fever, nasal discharge and incoordination of the hind limbs.

Brown said horse owners should practice proper biosecurity procedures and contact their local veterinarian with any questions or concerns regarding the disease or transmission.

Additional information on the disease is available at the Kansas State University Center for Veterinary Medicine website: <http://www.vet.ksu.edu/under/PublicHealth/VeterinaryAlerts>.

Update given on status of Van Gogh painting, park

PAINTING, from Page 1

Zimmerman and some design work by Dana Belshe and an associate of his.

He said the the second thing is the city has been working to get legal ownership from Sunflowers USA.

"I do not know all the history," he said, "but the group came together 10 years ago and got a grant to get the painting here and had ownership. Over the years Sunflowers USA became a defunct organization."

"That has been taken care of, and the group has reformed so they could disband. The group agreed to donate the painting to the city, and we have a bill of sale."

He said progress is partially contingent on Canadian artist Cameron Cross releasing the first right of refusal in his agreement with Sunflowers USA. He said the group did than and Cross did not want to purchase or take ownership of the painting. The city is working on a new marketing agreement with Cross.

Gerber said a marketing contract has been put together. He said the

contract will be between the city and Cross. He will have 8 percent of any materials sold and the city will have 92 percent.

He said in the original agreement there was a contract with the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, but they do not want to have a marketing agreement. He said the CVB does want to have the right to use the image, and he felt it was important to get that down in writing.

"That is what has been going on," he said, "and that is where we are."

He said the next step is to decide what we do to solve the problem of the painting condition where it is deteriorating. He said Michael Solomon will have a conference call with Cross on Thursday to talk about the painting and get his recommendation about what needs to be done.

Mayor John Garcia asked what the estimate is to bring the painting up to par.

Fairbanks said that depends on what options the city has, and that is why they are talking to Cross.

"There have been a lot of opinions," she said. "We need to have

facts about what needs to be done."

"It has been neglected for years," Gerber said. "If we agree is a major attraction for the people visiting we need to do something. I believe we need to do something."

"I guess I am all for it," Josh Dechant said

"You know my feelings," Fairbanks said.

"It is my feeling it is there and we need to use it," Garcia said. "We can utilize it as a way to generate income and capitalize on it to benefit the community."

"Who was going to maintain the painting was something discussed when it was proposed," Bill Finley said. "I felt it should have been the city all along."

"We need to do what we can to keep it going," Chris Zimmerman said.

Gerber said a lady from Mountain Marine of Denver came out last fall to look a the painting and her estimate was pretty high, over \$20,000.

Solomon said when he has the conversation with Cross on Thursday he will ask about what has been

done at the other two and see what suggestions he might have.

Fairbanks said it would be great to get Cross to come out and look at it himself.

Gerber said he would have the bill of sale and marketing plan on the next agenda.

Dechant asked about the CVB selling Van Gogh pins and any other items.

Donna Price, CVB executive director said the board has decided not to sell any times, but will have some they will give away such as a patch made to be given to the riders for the Run For The Wall.

Gerber said he did not see the promotional items as a source of major income, but feels the city needs to give it a try.

Price said in the past it was more of a problem because they had to be approved from both Cross and Sunflowers USA.

Gerber said Solomon and Karen Anderson, the High Plains Museum director, have some new ideas of how to make a better tie-in.



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