

from our viewpoint...

## Town shows off for weekend visitors

The past weekend was a great showcase for Goodland from the Northwest Tech College graduation on Friday, the Goodland High School graduation on Saturday and the overnight stop of the Run for the Wall riders.

Add the races at Sherman County Speedway on Saturday and several hundred people were in town for these events. Goodland citizens turned out to attend the events and were good hosts and patriotic supporters.

Max Jones Fieldhouse was filled on Friday for the Northwest Tech College graduation of 147 students who picked up technical certificates or associate degrees in 16 different academic areas.

Our congratulations to Troy Johnson of Stratton, Neb., who was chosen as the Student of the Year. Johnson picked up a technical certificate from heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration.

Those attending the graduation heard an inspiring speech from Mark Smith, owner of Pleasant Valley Ranch in Wallace County, and a former member of the college board of control. He talked about values to guide a person such as having the right attitude, being honest, dependable, responsive and be professional.

Saturday those attending the Goodland High School graduation heard an other inspiring speech from Dr. Tim Leavitt a 1963 Goodland graduate and now a cardiologist in Denver. He spoke about having a "radical life" and said the students should "Believe, be Prepared, be Passionate, seek Help, always Read and Love everyone" (BPPHRL).

Saturday night the Run for the Wall riders heard an inspiring speech from Mayor John Garcia as he thanked the people who were riding to Washington to the Vietnam War Memorial to remember those who gave their lives and for the missing in action.

In each case the audience cheered the speaker, and at the armory the riders gave Garcia a standing ovation.

Those attending the college graduation said it was a great program and the three cosmetology students summed it up in their song "The Climb."

Those attending the high school graduation remarked on how smoothly the program went and the smiles, hugs and cheers for each graduate.

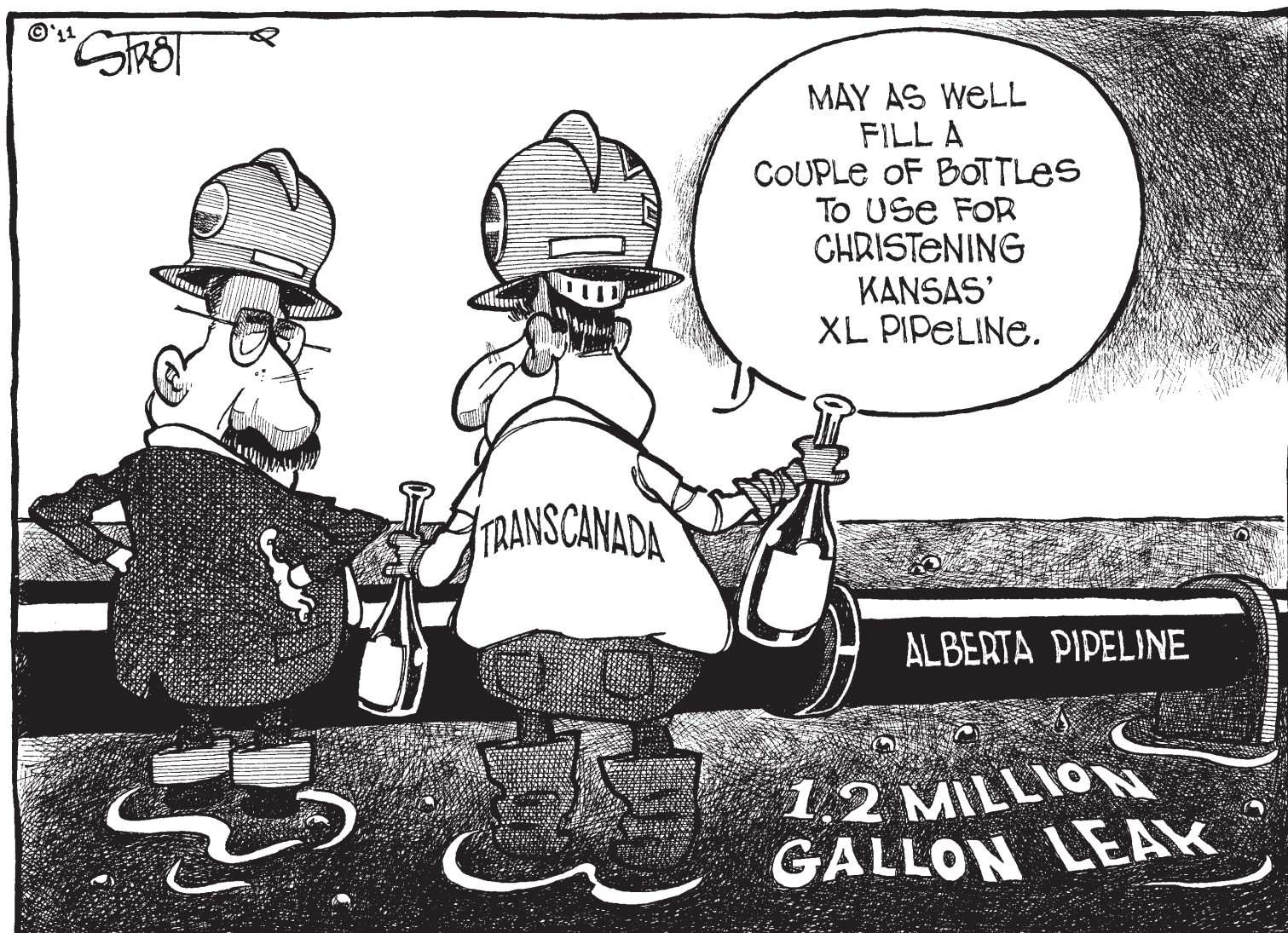
This was the second year for the stopover for the Run for the Wall riders, and many said they enjoy their stops in Goodland. Several said it was becoming the favorite stop on the trip. One said there would be an insurrection if the organizers decided to stop somewhere else.

Goodland citizens showed their patriotic support lining the streets on both Saturday evening and early Sunday morning to welcome the riders and to cheer them on their way further east. The riders continue east over this week gathering in Washington on Friday and on Saturday making a trip to Arlington Cemetery. Sunday all the cyclists will gather at the Pentagon for the Rolling Thunder ride to the Vietnam War Memorial and a special program celebrating Memorial Day.

At the Washington end of the trip the riders display tremendous feelings of comradeship and reverence as they walk past those dark granite slabs where Vietnam War names are carved and those depicted in the nearby Korean War and World War II Memorials.

It is great for Goodland all this came together on the same weekend to give the community a terrific opportunity to celebrate those graduating and starting their lives while remembering those who have served and are serving to protect our freedoms.

— Tom Betz



## Huge 'thank you' for community effort

To the Editor:

A huge thank you goes to the community of Goodland for their efforts to welcome the Run for the Wall Riders on Saturday and Sunday, May 21 and 22. It takes many people to make this a success and we had help from everyone to do so.

Special thanks to several sponsors who donated money and goods: Frontier Ag, Goodland Greenline, Sun Opta, Bank West, First National Bank, Western State Bank, Truck and Tractor, Eklund Insurance, Garrett Liquor, Garrett Laundry, Goodland Lions Club, Sunflower and Ruleton Eager Beavers 4-H Clubs, the VFW 1133 and it's Auxiliary and American Legion Riders from Colby. Numerous individuals helped as well.

Northwest Tech College deserves a round of applause for allowing us to use the Derrick Lutters Memorial Building. Their maintenance crew donated some hours to help clean up, set up and answer questions. The Collision Repair and Diesel students were a great help with that.

Rotary Club deserves special thanks for



### from our readers

to the editor

putting on the breakfast. That group really works hard early in the morning to get that put together. Steve Evert and crew served the dinner and that also was a huge effort.

The riders appreciate the gas donations, especially this year. Dave Daniels had donations from community members and the City to help with that project. Rick Stramel and the Boy Scouts are to be commended for their water service at the gas stop and for helping clean up at the dinner.

Goodland Sunflower badges from the Convention Bureau were a big hit. It didn't take long for the word to spread they were available and the riders certainly appreciated them. I'm sure they will show up on the vests. Curtis Duncan, the radio station and Tom Betz at The Goodland Star-News deserve thanks for their

promotion of this event.

Thanks to Kiwanis members who put up the flags. It sure made the roadways look special. And to the residents on Eighth Street and Caldwell Ave. who decorated their yards with flags and signs. Again, the riders commented on how great it is to see those flying as they come in and when they are leaving.

Dixie Teeter and Demi Mitcheck received many compliments on the singing. So thanks to them as well.

Comments from the riders: "It's great to have a home cooked meal." "Dinner was just excellent." "Dinner was great---a real western Kansas meal." "Thanks for the hospitality." "The huge flag is awesome." "This is becoming my favorite stop."

The route coordinator indicated they will be back again next year, so mark your calendars.

RFTW Committee  
Dick Liess, Dave Daniels, Darren Kandy, Debbie Lucas, Joe and Jo Ann Wahman

## Budget passes on first try Friday morning

As we wrap up the final week of this session the primary focus was to pass a budget on Thursday morning. We started the day waiting on the revisers office to print copies of the budget. They had been working round the clock since it had been agreed on by the House and the Senate, a day earlier. We spent most of the Thursday working on the bills coming over from the Senate.

The reviser estimated the budget would be ready to look over at 5 p.m. The budget would first go to the Senate for passage then over to the House for approval. By the time the Senate had worked the budget and passed it over to the House it was approximately 2 a.m. Friday morning. We worked the budget until approximately 5 a.m. and, fortunately, the budget was passed on the first try by six votes.

Budget Details

At the beginning of the session, anticipated budget shortfall was approximately \$500 million. The budget approved by the House and Senate leaves the state with a \$50 million surplus. More than \$750 million dollars was cut out of the 2012 all funds budget. This is the first cut to the all funds budget since 1972.

K-12 education saw a cut of \$18 on the base state aid per pupil setting the base at \$3,780. This was what Governor Brownback proposed in his original budget.

Mental health funding for community mental health centers totaled \$10.2 million, a \$3 million increase over what was passed in the House. This will be a significant help in ensuring valuable Kansans continue to receive the services they so desperately need.

\$1.1 million was allocated to local health departments and \$1 million to Safety Net



### rick billinger

state rep.

Clinics.

The Oil and Gas Valuation Depletion Trust Fund, funded through severance taxes for counties with at least \$100,000 in severance tax receipts was left untouched. House amendments would have taken \$3.5 million from the fund and transferred it to the State General Fund. The ending balance for the fund is anticipated to be approximately \$21.0 million for FY 2012.

Funded \$6 million for Kan-Ed. House. Kan-Ed is an important tool for schools, libraries and especially the hospitals to use for telemedicine.

There were several other important bills passed late in the day which were important to rural Kansas, including our EMS services.

The bill amends current law regarding emergency medical services provided by individuals regulated by the Board of Emergency Medical Services. Changes made in 2010 allowed EMS attendants to transition from authorized activities to scope of practice, changed the names of some attendant levels, and allowed for enhancement of skills set to provide for a higher level of care. This bill makes changes to support the changes made in 2010 and allows EMS attendants to:

Option to transition to a lower level of certification;

Change the transition initiation date from

### where to write

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### Nor'West Newspapers

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