

weather report

83°
noon
Monday



Today

- Sunset, 8:14 p.m.
- Sunrise, 5:31 a.m.
- Sunset, 8:14 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 75 degrees
- Humidity 59 percent
- Sky mostly cloudy
- Winds east 4 mph
- Barometer 30.01 inches and steady
- Record High today 106° (1954)
- Record Low today 44° (1895)

Last 24 Hours*

- High Sunday 99°
- Low Sunday 65°
- Precipitation 0.59
- This month 2.22
- Year to date 11.69
- Above normal 0.20 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon, a high near 92, winds calm switching to the east at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 66. Wednesday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon, a high near 93, winds out of the east at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 68.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Mostly sunny and hot, a high near 99 and a low around 66. Friday: Mostly sunny and hot with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms at night, a high near 99 and a low around 70.

(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$6.38 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$6.60
 - Corn — \$6.19 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$6.60
 - Milo — \$5.93 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$12.50 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$12.89
 - Millet — \$5 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$32.20 cwt.
 - Confection — no bid
 - Pinto beans — \$28 (new crop)
- (Markets by Scoular Grain, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News



Stallions win over Wray

Coach Harvey DeLaRosa huddles with his young team during the first game on Friday against Wray at Centennial Park. The Stallions are in Wray today for their final doubleheader. See photos, story on Page 10.

County asked to join Gov's plan

By Tom Betz

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City commissioners have been wrestling with a large financial obligation created by a health insurance benefit originally created years ago to bridge the gap between an employee retiring and being eligible for Medicare or KPERS (Kansas Public Employee Retirement System).

City Manager Doug Gerber said he had taken a stab at rewriting the policy to reflect the discussion the commissioners had before.

He said he was doing this because the commissioners wanted him to put something into policy form to review.

Major changes Gerber included from the previous commission discussion was reducing the benefit from three years to one year, making it a benefit to pay health insurance for the employee and to limit it to employees who separate in good standing and who are

KPERS eligible.

Commissioner Bill Finley questioned changing from three to one year. He said he had talked to some of those who were around when the original policy was put in place in the 90s. He said the idea was to be a bridge between retirement and when the employee was covered by Medicare. He said it is possible for an employee to be KAPERS eligible at 62, and Medicare does not cover until 65.

Gerber said what he took from the previous discussion was the benefit needed to be limited in scope and put a time limit on the benefit.

Mayor John Garcia said that is what he remembered and what he got from Commissioner Josh Dechant, who was absent from the meeting.

Finley said if the benefit was meant to be a way to cover the gap between retirement and Medicare it could be more than one year,

and felt some of the existing employees may be counting on this as a part of their future retirement plans.

Gerber said that is true, especially for an employee who started after high school. He said if they worked for 30 years they would be eligible. He said that is harder for new employees to reach as the magic number for KPERS is now 95 rather than 85.

Finley said he did not feel the city is going to see many stay for 35 years.

Gerber said he would agree because the average person today works six or seven jobs and in several different fields.

Garcia asked what type of position the city is in with the financial ramifications.

Gerber said it was in the last packet, and at that time it showed the city with a possible financial obligation of more than \$200,000 based on the existing language.

"What are we getting to," Garcia said.

"If the intent is to bridge the gap you have to go with what Finley is talking about," Gerber said. "If not a bridge it is just an added benefit to the employee. If you go with the bridge intent the financial cost would be higher."

He said the biggest cut is to make sure it is for the single rather than the family health insurance. He said that would cut the cost in half as the family rate is more than \$800 and the single is about \$330.

Finley said reducing or doing away with the lump sum could have some affect, and reducing the policy to a single more of an effect.

"I feel it is going to hurt our employees," he said. "We want them to see we are making a concerted effort to meet them half way."

"What about doing away with it entirely," said Commissioner Annette Fairbanks.

"That is what makes it so hard," said Com-

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I-70 work continues

The public will continue to see orange in Sherman County, as highway projects continue along part of the I-70 corridor.

The project to mill and patch the westbound lanes from Exit 17 to Exit 19 will continue to occur for the next week to 10 days. Crews with Bryant and Bryant., of Halstead, will then start patching the eastbound lanes between the same two exits.

"The eastbound lanes will require a week or so of patching since the concrete pavement is less deteriorated," said KDOT Area Engineer Eric Oelschlagler of the Atwood office.

I-70 will receive an ultra-thin bonded overlay on the driving lanes between Exits 12 and 17 as early as this week.

KDOT awarded this construction contract to Venture Corporation, totaling \$1,132,733.

Weather permitting, this job should be completed by the first part of August.

The three-year project to reconstruct a portion of I-70 from the Colorado/Kansas state line to Caruso (Exit 12) is a separate working contract; and it is still underway.

Beginning Thursday, subcontractor Ninemire Fence Construction, of Hill City, will start to replace the existing fencing, which is original to the 1970 construction of that portion of interstate. The existing fence will be replaced with five-strand, barbed wire fencing. The fence work will be complete sometime this fall.

Currently workers with Klaver Construction are extending concrete drainage structures along the portion of the corridor.

"The drainage structures are being extended so we may upgrade the slopes to current standards and remove some guardrail in a couple spots," said Oelschlagler.

Bridges Inc. is still working on the four eastbound bridges.

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Harry Potter costume contest planned

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II will open at the Sherman Theater with a special midnight showing on Thursday, and to celebrate a special costume contest has been planned.

Dave Branda, theater owner, said Dr. Patrick Gleason has agreed to sponsor a Harry Potter costume contest for those attending the special showing.

Branda said the doors will open at 11:15 p.m. on Thursday, and the costumes will be judged as people come into the theater. Prizes will be given for first, \$50; second \$30; and third, \$20.

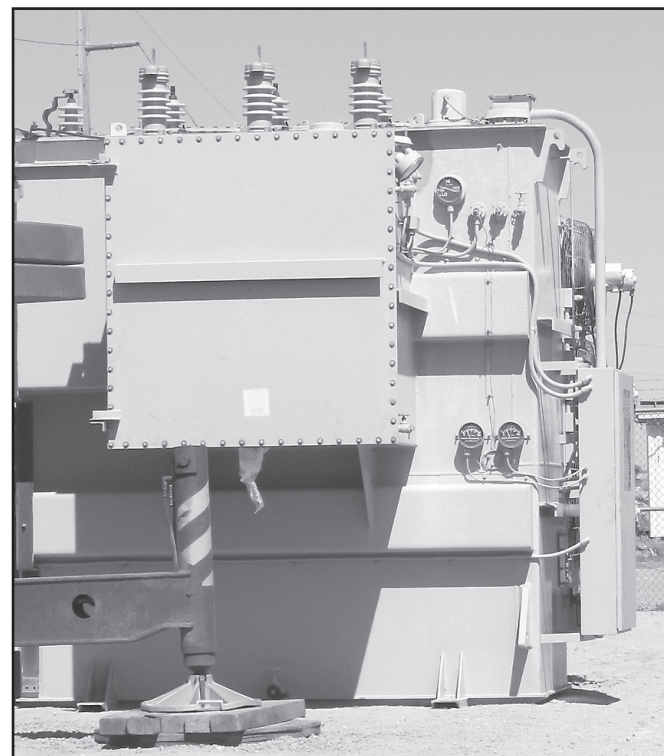


City replaces 30-year old transformer



A problem last year with the main transformer at the tie-in with Sunflower Electric caused Goodland to order a new transformer, and it was installed on Thursday. Rod Blake, power plant superintendent, said he had hoped to get through the summer, but another problem with the transformer changed those plans. Chad's Crane Service of Salina was brought into move the old transformer out and the replacement into position. City Manager Doug Gerber said it was good timing as Sunflower was working on their line that day. The Goodland power plant was running for most of Thursday while the switch was made. The old transformer had been in place for about 30 years Blake said.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News



Taking apart the old transformer (above) to use parts on the replacement (top photo). The old transformer (right) after being moved.