

Vets bicycle platoon plans overnight stop in town

A group of 20 bicycle riders left Bell, Calif., Wednesday on a ride to St. Louis, Mo., to raise awareness about homeless veterans and plan to overnight in Goodland on Monday.

The Vet Hunter Project, in conjunction with parent organization, Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, a 501(c)3, is honored and proud to be part of "The Ride against Homelessness Bike Ride." This monumental bike ride is designed to raise awareness and support of our homeless with a focus on the homeless Veterans, said Gary Douglas.

The ride will be conducted by a diverse 20 member team of Active Duty service

members, Veterans, Wounded Warriors, Supporters and Homeless Veterans.

The journey started Wednesday, from The Salvation Army Bell Shelter, Bell, California. The final destination will be St. Louis, Missouri.

Upon arrival in St. Louis the group will participate and address AMVETS National and the Department of Veterans Affairs during their National Stand Down on Sunday, Aug. 7. VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and National AMVETS Commander Jerry Hottel will be in attendance at the AMVETS National Opening Ceremony where The Vet

Hunters Project Project will be given the opportunity to share the names and faces of our forgotten Warriors we have met on our journey, Douglas said.

The total projected days of the "Vet-Working" mission will be approximately 18 days. On our journey, The Vet Hunters Project Platoon will visit homeless shelters, Veterans hospitals and burn centers to meet with our Homeless Heroes and Wounded Warriors. Vet Hunter and Platoon member Dave Adams, will perform his "Comin Home" song at all our engagements.

We have a film crew documenting the

entire ride, including our preparations, training, though to St. Louis, MO. Actor, Jon Voigt is narrating and going to appear in the documentary to show his support. This is an amazing opportunity to continue the impact and awareness the bicycle ride will bring to all Americans.

The group made it to Bullhead, Nev., the first night, and were to make it to Grand Junction by tonight. The riders will overnight in Denver on Sunday and visit the VA Medical Center.

The plan is to ride to Goodland on Monday, and to Salina on Tuesday. The riders

plan to be in St. Louis by Thursday night.

The original plan was to ride down I-70, but without special permission that is not allowed in Kansas. Vet Hunter Platoon member Todd Morgan said the riders will be using bike paths and frontage roads where they cannot ride on I-70.

For those in western Kansas these riders will probable be seen Monday afternoon along old U.S. 24 as they ride from Burlington, and head east to Colby and Oakley on Tuesday morning.

The bicycle ride and Vet Hunters Project is on Facebook and at www.vethunters.org.

City budget tight for next year

CITY, from Page 1

Services and Relay for Life.

Gerber said the staff had put money in the grant matching fund in case the city does get another grant.

He said economic development has been moved to a separate section to make it separate so they can show the county what is being done.

General Government at a glance:

- Police – budget is up about \$25,000, and Volk said that was because of the three or four resignations and had to pay benefits. And with new people coming in had to give some room for the people and chief of police.
- Commissioner Josh Dechant asked what benefits for those who resigned.
- Gerber said same as others half of vacation and sick leave.
- Question about buying new police vehicle, and Gerber said he would bring it up.
- Acting Police Chief Joni Showalter said the department has five vehicles and all are Crown Victoria's. Typically the officers put about 30,000 miles on each year.
- Commissioner Bill Finley asked about the condition of the 2007, which is the one to be replaced.
- Showalter said it was not necessarily the mileage, but figured it would have about 100,000 miles when traded in. She said it is the wear and tear on the unit after five years on the streets. She said they are looking at going a different way with this replacement.
- "Could it wait," Gerber said, "of course, but we have a large vehicle fleet. We need vehicles to do our job and maintain a consistent rota-

tion. We can skip a year, but it will eventually catch up."

He said they are looking at getting a truck rather than a car, and it might be helpful in winter. He said the Crown Vic's trade in is about \$2,000, and pickups do much better getting about \$15,000 for the sheriff's department.

Showalter said they were looking at the Partners program offered through the KHP.

- Municipal court includes potential expenses for prisoner care and indigent defense.
- Animal control have contract, budget \$47,600 and county pays 30 percent of total.
- Transportation van expense is offset by state revenue of about \$15,000. Gerber said they were trying to be more strict about people paying and it is now \$1 per trip (one way). Before it was 50 cents and free will donation.
- Fire department part of Brian James salary and paying volunteers comes out of this. Losing two volunteers in the next few weeks, and have one guy who is interested.

Gerber said the fire consultant is not in the budget.

Finley asked about the feasibility study combining fire departments.

"I am assuming that is the guy who came and has already been paid," Volk said.

Gerber said there was additional discussion about doing a consolidation study. He did contact one and so did Darrel Cloyd. The cost came back about \$19,000. He said at this point it appears the county has dropped this.

- Building inspection budget they have cut professional services down to \$70,000.

Asked about the cost of demolishing unfit structures Volk said they have spent \$21,000 to date, and have about \$20,000 left. She said these are billed to the owners and if not paid are put on the taxes.

Dechant said the city needs to continue this project.

- Streets and alley is where street maintenance comes from. One thing under this Rich Simon, public works director, said he is planning to replace the shop heaters that were put in 22 years ago.
- Airport has three budgets Gerber said. One is for general operations, and there is a transfer to pay the city back for the hangar purchase. He said the city gets income from the hangars and that is why the city pays property taxes. He said the T-hangar rents are not appropriate, and need to be raised. He said he knows this is a sensitive issue.
- Dechant said the commission could try to raise the rates again.
- Parks budget cut to reduce the number of mowers.
- Museum is where Gerber said Karen Anderson is trying to build up the museum.
- Cemetery the major expense is professional services and go up every year about 2 percent.
- Recreation the city has a contract with Goodland Activity Center \$45,000 to manage youth programs.
- Steever Water Park had a good summer so far Gerber said.

Dechant said he has had great feedback on the water park staff this year.

That is all the departments covered under general government.

Police looking for information



Goodland police are asking for anyone who has information about the recent rash of graffiti on Main Ave., and this one (LOVE) at Kear's Liquor. Andy Kear said the paint was still wet when he arrived on Monday. Chief Joni Showalter said on Saturday about 4:47a.m. people were seen on a roof located in the 1000 block of Main, and had sprayed graffiti on a wall at 1010 Main. On Monday there were additional reports of graffiti. Showalter said the police have

identified several individuals of interest, and is continuing the investigation. "We are taking other actions to deter such criminal acts," she said. Showalter is asking everyone to be aware and report any suspicious activity or behavior. Anyone with information is asked to come to the police department at 204 W. 11th, or call (785) 890-4570. People can contact Crime Stoppers at (785) 899-5665 with any information.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Night on the Town

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www.goodlandgac.com

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