

# Cowboys open district play at Norton tonight

By Tom Betz

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Goodland Cowboys begin district play at 6 p.m. tonight in Norton with both teams coming in with 3-3 records.

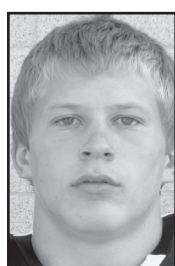
Goodland evened their record by defeating Colby 27-18 on the road on Friday. The Norton Bluejays fell to Perryton, Texas 28-19 in Norton to give them a 3-3 record.

Cowboys Coach Kent Teeter felt the Colby game was a typical rivalry game.

"Both teams played hard," he said. "I thought we took over the game in the fourth quarter. Defense played well and the offense had a great final drive to put it away."

Goodland had a total of 335 yards of offense with 274 rushing and 61 passing.

In the passing Dax Ruhs completed one pass to Ryan Hillmer for 20 yards and Reed Bellamy completed two of seven attempts for 41 yards with both completions



Ruhs



Avelar



Smith



Gastineau

going to Hillmer with the longest for 30 yards.

Ruhs carried the ball 30 times for 162 yards and his longest was for 34 yards for the first Cowboy touchdown.

Bellamy carried the ball eight times for 86 yards and his longest was for 58 yards.

Riley Oharah carried two times for six yards, but his last carry was for a touchdown on a one-yard run in the fourth quarter.

The Cowboys lost one fumble by Oharah and Ruhs was able to recover his own fumble down by the

end zone in the fourth quarter.

Bellamy was intercepted one time in the second half. Colby fumbled once recovered by Cowboy Tyler Gastineau.

The Cowboys intercepted Eagle quarterback Luke Cox twice with Rush getting one he returned for 27 yards and Hillmer getting the other that he returned for 10 yards.

The Cowboys punted one time in the game with Taylen Smith kicking 25 yards.

Looking ahead to the district game tonight Coach Teeter said Norton has been a running team, but

have changed a bit this year.

"Norton has been primarily a running team in the past," he said. "This year they are about 60 percent run, and 40 percent pass."

"The district plays begins this week. I think our district is wide open between all four of the teams. We all have about the same record."

The game starts half an hour earlier at 6 p.m., and the pre-game on KKCI 102.5 FM will be at 5:30 p.m.

The Bluejays are averaging 89 yards passing per game and 208 yards rushing through the first five games.

Norton averaged 30 points per game and completes 21 percent of the passes in the first five games.

Norton defeated Ellis 38-7 at home, St. Francis 53-8 on the road, lost to Plainville 53-13 on the road, defeated Oberlin 27-14 at home, lost to Smith Center 58-20 on the road and lost to Perryton 28-19 at home.

Jordan Wahlmeier is the Bluejays quarterback and has completed 21 of 51 passes for 444 yards for an average of 89 yards per game. He has thrown four touchdowns and four interceptions. His longest pass has been 64 yards.

Jacob Brooks is the Bluejays leading rusher carrying 50 times for 310 yards and one touchdown.

Wahlmeier has carried 18 times for 153 yards and three touchdowns. Trey Milan has carried 16 times for 155 yards.

The Cowboys are averaging 119 yards passing per game and 162 yards rushing.

Goodland averages 20 points per game and has a 44 percent passing completion.

Bellamy has completed 43 of 86 attempts for 692 yards. He has thrown for five touchdowns and seven interceptions.

His longest pass this year has been 62 yards.

With his 162 yards against Colby

Ruhs is the Cowboys leading rusher with 400 yards on 81 carries and five touchdowns. His long run was the 34 yard touchdown in the first quarter against Colby.

Bellamy has carried 43 times for 218 yards and one touchdown.

Garrett Taylor was injured for the Colby game, but has 273 yards on 73 carries and one touchdown.

Oharah has carried 25 times for 71 yards and two touchdowns.

Hillmer is the Cowboys leading receiver with 244 yards on 17 catches. He has one touchdown coming in the Colby game and the longest catch was 62 yards.

Oharah has 10 catches for 239 yards and two touchdowns with his longest for 51 yards.

Austin Avelar has six catches for 129 yards and his longest is 51 yards.

Avelar kicked three extra points in the Colby game to give him nine, and he has four field goals.

## Author says rural Kansas towns can find ways to survive, grow

By Kayla Cornett

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Disappearing schools, retirees going elsewhere and closing businesses are just some of the reasons why rural America has been on the decline, says author, attorney and former reporter Richard Wood.

Wood spoke on Sept. 20, at Colby Community College, part of the Dr. Max Pickerrill Lecture Series. He discussed his latest book "Survival of Rural America: Small Victories and Bitter Harvests."

Wood received his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas, his masters degree from New York University and a graduate degree in law from Georgetown University in Washington D.C. His book was published in 2008.

For his book, Wood decided he wanted to find out why people are leaving rural communities, so he traveled to numerous Kansas towns to see what each of them was doing to try and keep residents as well as bring new people to their towns. He also researched where people are moving to and what drew them to the new place.

Wood found that people tend to move to places that are retirement destinations and have natural amenities. Kansas and other states located in the Great Plains are not ideal retirement destinations and are low in natural amenities and he said he thinks this is related to these states' population decline.

Wood said he chose to look specifically at Kansas towns because he sees Kansas as a microcosm of the world and as a surrogate for rural communities.

He started his tour of Kansas in Minneapolis, which was using an approach where the city would provide land for free as long as the resident built a house on the land. This approach hasn't helped them with the decline, though.

A few of the towns he visited were disappearing after their school districts closed. Ada, Delphos and Wilson were towns like this, and

they also had close to no commercial activity. Wilson's community center and newspaper closed down, but the town tried to attract people to it by renovating a hotel and turning an old school into an assisted living apartment complex. In the end, it didn't seem to help.

Wood said that Tipton is a town that defies the rule of losing a school district. After the closing, approximately 250 residents banded together, raised money and opened up their own private elementary school. Wood said the town's numbers are still dropping, but the residents still made the effort and it might turn Tipton around some day.

Wood observed other towns, like Lucas, that try to draw people in with something unusual. Lucas proclaims itself as the folk art capital of Kansas. It has a place called the Garden of Eden that is full of art work, a folk art center and a renovated community theater. Still, Wood found that Lucas may be attracting visitors, but not actual residents and it lost 10 percent of its population in the last 10 years.

Other communities, such as Palco, made good decisions that kept their schools open. Palco has another thing going for it though, in that its residents are not poor and are willing to invest in the town. It actually increased its population by 1.5 percent in the last 10 years.

Zurich was a town that made bad decisions by not bargaining with its school district, and when Wood visited it, Zurich had almost no commercial activity and has lost 23 percent of its population in the past 10 years.

Two towns, Plainville and Sedan, were able to turn their situations around thanks to one person. In Plainville, a man who grew up there ended up running a high-end furniture business. He decided to move back to Plainville and renovate old structures and run his business from

them. This brought in new jobs and boosted the commercial activity in the town.

Sedan had started out by trying to have something unusual in town. It claimed to have the World's Longest Yellow Brick Road, which was actually sidewalks with yellow-painted bricks lining the sides. The road was not a successful attraction, but then a wealthy man moved to Sedan and decided to use his money to renovate the town. Wood said the man had considerable success in making Sedan more attractive, and he also brought his successful beef business to town, which increased the commercial activity. Sedan even tried to build a park to add to its attractiveness, but it still lost 16 percent of its population in the last 10 years.

The last type of towns Wood talked about were places that had bad luck with mother nature. Codell suffered from three tornadoes that occurred on the exact same day three years in a row. Wood said that residents there were sick of the natural disasters and gave up and left. Atwood had the bad luck of being on a highway that is hardly traveled and has a lake that is turning to mud. Wood said Lake Atwood is the town's pride and joy, but moisture is decreasing more and more every year, which is drying it out.

After all of his research, Wood said that his book discovered a lot of bad news, but there is still one piece of good news: these towns tend to be great places to raise children.

"There is something to be said about living a simple and safer life," Wood said.

He finished his lecture by briefly discussing other subjects in his book that he wasn't able to get to in the lecture, such as the things the government should be doing to help rural America as well as stories of people doing things that others can relate to.

## Goofy gets ride to Flatlander Festival



A stuffed "Goofy" accompanied Dave and Karla Cunningham of Ft. Lupton, Colo., to the Flatlanders Festival. The Cunninghams, who have been to Flatlanders Festivals in previous years brought two motorcycles and the Disney character this year. Goofy belongs to their Christian Motorcycle Club and has been to the annual motorcycle gatherings at Sturgis, S.D., on the Vietnam Veterans' Ride to the Wall in Washington D.C., and to many other places across the country. Goofy gets to ride with a club member who has done something, er, goofy. The mascot earned its ticket to Flatlanders when Dave forgot to fill his gas tank on the way to a ride. "I didn't run out of gas, but I had to drop out of the ride," Dave admitted.

Photo by Ava Betz/The Goodland Star-News

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