

weather report



61°

10:30 a.m.
Monday

Today

• Sunset, 7:37 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 5:51 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:38 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 61 degrees
- Humidity 57 percent
- Sky cloudy
- Winds south 12 mph
- Barometer 30.02 inches and rising
- Record High today 90° (1953)
- Record Low today 22° (1994)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	86°
Low Wednesday	48°
Precipitation	0.02
This month	2.16
Year to date	3.27
Above normal	0.03 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, a high near 69, winds breezy south at 15 to 35 switching to the north and a low around 35. Saturday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers after noon, a high near 62, winds out of the north at 5 to 15 mph switching to the east and a low around 42.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon, a high near 58 and a low around 48. Monday: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers.

(National Weather Service)



Sixth graders get career ideas

Students from the Northwest Tech computer graphics department (above) showed off the technology they use in class to a group from Grant Junior High at the Sixth Grade Job Fair on Wednesday. Sixth graders from northwest Kansas, eastern Colorado and southwest Nebraska came to the campus to check out various college programs as well as booths from the city of Goodland, Sherman County emergency medical services, and more.

Photos by Kevin Bottrell/The Goodland Star-News



local markets

10:30 a.m.

Wheat — \$5.92 bushel	Posted county price — \$5.83
Corn — \$5.87 bushel	Posted county price — \$6.09
Milo — \$5.63 bushel	
Soybeans — \$13.29 bushel	Posted county price — \$13.80
Millet — \$11.50 hundredweight	
Sunflowers	
Oil current crop — \$27.05 cwt.	Confection — no bid
Pinto beans — \$28	

(Markets by Scouler Grain, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

Post offices get reprieve from Senate

By Tom Betz

nt.betz@nwkans.com

The U.S. Senate took a step to save rural post offices at Edson and Kanorado by approving the 21st Century Postal Service bill on a 62-37 vote Wednesday afternoon.

The Senate worked through 39 amendments beginning on Tuesday and finishing Wednesday evening and approving the final version on a bipartisan vote, including the support of Kansas Senators Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts.

The bill first proposed in September provides the U.S. Postal Service some flexibility in solving financial problems, but seeks to preserve many of the rural post offices and processing centers under threat of closure with a Postal Service self-imposed May 15 deadline.

Pressure was put on Congress by the Postmaster General last year when he announced the Postal Service was facing a financial crisis and began taking measures he felt were required to keep the service operating. Among his proposals was closing of about 3,700 post offices

across the country and about 200 mail processing centers plus delaying first class mail delivery by a day and dropping Saturday delivery.

Sen. Moran is a member of the Homeland Security Committee, which includes the Postal Service, has been working on the bill and authored several amendments to help save rural Kansas post offices including Kanorado and Edson.

"The postal reform bill will provide USPS with flexibility to restructure and save billions of dollars — while preventing taxpayer dollars from being used for a bailout," Sen. Moran said. "I am pleased the bill passed by the Senate expands on critical language I successfully had adopted in committee to provide an answer to the question so many Kansans have been asking: 'what do we have to do to save our post office?' Once passed by the House and signed into law the language will help protect rural post offices by defining a structure for what the Postal Service must consider as it

See SENATE, Page 5

More inmates escape custody

The same day that four state inmates escaped from a county jail in Minneapolis, a convicted sex offender escaped from Lansing Correctional Facility in Leavenworth, and he hasn't been recaptured yet.

A Department of Corrections news release said Gary Leslie Furthmyer, 59, escaped from the prison's steam plant early April 18. He had been serving a six- to 25-year

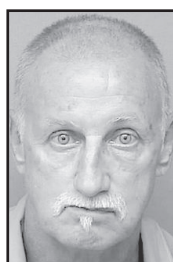
after being convicted in 1985 of indecent liberties with a child and aggravated failure to appear. He has escaped twice before, once in 1988 and again in 2005.

Furthmyer is a white male, stands five feet, nine inches tall and weighs 185 pounds. His whereabouts are unknown and he is considered armed and dangerous.

A little closer to home, an inmate escaped the Thomas County Jail in Colby on Saturday, but he was recaptured within minutes.

Jeff Anthony Benedetti, 35, from Colorado, crawled through a fence behind the jail during a shift change Saturday afternoon. He had found a place where the chain link fence had become unraveled, and created a hole. The alarm went out at 4:23 p.m., and he had been taken back into custody by 4:31. Sheriff's deputies and Colby Police officers caught up with him behind Beulah Cemetery and had to shoot him with a tazer to get him under control.

Benedetti had been in jail for about three months awaiting trial on drug charges and assault against a police officer.



Furthmyer

State Legislature returns to work

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkans.com

Despite all the business still left to do, both Rep. Rick Billinger and Sen. Ralph Ostmyer described the House and Senate's first day back on Wednesday as a "pretty slow day."

The Legislature recessed on March 30 for the traditional mid-session break. Both houses reconvened Wednesday for the veto session. Billinger said he expected the first day back to be slow. Time was spent in conference committees, joint committees between the two houses.

One of the most high profile issues still before the Legislature is redistricting, redrawing the legislative boundaries to account for the population change over the past 10 years.

Secretary of State Kris Kobach held a press conference on Monday, reminding the Legislature that they have until May 11 to finish. Failure to do so, he said, will cause a constitutional crisis in Kansas.

Billinger said even though the Senate has a Republican majority, it is almost evenly split between conservatives and moderates. The two sides are clashing over the process. It is also an election year for both houses, something Billinger suspects is holding up the process. Some Legislators have wanted to draw the map so challengers would be put in other districts, he said,

which amounts gerrymandering — redrawing district lines for political advantage.

Billinger said the House has passed two maps, with more than 100 of the 125 representatives voting in favor. The second map, he said, fixed some oversights with the first such as a small town that was split between districts. That helped it pick up several more votes.

Billinger said he has filed to run in this year's election. He said he didn't know of any challengers, but depending on what happens with redistricting, he may have a significantly different district than the last time around. Under the House plan, Billinger's district, which currently includes Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan and Graham counties, would lose Graham County while picking up Wallace, Logan and most of Gove counties.

At the Republican party convention to replace Rep. Jim Morrison in 2010, support from Graham County delegates was instrumental in Billinger's election.

"I'd hate to lose Graham County," he said. "But Ward (Cassidy) will do a good job for them."

However, he said, that redistricting plan was killed by the Senate. Ostmyer said he didn't understand why that map was rejected. Ostmyer's Senate map was also rejected. Billinger said that proposal was a good one, with incumbents kept

apart and no challengers drawn out of their districts.

Billinger said that since the Senate hasn't been able to pass a map for the House, the House Redistricting Committee may give them until the end of the day today, after which it will come up with a map for the Senate.

"Every state but Kansas has finished their redistricting," Billinger said. "It's time for us to step up and get it done."

Ostmyer said he is disappointed that the Legislature couldn't get the process finished during the regular session, going on to say he doesn't have a good feel for what the Senate leadership will do on the issue. There are some who want to push the primary election back to give the Legislature more time.

"I think that's a pretty poor idea," he said.

Billinger said he suspected some legislators want to drag their heels and leave it up to the Kansas Supreme Court. At his Monday press conference, Kobach said this is not an option allowed by the state constitution.

"Contrary to popular misconception, the Kansas Supreme Court justices do not have the authority to draw the redistricting lines themselves," Kobach said. "They can only declare legislatively drawn

See LEGISLATURE, Page 5

Talking up sobriety



The Goodland Elks Lodge, the Community Partnership for Prevention and Education and the Students Against Destructive Behavior brought a man named Superstar and his partner Rockstar to speak to youth and adults on Wednesday night at the Goodland Elks Lodge. Superstar talked about his 15 years of being addicted to alcohol and drugs and how he achieved sobriety.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

inside today



More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News



Baseball team loses to Lakin

The Goodland High baseball team lost a pair of games to Lakin, one of the top-ranked teams in the state, on Monday. It's not all bad news though for Goodland athletes. The high school golf team won a meet in Hoxie, and the junior high track teams had many first place finishes in Scott City.

See Page 10

