

weather report**81°**10:30 a.m.
Monday**Today**

• Sunset, 7:23 p.m.

Wednesday

• Sunrise, 6:13 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:21 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 73 degrees

• Humidity 47 percent

• Sky sunny

• Winds southwest 15 mph

• Barometer 30.23 inches

and steady

• Record High today 100° (1954)

• Record Low today 40° (1964)

Last 24 Hours*

High Sunday 94°

Low Sunday 62°

Precipitation 0.00

This month 0.90

Year to date 8.16

Below normal 7.41 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Clear in the morning then partly cloudy. High of 91 and breezy. Winds from the south at 10-20 mph. Evening clear and breezy low of 55. Wednesday: Clear in the morning then partly cloudy. High of 91 and breezy. Winds from the SSW at 15 to 20 mph with gust to 30 mph. Evening clear with low of 54.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Clear to partly cloudy, high of 90 and low 55. Friday: Clear with high of 86 and low of 55. Saturday: Partly cloudy with a high of 88 and a low of 57.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

Enjoying life in rural Kansas

Chisum Annie and Ellie Goodwin, ages 7 and 6, of Goodland took the opportunity to splash around in a pool of water left by one of this year's all-too-brief rainstorms. The girls and their family had been picking sweet corn at the Answer Plot just east of Brewster.

Photo by Heather Goodwin

City looking to do water, electric audit

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkans.com

The Goodland City Commission is considering whether or not to hire a company to take a hard look at the water and electric systems.

Chris Christiansen with Johnson Controls has been at several commission meetings to propose an investment grade audit. Johnson Controls has been working with the city on preliminary studies of the water and electric systems. Those studies have already found about \$80,000 in yearly losses from inaccurate meters, leaks and other problems. With the investment grade audit, Johnson Controls will come up with a project to solve these problems.

During the audit, the company will replace water meters and send the old ones out to be tested. It will also do leak detecting and a rate study. When the audit is finished, Christiansen said, Johnson Controls will present a list of needed improvements to the city, and the city can pick and choose which ones to do.

"We won't know the contract cost yet," Christiansen said. "There are a lot of variables we don't know yet."

The audit will cost \$163,450, but the city will not be billed for it right away. Christiansen said that the cost of the audit will be rolled into the project contract. If the city decides not to pursue a project, then it will be responsible for paying the study cost.

Mayor John Garcia said he was worried about a clause in the contract giving the city 30 days from the presentation of the audit findings to enter into a project contract. Christiansen said the length of time can be changed to whatever the city wants.

Commissioner Bill Finley said he was concerned that the project would necessitate another rate increase. Garcia agreed.

"I don't think our constituents can absorb any more rate hikes," he said.

Christiansen said it is possible, but the company tries to build projects that can be paid for with the amount of money the city is going to save with the more efficient system. Those savings are guaranteed in the contract, he said, and the company is audited by the state of Kansas to make sure.

See AUDIT, Page 5

County working on next year's department budgets

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkans.com

The Sherman County Commissioners are deep into work on next year's budget.

At their meeting last Tuesday the commissioners looked over proposed budgets for the County Attorney and Sheriff's Offices.

Both budgets had been cut back

from the previous year. County Attorney Brock Abbey has recommended the county investigator position be eliminated. Unless he is defeated by a write in candidate in the General Election in November, current County Investigator Burton Pianalto will be taking the Sheriff's position. Abbey suggested money be shifted into hiring an assistant

county attorney.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said this would mean the attorney's office would no longer need to be a certified law enforcement agency.

The commissioners also discussed the ambulance department, which the county will be taking over in January. The county has put in an ad looking for a new director for the

department and is forming a board to conduct interviews.

Strnad and Commissioner Larry Enfield had recently attended a department meeting. Strnad said she was able to answer several questions that had been concerning the EMTs. First, she said the county is not planning to do away with volunteers. The county is planning to have

several full-time personnel, but the bulk of the department will still be volunteers.

There were also concerns about the addition of sleeping quarters for EMTs at the proposed new fire station. Strnad said the county won't require EMTs to stay at the station,

See BUDGETS, Page 5

local markets**10:30 a.m.**

Wheat — \$8.07 bushel

Posted county price — \$9.11

Corn — \$8.01 bushel

Posted county price — \$8.41

Milo — \$7.52 bushel

Soybeans — \$16.54 bushel

Posted county price — \$16.87

Millet — \$14 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$27.30 cwt.

Confection — no bid

Pinto beans — \$28 (new crop)

(Markets for Scouler 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



Scrimmage draws crowd

Abig crowd turned out to see the Goodland High School football and cross country teams demonstrated their skills at the Sports Drink Scrimmage on Friday.

See Page 12

Lecture series to cover politics and 2012 election

A native of Colby and the son of John and Joyce Hansen of Colby, Dr. Mark Hansen, will be the first presenter of this year's Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College. He is the Senior Advisor to the President of the University of Chicago and one of the nation's leading scholars of American politics.

The public is invited to hear his free presentation, called Coming Together or Coming Apart: America and the 2012 Election, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 5, at the Northwest Kansas Cultural Arts Center.

This speech has been delivered in nine countries on three continents, said the college's Public Information Director Debbie Schwanke.

According to Dr. Hansen, American politics today is polarized between Democrats and Republicans, between liberals and conservatives, as never before, Schwanke said.

"Looking beyond the heated rhetoric, political scientist Dr. Hansen will trace the extent and origins of American political divisions, analyze the effect they will have on

the 2012 elections and assess the prospects for effective governance in the future," said Schwanke.

A 1977 graduate of Colby High School and a former student of Colby Community College, Hansen received his Bachelor Arts degree in 1981 from the University of Kansas, a Master's in Philosophy in 1983 and his Ph.D. in 1987 from Yale University.

Hansen is a Charles L. Hutchinson Distinguished Service Professor who focuses his research on interest groups, citizen activism, public opinion, public budgeting and politicians' inferences from the outcomes of elections.

The lecture series will host two additional lectures during the school year, Schwanke added. Dr. Andrea Stanton, University of Denver, will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 27. At the same time on Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2013, Dr. Scott Phillips will speak, also of the University of Denver.

The Max Pickerill Lecture Series is funded annually by anonymous donations and there is no charge to attend.

Looking good



Work has been ongoing to fix up the old gas station owned by Rod Cooper that was moved to 17th Street and Clark Avenue and the surrounding landscape. The latest work is a brick driveway using old bricks from Main Avenue.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County among many counties with rising graduation rates

By Bill Bishop and Roberto Gallardo

Sherman County has experienced a brain gain in the last 40 years, joining the rest of the country in what has been a massive increase in the number of adults who have earned college degrees.

In 1970, 6.9 percent of those over 25 years of age had college degrees in Sherman County. By 2010, 19.1 percent of adults here had completed college.

The percentage of adults with college degrees in Sherman County was less than the national average of 27.9 percent in 2010. The college-

educated rate here was less than the Kansas average of 29.3 percent.

The number of adults in the United States with college degrees has nearly tripled since 1970, when only 10.7 percent of adults had graduated from college. But the percentage of adults with degrees in rural counties, such as Sherman County, while increasing, has generally fallen behind the proportion of college-educated residents in urban counties.

The loss of young, well-educated residents has posed a long-standing difficulty for rural communities.

"One of the problems that rural

areas face is that in order to get a college education, young people often have to leave," says Judith Stallmann, an economist at the University of Missouri. "Once you leave, that introduces you to other opportunities that you might not have seen had you not left."

The good news for rural America is that it has caught up in every other measure of education.

In 1970, 7.8 percent of adults in rural counties had some education after high school, but less than a college degree. By 2010, 27.4 percent of rural adults had attained some post high school education without

earning a college diploma. That level of education was close to the national average of 28.1 percent.

In Sherman County, 11.7 percent of adults had some college in 1970, rising to 37.6 percent in 2010. The Kansas average in 2010 was 31.0 percent. Sherman County had 4,171 adults (those over 25 years of age) in 1970 and 4,342 adults in 2010.

Overall, Stallmann says, the trends show that "rural people have responded to the demand for increased job skills by the increasing their post secondary education."

Only 9.9 percent of the adult population in Sherman County had

failed to graduate from high school in 2010. Nationally 15 percent of adults had not completed high school; in Kansas, the rate was 10.8 percent.

Mark Partridge, a rural economist at Ohio State University, says that regional differences in college graduation rates have increased in recent years. Partridge said his studies have found that rural counties and counties with small cities in the South and West didn't fare as well as those in the Midwest and Northeast in attracting college

See GRADUATION, Page 5