

weather report



21°
10 a.m.
Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 4:27 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 7:04 a.m.
• Sunset, 4:28 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 35 degrees
• Humidity 50 percent
• Sky clear and sunny
• Winds west 15 mph
• Barometer 30.25 inches and steady

• Record High today 69° (1933)
• Record Low today -17° (1989)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 32°
Low Wednesday 13°
Precipitation 0.28
This month 0.35
Year to date 9.37
Below normal 10.12 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Sunny with a high near 47, winds out of the west at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 15. Saturday: Sunny with a high near 46, winds out of the northwest at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 16.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Sunny with a high near 42 and a low around 21. Monday: Mostly sunny with a 30 percent chance of snow at night, a high near 37 and a low around 13. Christmas: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of snow at night, a high near 23 and a low around 11.

(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

Blizzard hits Sherman County

By Kevin Bottrell

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It was a wet and wild Wednesday with this winter's first blizzard hitting northwest Kansas in the afternoon.

Snow began to fall lightly mid-morning. About 12:30 p.m. it began to fall heavily and wind picked up. The highest sustained wind speed was 43 mph, with gusts up to 55. Visibility began falling. By 2 p.m., Troopers were reporting zero visibility on I-70 between Goodland and Colby.

I-70 between the Kansas state line and Denver was closed early in the afternoon. K-27 from Goodland to Wheeler was closed at 2:30 p.m. I-70 was closed from Goodland to Burlington at 3:45 and then all the way to Oakley by 4 p.m. I-70 was reopened at 1:30 a.m. Thursday, with all other roads open by 7:30 a.m.

Schools in Colby and Oakley were closed Wednesday ahead of the storm. One Goodland school official said the schools were going to "cowboy up" and have classes. School was let out in the early afternoon when the snow began rolling in.

Fire Chief Brian James said the county got off light in accidents. The first reported accident in Sherman County was a car that went off the road on I-70 east of Goodland at



High winds blew the snow around on Wednesday afternoon, dropping visibility. Outside of town visibility was anywhere from zero to 150 feet. The storm left about 4.2 inches of snow. Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

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121st District rep to chair education budget committee

By Kevin Bottrell

The Goodland Star-News

Rep. Ward Cassidy of St. Francis is already hard at work preparing to take over as chairman of the House Education Budget Committee and vice-chair of the House Education Committee.

"I'm excited," said Cassidy, a former teacher, counselor and principal for the St. Francis schools. "I've already been consulting with the governor and the House leadership. I've got the first two weeks ready to go."

Cassidy is only starting his second term as a state representative, but with redistricting,

many experienced House members were defeated, paving the way for incumbents with less seniority to get top committee assignments. Cassidy said former education chair Rep. Clay Aurand of Belleville probably would have stayed on had he been re-elected.

In reapportionment this year, done by a panel of federal judges in Kansas City after the Legislature deadlocked on drawing new maps, Cassidy picked up Sherman County and the Colby area in his district, losing Norton and Phillips counties. The same redistricting threw many incumbents together in the

same districts, where and elsewhere.

Cassidy said he got calls from all three candidates for speaker of the House, including eventual winner Ray Merrick, about the chairmanship. He said people were impressed with his performance during his first term.

"I don't go for that conservative-moderate divide," he said. "I just say that I'm for northwest Kansas. I'll work with everyone."

He said Education Budget Committee reviews the budgets for Kansas school districts, community and technical colleges and the Regents universities. Cassidy, who spent 20 years as principal of St. Francis High School,

said he plans to spend the first two weeks of the session teaching committee members about school finance. He said he hopes to bring in superintendents and college presidents to talk to the committee.

"The governor has requested we look at a two-year plan," he said. "This would be much better than what we have now, with districts always waiting to hear what the Legislature decides. With a two-year plan, they'll know ahead of time what budget they can work with."

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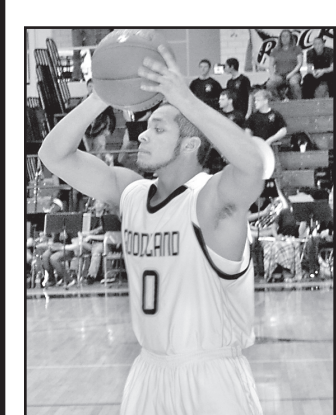
local markets

10 a.m.

Wheat — \$7.86 bushel
Posted county price — \$7.90
Corn — \$6.95 bushel
Posted county price — \$7.16
Milo — \$6.55 bushel
Soybeans — \$13.31 bushel
Posted county price — \$14.28
Millet — \$14 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$24.05 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.)

inside today

More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News



Boys lose on the road

The Goodland High School basketball team lost their first league game of the season last Friday on the road against the Holcomb Longhorns.

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Chiming in



A packed house listened to the Goodland School District's bands including the fifth, sixth, junior high and high school at their winter concert on Tuesday night at the Goodland High School Auditorium. One of the junior high students (above) played the chimes during "Silver Bells." The program of seasonal favorites also showcased the various ensembles from the junior high band. Director Deanne Langness said the band program continues to grow. The fifth grade band has over 50 members. A flute ensemble played music from the "Nutcracker Suite" and a clarinet ensemble played "Greensleeves."

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

County health fair scheduled for Jan. 26

Goodland Regional Medical Center, together with the Sherman County Health Department, Sunflower District Extension Office, and the Sherman County Community Partnership for Prevention & Education will provide an opportunity for Sherman County residents to monitor almost all aspects of their overall health at this year's Sherman County Health Fair, from 8 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Northwest Kansas Technical College Student Union.

The fair will again include a variety of health care providers and vendors offering a wide range of wellness information and free screenings.

The hospital will offer reduced-cost blood profiles in advance of the health fair from 7 to 9 a.m., Jan. 7 to 11, in the main lobby of

the hospital. The cost for the blood profile is \$30.

In addition to the basic blood chemistry profiles, A1c (diabetes screen), prostate and thyroid screenings can be added for \$15 each. For CBC only the cost is \$10. Fasting for 12 to 14 hours is recommended to assure an accurate cholesterol screening included in the blood chemistry profiles. Goodland Regional Medical Center's laboratory staff will conduct the blood chemistry profiles and no appointments are necessary.

The screening results will be available the day of the health fair for review with one of the Goodland Family Health Center physicians who will all be on hand to discuss the results. The results can also

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Transportation department was ready for winter storm

The season's first winter storm blew into Kansas this week and the Kansas Department of Transportation says it has done its best to be ready for whatever Mother Nature has in store.

"At this time, we are stocked up with salt and sand, ready to go," said Peter Carttar, assistant bureau chief in construction and maintenance for the department.

But, he said, the most important element in responding to a winter storm is a well-trained maintenance force.

"There is no better way to be efficient and cost effective than to have your frontline people focus on managing resources and interacting with each other during a winter event," Carttar said. "Our maintenance staff believes in the job they do and they have pride in taking care of their

communities."

Improvements also continue to be made in the techniques and technologies used in inclement winter weather, Carttar said. A few examples include:

- Salt brine pretreatment of bridges and certain roadways when conditions are appropriate. This works to prevent snow and ice from bonding to the pavement, which makes it easier to remove during and after the storm.

- Road Weather Information Systems technology that uses remote sensors across the state to measure air and pavement temperatures, wind speed, visibility and other pavement conditions. This gives maintenance crews and forecasters better information on conditions.

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