

Merry Christmas

The Goodland Star-News

1205 Main Avenue, Goodland, KS 67735 • Phone (785) 899-2338

MIDWEEK
Tuesday, Dec. 25,
2012


\$1

Volume 80, Number 103

8 Pages

Goodland, Kansas 67735

weather report



34°
9 a.m.
Saturday

Today
• Sunset, 4:29 p.m.

Wednesday
• Sunrise, 7:05 a.m.
• Sunset, 4:30 p.m.

Midday Conditions
• Soil temperature 34 degrees
• Humidity 49 percent
• Sky mostly sunny
• Winds northwest 10 mph
• Barometer 30.02 inches and rising
• Record High today 74° (1950)
• Record Low today -7° (1918)

Last 24 Hours*
High Friday 48°
Low Friday 14°
Precipitation none
This month 0.35
Year to date 9.37
Below normal 10.15 inches

The Topside Forecast
Today: Cloudy with a 50 percent chance of snow after 8 p.m., a high near 17 and a low around 0. Wednesday: Mostly sunny with a high near 23 and a low around 10.

Extended Forecast
Thursday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of snow at night, a high near 29 and a low around 14. Friday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of snow and a high near 28 and a low around 14.
(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

Decorated for the holidays



This house on Circle Drive is one of many around Goodland lit up for the Holiday season. Many residents have spent long hours on their displays, putting out strings of moving lights, nativity displays or inflatable Santas.
Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Tax gets lukewarm reception from city

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkansas.com

At their regular meeting Dec. 17, the Goodland City Commission stopped short of fully endorsing the Goodland School District's request to put a sales tax on the ballot, but most said they think the issue should go before voters.

Superintendent Bill Biermann and several school board members came to the commission meeting with a formal letter asking the city to consider putting a 1/4 cent sales tax on the April 2 ballot. The district has been planning a project to renovate North and

West Elementary Schools and Goodland High School.

"You guys control whether this goes before the voters," Biermann said, addressing the commission.

With the 1/4 cent sales tax, the proposed bond issue would come down to 8 1/4 mills in property tax.

The commission did not make a decision at the meeting. City Manager Doug Gerber said he would have a draft resolution ready in time for the Monday, Jan. 7, meeting.

Commissioner Bill Finley said he had spoken to several business owners in town

who said they were not in favor of raising the sales tax because they would face stiffer competition from Burlington, which already has a lower sales tax.

"It's an unfair way to go after the money," he said, "and it could hurt us economically."

Biermann said the commission had discussed that issue at length, which was why the sales tax side of the proposal ended up on the low end of the options they considered.

Finley said he also thought the proposed new property tax was also a burden.

"We're having some hard times," he said. Biermann said people could vote down the

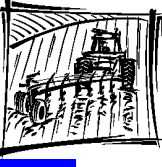
sales tax but approve the bond. If voters approve the sales tax but not the bond, the sales tax would be null and void.

Commissioner Gary Farris said he doesn't like the sales tax, but the issue should be brought to a vote. Mayor John Garcia said it is a decision that shouldn't be taken away from the voters.

In other business, the commission:
• Approved a bid for tree removal from Sunrise Lawn Service in Burlington for \$5,255. There were five other bidders: Floyd

See CITY, Page 5

local markets



9 a.m.

Wheat — \$7.82 bushel
Posted county price — \$7.86
Corn — \$7.03 bushel
Posted county price — \$7.08
Milo — \$6.63 bushel
Soybeans — \$13.46 bushel
Posted county price — \$14.40
Millet — \$14 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$23.50 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.)

County budgets for ambulances

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkansas.com

The ambulance budget has been completed for the next year. Ambulance Director Dwayne Wright and Billing Director Eric Albright told the county commissioners at their regular meeting last Tuesday.

Albright said they had to make some guesses since this will be their first year, but they based it on a 70 percent recovery rate on the bills sent out. In addition to Albright and Wright, there will be three full-time and two part-time employees including one paramedic.

One ambulance was getting its radiator replaced last week, they said, which will be paid for by the hospital.

In other business, the commissioners:

• Voted to charge the racing committee a flat rate per race of \$500. The county had been charging \$500 per race, then subtracting or adding based on actual costs, such as water used.

• Heard from Charlie Krull from Blue Cross Blue Shield about the

See BUDGET, Page 5

Workforce specialist in town part time

By Christina Beringer

colby.society@nwkansas.com

A Colby woman is helping people in Thomas and Sherman counties find jobs, learn skills and prepare for interviews — and helping businesses find qualified workers.

Bronwyn Bitner, who has lived in Colby for 14 years, took the position with the Local Area 1 Workforce Investment Board, known as Kansas WorkforceONE, on Nov. 1, and has offices in Colby and Goodland. She replaces Patti Purvis, who retired in September.

She's in Goodland on Mondays and Thursdays at 720 Armory Rd. Her phone number is (785) 443-4607.

Kansas WorkforceONE, based in Salina, is an affiliate of KansasWORKS, the state job service, which is part of the Department of

Commerce. It covers 62 counties, including all of western Kansas. KansasWORKS closed a state-staffed job office in Colby which had served this area until April 2012.

"We provide workforce investment activities that increase employment, retention and earnings of participants," Bitner said, "and our efforts are part of the Workforce Investment Act, which was put into (law) for the purpose of federal reform of the workforce development system."

By helping people look for a job and prepare them for the workforce, Bitner said her office can increase job seekers' confidence during an interview and help them to ultimately get a job they enjoy and are good at. And, she said, all of her services are

See WORKFORCE, Page 5



Bitner

What to do on your days off



Two of the many kids visiting the Goodland Activities Center during the winter break for school Friday afternoon. Several were shooting baskets.
Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Kansas officials meet on drought relief

Governor Sam Brownback and other Kansas officials identified plans to assist communities, businesses, farmers and ranchers in coping with decreasing water supply and historic dry conditions at a meeting Thursday.

The Governor asked all Kansans to do their part and take conservation seriously.

"We can't predict the end date of this drought," Governor Brownback said. "I am asking all Kansans to please take steps to reduce their water usage and be conscious of fire hazards. There have been examples of communities cooperating to respond to this drought, but we need all Kansas communities working together to conserve, provide as-

sistance and resources to reduce the damage of this drought."

The meeting included Kansas Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli; Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman; Kansas Secretary of Health and Environment, Division of Environment Director John Mitchell; Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Secretary Robin Jennison and Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter.


The main message shared by state leaders was cities and rural water districts need to measure their current water supply as well as review and use their conservation and drought emergency plans. They need to evaluate their experience from this past year and update

those plans to make sure they are prepared to address water supply needs should the drought continue as predicted.


Governor Brownback reminded citizens of the website, Drought.ks.gov, which provides drought information for all Kansans. It provides easy access to specific drought information, as well as links to state and federal resources for farmers and ranchers, small businesses, Kansans, and cities and counties.

The Governor's Drought Response Team will continue to watch the situation closely and work to minimize the effects the drought has on Kansans.

inside today



More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News



Wrestlers fall to Colby

The Goodland High School wrestling team lost to Colby on Thursday.
See Page 8

