

## Weather Corner



**Tonight...**Partly cloudy. Lows around 20. West winds around 10 mph.

**Tuesday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 40s. West winds around 10 mph. Tuesday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 20. South winds around 10 mph.

**Wednesday...**Partly sunny. Highs in the lower 40s. West winds 10 to 15 mph. Wednesday night...Mostly cloudy in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. Lows around 20.

**Thursday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 40s. Thursday night...Partly cloudy in the evening then becoming mostly cloudy. Lows around 19.

**Friday...**Partly sunny in the morning then becoming mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of light snow. Highs around 40. Friday night...Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of light snow. Lows around 18.

**Saturday...**Breezy. Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of light snow. Highs in the mid 30s. Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 16.

**Sunday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 40s. Sunday's low, high: 9, 40. Saturday's low, high: 4, 23. Friday's low, high: 14, 25. Snowfall Friday: 3 inches

## Sherman County to improve billboards

By Sharon Corcoran  
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After catching a break on prices, the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau will spend about \$2,000 to update its billboards advertising Goodland's attractions along I-70.

The bureau's board voted Tuesday to spend \$2,190 plus sales tax to update four of their billboards. That includes vinyl printing and installation, said Director Donna Price.

The bureau leases the boards from Lamar Co. out of Baton Rouge, La., and was having Magic Media prepare new designs for the boards. Lamar was going to charge \$250 per billboard to install the vinyl from Magic Media of Bangor, Pa., Price said, which would have made the total cost of updating the boards nearly \$4,000.

After some negotiation, she said, Lamar agreed to cut the cost of production and not to charge for installation if they produce the vinyl. Price said she forwarded the design concepts they had chosen with Magic Media. She said Lamar will do a redesign and within a couple of weeks, they should have the designs ready for approval.

Once the designs are approved and the contracts signed, she said, it should only take until January to have the new messages to promote Goodland and Sherman County posted along the Interstate.

"I'm excited to get them up," Price said, noting that the bureau spends 52 percent of its marketing budget on billboards.

The vinyl for the Sugar Hills Golf Club board has been delivered, Price said; if it's not up already, it soon will be. She had a model of the billboard to show to board members.

The club is subleasing an entire board near the Colorado line, advertising the course as the "Gem of the Prairie." Several board members said they like the design, which they said would be a great improvement over what has been on the billboard.

That board cost \$750 for vinyl and installation, she said, and the club will sublease it from the bureau. They have already paid for the vinyl and installation, she said, and that will be reflected on December's financial report. The club will pay the \$197 per month lease for the board.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby is working on a contract between the bureau and the club, Price said.

The board's committee on billboards had met to decide on wording for the bureau's four other billboards. David Branda, owner of the Sherman Theatre and a member of the committee, said his understanding was the group decided the billboards farther from Goodland would have more general messages regarding the town's attractions and they would become more specific as the boards get closer to town.

He made a motion to approve that plan for the designs, and Brenda McCants, another member of the committee, seconded. It was approved unanimously.

## Oberlin debates proposal

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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The Oberlin City Council took no action on a proposed power contract from Sunflower Wind on Thursday, but members said the proposal didn't match comments in a newspaper interview with company officials.

Brice Barton, with Sunflower Wind, met with the council Thursday night to answer questions. He apologized for not being able to make it to the last meeting in November, when the council received the proposal.

In the contract, said Councilman Ray Ward, it says that the city will be buying all of its power from Sunflower Wind.

That's not what was in *The Oberlin Herald*, said Councilwoman Rhonda May. The article and contract are not the same.

The contract is to replace a firm power agreement with Sunflower Electric Power Co. of Hays that expires, said Mr. Barton. Sunflower Wind, at this point, isn't trying to replace the hydropower the city gets from the Western Area Power Administration, a federal agency. This agreement was never to replace that, he said, just the Sunflower Electric agreement.

That section can be amended if needed, said Mr. Barton, adding that Section 5.5 addresses the power contract coming up to expire.

Sunflower Electric transmits the federal hydropower, City Administrator Gary Shike noted.

"I felt like I've been misled by you," Ms. May told Mr. Barton.

If the council looks at section 3.5 in the contract, said Mr. Barton, it says when the agreement with Sunflower Electric expires.

"We are willing to fix this," he added.

What about the city running its power plant? asked Mr. Ward. The newspaper article says the city might have to run the plant.

The city has a power plant that is already on line, right? said Mr. Barton. No, said Ms. May, the plant usually isn't on line.

Mr. Barton said what he meant

was that if something happens and the power grid goes off, the city might have to start the power plant. It is the same as with Sunflower Electric, he said.

"Words are always misconstrued in the newspaper," said Mr. Barton.

That happens being on council, too, said Ms. May, adding that it isn't always the reporter's fault.

What are three advantages to Oberlin to accept this proposal and have Sunflower Wind here? asked Councilman Jay Anderson.

The first, said Mr. Barton, is economic development, with the firm planning to build its wind farm and alternative power sources in the county. Anytime a town can bring in revenue, he said, it's good. A wind farm could mean recognition at the state level for Oberlin, he said, and bring more people to town.

The second, he said, is independence. A local wind farm will mean the City of Oberlin doesn't have to be a slave to the grid price for electricity. The city often has had few options when it came to purchasing power in the past, he said, and now the city will have options.

The third, said Mr. Barton, is everyone with Sunflower Wind are Kansas people. There is one board member from Wichita and one from McPherson who has deep roots in Northwest Kansas and Dan Rasure is from Goodland, though his maternal grandparents live here.

"You can be upset all you want," said Ms. May, "but why doesn't the story go the way the contract goes?"

Does the company have a business plan or financial records, asked Dr. Anderson, or are these private? Mr. Barton said he isn't going to lay all the company's information on the table for everyone to see.

What about the right of first refusal in the contract to purchase the city's power plant if the city decides to sell it, said Dr. Anderson. Will the city have the same on the Sunflower Wind's facility?

That could probably be put in the contract, said Mr. Barton, adding that the company doesn't plan on selling. Since Sunflower Wind is

such a young company, he said, if that gives the city more of a feeling of protection, it can be done.

Why would Sunflower Wind want to buy the power plant? asked Mayor Joe Stanley. Do you think someone else could buy it, refurbish it and sell the city power using it?

Not now, said Mr. Barton, but who knows with technology what could come along in five years. He said Sunflower Wind just doesn't want a competitor coming in the back door.

Maybe, said Mayor Stanley, this should be changed from a 20-year contract to five years. Who knows where technology will be five years out.

Sunflower Wind is putting up a 30-year investment with the wind farm, said Mr. Barton. Why would the company want a five-year contract?

How long is the current contract with Sunflower Electric? asked Councilwoman Marcia Lohofener. Five years, said Mr. Shike.

Can the city drop the federal hydropower? asked Dr. Anderson. Yes, said Mr. Shike, but there is a penalty. Why would the city want to? asked Mayor Stanley.

A penalty-out clause can be put in the contract, said Mr. Barton, if that's what the council wants.

At one point, he asked for a closed-door session to discuss trade secrets with the council. After a five-minute recess for City Attorney Steve Hirsch to look at some information from Mr. Barton, the council watched a computer presentation of a man in upstate New York who is generating power with wind, hydrogen and methane.

## Second storm hits, foot of snow in central Kansas

(AP) Utility crews faced about a foot of snow in some parts of the state as they worked Sunday to restore power to about 57,000 homes and business that remained in the dark.

A snow storm swept across the state Friday and Saturday on the heels of an earlier ice storm. The heaviest accumulations were reported in central Kansas, with Hays getting more than 13 inches of snow. Elsewhere accumulations ranged from 1 inch to 5 inches in western Kansas to about 2 inches in eastern Kansas, said Jennifer Stark, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Topeka.

"I think it has exasperated some of the problems they've had with power outages," Stark said of the snowstorm. "The trucks have had to go back to snow removal instead of debris removal."

On Sunday, Westar Energy Inc. was reporting about 19,000 outages, down from a high of more than 80,000 Tuesday, said Sharon Watson, spokeswoman for the Kansas Department of Emergency Management.

Also, about 38,000 customers of rural electric cooperatives were without power Saturday but updated numbers won't be available from Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc., a statewide association, until Monday, Watson said.

"They are gradually coming down," Watson said of the outages, although she said the snow was making the power restoration effort more difficult.

The National Guard was helping clear debris in Horton in northeast Kansas' Brown County to help

power crews reach power poles. Watson said parts of the county may not have power fully restored for two weeks.

Guardsmen and women also continued to help communities conduct door-to-door searches for residents in need of help.

Watson said about 45 shelters were open. But the number of people staying in them had dropped to 965 Saturday night from 2,300 Thursday night.

"It's getting better," she said. The ice storm was blamed for at least six deaths in Kansas, including two elderly residents who officials believe died from exposure. The other four deaths were traffic fatalities. No new deaths were reported over the weekend.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported working multiple slideoffs Saturday. By Sunday, roadways

were mostly wet and slushy, Watson said. But she said some areas were snowpacked and icy, including much of north-central Kansas and roads from Dodge City to Hays and from Great Bend to Dodge City.

The state is expected to remain dry until Wednesday and Wednesday night, when a small chance of light rain or snow is forecast across central and eastern Kansas, Stark said.

A more significant winter storm is forecast across much of the state next weekend in time for holiday traveling.

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**GRACE IONE HOWARD**

Grace Ione Biggs was born on November 8, 1912 to John Farmer and Abbie Dora Rhoads Biggs in Vandalia, Missouri. She was the 6th of 7 children, 3 of whom passed away as infants or a young child, and 4 of whom lived to adulthood.

Grace, at 95, had survived all of her brothers and sisters, although her sister Margaret, at 98, was older when she died several years ago. Grace passed away around 3 p.m. on December 11, 2007, just a month after her birthday.

Grace is survived by her son, Rodger Scott Howard, of Cawker City, KS, his 3 daughters; Darla Hammer and her son Zachary Dean of Winfield, KS; Brenda High and her husband Dean of Overland Park, KS, and Jana Burjes and her husband Roger, and their 2 sons, Caleb John and Joshua Samuel, of Independence, KS, and by her daughter, Nancy Carolyn Saddler and her husband Gary, of Denver, CO, and their 3 children; Lara Perrin and her husband Rob and their 2 children Chloe Grace, and Robert David of Jackson, TN, Garlyn Saddler of Denver, CO, and Brian Saddler in Nashville, TN. Her youngest brother's wife, Eldora Bigg's survives her and resides in Colby, KS.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at 10:30 AM at University Hills Baptist Church 2750 S. Clermont Dr., Denver, CO. Internment will be Wednesday, December 19, 2007 at 10:30 AM at Beulah Cemetery in Colby, KS, with a reception following. Memorial contributions may be made to Gideons International or to the University Hills Baptist Church in Grace's memory.

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