

Weather Corner



Tonight...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. Southwest winds 10 to around 10 mph.

Saturday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph. Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s. West winds around 15 mph shifting to the northwest after midnight.

Sunday...Partly sunny. Highs around 50. North winds 10 to 15 mph. Sunday night...Mostly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s.

Monday...Mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of light rain showers in the afternoon. Highs in the lower 40s. Monday night...Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of light snow. Lows around 20.

Tuesday...Mostly cloudy in the morning then becoming partly sunny. A 20 percent chance of light rain and light snow. Highs in the upper 30s.

Tuesday night through Wednesday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 17. Highs in the lower 40s.

Thursday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 30s. Thursday's low, high: 16, 43

Online university to open in Goodland

By Sharon Corcoran
Goodland Star News
slcorcoran@nwkanssas.com

An online university plans to open an office in Goodland, offering students a chance to earn associate's and bachelor's degrees and a Masters in Business Administration through video classes, a work study program and even transferring life experiences to credit hours.

Harvest University, which started as a on-line education operation, plans to open an office in Goodland, economic development officials say.

Director Jeremy Jennings told the Sherman County Economic Development Council at its Dec. 18 meeting that he had talked to the university's director, who told him they would like to have a physical presence in Goodland.

They're looking for an office for enrollment, Jennings said, and will be adding faculty and staff. Open enrollment starts in April, he said, and they gave the development office certificates for \$2,000 in scholarships that he plans to give out.

"They approached us," Jennings added. The university was going to put an operation in St. Francis, he said, but he told them about property in Goodland.

Students will be able to earn bachelor's and master's degrees, he said, and a lot of the university's programs will work with those at the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

Once they pick a location, he said, university officials plan to put up signs and advertise.

In an email with a promotional video attached, that University Director Laura Wing wrote to Jennings, she said: "Please view the

video and also feel free to share it with others. We just want to get the word out that we have decided to start up in Goodland."

The university plans to hold an advisory board meeting Monday, Jan. 21, he said. There are nine board members, said Wing, who has lived in Goodland almost 12 years, with all but one or two being from Sherman County, adding that she is waiting to hear for sure on one member.

The board members each got four \$500 scholarship certificates, she said, which they can either give out or use for themselves. Jennings is a board member, she said.

The university's mascot will be the Buffaloes, Wing said, and degrees will be offered in business, human behavior, arts and sciences and other fields. Associate's and bachelor's degrees will be offered in all areas, she said, and the university will offer a Masters in Business Administration.

Students can earn credits toward their degrees in several ways, she said, including attending traditional classes, video classes, transferring credits from another school, work study, life experience and even teaching a class in a subject they are proficient in.

Students can submit their life experiences, Wing said, and the university would convert it to credit hours. She said the operation started just as a "life-experience" university on-line in April, operating under a different name, adding that she found that market was flooded and that the university couldn't offer the programs she was planning.

Wing said she dissolved that and was looking for a physical site and was considering St. Francis but got support in Goodland.

Nebraska senator asks Legislature to pay farmers

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A state senator will ask the Legislature to help pay about 200 Republican River irrigators who are still waiting on \$9 million for sending Kansas water, but he's not counting on the blessing of Gov. Dave Heineman.

"The governor is opposed to it, flat out opposed," said Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial. "I'm not surprised. We'll just have to overrun it."

Under Christensen's plan, which will be introduced to lawmakers after the legislative session begins Jan. 7, the state would dip into its cash reserves to pay farmers who haven't been paid because of a pending lawsuit. The reserves would then be paid back — assuming the state wins a lawsuit that challenges a new way of collecting dollars for water.

And if the state doesn't win the lawsuit?

"We haven't worked out a plan B," said Jasper Fanning, general manager of the Upper Republican Natural Resources District. "Ultimately, if the lawsuit's not decided in the state's favor, we would simply go back to the Legislature and find a solution that would do essentially the same thing through slightly different means."

Farmers are owed nearly \$9 million for sending water to Kansas last year instead of irrigating their crops, part of an effort to comply with a three-state water compact that in-

cludes Kansas and Colorado.

Much of the \$9 million was to be raised through the sale of bonds issued by the upper, middle and lower Republican natural resources districts.

The debt was to then be repaid mostly through property taxes the districts can collect under a new state law that gives them the authority to levy property taxes to buy or lease water.

But the pending litigation prevents Ameritas, the company picked to provide the bonds to the natural resources districts, from doing so until the issue is resolved in the courts.

Nine residents of the Republican basin who filed the lawsuit in Lancaster County District Court say the property taxes aimed at helping meet the state compact unfairly target only residents of the basin. That, they say, violates an article in the state constitution that says the state "shall be prohibited from levying a property tax for state purposes."

A trial is scheduled for later this month.

Nebraska has struggled to meet terms of the compact and Kansas officials have grown impatient. Last month, they demanded Nebraska cut its water use and pay Kansas for overusing its allocation of Republican River water.

Some farmers near the Republican River who are still waiting on checks they were supposed to get a

month ago have also grown impatient, said Roger Patterson, manager of the Frenchman-Cambridge Irrigation District. It was one of three irrigation districts that leased roughly 38,000 acre feet of irrigation water to natural resources districts in the Republican River basin to send to Kansas.

But a wet year that produced strong dryland crop yields without irrigation is one reason "we haven't heard too much fussing" from customers of the irrigation district, Patterson said.

Irrigation districts at one time discussed filing a lawsuit against the natural resources districts in the river basin.

"We talked about it and decided what good is that going to do?" Patterson said.

Christensen said his plan is a fair way to pay farmers who acted in good faith when they agreed to the water-lease deal.

Under the plan, \$9 million from the state's expected cash reserve of about \$540 million would be transferred to a water fund already in place and then given to farmers. Also, the water fund would receive \$9 million less in state general fund money than it is now scheduled to receive over a few years.

Payment for rescue services slow for county

By Tom Betz
Goodland Star News
ntbetz@nwkanssas.com

Collecting bills for fire-department rescue calls has proven to be tough, Sherman County commissioners heard last Tuesday before they approved a recommendation to try sending two letters from the county attorney and then using a collection company.

Goodland Rural Fire Chief Alan David, who had been at the previous meeting, said the department has made 49 rescue calls on highways this year and 38 last year after taking over the rescue work from the city fire department.

David said he had been talking to County Attorney Bonnie Selby about billing for the calls, noting that he's had little luck collecting from individuals or insurance companies.

The commissioners approved a resolution drafted by Selby that sets up a listing of rescue, fire and hazardous material equipment used by Sherman County and the price for use of each piece. She said the bills are sent to out-of-county people involved in rescue runs on I-70 and for hazardous spills anywhere in the county.

She said the only time a Sherman County person would be billed is if they were involved in a hazardous material spill which has to be cleaned up under federal regulations. The resolution lists the basic price for the use of rescue equipment like the spreaders, cutters, rams or air bags at between \$250 to \$350. The list for hazardous-material work includes absorbent material (\$17 per bag), disposable coveralls (\$22 each), gloves (\$17.50 per pair), drum liners (\$10 each) and disposal of the material (\$150).

Selby said her office has been sending out bills, but has not recovered much money. She said it seems to make no difference whether the bill goes to a person or an insurance company. Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he was surprised the insurance companies were not paying. Selby said she knew of three bills that have been collected, but thought there was about \$15,000 that is not paid.

David said some of the bills are for hazardous material spills that should be "a guaranteed pay."

Selby said she was not opposed to trying a company which specializes in this type of collections. She said the company would take 20 percent of what is collected. County Clerk Janet Rumpel said she thought three bills have been paid. She said if the county receives payment for rescue and hazardous material runs, the money goes into the Rural Fire budget.

Rachel's Vineyard

Healing the trauma of abortion — one weekend at a time.

Next retreat: January 25-27, 2008
call 1-877-I-GRIEVE (1-877-447-4383)
or e-mail rachelvineyard@salinadiocese.org

Change a Child's Life in the New Year
Become a Foster Parent
1,200 children are waiting

Join us for FREE foster parent training classes.
January 22 from 7 p.m.-10 p.m.
Colby Methodist Church

Call to register...
785.540.4092 or 800.593.1950 ext: 194

Youthville www.youthville.org/getinvolved

FUN NIGHT!!!

KARAOKE
w/ Nate Schwarz

Saturday, Jan. 5th
Starts at 10 p.m.

CITY LIMITS
2227 S. Range • 462-6565

General Public
Transportation Van

Hours: 8 am to 4 pm
Days: Monday - Friday
Phone:
460-2901 (8 am-12:30 pm)
443-9208 (12:30 pm - 4 pm)

If possible call for Reservations by 11 am the previous business day. Provided to Colby, Brewster, Gem, Menlo, Rexford and a Portion of Oakley as needed.

"This Project Funded in Part by the KDOT Public Transit Program"

ABC

BE TRUE TO OUR SCHOOLS

Learn the ABC's of being true to your school with Sunflower Bank!

A WE PAY FOR A'S! Students, bring a copy of your current report card to Sunflower Bank — and you could be one of five winners, earning \$10 for each A! Plus, we'll match that donation to your school. Also, you could be chosen to appear on TV!

B BUCKS FOR OUR SCHOOLS. Each time you use your debit card, a participating school can receive: 10 cents when you enter your PIN
20 cents when you sign
And don't forget to enroll in Sign & Save — round up all your transactions to the next dollar, and automatically deposit the spillover cents into your savings account!

C CHECKING IS FREE! Switch to Sunflower and you could earn up to \$100* when you switch your checking account to Sunflower Bank. Best of all, we donate a matching amount to the school of your choice.

*A and "C" above are effective during the months of January & February, 2008. "B" is effective Jan. 1 — March 31, 2008. The report card drawings will be held on March 1, 2008.

Switch to Sunflower and earn up to \$100

deposited into your account when you present this ad*

Earn \$10 For each signed agreement for auto deposit or payment from your account**

Earn \$10 Enroll for SunNet™ Online Banking and FREE Bill Pay

Earn \$10 Bring in your current checking statement for easy transfer

Earn \$10 Open a Sign & Save savings account and debit card transfer

Earn \$10 Sign up for eStatements!

Colby • 500 N. Franklin • (785) 462-3313 • www.sunflowerbank.com

FDIC

* This is a limited time offer for new households only. Must maintain accounts for six months. One checking account per household. \$100 minimum deposit to open account. ** Limited to 4 ACH debits or credits from your account.

© 2007L Sunflower Bank SUBA-389