

weather report

30°
at noon



Today

Sunset, 5:48 p.m.

Tomorrow

Sunrise, 6:05 a.m.

Sunset, 5:47 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temp. 37 degrees
- Humidity 88 percent
- Sky Mostly cloudy
- Winds SE 10
- Barometer 30.12 inches and falling
- Record High 82° (1989)
- Record Low -20° (1948)

Yesterday's Data

High 51°
Low 31°
Precipitation Trace

Northwest Kansas

Tonight: Winter storm watch; 70 percent chance of snow; low 20-25; winds SE 10-20. Tomorrow: Snow with possible accumulations of 8-12 inches; high mid-20s; winds NE 10-20; becoming gusty.

Extended Forecast

Saturday through Monday: Snow through Saturday; high 40-35; low 20. Sunday dry; high 40; low 20-25. Monday dry; high 50-55; low 20-25.

24-hour weather information is broadcast at 162.400 MHz.

local markets



Noon

- Wheat — \$2.51 bu.
 - Posted county price — \$2.38
 - Loan deficiency payment — 7¢
 - Corn — \$1.85 bu.
 - Posted county price — \$1.82
 - Loan deficiency payment — 17¢
 - Milo — \$2.80 cwt.
 - Soybeans — \$4.06 bu.
 - Posted county price — \$4.03
 - Loan deficiency payment — 86¢
 - Millet — \$4.25 cwt.
 - Sunflowers
 - oil current — \$7.65 cwt.
 - loan deficiency payment — \$2.27
 - oil 1999 crop — \$8.40 cwt.
 - conf. current — \$18/\$11 cwt.
 - Pintos - \$15 (new crop)
- Local markets courtesy of Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun and Collingwood Grain
Local bean market courtesy of Prairie Pea and Bean

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press
1 p.m.

House passes bond changes

TOPEKA — House passage of a bill amending the state's bonding laws would boost the chances for development of a major recreational theme park in western Johnson County, sponsors said. The bill would help developers sell and pay off bonds for the proposed Wonderful World of Oz theme park. The bill was advanced Wednesday on voice vote to a final vote, scheduled for today. Passage would send it to the Senate. It would allow the economic development bonds to be paid off over 30 years instead of 20, and it would permit higher sales taxes in the 9,065-acre complex to generate more income to pay the bonds. Developers say they need the changes to help finance construction of a \$771.4 million resort complex on the grounds of the former Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant near DeSoto in Johnson County.

Signs herald summer of road work

Chamber group hears plans for highway improvements

By Tom Betz

Goodland Daily News

Work on the westbound lanes of I-70 from Goodland east to Edson is expected to begin Monday, and the Goodland Chamber's transportation committee met Wednesday afternoon to review upcoming highway projects.

Chairman John Golden said the schedule for I-70 calls for rebuilding the north, or westbound, pavement and the north access ramps this year. Traffic will flow both ways on the south side while all the old pavement is ripped out this spring.

The work has been planned to minimize the amount of time any one exit is closed, and to complete work on the access ramps before the heavy tourist season this summer. That was done to ease the financial burden on highway businesses here.

The north entrance and exit ramps at Exit 17, the main Goodland access at K-27, will be closed from April 7 to May 5. Then the contractor, Koss Construction of Topeka, will do the north ramps at Edson between May 6 and May 25. Finally the north ramps at Exit 19, the east Goodland access, will be closed and rebuilt between May 26 and June 16.

Work on the main pavement is expected to last into the fall, but the exits will be reopened as soon as possible, with traffic crossing over new pavement to them.

Next summer, the eastbound lanes and exits will be ripped out under a separate contract, to be let this summer.

Rebuilding the section of K-27 from the KLOE corner up to the Business U.S. 24 intersection is scheduled to be let for bid in July, and there is hope this will be started in late summer or fall, but it could be delayed until next year, Golden said.

As to the city project to straighten Cherry Street, Golden said the plans are to rebuild the railroad crossing and to build the containment ponds this year. He estimated it would take five days to replace the railroad crossing.

Golden then turned to Curt Way, county road and bridge supervisor, to discuss the local access road and the bridge replacement projects.

When the K-27 project begins north of Goodland in the summer of 2001, the state will divert truck traffic to the east through Colby and up K-25, but will allow the county to improve a road for local access.

"We cannot advertise this as a bypass," County Road Superintendent Curt Way said, "but the state has agreed to assist in chip sealing Eighth Street from K-27 west to Road 14 and then south to I-70. Also they will help with gravel north on Road 15 to Road 72, west to Road 14 then north to the county line."

Some asked about paving this road, and Way said the state would only consider a four-inch overlay which would then restrict traffic to 25 tons maximum. He also said McDiffett and his staff felt a good gravel road would be better than the paving.

How much is done will depend on the amount of money the state is willing to allow, Way said.

The bridge replacement on U.S. 24 near Ruelton this summer is another reason for the chip sealing of Eighth out to Road 14 and south to I-70, he said.

Bids are expected to be let on the bridge replacement in May with construction to begin about the first of July.

"Is there any way we can delay this until after the wheat harvest," Short asked.

"There is nothing we can do," Way said. "This project was put into the works before myself or any of the current commissioners were in position."

He said the project is expected to take 45 days once construction begins.

On the east end of the county, Way said the project to rebuild Road 64 (old U.S. 24) will begin in mid-July from Road 37 west to Road 27. The first part will be the hot in-place recycling, and this will be followed by chip sealing after a four week break.

"As you can see, we have a number of projects that will be under way in our county over the next several years," Golden said. "They will all be improvements in the future. We are going to have to change our habits. We need to work with the people and may have a much better system when all is completed."



Even as Mother Nature prepared to dump more winter-like weather on northwest Kansas, crews from Advanced Warnings of Muskogee, Okla., were working to get the more than 100 signs placed along I-70 from Goodland east to Edson. Jimmy Truitt, Brian Fletcher and Shane Graves were working near the Edson exit this morning. Truitt said the crews hoped to have all the signs up by Friday, but were concerned about the weather slowing down the re-stripping of the lanes for two-way traffic. Construction is scheduled to begin Monday — weather permitting.

Photo by Tom Betz / Goodland Daily News

Saving Cattle Trail access to 17th top priority

By Tom Betz

Goodland Daily News

Tops on the wish list for the Goodland Chamber's Transportation Committee is the desire to save the present link to Cattle Trail from K-27, which provides the major access from the southwest to downtown and grain elevators.

The state Department of Transportation says it's a dangerous access which must be eliminated, the committee was told at a meeting Wednesday.

Chairman John Golden reviewed a recent meeting in Topeka with Secretary of Transportation E. Dean Carlson and a meeting in Norton last week with District Engineer Chriss McDiffett and his staff.

"We told the secretary we had four points to discuss with him," Golden said. "The first was the K-27 detour, to which he said they would work with us. The second was the I-70 construction, to which he said they would work with us. The third was the construction on K-27 from old U.S. 24 south to KLOE, to which he said they would work with us."

The fourth was the intersection of K-27 and old U.S. 24, where we wanted to keep the "hook" to Cattle Trail open, to which the secretary said, "I am glad



Part of the plan for closing the "hook" access to Cattle Trail is a new road to be built between Business U.S. 24 and 19th Street on the land occupied by the closed Saludos restaurant. Photo by Tom Betz / Goodland Daily News

we talked about the other three, but on this one I cannot help."

"He told us the turnoffs on both sides of K-27 north of the Business U.S. 24 intersection and the western entrance to Short Brothers, were to be closed when the intersection is rebuilt, and there was nothing he could do about these."

State plans call for replacing the intersection with concrete, and installation of a new stop light. Cattle Trail

would be routed east, then south to a new intersection on Business U.S. 24. Several of those present expressed concern about the closing of the access to Cattle Trail.

"Has the secretary been out here to look at this?" Dick Short asked.

"Is that just his opinion or is there someone else to appeal to?" asked another committee member.

"We tried to suggest alternatives to

closing the Cattle Trail turnoff, including making it a one-way, and were told 'no' to this," said Chamber Director Ron Harding. "The secretary and staff members said they had counted and studied the situation and would not leave this open."

"Did they count it during harvest?" someone asked.

Another question asked of Jeff Mason, District 3 representative on the

state Highway Advisory Commission, was if there was anything legally that could be done to stop the state from closing the Cattle Trail access. Mason said he had looked into this and had not found anything that could be done.

"I think this will make it more dangerous than it is now," said Randy Bellamy. "With this plan, a truck will have to turn east onto Business 24 and then cross traffic to turn onto the road to reach 19th."

"Or you will have to widen 16th Street to Cattle Trail, because it is very tough to turn a truck off of K-27 there and onto Cattle Trail."

Others agreed that 16th Street would have to be widened, and that it was very dangerous trying to turn onto K-27 at that intersection at the intersection with traffic coming north on K-27 over the overpass.

The committee will get a chance to review the proposed design of the intersection and access to Cattle Trail once it is drafted, but according to Mason, once the plan is drawn there is little room for change.

"Now is the time for that input, you need to get your needs and suggestions into the planning while they are still working on the design," he said.

Two dozen New York officers search for slayer of Kansas student

NEW YORK (AP) — Police were hunting for the suspect who stabbed a graduate student from Kansas to death as she walked from the subway to her Brooklyn apartment.

Police Commissioner Howard Safir said Wednesday that more than 25 detectives were working on the case.

He called the death of Amy Watkins a horrible, unusual crime.

"It was unusual for the level of violence," he said. "That is a neighborhood that has not seen this kind of violence recently. For somebody to stab somebody in the back like that and rob them

is unusual." Murders in the 77th Precinct — which covers the Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn — dropped 79 percent in 1998 from the previous year. There were seven murders in the precinct last year, compared with 34 in 1997, police statistics show. Ms. Watkins' death was the second homicide in the precinct this year.

Ms. Watkins, 26, was stabbed Monday night as she walked to her apartment. Police believe robbery was the motive — her purse was taken.

So far, there are no suspects. Safir refused to comment on whether surveillance tapes taken from

a grocery store where Ms. Watkins had stopped right before she was attacked provided any clues.

Autopsy results show that Ms. Watkins died of a stab wound to the back, and perforations of the aorta and lung, said Ellen Borakove, spokeswoman for the medical examiner's office.

Ms. Watkins, originally from Topeka, was a graduate student at Hunter College's School of Social Work, and had an internship at a community center in the Bronx, where she worked with domestic violence victims.

Ms. Watkins was a 1996 graduate of the University of Kansas, where she earned a degree in so-

cial work. While a student she worked about three years at the Casbah, a Lawrence restaurant.

"She was the most determined person I've ever known," said Jill Zinn, restaurant co-owner.

Her aunt, Judy Gehm of the Kansas City suburb of Roeland Park, Kan., recalled that Ms. Watkins was quick to act last Christmas when she saw a man beating a woman at the St. Louis airport. As the man screamed threats at her, she led the woman into a restroom and comforted her.

"That's how she was," said her aunt. "She tried to make a difference in everyone's lives whether or not she knew them."