

Slots lead want list for tracks

TOPEKA (AP) — The contentious issue of allowing the spread of electronic gambling machines in Kansas will be the focus of hearings this week by the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee.

Meanwhile, the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee will take up a new transportation plan with \$13.2 billion in improvements over 10 years. Paying for it would require an increase in gasoline and diesel taxes of 5 cents per gallon, a 15 percent increase in vehicle registration fees and the issuance of \$990 million in bonds.

The plan, formed by Senate Republicans, is the latest to surface as lawmakers discuss how much of the state should be paved. The House passed a transportation bill with a \$10.4 billion price tag that would rely on money once earmarked for tax breaks and other programs.

The Federal and State Affairs Committee will conduct hearings Thursday and Friday on a bill that would permit electronic gambling machines — but not slot machines — in bars, clubs and certain other places where lottery tickets are sold.

Another bill the committee is considering would allow slot machines and electronic gambling machines, such as video poker, at the Woodlands, Wichita Greyhound Park and any other pari-mutuel racetracks.

Currently, such gambling machines are legal only at the four Indian casinos in eastern Kansas.

Both gambling bills would put the Kansas Lottery Commission in charge, and some legislators have questioned whether that would create an inappropriate partnership between government and gambling.

"I don't think that the Kansas government is here to manage slot machines," said Federal and State Affairs Chairwoman Lana Oleen. "To me, Kansas running slot machines is a little different than 7-Eleven selling lottery tickets."

Gov. Bill Graves — who supports the bill to allow slot machines and electronic gambling at racetracks but not the measure to permit them at other locations — said he wouldn't have a problem with putting the government agency in charge.

"It's not like we'd be putting our toe into water that we hadn't had our toe in before," Graves said. "Lottery, in my mind, is a form of gambling. It's kind of like a slot machine without a handle."

The economic impact of the gambling proposals marks another source of disagreement.

The state's Budget Division estimates the racetrack bill would bring in \$8.6 million in the first year. The state would receive \$52.7 million under the other bill the first year, but the Lottery would have to pay \$40.3 million if it were required to buy the electronic gambling machines.

"We could end up in the hole," said Oleen, who said expanding gambling also could result in the sale of fewer lottery tickets.

Oleen, R-Manhattan, has asked Lottery officials to study how lotteries in other states, such as Iowa, fared after the states legalized gambling.

Sen. Sherman Jones said legalized gambling hasn't hurt lottery sales in Connecticut, Iowa or Missouri.

Jones, D-Kansas City, is backing the racetrack bill because he thinks it will benefit the Woodlands, which is in his district. The track faces competition from casinos in Kansas City, Mo.

Senate President Dick Bond supports the racetrack plan, but he said some senators have expressed concern the state wouldn't receive enough money under the bill.

"I think if anything comes out (of committee), it will be changed significantly," said Bond, R-Overland Park.

House Speaker Robin Jennison said some House members may view expanded gambling more favorably in light of the state's revenue shortfall of nearly \$32 million in February.

Jennison said he is opposed to more gambling and would like to renegotiate the state's compact with Indian tribes. Under Jennison's plan, tribes would pay the state a percentage of casino revenues in exchange for the exclusive right to operate casinos.

Storm blankets the area

I-70 closed here, but few travelers reported stranded

By Tom Betz

Goodland Daily News

Officially, Goodland received 11 inches of snow in the storm Friday which closed area schools and I-70.

The National Weather Service said the snow had a moisture content of .8 of an inch in Goodland.

Despite national publicity for neighboring Colby, the Kansas Highway Patrol reported only one minor injury accident near Goodland during the storm.

Michelle Doll, 32, Great Bend, was westbound in her white 1998 Toyota sport utility vehicle about Midnight Friday near the Edson exit, when she lost control on the ice. The vehicle went sideways into the median, flipped one time and came to rest on the on-ramp. She was taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center, where she was treated and released.

Earlier Friday, the Colorado State Patrol and Kansas Highway Patrol closed the entrance ramps to I-70.

The road was officially closed at 8:30 p.m. westbound from Wakenney to the state line, and eastbound from Burlington, Colo., to Colby. The road was opened at 8 a.m. Saturday for both directions.

Colby received about 11 inches on snow as well. Other storm totals in the Northwest Kansas region were 14 inches at Gove, 13 inches at Leoti, 12 inches at Oakley, 9 inches at Brewster and Atwood, 8 inches at McDonald, 10 inches at Sharon Springs, and 7 inches at Oberlin and Tribune.

Saturday morning Sherman County Deputy Roger Studer had some short words for those on the highways.

"The roads are snowpacked and icy. There're a few fools causing traffic tie-ups," he said. "We've got semis jackknifed, vehicles sliding off. It's a mess."

"Interstate 70 is the worst problem because everyone wants to get out while they're trying to scoop it, then it gets packed down so they can't scoop."

In Goodland, there were no reports of stranded motorists, but in Colby, several hundred people were stranded when the interstate was closed. They were allowed to spend the night at the National Guard armory and other



Saturday after the sun came out, Goodland citizens took advantage to enjoy some fun in the wet snow. People were out shoveling walks and building snowmen. Putting the finishing touches on their snowman (above) were Bryce and Gracie Cole (left), Chloe Goodwin (front left), Alex and Kurt Goodwin (back center), Hazen Deeds (front right) and Nolan and Jeff Deeds. Nearby (bottom left), Mariah Jones, 4, and her brother Issac, 16 months, were helping their mother, Virginia build a snowman. Knowing that it's March (bottom right), Matson Hatfield and a friend cleared just enough concrete to get in some hoop practice. Photos by Tom Betz / Goodland Daily News

buildings in town.

Goodland city crews plowed main streets to the center, leaving some large snow piles, but pavement was clearing by noon Saturday. Monday, crews using loaders and a snow blower were filling dump trucks with the snow and hauling the piles off from downtown.



County considers bonds, lease of fairgrounds

The Sherman County Commissioners will consider leasing the county fairgrounds to the Tri-State Sheep Breeders Association, and will consider fire board appointments.

Larry McCants of the First National Bank of Goodland, and Jim Chaddic,

Goodland Regional Medical Center administrator, are scheduled to appear agent to handle this type of project.

Also, the commissioners will consider a change order for the exhaust from the courthouse restrooms.

Under old business, the commis-



sioners will discuss the proposed wireless connection with Mary Messamore of county dispatch and Sheriff Doug Whitson. They will also talk to Messamore about split shift pay scales.

Commissioners meet at 8 a.m. in the commission room of the courthouse.

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weather report

69°

at noon



Today

Sunset, 5:53 p.m.

Tomorrow

Sunrise, 5:58 a.m.

Sunset, 5:53 p.m.

Midday Conditions

•Soil Temp. 34 degrees

•Humidity 38 percent

•Sky Partly cloudy

•Winds calm

•Barometer 29.86

inches and falling

•Record High 82° (1935)

•Record Low 5° (1952)

Yesterday's Data

High 39°

Low 6°

Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas

Tonight: Clear; low 30-33; winds SW 10-20. Tomorrow: Clear; high 60-65; winds SW 10-20.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday through Friday: Chance of rain Wednesday and Thursday; high 60-65; low 30. Friday dry; high 60; low 30.

24-hour weather information is broadcast at 162.400 MHz.

local markets



Noon

Wheat — \$2.45 bu.

Posted county price — \$2.37

Loan deficiency payment — 8¢

Corn — \$1.80 bu.

Posted county price — \$1.86

Loan deficiency payment — 13¢

Milo — \$2.68 cwt.

Soybeans — \$3.98 bu.

Posted county price — \$4.02

Loan deficiency payment — 87¢

Millet — \$4.25 cwt.

Sunflowers

oil current — \$7.65 cwt.

loan deficiency payment — \$2.19

oil 1999 crop — \$8.40 cwt.

corn current — \$18/\$11 cwt.

Pintos - \$13

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.



Congress hot over spy story

WASHINGTON — Dissatisfied with the Clinton administration's handling of the Chinese grab for U.S. weapons technology, several members of Congress are pressing for a closer look at high-tech relations between the nations.

The Senate is holding hearings this week on an alleged 1980s case of Chinese spying at the Energy Department's nuclear weapons laboratory in Los Alamos, N.M., that only recently came to light. In the House, members are demanding that nearly all of a classified 700-page report on technology transfers to China be made public.

Administration officials said Sunday that they have dealt with the Los Alamos case and overall security threats to the nation.

But Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said President Clinton should appoint a nonpartisan commission to investigate allegations that China stole nuclear warhead technology.

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