

**weather report**

**39°**

at noon



**Today**

Sunset, 7:22 p.m.

**Tomorrow**

Sunrise, 6:10 a.m.

Sunset, 7:23 p.m.

**Middy Conditions**

- Soil Temp. 50 degrees
- Humidity 89 percent
- Sky Rain and snow mixed
- Winds N 35-45
- Barometer 29.95 inches and rising
- Record High 86° (1936)
- Record Low 15° (1928)

**Yesterday's Data**

High 62°  
Low 41°  
Precipitation none

**Northwest Kansas**

Tonight: Decreasing cloudiness; low 30s; winds N 30-40, gusting to 60, high wind warning. Tomorrow: Mostly Cloudy; flurries; high 40-45; winds NW 20-30.

**Extended Forecast**

Friday through Sunday: Dry all three days; highs 50-60; lows 25-35.

24-hour weather information is broadcast at 162.400 MHz.

**local markets**

**Noon**

- Wheat — \$2.33 bu.
  - Posted county price — \$2.24
  - Loan deficiency payment — 13¢
  - Corn — \$1.81 bu.
  - Posted county price — \$1.99
  - Loan deficiency payment — 13¢
  - Milo — \$2.69 cwt.
  - Soybeans — \$3.95 bu.
  - Posted county price — \$4.08
  - Loan deficiency payment — 81¢
  - Millet — \$4.25 cwt.
  - Sunflowers oil current — \$8.35 cwt.
  - Loan deficiency payment — \$1.94
  - oil 1999 crop — \$8.85 cwt.
  - conf. current — \$17/\$10 cwt.
  - Pintos — \$12 (new crop)
- Local markets courtesy of Mueller Grain, Sigo Sun and Frontier Equity  
Local bean market courtesy of Prairie Pea and Bean

**afternoon wire**

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

**NATO strikes Serbian targets**

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — NATO warplanes hammered Serb targets in Kosovo with dozens of airstrikes today, Yugoslav media said. On Albania's border, Serb forces shelled a deserted Albanian village they had briefly seized a day earlier.

The action on the ground came amid a flurry of diplomatic consultations, including a German peace initiative that would provide for a 24-hour suspension of allied airstrikes if Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic began withdrawing his forces from Kosovo.

"The idea is to find a feasible way to achieve a cease-fire and a withdrawal of the Serbs from Kosovo," and there is "fairly broad agreement on this idea" within NATO, German deputy foreign minister Ludger Volpert said today on German radio. NATO would "permanently suspend" airstrikes once the pullout is completed.

## County OKs use of arena

### Roping club leases Sherman grounds for season practice

By Tom Betz

Goodland Daily News

The Sherman County commissioners granted permission Tuesday for J and J Roping Club to hold practices at the fairgrounds, and approved a new cellular phone plan.

Dana Belshe, county extension agent, and J.D. Burk talked to the commissioners about using the fairgrounds for roping practice. Belshe said there would not be any liability for the county, and that the ropers would sign a lease for the summer season.

He said included in the lease was a provision that Doug Johnson would contact Belshe to schedule practices, and in lieu of any payment, the roping club would help with maintenance of the arena and cutting weeds. Also, the club would be responsible for utilities and restroom expenses if these are used. The club will provide a \$250 damage deposit, Belshe said.

Commissioner Kenney Davis said was concerned about each member being aware of the terms of the lease and that each should sign an agreement acknowledging they had read and agreed to them.

The commissioners asked that Johnson have everybody sign who is roping, and that if someone didn't sign, they would not be allowed to rope.

Davis also asked that the lease specify the use is for non-profit events only, and that if the roping club decided to have an event where there were any fees, that the club would be required to request a different lease and provide liability insurance.

The lease was amended as Davis had asked, and then approved. Davis and Commissioner Gary Townsend voting in favor; Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld was absent.

Belshe reported there was some minor wind damage at the fairgrounds last week, and that he has called the insurance company.

County Attorney Mike Irvin said he had talked to Robert Perry, an attorney involved in the hospital financing deal, about the certificate the commissioners are being asked to sign in support of the master lease for the Goodland Regional Medical Center.

"The big key is the hospital cannot misuse the funds," Irvin said. "As long as the funds are used for hospital equipment and non-profit uses, there will be no problem. Also there is no problem with this under the tax lid."

Davis asked that since Frankenfeld was absent, the item be tabled until the next meeting Tuesday. He also said the county should receive reports on what the hospital spends the money on.

Discussion of bonds to finance a new bridge west of town on old U.S. 24 also was tabled until the next meeting.

The commissioners have been considering a new phone plan from Kansas Cellular which would allow county employees to get cellular phones at a lower rate. Davis said he did not have a problem with offering the benefit to the employees as long as the county was not responsible for any of their phone bills.

He was assured by County Clerk Janet Rumpel and Townsend that the bills would be sent directly to the employee, and they would be responsible for payment. Townsend said the department heads are to keep track of who has a phone or when they leave the county.

Under the plan, the long distance minutes of all the phones will be added together to reduce the monthly minute rate for all employees. Commissioners David and Townsend vote to approve the plan.

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m. The next regular meeting will be 8 a.m., Tuesday in the commission room on the first floor of the Sherman County Courthouse.

## A celebration of reading at Central



David Branda was reading "The Malachite Palace" by Alma Ada to third graders from Linda McKee's and Karen Stone's classes at Central School for National Library Week. The book was one of many donated to the school library by third grade teacher Susan Jensen. In the background was Central School library technician Karen Colip. Photo by Janet Craft / The Goodland Daily News

## Motel owners complains about tax

By Tom Betz

Goodland Daily News

A Goodland motel owner challenged the way Sherman County handles its "guest tax," at a county commission meeting on Tuesday, saying he thought the Chamber of Commerce was spending motel owners' money the wrong way.

Saying he felt the tax had been improperly established, Karl Hildreth, owner of the Buffalo Inn, appeared at the commissioner meeting asking to have changes made in how the money is collected and spent.

However, County Attorney Mike Irvin said he thought the tax had been legally established even though the way things are done does not strictly follow state law. The county used its "home rule" powers to make changes, the attorney said.

One key issue is the number of motel owners on the board, which Hildreth charges has led to control of the Convention and Visitors Bureau by the Chamber. Officials say, however, that it's hard to get motel owners to serve.

"I don't feel there is a valid law for collecting the transient guest tax," Hildreth said. "I don't think the resolution was done correctly in 1982 when it was first established, and I believe the resolution passed in 1990 was flawed. The first resolution calls for six motel people to be on the board, and ... that has never been followed."

**"I don't feel there is a valid law for collecting the transient guest tax."**

— Karl Hildreth owner of the Buffalo Inn

**"I want you to pass a new resolution and make it conform to the eight businesses who are paying the tax."**

— Karl Hildreth owner of the Buffalo Inn

According to Hildreth, the first resolution passed Dec. 14, 1982, cited the wrong statute, and that should have made it invalid. An error in the resolution passed in 1990, which raised the tax from 2 percent to 3 percent, he suggested made the new resolution invalid.

In December, the question about the motel representation on the board was brought to the attention of the commissioners, and a letter was sent to the Convention and Visitors Bureau board in January asking them to find additional motel representatives.

County Attorney Mike Irvin attended the meeting and said he and Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld had been meeting with the motel owners and the convention and visitors board to attempt to resolve the matter.

He said a meeting has been set up for Friday for the motel owners to review how the funds have been spent, and to go over the accounting procedures.

"I agree that he (Hildreth) has some points, but in my opinion they are open to interpretation which does not necessarily invalidate the resolution or the present board configuration," Irvin said.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel brought out the original books which show the resolution from 1982, but also located a second resolution passed March 28,

1983, which appeared to correct the error in the earlier resolution.

"I think the second resolution corrected the problem with the first resolution," Rumpel said. "The tax appears to have been OK when it was implemented."

"The question about the possible error in the 1990 resolution can be interpreted several ways," Irvin said. "One interpretation would mean the whole resolution is null and void, but another interpretation would be that only that one part would be null and void."

"The 1990 resolution used the statute as a guideline, including the make-up of the board, but that resolution also exempted the county from the statute through the home-rule provisions. Under home rule, you can do what you want, and in the 1990 resolution, the board representation called for six motel representatives 'if possible.'"

Commissioner Kenny Davis asked what was keeping the motel people from attending the meetings when they had been invited.

"I don't think the current situation is fair," Hildreth said. "This is my advertising money, and it seems skewed toward economic development."

In answer to Davis' question, Hildreth said it was difficult for motel people to take time off for a meeting at 9 a.m.

"Will changing the time help get people to show up for the meetings?" Davis asked.

"I don't feel the Chamber of Commerce and the convention bureau are the right ones to handle this tax money," Hildreth said. "I don't want anything to do with the Chamber."

"What is it you want us to do?" asked Commissioner Gary Townsend.

"I want you to pass a new resolution and make it conform to the eight businesses who are paying the tax," Hildreth said. "I want to see the money used to promote the filling of all the motel

rooms in Goodland. We can do that, and bring more people to downtown and to all the businesses."

"I am not saying that what Hildreth is saying is inaccurate, but there is another side," Irvin said. "I feel the commissioners need to get all the information before making any changes."

Townsend and Davis agreed to allow Irvin and Frankenfeld continue to work with the two groups.

"I would like to finish what we started, and then look at the possibility of change," Irvin said. "The ultimate issue is how the funds are being spent."

"We have been trying to get people from the motels to be on the board since I have been a commissioner," Townsend said.

"I think it is the fault of the commissioners that this has gone on," Hildreth said. "There was a letter from the attorney general saying there were problems and nothing was done."

"I agree there may be a conflict, but I have not seen anything from the attorney general on this matter," Irvin said. "There is a letter from Scott Showalter (former county attorney) which indicates there are areas open to interpretation."

"I want you to do it the way we want it done," Hildreth said. "I think my voice is like 1,000 people saying this is wrong and it is a mess and (they) want it changed."

**"I am not saying that what Hildreth is saying is inaccurate, but there is another side."**

— Mike Irvin Sherman County Attorney

## State running behind on processing tax refunds

TOPEKA (AP) — The processing of state income tax returns and refunds could be delayed this year because the state Department of Revenue has fewer workers to handle them.

"It's crunch time," said Angela Goering, the agency's information officer.

Refunds that normally take six to eight weeks are likely to take eight weeks or more, she said, blaming

ing a shortage of employees.

That is why the department is pushing electronic filing for taxpayers due refunds.

They get their refunds in 10 to 14 days, and the workload on the department's staff is reduced.

The deadline to file is midnight Thursday, and the department expects some 500,000 returns to arrive in its mail room this week.

Last year, the department processed 1,325,372 tax returns. This year, it expects 1.5 million, and it has fewer workers to do them.

Six people separate tax forms from the regular mail, 185 open and sort returns, six scan returns into a computer and 67 do data entry.

Data entry is short about 40 employees, Goering said. That's what is delaying refunds.