

weather report

60°
at noon



Today

Sunset, 7:36 p.m.

Tomorrow

Sunrise, 5:51 a.m.

Sunset, 7:37 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 48 degrees
- Humidity 64 percent
- Sky Partly cloudy
- Winds east at 17-22 mph
- Barometer 30.03 inches and rising

- Record High 87° (1967)
- Record Low 24° (1969)

Yesterday's Data

High 72°
 Low 38°
 Precipitation —

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Cloudy; 50 percent chance of thunderstorms; low 45-50; winds SE 20-30. Tomorrow: Cloudy; 60 percent chance of thunderstorms; high 60; winds E 20-30.

Extended Forecast

Friday through Sunday: Chance of rain 60 percent Friday and Saturday; high 60; low 45. Chance of thunderstorms Sunday; high 70; low 40.

(National Weather Service)
 For 24-hour weather information, tune scanner to 162.400 MHz.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.19 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$2.12
 - Loan deficiency payment — 33¢
 - Corn — \$1.78 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.82
 - Loan deficiency prmt. — 17¢
 - Milo — \$2.64 hundredweight
 - Soybeans — \$3.86 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.04
 - Loan deficiency payment — 85¢
 - Millet — \$4.15 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$8.50 cwt.
 - Loan deficiency prmt. — \$1.35
 - Oil new crop — \$8.80 cwt.
 - Confection current — \$17/10 cwt.
 - Pinto beans — \$13 (new crop)
- (Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and Prairie Pea and Bean.)

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

Three in black target of probe

GOLDEN, Colo.—The man in charge of the Columbine High School shooting investigation expressed suspicions about three teens who knew the gunmen and waited outside during the massacre. He also said "the entire carnage" in the school cafeteria was captured on videotape.

"They were in combat fatigues," Jefferson County Sheriff John Stone said, referring to the three young men. "They said they heard it on the radio. Well, it wasn't on the radio at that time."

Meanwhile, a Marine Corps spokesman said today that 18-year-old gunman Eric Harris had tried to enlist but was told by a recruiter visiting his home on April 15 that he had been rejected for medical reasons, which other sources said included psychiatric problems and psychiatric drugs.

Chief happy with progress of department

By Keith Lippoldt

Goodland Daily News

So far, so good. But Ray Smee says he still has a long ways to go before he is satisfied as he enters his fourth month as Goodland chief of police.

Smee took office in January. One of his first orders of business was to build a department. With only three experienced officers, Bill Fulcher, Dave Becker and Greg Kroskey, Smee had to hire four officers and still has one full-time position to fill. Besides that, no major changes were needed.

"To be at full strength, we need nine full-time officers and the chief," Smee

said. "We now are very close to reaching full strength. We have three new officers in school (Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center in Hutchinson) and one more position to fill.

"I am very happy with this staff. Things are going pretty well. Besides a little minor tweaking, everything has pretty much stayed the same."

In addition to the full-time position still available, Smee would like to add one part-time officer and a part-time animal control officer.

"This town is no different than any other town," Smee said. "The majority

of our calls fall into two categories, dog calls (running loose, barking and bites) and criminal damage to property. We handle these on a daily basis."

Public perception can make or break a police department and its leader. With that in mind, education and public relations both weigh heavily on Smee's 'must-do' list. So how would he say that the public is perceiving the job that both he and his staff are doing?

"Other than the little bit of feedback that I have received, I don't really know," the chief said. "I have received some letters of commendation on some of my officers that were very positive. I want my guys to take the time and talk with people. I want to get into the schools and talk to the students, not as

a cop but as a friend. A good rapport is very important."

Several programs are in the works that will make the force even more accessible to the public, especially the youth. Among these are Kansas City Royals collector card handouts and the possible implementation of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (known as DARE) in the near future. That can be more easily handled with a full staff of officers, the chief said.

"This (baseball card) program is an excellent opportunity for our law enforcement officers and community youth to meet one another in a positive environment," Smee said. "We look forward to each season so we have the opportunity to participate in this worth-

while program."

Another important item, the chief said, is the working relationships the force has with other law enforcement agencies. In recent cases, the police has been involved with officers from the Sherman County Sheriff's Department, the KBI and the Kansas Highway Patrol. Just a few weeks back, Smee had the help of seven drug dogs from area agencies to check the halls of Goodland High School. Nothing was found.

"I know that there are drugs in Goodland and we will do everything we can to find them," Smee said. "We want to be the best department that we can be. It sounds like an advertisement, but we want to be the best. We owe that to the citizens of Goodland."



Ray Smee

Road bill could die this week

House is balking over tax increases

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — Legislators expect transportation to be the biggest and most difficult issue to resolve during their wrap-up session starting today.

Gov. Bill Graves has attempted to break an impasse between the House and Senate by giving legislators a new plan for a 10-year transportation program. He proposes increasing gasoline and diesel fuel taxes by 4 cents a gallon over five years and issuing \$995 million in bonds to pay for it.

The Legislature also still needs to consider the year's final budget bill, which contains the entire budget for the Juvenile Justice Authority and its corrections centers for young offenders.

Legislators haven't decided how much they will increase spending on public elementary and secondary schools either, and their leaders expect the House and Senate still expect to pass a compromise proposal to overhaul the state's higher education management system.

The Legislature might even discuss gambling and proposed changes to a 1998 law designed to restrict late-term abortions.

Legislative leaders expect the wrap-up session to last at least through Saturday, but it could go longer. Since 1975, the average length of the wrap-up sessions has been six days, with the longest running 12 days in 1991.

Transportation is likely to be the issue that determines how long legislators meet this year.

Even Graves has said if legislative leaders do not see a consensus building on the issue by the end of the week, they should give up on trying to pass a plan.

"You can beat your head black and blue over this," said Rep. Gary Hayzlett, R-Lakin, chairman of the House Transportation Committee. "If by Friday we don't have a consensus, and it appears we're not going to get one, we'll probably get ready to go home."

Legislative leaders appointed a joint conference committee of five senators and five House members to draft a final version of a transportation bill.

Graves' newest proposal would allow the state to spend nearly \$12.6 billion over 10 years on improvements to highways, airports, public transit and short line railroads. Besides the bonds and fuel tax increases, the plan would divert more existing revenues to transportation, but it would not require an increase in vehicle registration fees.

Senate leaders expect the conference committee to adopt the plan to allow a quick vote in their chamber.

"My goal is to have the governor's plan over to the House by Thursday morning," said Senate President Dick Bond, R-Overland Park.

The outlook is less certain in the House. Many Republicans, particularly conservatives, still oppose any tax increase for a transportation plan. Their plan, approved by the House, assumed the state would have enough money over the next 10 years that it could divert enough to finance a transportation plan without increasing taxes.



Starting a clean sweep

Grant Junior High School eighth-grader Chad Kallsen (above) led the efforts of the entire school during the Spring Clean-up Day on Tuesday. The students, after several rainouts last week, were finally able to complete their tasks, cleaning up laws for people around town, especially the elderly. Cory Navarro (below) raked up a pile of leaves while Candi Carpenter and Erica Austin put them into the trash bag.

Photos by Keith Lippoldt
 Goodland Daily News

Hospital reviews rules on patient moves

By Keith Lippoldt

Goodland Daily News

In an effort to streamline a patient admissions and transfer system complicated by a serious shortage of nursing home space, the Goodland Regional Medical Center board listened to possible changes to policy and procedures Tuesday.

While, in the end, no changes were made, the board and hospital officials agreed that they need to do a better job of explaining their policies to the public to avoid the image that people are being "thrown out" of the hospital and forced to go to out-of-town homes.

Several people have complained in the past few months about the policies on length of care and transfer of patients out of so-called swing beds.

Hospital officials say the policy states that a patient, following an as-

essment, will be recommended to a care level. As need changes, the staff may make another recommendation.

The "swing bed" services are an intermediate level of care between regular hospital service and a nursing home or rehabilitation center. They are designed to house a patient for up to 30 days before a transfer unless there are unusual circumstances.

"With an intermediate admissions, we encourage the patient to go elsewhere for help," one hospital official said. "We encourage them, but we do not make them leave. We have never kicked anybody out."

If a patient requires more structured care than the swing bed, a nursing home or other, facility is recommended. Policy states that a patient can stay in the hospital until a place opens up elsewhere. In Sherman County, though, the

only nursing home is the Good Samaritan Center with a capacity of 60 beds. Rob Cotter, a social worker at the home, said it has a waiting list of 43 women and 21 men for admission, a wait of five to six years in some cases.

With that situation, the hospital must recommend transferring patients out on town. This adds to the already existing stresses of families who must deal with the family members illness. This inconvenience is then blamed on the hospital. The nearest are in St. Francis, Colby, Sharon Springs and Burlington.

"We have no policy that says that we can't keep a patient long-term," said Brenda Drennan, the hospital swing bed coordinator. "We do encourage them to go elsewhere, because it could be a five- or six-year stay. We encourage but we don't make them leave. We have never kicked anybody out."

The public's perception of this may not be the same as the hospital's, board Secretary Dennis Shank said.

"Perception is different than actuality," he said. "We do not kick patients out."

After much discussion, it was decided that better public education on the existing policy was the best option. No changes were made.

In other action, the board: • Heard a report from Roger Johnson, a certified public accountant with the firm of Wendling, Noe, Nelson and Johnson, on the audit for the year ending Dec. 31. He said the hospital, despite paying for the current construction project, compared favorably with a group of five similar hospitals.

• Toured the new obstetrics wing, which is currently in use, and the new Medical Office Building.