

Landfill fees to remain at current level

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Sherman County property owners won't see any increase in trash fees for the next year, though commissioners are keeping their fingers crossed that nothing unexpected pops up.

At their end-of-the-month meeting Wednesday, commissioners decided to stay with the current fees, which are designed to pay for the closing of the old landfill and opening of the new site south of Goodland.

The solid waste fee must be set by July 1 of each year, and will be included with the property tax bills received in November. The residential rate is \$150 per home.

Commissioner Gary Townsend said the figures from County Clerk Janet Rumpel and Public Works Director Curt Way indicate there should be enough with the current fee level to get the

county through the next year.

None of the commissioners expressed any interest in raising the fee, and Rumpel said if there is a shortfall, the money would have to come from the county General Fund.

There was some discussion about delaying the purchase of a compactor until the next year to give the landfill fund some cushion in case there are unexpected costs from the closing of the old landfill. Groundwater at the site is contaminated, and the state has demanded that the county drill more monitoring wells to find out how far the leakage stretches.

Commissioner Kenny Davis said he hoped the state health inspectors would not find anything more at the old landfill site which could cost the county even more money.

If the new wells show additional contamination, it is possible the county would be required

to treat the water or in some manner clean up the site. There is no way to know at this time what such a clean up could cost or how long it would take, commissioners said.

Meantime, the board learned that costs were going up on another project. Because of a change in materials to be used on the old U.S. 24 resurfacing, the costs are expected to be at least \$140,000 higher, Way said. He said the original plan had called for using sand in the chip sealing of the road, but a change was made to use a rock aggregate and a newer oil emulsion to give a better surface with extended road life.

The change will take the total estimated cost of the entire project to about \$600,000 over the next three years, and because of that, the county is considering a financing plan presented by Dave Warren of Chapman Securities of Wichita.

Warren said the commissioners could issue

sales tax revenue bonds to pay for the project, and based on a cash flow sheet he presented, the interest would cost about \$18,875 over three years.

The county would issue \$500,000 in bonds to complete the project, and payment would end in the fall of 2002, Warren said.

He also suggested the county could use a "temporary note" plan which could reduce the interest cost because no bonds would be issued and the principal would be paid on a regular quarterly or semi-annual basis.

The estimates show the special one-quarter percent sales tax will raise about \$240,000 each year, but the costs are to be paid out in the first two years. The total cost also includes an estimated \$30,000 to improve the section of the highway recently exchanged with the City of Good-

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weather report

74°

at noon

Today

- Sunset, 8:17 p.m.
- Tomorrow
- Sunrise, 5:24 a.m.
- Sunset, 8:17 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 73 degrees
- Humidity 51 percent
- Sky Mostly sunny
- Winds North at 5mph
- Barometer 29.95 inches and steady
- Record High 106° (1990)
- Record Low 40° (1959)

Last 24 Hours*

High 82°
Low 57°
Precipitation .77

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy with a chance of isolated thunderstorms. Low 60-65. Winds southeast at 10-20 mph. Tomorrow: Mostly sunny and breezy with high of 90. South winds at 15-20 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday through Monday. Dry and sunny with lows of 65-70, highs 95-100.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.20 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.11
Loan deficiency payment — 34¢
Corn — \$1.65 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.80
Loan deficiency pmt. — 19¢
Milo — \$2.33 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.78 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.87
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.02
Millet — \$4.00 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$7.30 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$7.86
Oil new crop — \$7.40 cwt.
Confection current — \$17/10 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$13 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigo Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and Prairie Pea and Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

Vote sought on tax increase

TOPEKA — Two conservative political groups are pushing for a constitutional change to mandate a public vote on state tax increases.

Leaders of the Kansas Taxpayers Network and the Kansas Republican Assembly said Wednesday that one reason for their proposal is gasoline and diesel fuel tax increases. The increases, which take effect Thursday, help finance a \$13 billion comprehensive transportation program.

Motor fuel taxes will increase 2 cents a gallon, then 1 cent a gallon more on July 1, 2001, and a final 1 cent a gallon on July 1, 2003. Over 10 years, those tax increases will raise about \$615 million.

The two groups also object to the transportation program because the state will issue \$995 million in bonds to help finance its highway, airport, railroad and public transit improvements.



Summer school projects

North Elementary School has been busy the past three weeks with summer school enrichment activity sessions. Several different subjects have been studied including rocketry and the purpose and composition of rain forests. Students in the classroom of Janet Davis and Kara Smith created a model of a rain forest

(above). Steve Wright was the instructor in rocketry where the students built and then launched model rockets. The rocket (at right), the Mean Machine, was built by Kali Reitchcheck. It measured nearly five feet tall and launched perfectly.

Photos by Keith Lippoldt/The Goodland Daily News



Information highway overtakes I-70 from Kansas City to Denver

By Charlie Baker

The Goodland Daily News

A big tractor-mounted cable rig is moving swiftly west through Sherman County. It's the information highway overtaking the Interstate highway as crews plow in three to four miles a day of conduit for a fiber optic cable between Kansas City and Denver.

Two of the conduits are for Digital Teleport Inc., a company out of St. Louis, and the other two are being installed for the state at no cost as rent for the right of way.

Schatz Underground Cable has a subcontractor installing the conduit with two Caterpillar dozers connected to each other, pulling a hook-like wedge that cuts a four-foot deep groove and lays the four conduits as it moves along.

Once the conduit is complete, the crew will come back and pull a fiber optic cable through one of the conduits. That should be by the end of the year, said Walter Love, division manager for the firm.

Apperson Utilities out of Eldon Mo. is the subcontractor laying the conduit for Schatz. The crew can bury about three to four miles a day, putting the lines about 40 to 48 inches deep, says Richard Beckett, job supervisor.

They hope to reach Denver sometime in October. Then they will come back and pull a fiber optic cable through one of the lines for Digital Teleport. The other one will remain empty until there is a need for more cable.

The Digital Teleport cable will be used mainly for national long distance service, said Love.

"The company is a carriers' carrier," said Matt Volz, intelligent transportation



Workers for Schatz Underground Cable lay four conduits for fiber optic cable along I-70. Two will be used by Digital Teleport Inc., and two will be used by the Kansas Department of Transportation to transmit weather and traffic information.

Photo by Charlie Baker/The Goodland Daily News

tion systems coordinator in Topeka for the Kansas Department of Transportation. "In other words, they put in the high capacity lines, then lease out access to companies like MCI, Sprint and so on."

He said the new lines probably won't affect the Goodland area much, though regional phone firms might lease space on the lines in the future. The project is a public/private partnership between the transportation department and Digital Teleport, said Volz.

"Digital Teleport needed to lay fiber optic lines," he said. "We offered them access along I-70 in return for (having) our own lines installed at the same time."

The two conduits that are being put down for the state will eventually be used to transport information on traffic and weather conditions along Kan-

sas highways.

"We will have cameras and sensors on the roads that will tell the condition and the number of vehicles traveling on it," said Volz.

Another usage will be to operate message boards along the highways. "If the highway is closed in Colorado because of weather conditions," he said, "we can warn travelers several hundred miles in advance of the closure so they can find accommodations."

Volz said the first installations will be in the Kansas City and Wichita areas. He said that in the future, the department will have connections all along I-70 to send information to a centrally located traffic center.

"We have the opportunity right now to install the conduit at no cost to us," he said, "and when the need rises for connecting, we will be ready."

Storms threaten area

Severe weather threatened Goodland residents and Sherman County wheat farmers Tuesday afternoon as thunderstorms and tornadoes began forming right over the town. There was little damage, though, with the worst reported southeast of Edson.

"We watched the clouds start to swirl around," said Scott O'Neal, an environmental geologist who was in Goodland working at the corner of Main Ave and 11th Street. "It moved across town, then formed into a funnel. It looked like it touched down on the south edge of town."

Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson saw the funnel a little before 1 p.m.

"It was about 3 1/2 miles east of Goodland, crossing Eight Street," he said. "It was about 100 to 150 yards across, really a pretty small one."

Police Chief Ray Smee said he got a call from Sheriff Whitson a little after noon that he had spotted a funnel cloud on the southeast edge of Goodland.

"I saw it cross I-70 and continue southeast," he said. "By the time it

crossed the highway, it had kicked up so much dust and dirt that you couldn't see much anymore."

Smee said after the storm had passed, he followed the path but couldn't see much damage.

The National Weather Service reported that tornadoes were spotted in Sherman, Logan, Thomas and Wichita Counties. One-inch hail was reported a mile north of Edson, and 1 3/4-inch hail fell in Winona in Logan County.

The storm did some damage to wheat fields, mostly southeast of Edson.

"There was a strip two to three miles wide and about 20 miles long that had major damage," said Merwin Jensen of Frontier Equity Exchange.

"We had one customer that lost 1,600 acres of wheat."

Lynn Hoelting of Mueller Grain said that the damage they have had reported was here and there.

"We have had losses reported from 20 percent to total loss," he said, noting that where it rained, field will be muddy.

"The rain will probably hold cutting up a day or two."

Crossed wires cause outage

The southwest quarter of Goodland was left without power for a couple of minutes Wednesday when a contractor employee accidentally crossed two wires.

City officials said an employee from E.A. Pederson was working on a power line upgrade across from the city shop at 16th and Arcade.

He pulled a control wire that came in contact with another wire, causing a circuit breaker to open. Customers were back on line within minutes and there was no damage reported.

City Manager Ron Pickman reported that the customers affected were those on Main Street, downtown, city hall and southwest.