

weather report

55°
at noon



Today

- Sunset, 6:55 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 6:54 a.m.
- Sunset, 6:30 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 64 degrees
- Humidity 93 percent
- Sky cloudy and foggy
- Winds southeast 15
- Barometer 30.23 inches and falling
- Record High 98° (1955)
- Record Low 34° (1965)

Last 24 Hours*

High	62°
Low	44°
Precipitation	none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: mostly cloudy, a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms, south winds 5 to 15 mph.
Friday: partly sunny, a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms, high near 80, south winds 5 to 15.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: dry, low near 50, high near 80.
Sunday: chance of thunderstorms, low near 50, high near 80.
(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.23 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$2.17
 - Loan deficiency payment — .28¢
 - Corn — \$1.63 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.58
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — .41¢
 - Milo — \$2.29 hundredweight
 - Soybeans — \$4.08 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.09
 - Loan deficiency payment — .80¢
 - Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$6.31 cwt.
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — \$2.91
 - Oil new crop — \$6.31 cwt.
 - Confection current — ask
 - Pinto beans — \$18 (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. Floyd is ashore near Cape Fear

WILMINGTON, N.C. — Hurricane Floyd roared ashore today near Cape Fear with 110 mph wind, flooding the coasts of the Carolinas and Virginia with more than a foot of rain and sending tens of thousands of people to huddle in shelters.
The eye of the huge storm hit the mainland at about 3 a.m., preceded by hours of violent weather that included several tornadoes. Floyd then weakened rapidly as it headed across the southeastern corner of Virginia on its way back to the ocean.
Some 1.3 million utility customers in the Carolinas and Virginia lost power, and 125,000 still had no power today in Florida. Flooding and power failures combined to shut down Portsmouth, Va.'s water supply system, which serves 110,000 customers.
At least seven deaths were blamed on Floyd.



Dustrol has begun resurfacing K-27 north of Goodland, and delays should be expected by travelers. The road will be resurfaced to the county line, and the job should take about two and a half weeks.
Photo by Charlie Baker/The Goodland Daily News

Eastbound ramps closed for 20 days

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News
Beginning today the eastbound on and off ramps at the east Goodland exit (17) will be closed said Donna Binning of the Colby office of the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The ramp replacement an effort to ease the construction problems next spring. The Kansas Department of Transportation has decided to proceed with replacement of the ramps at the east exit, and this will mean that during the construction season next spring only the eastbound ramps at the west Goodland exit (19) will need to be replaced.

Binning said the ramp replacement should take about three weeks.

Friday Binning said the newly completed westbound lanes of I-70 will be opened from Edson to the bridge about two miles east of Goodland.

"There will only be four miles of head-to-head two lane traffic after Friday," she said. "The eastbound lanes will be returned to two lanes next week."

Several other projects are currently underway in the Goodland area including the recycling project on K-27 north of Goodland.

Binning said the contractor, Dustrol, is expected to be working on K-27 for about three weeks, and there will be

traffic delays on a daily basis.
The Caruso bridge replacement project is to begin later this week, but Binning said it could be Monday before old hwy. 24 is actually closed west of Goodland.

Beginning Monday she said there will be additional one lane restrictions on I-70 between Goodland and the state line as the concrete replacement continues and a second contractor begins the joint sealing. Tuesday the Port of Entry at the state line will be closed for about 48 hours to allow replacement of some concrete panels.

With all the construction activity in the Goodland area Binning said the only direction where there is not a project presently is south on K-27. "Just give us some time," she said. "I was down south recently inspecting the bridge and can say I have seen some in worse shape. Everybody is going to holler when we get ready to replace that bridge in the next few years."

The bridge over the Smoky Hill River which is about seven miles south of Goodland will be replaced as part of the major project on south K-27 from Goodland to the Sherman County line. Binning said it is to early to know if the bridge will be replaced as a part of the whole project or as a separate piece before the major project.

Hospital board requests money for equipment

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News
Hospital officials gave Sherman County commissioners a presentation Tuesday on money needs of the Goodland Regional Medical Center, adding up to projected losses of a quarter million dollars down the road.

They ask commissioners for \$204,000 for equipment needs next year and help with their budget in succeeding years, but got no promises in return.

Most members of the hospital board were present, along with Administrator Jim Chaddic and Financial Officer Andy Laue, to explain the current and future needs of the hospital.

President Doug Irvin said the board thought the recent meeting between the hospital representatives, Commissioner Kenny Davis and County Attorney Bonnie Selby had been very good. "We need to keep this open, and continue such meetings," Irvin said.

"I think the meeting helped to get everything resolved," Davis replied. "It is a means for all three commissioners to ask questions and then get answers which I share with them after the meeting. I think the only thing which remains is the autopsy question, and I think we still have to get with the guy in Oakley (Dr. Richard V. Ohmart, the district coroner)."

"We'd like to show you what we are doing, and the results of our recent strategic planning session," said Chaddic.

He said the planning session had been attended by members of the staff, administration and board members on Aug. 5, covering a range of issues affecting the hospital currently and over the next three to five years.

Chaddic showed the commissioners a computer presentation which shows that 82 percent of the patients at the hospital are coming from Sherman County. Wallace County had 7 percent, Cheyenne County 4 percent, and Colorado and Thomas County each had about 2 percent.

Another chart showed that the hospital's market share has grown a bit, reaching 80 percent in 1997. Board member Larry McCants said the market figures show that the people have confidence in the hospital and that more of people are using the hospital than going out of the area.

This is an important factor, since another chart in Chaddic's presentation showed population projections over the next 20 years. It assumes that Sherman County will slowly continue to lose population while Thomas County is projected to grow.

Outpatient visits have increased over the past 10 years, but appear to have leveled off around 30,000 a year, he said. The biggest increase was after the new outpatient clinic was completed a few years ago.

Looking to the future, McCants said the big problem may be the effect of the federal Balanced Budget Amendment,

which calls for large cuts in Medicare reimbursement. Those make up half the revenue for the hospital.

Chaddic said there are efforts in Congress to keep the Medicare at the level it is now, but there is no indication yet that this will change. He said he was surprised by the reaction of Kansas Sen. Sam Brownback at a recent meeting in Oakley.

"When I brought this up, the senator said we should go to the taxpayers for an increase," Chaddic said. "I told him we were already taxed to the max, and he seemed very surprised at my reaction."

Chaddic presented charts showing that with the changes in reimbursement levels, the hospital would begin to see losses mount, reaching a net loss of over \$250,000 a year by 2002, including equipment costs. He said the hospital plans to work on improving its market share in the surrounding counties, look for niche opportunities and to target the 46-64 age group to help increase revenues.

"The cuts will impact our hospital and could cause a change in the level of care," McCants told the commissioners. "We are asking for help to fund the gap, the shortfall, with sales tax funds."

McCants gave the commissioners a list of equipment the hospital needs today totaling \$204,000. He said the annual cost of equipment for the hospital is at least \$500,000 and he expects that

to keep growing.

"I guess anything you can do to help will be appreciated," McCants told the commissioners. "In the future, with pending changes, we may need much more to keep our heads above water."

"Things are going well," Irvin said, "but we need to keep the momentum going and looking ahead this is an issue we need to address."

"Some of our neighbors face problems with primary care with these changes," Chaddic said. "We can assist them and make it more local than having to go to Hays or Denver."

"Maintaining the quality is key," added Randy Schoenthaler, a board member.

"I want to commend the job you have done," Commissioner Gary Townsend said. "I think this is good, and the more the taxpayers know, I think they will feel more comfortable about this open process. People don't feel it is under the table, and are more likely to support the hospital."

Townsend asked why the Goodland

hospital seems to have lower rates than most of the surrounding communities, and wondered if this might not be part of the revenue stream problems.

"We did an across-the-board 10 percent raise recently," Laue said, "but when we were done we hardly saw any effect on the bottom line. We did see an increase in the contractual expenses."

"This needs to be more open and let people know more about what is happening," Commissioner Davis said.

"We understand and we now have a new board committee for outreach," said board member Lynn Hoelting.

"The planning for the new doctor clinic was done over five years ago and is a sound investment," McCants said. "We are committed to keeping the hospital at a high level to provide better care for our citizens at what we can afford."

The commissioners said they would take the request under advisement, but said they did not have any idea what they could do at present.

Nearing the end



Shoppers were out Tuesday to take advantage of the 50 percent off sale at Gibson's. The store is selling off their inventory in preparation of closing.
Photo by Charlie Baker/The Goodland Daily News



A pick-up truck lost control and rolled over on County Road 64, just east of Goodland. The driver was not at the scene when police and emergency vehicles arrived.
Photo by Charlie Baker/The Goodland Daily News