

weather report

35°
at noon



Today
• Sunset, 4:27 p.m.
Tomorrow
• Sunrise, 6:40 a.m.
• Sunset, 4:27 p.m.

Midday Conditions
• Soil Temperature 45 degrees
• Humidity 78 percent
• Sky partly cloudy
• Winds northwest at 15 mph
• Barometer 30.23 inches and ???????
• Record High 72° (1925)
• Record Low 0° (1941)

Last 24 Hours*
High 37°
Low 31°
Precipitation .14 inch

Northwest Kansas Forecast
Tonight: mostly clear, low near 15, light winds.
Wednesday: partly sunny, high near 50, west winds 5 to 15 mph.

Extended Forecast
Thursday: dry, low near 20, high near 50.
Friday, Saturday: dry, low near 20, high near 60.
(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon
Wheat — \$2.09 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.06
Loan deficiency payment — 39¢
Corn — \$1.55 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.63
Loan deficiency pmt. — 36¢
Milo — \$2.17 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.93 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.96
Loan deficiency payment — 93¢
Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$5.80 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$4.01
Confection current — \$7/11 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$15 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco 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.
Escaped inmates recaptured today
HUTCHINSON (AP)— Three inmates who escaped from the Hutchinson Correctional Facility on Sunday were found at a house in Shawnee this morning and taken into custody, a state official said.
The inmates, Jeffery Chapman, Bryce Cox and Paul Fouraker, were captured about 10:15 a.m., said Bill Miskell, public information officer for the state Department of Corrections. They were reported missing about 10 p.m. Sunday from the minimum security prison.
The three surrendered peacefully and were not armed, Miskell said. Their connection to the Johnson County home was not immediately known.
“We had some information from the public they were in a particular place,” Miskell said. “We tracked them to the Kansas City area yesterday, and were confident they were still together.”

Dr. Renner combined flying, medicine

By Charlie Baker
The Goodland Daily News

Flying Doc Renner was a pioneer in combining aviation and medicine, and an important figure in the history of Goodland.

Now the Sherman County Historical Society and two Goodland residents have polished up the display at Renner Field highlighting the career of the Flying Doc.

Volunteers Millie Wright and Kevin Rasure refurbished the display, which had been in place since 1966.

Wright is not a member of the society, but volunteers often to help on projects. She has been interviewing Gertrude Renner, widow of Dr. M.J. Renner, as part of the society's oral history program.

Mrs. Renner, 77, has a wealth of information about Sherman County, said Wright.

“When we were talking,” she said, “Gertrude told me she wished someone would fix up the display at the airfield.”

She said she thought about it for a little while, then spoke with a few friends, and together, they decided to tackle the project.

Historical society member Connie Hatcher and past society president Jennifer House worked with her to update the display, done for the dedication of the field.

Wright said she had known Doc Renner all her life, but discovered some interesting information about him through the project.

Renner graduated from the University of Kansas in 1920, with a degree in medicine. He established a practice in Goodland in 1926.

Renner had a passion for flying. He volunteered for the Army Air Corps, but because of his health, he did not pass the examination.

Later he bought his own plane, and



The display at Renner Municipal Airport features history, photos, and items used by Doctor Renner during his flights to treat patients out on the

plains of Kansas. Included are the gloves (left), leather helmet (right) and special goggles (center). Photo by Charlie Baker / The Goodland Daily News

often used it to travel to patients. He has flew over impassable roads to deliver babies and used his plane to get to injured patients who could not get to him. He also used his plane to transport ill or injured patients to the hospital.

Because of his dedication to flying, he was instrumental in making Goodland a glider pilot training location, said Wright.

In 1966, Goodland's airfield was

dedicated as Renner Municipal Airport, to honor the doctor and his contributions.

Wright said Mrs. Renner offered to allow her to look through family photo albums, and to use whatever she needed. She then gave the photos to House, who had them copied, preserved and mounted with captions.

Wright said she volunteered her son, Kevin Rasure, owner of Rasure Lum-

ber Do-It Center, to help in the project.

“I am not a member of the historical society,” Rasure said, “but I get volunteered to do projects like this pretty often.”

Rasure built the cabinet for the display. He cut a design into the heading, then turned it over to Hatcher, who painted the designs on the sides of the cabinet, and covered the back to get it ready for display.

The three women then put it all together, along with some items that Gertrude Renner had offered.

Wright said the small cost of materials was paid for by the Renners, Gertrude, and her daughter, Sally.

“This has always been a project that needed to be done,” said House, adding that the society hopes to have a dedication for the display in January.

Requests for public records brings mixed response

Nineteen Kansas newspapers, including The Goodland Daily News, joined this fall to survey access to public documents held by cities, counties and school districts. This report is part of the results of that project.

By Hurst Laviana
The Wichita Eagle

Ask for a public record in Kansas, and you'll probably get what you want.

But don't be surprised if your request generates blank stares, suspicious looks and a demand to provide a lot more information about yourself than the law requires.

If you want information about what your schools spend on salaries, expect to be asked who you work for and why you want the information.

If you want to check on a local crime, you may be questioned by police, and you may have to submit to a criminal background check. In Harper County, you may even be detained if you don't explain who you are and why you want to see the crime reports. In several counties, even if you can get the reports, copies will cost \$5 a page.

Those are some of the conclusions of a project that involved reporters and editors from 19 Kansas newspapers. They went to city halls, county courthouses and school district offices in all 105 counties in late September in a search of public records. Dozens of requests were denied in whole or in part.

Many government agencies defended their reluctance to disclose information that Kansas law says is open to everyone. Some officials said they withheld records out of concern for the privacy or safety of those named in the documents.

Those concerns, while well-intentioned, are rarely warranted and ultimately threaten the American way of life, say advocates of open government.

The danger, they say, is that citizens will be shut out of the democratic process.

The Open Records Act is intended to make sure voters can monitor elected officials and see how their tax dollars are spent, said Topeka attorney Brad Smoot, who was in the attorney general's office when the law was en-

acted.

“It's an element of democracy, and therefore it's something that everyone ought to be interested in,” he said. “You can't know what your government is doing unless you have access to that information.”

The survey was done at a time when more and more Kansans are asking for help with open government issues. The Kansas Attorney General's Office handled 625 inquiries from Kansas residents about public records and open meetings in fiscal 1999. The year before, the office responded to 325.

“My personal opinion is it's an increasing mistrust (of government) by private citizens,” said Assistant Attorney General Steve Phillips. “Cynicism and mistrust.”

Jack Turner, a Wichita lawyer who has made frequent public records requests in his efforts to monitor local governments, said he wasn't surprised by the survey's results. While most government workers have been helpful with his open records requests, Turner said some have a predisposition toward keeping government records a secret.

“It's a ‘them-and-us’ deal,” he said. “If you're in the city, county or state government, it's ‘us.’ If you're a member of the public, you're ‘them.’”

How the project worked

Without volunteering their occupations, the Kansas journalists asked for:

- County commission meeting minutes.
- A list of bills approved for payment by local city councils.
- Records that detail the total compensation for high school football coaches.
- Crime reports from local sheriff's offices.

The records were chosen because they are open for public inspection under Kansas law, and because they are the types of records an ordinary citizen might ask for.

Although most of the 420 records requests were granted — some with a smile and cup of coffee — 35 were

flatly denied.

And more than half of the public agencies asked for more personal information than the law requires citizens to disclose. Statewide, 89 sheriff's offices, 71 school districts, 62 city offices and 22 county clerk's offices asked who their visitors worked for or why they wanted a public record. More than half of the sheriff's offices asked both questions.

Government agencies in Kansas can require that public records requests be put in writing, but they cannot require more than a name and address.

That's more than most states allow. Only four other states allow citizens to be asked for either a name or address; some state laws forbid it outright.

The 35 denials appeared to be clear violations of the 1984 Kansas Open Record Act, which begins, “It is declared to be the public policy of the state that public records shall be open for inspection by any person unless otherwise provided by this act, and this act shall be liberally construed and applied to promote such policy.”

Kansas Attorney General Carla Stovall said the survey suggests that many government officials, from agency heads to front-desk workers, lack a ba-

sic understanding of the open records law.

“Clearly, education is what needs to happen,” she said.

Stovall said that after hearing the preliminary results of the survey last month, she sent letters to three statewide law enforcement organizations — the Kansas Sheriffs Association, the Kansas Peace Officers' Association and the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police — reminding them of their obligation to comply with open records laws and offering to conduct training sessions. The first such session was held Oct. 28 in Salina.

Former Kansas Attorney General Bob Stephan was surprised to hear that 35 requests for public records had been denied.

“The public records law has been there a long time,” Stephan said. “If people are not aware of what open records are, they're not being educated very well.”

Crime reports hard to get

The Access Project was patterned after similar surveys in a half-dozen other states. Reporters in each of those states also found numerous open-records violations.

And, as was the case with those other efforts, the Kansas project found that most open records obstacles were put up by law enforcement agencies.

In all, 29 sheriff's offices refused to

release copies of recent crime reports that are clearly marked “open public record.”

Reporters who walked into an office and asked to see the reports were often greeted with suspicion.

“What for?” Greenwood County Sheriff Lowell Parker asked.

“You're with?” Logan County Sheriff Pat Parsons asked.

Standard offense reports include the time, date and place where a crime occurs, the nature of the offense, the victim's name and address, and a description of any property that was lost.

The requests for information generated the most suspicion in smaller towns, where a stranger visiting four government offices in one day can draw a lot of attention.

“It's your attitude,” Harper County Undersheriff Richard Happ told a Wichita Eagle reporter who had asked for several public records in the town of Anthony. She provided her name and hometown when asked, but declined to answer questions about who she worked for and why she wanted them. Happ held her against her will briefly for questioning, releasing her after a call to her editor to complain that she was being “demanding.”

Happ's boss, Harper County Sheriff Dan Eslinger, later explained that in a

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Most close for Thanksgiving Day

By Charlie Baker

The Goodland Daily News
Goodland schools will have classes for only half a day on Wednesday, and will be out Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving holiday.

City and county government offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, but many businesses will be open. Federal offices, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will be open. The post office will be open

and deliver mail on Friday.

The Goodland Daily News will not publish Thursday, but will publish a paper on Friday, and the offices will be open Friday.

Goodland banks will close for the holiday, but will be open Friday.

The Goodland Activities Center will be open Friday, as will the public library.

The restaurant at Howard Johnsons will be open Thursday, and will offer a Thanksgiving buffet.

The restaurant at the Buffalo Inn will be open for breakfast, but will close at 10 a.m. for the remainder of the day.

McDonalds will also be open for breakfast, but will close at 1 p.m. Kentucky Fried Chicken, Wendy's, and Subway will all be closed Thursday.

The Cowboy Loop on Main Avenue will be open, and so will the Presto, on Commerce Road. Wal-Mart will be open all day.