

weather report

67°
at noon



Today

- Sunset, 4:26 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 6:44 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:25 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 36 degrees
- Humidity 25 percent
- Sky partly sunny
- Winds variable at 5 mph
- Barometer 29.78 inches and falling
- Record High 72° (1960)
- Record Low -7° (1952)

Last 24 Hours*

- High 51°
- Low 22°
- Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: partly clear, low near 30, west winds 10 to 20 mph.
Saturday: Sunny, high near 55, north winds 5 to 15 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday through Monday: dry, lows near 20, highs near 55.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400.MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.05 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$2.04
 - Loan deficiency payment — 41¢
 - Corn — \$1.51 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.63
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 36¢
 - Milo — \$2.11 hundredweight
 - Soybeans — \$3.87 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.94
 - Loan deficiency payment — 95¢
 - Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$5.80 cwt.
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.87
 - Confection current — \$117.7 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.

Nebraska wants suit dismissal

TOPEKA — Nebraska wants the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss a lawsuit by Kansas that claims it is being shortchanged over the amount of water it gets from the Republican River.

Attorney General Carla Stovall filed a lawsuit last year claiming that each year Kansas is shorted some 10 billion gallons of water by Nebraska in violation of the 1943 Republican River Compact.

The U.S. Supreme Court took charge of the case and appointed retired Maine Supreme Court Chief Justice Vincent McKusick to hear the lawsuit on behalf of the court.

Lawyers for the two states met Jan. 5 in a federal courtroom in Kansas City, Mo., as Nebraska argues for dismissal. McKusick will listen to the arguments and make a recommendation to the Supreme Court, which will decide whether the lawsuit should be dismissed.

Big shopping season in full swing



Christie Rasure (above, left) took advantage of the early opening and big discounts to do some shopping this morning. J.C. Penney clerk Elizabeth Riley (right) said there had been a steady stream of customers since the store opened at 7 a.m. Luann Nitsch (right) traveled from Burlington to cash in on Wal-Mart's after-Thanksgiving bargains. "I am here for the sales," she said. Wal-Mart was crowded (left) by 7:30 a.m., with the toy department being a very busy area. Shoppers also filled the downtown stores that opened early. Alco opened at 7 a.m. with many advertised specials. Jon and Jolynn (right) Manning were a couple of shoppers out early. "Being off work made it possible, but the tons of sales are what really brought us in," said Jolynn.

Photo by Charlie Baker/The Goodland Daily News



Experts expect 5-6 percent jump in Christmas sales

NEW YORK (AP) — In a bid to get shoppers to buy rather than browse, merchants started the holiday season today by cutting prices, and many shoppers showed up before dawn — sometimes even before midnight.

As stores and malls dangled discounts on the official kickoff of the holiday shopping season, Internet merchants also courted shoppers by offering deals to those who visit their Web sites.

The crowds were so big early today at the Ames discount store in Revere, Mass., that all the shopping carts were taken by 7:15 a.m.

Bargain prices lured shoppers to Wal-Mart stores nationwide. In Bowie, Md., lines began to form around 10:30 p.m. Thursday night, hours before the store's 6 a.m. opening, while hundreds of cars filled a Wal-Mart parking lot in Lynn, Mass., at 5 a.m.

"I didn't want to be here, but you can't beat the prices," said Charles Chisholm, who had already picked out two \$99 19-inch TVs and \$69 VCRs by 6:15 a.m. at the Lynn store.

It's been a blockbuster year for retailers but a lot is riding on the next five weeks, when most store owners tally a significant portion of their annual sales. Last year, merchants rang up more than \$170 billion in sales during the holidays.

"Shoppers won't just be at the mall this

weekend, but they will be checking things out online," said Britt Beemer, chairman of the consulting firm America's Research Group in Charleston, S.C. "Where they find the better deal is where they might actually make the purchase."

With consumer confidence remaining strong, unemployment levels at 30-year lows and stock prices continuing to climb, expectations are high for this year. Estimates are that Americans will spend at least an average of \$500 per family.

Analysts project sales at traditional stores will rise 5 percent to 6 percent from last year, while online sales are expected to at least double from December 1998.

But retailers have learned that bold forecasts aren't always on target. With shoppers more fickle today than ever before, anything — from a downturn in the stock market to unusual weather — can keep them home.

"We had a great start to this year, but we've seen spending slow down a little bit and no one is sure what that will mean for this holiday season," said Michael Niemira, a retail analyst at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi in New York.

Shop owners also are coming under pressure from the growth in popularity of the Internet. While e-retailers only tally a fraction of all holiday sales, traditional merchants don't want to lose too much business to their Web rivals.

First two instant winners claim \$50 prizes

The first two winners have claimed their instant prizes in Goodland merchants big Christmas on Us holiday giveaway.

James Carver and Stan Martin turned in winning tickets worth \$50 in Goodland scrip money to give a little boost to their holiday shopping. Martin, 5211 Arcade, said he thought he got his ticket when he bought auto parts at Dan Brenner Ford-Mercury.

Carver, 1512 Sherman, said he got his from Frontier Equity Co-op in Goodland.

"That's the only place I've shopped where they had tickets," he said. "I'm sure going to be doing some more business out there."

Both held tickets drawn in the first week of instant winners. The winning numbers appeared in the Wednesday edition of *The Goodland Daily News*.

In all, eight instant winners will be chosen during the holiday promotion. Numbers are placed in sponsors' ads in *The Daily News*, and winners had to read the ads to find



Carver



Martin

the numbers. The ads will appear again the next two Thursdays, with at least four winning numbers in each Christmas special section.

There are still two winning tickets outstanding. The owners have until Monday to claim their prizes, or the money will go back into the instant winner pool.

Sponsoring merchants will be giving away tickets for the contest until Thursday, Dec. 16. Merchants report giving out thousands of tickets in the first two weeks, and predict a lot of interest in the giveaway.

The Grand Prize Drawing will be

held in downtown Goodland on Saturday, Dec. 18. In addition to the \$3,000 Grand Prize, second and third prizes of \$400 and \$200 will be given away, along with any leftover \$50 prizes. Entertainment and treats are planned for the event.

Sponsors include: Knott Just Books, Collage Ltd., Corner Garage, Shores Bros., Rasure Lumber Do-It Center, Miller's Electronics, American Communications, Jan's Hallmark, First National Bank, Mann's Jewelry and Julie's Interiors, Gambino's Pizza, Aten Department Store, Orscheln Farm & Home Supply, NAPA Auto Parts, Frontier Equity Co-op.

Elliott's Inc., Fixsen Electronics, Wane's Carpet and Drapery, Latinos Mexican Restaurant, Bowladium Lanes, McB's Corner, Cowboy Loop, Dan Brenner Ford-Mercury, Scheopner's Culligan, Luci's Aquarium, Garcia's Home Furnishings and Appliance, McDonald's and The Goodland Daily News.

Some schools slow to release requested salary records

By Kendrick Blackwood

Lawrence Journal-World

When a stranger asked for a copy of the high school football coach's contract, the treasurer of the Norton School Board alerted her superintendent and then copied the contract with a smile.

"When it comes to salaries, that's all open records," said Terri Black, an 18-

year veteran of the district in northwest Kansas. "That was one of the first things I was told. They could come in and ask my salary. It's their business."

But Black's response was unusual among employees of school districts in each of the state's 105



counties, which were presented with the same request.

Though most districts eventually provided some information in one form or another, it often

was turned over only after a high-ranking district official asked how the infor-

mation would be used.

Sometimes, the person seeking information was flatly told he or she couldn't have it. Elsewhere, officials said it could be released only if agreed to in writing by the coach.

But the Kansas Open Records Act, under which employees' salary records, including contracts, are pub-

lic, does not require such written consent.

"You can't have a copy of the contract," said Rex Bruce, superintendent of schools in Sharon Springs. "You can take me to court on that. I'll spend as much money as I have to."