

weather
report

43°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 4:24 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:50 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:24 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 41 degrees

• Humidity 53 percent

• Sky Overcast

• Winds Northeast 18

• Barometer 29.76 inches
and falling

• Record High 74° (1959)

• Record Low 1° (1978)

Last 24 Hours*

High 48°

Low 21°

Precipitation —

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Snow and blowing snow 90 percent chance; low 30-35; winds gusty North 25-35. Tomorrow: Cloudy with 60 percent chance of snow with 2-4 inches possible; low 30s; very winds 30-40 and gusts from Northwest.

Extended Forecast

Sunday through Tuesday. Sunday and Monday, dry; high 30s; low 20-25. Tuesday, dry; high 50; low 20s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets



Noon

Wheat — \$2.03 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.97

Loan deficiency payment — 48¢

Corn — \$1.64 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.63

Loan deficiency pmt. — 38¢

Milo — \$2.08 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$3.97 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.03

Loan deficiency payment — 86¢

Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$5.80 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.89

Confection current — \$11/\$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.

Experts wait
on Mars probe

PASADENA, Calif. — Its trajectory looking good, the Mars Polar Lander faced the greatest challenge of its 11-month journey today as it maneuvered for touchdown near the Red Planet's south pole.

The \$165 million NASA probe was designed to slice through Mars' thin atmosphere at precisely the right angle, separate from its heat shield, deploy a parachute and fire a dozen thrusters before setting down — all without radio contact with Earth.

Instead, thousands of lines of computer code mapped out every final move, with the probe slowing from 15,400 mph to 5 mph just before touchdown at 10:01 a.m.

Engineers said today the spacecraft remained in excellent shape and was on course to land on the planet's frigid, rolling plains only a few miles west of the target point.



Randy Solko, Ludell, (right) and Tim Wolters, owner of Wolters Electrical Construction, Ludell, (left) were feeding "fishtape" through metal tubing so they can pull wire as part of their electrical work being done this morning at the Max Jones fieldhouse addition.

Photos by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

Building program gets national attention

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Bridge building, figuring cubic feet, planning plumbing and learning about construction equipment and safety kept 42 Goodland fifth graders busy last spring.

In December 1998, Darwin McClung, president of Rhoads Construction Co., approached Marvin Selby, Goodland school superintendent, about a Build-Up program that National Associated General Contractors and Scholastic Publishing Co. had available for fifth graders.

Selby talked to North School Principal Steve Raymer, who in turn presented the opportunity to the fifth grade teachers at a staff meeting. Two teachers, Norma Staker and Myron Tedford, said they would like to try the program.

The program aims to educate children in the construction field and encourage them to go into some phase of it as a career, as firms say it is becoming harder to find qualified workers all the time.

Scholastic's suggestion was to target fifth graders, because at that age they haven't made a firm decision about what they want to do when they grow up.

When McClung first heard about the program at Kansas contractor's board meeting in October 1998, he thought it sounded worthwhile.

"Construction has gotten a bad name," he said, "that it's a lot of hard work."

It worked out that Rhoads had contracted to add new locker rooms, a weight room and a gym to the Max Jones Fieldhouse, so the students could see the process of construction first hand.

For the first visit, the students were bussed to the construction site, where they put on hard hats provided by Rhoads before entering. They saw the hole that was dug for the underground portion of the new gym. This provided an opportunity for the students to learn how to figure the volume of dirt that was taken out.

On another visit, Gilbert Thomas, site supervisor, showed the students how a transit level was used. Mary Ann Weishapl, safety director at Rhoads, held the story pole, while each of the students got to look through the transit.

The students went on a field trip to Schlosser Concrete, where they learned about concrete. Later they were on the construction site, to see the concrete floor of the new gym being poured.

During the summer, they got a firsthand look

at the insulation used on the roof of the locker room addition.

The site visits started in January, but the kits designed by Scholastic, which had activities to do in the classroom, didn't arrive until March. One of those activities was the building of a model bridge that would span a sink nine inches by 13 inches and hold four pounds. The students drew bridge designs, showing top and side views, then built their bridges of popsicle sticks.

The students visited the Rhoads office to use a machine to make blueprints of the bridge designs. They learned that the interaction between ammonia and coated paper caused the design to turn blue.

Tedford said the bridge building activity turned out to be the students' favorite.

In another classroom activity, the students drew a simple floor plan of a house and constructed a water pipe plan of straws, clay and cups. The idea was to have the water flow from the main source to all the rooms that required it.

An awards picnic on May 17 was put on by Rhoads. Along with pizza and pop, the students received medals and certificates.

Staker had six students make a movie on the

project as a way of thanking Rhoads. They were Matt Rohr, Kalan Lambrecht, Wyatt Dautel, Morgan Titus, Cyndi Hiatt, and Daniel Schields. They were assisted by Abby Martin and Jordan Frazier. The movie showed pictures taken by Staker during the site visits and classroom activities. The students explained what was taking place in the pictures and added background music in the movie.

Both Staker and Tedford said it was a good experience for their students to be able to connect what they were learning in the classroom with things going on in real life.

After National Associated General Contractors found out what Rhoads had done, McClung said they contacted him about going to a construction conference, along with Staker and Tedford, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida on Nov. 15-17 to address the Business Round Table.

However, before that event, the three of them attended a National mid-year conference of contractors in Chicago to show and tell what they had done.

"It was national exposure for everybody involved," said McClung. "USD 352, Rhoads and Goodland."

County told to stop taking grain, dust

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Sherman County commissioners decided this week that the county will no longer accept grain dust or spoiled grain at the transfer station beginning in January.

The decision was made at Tuesday's county commission meeting and commissioners agreed to send a letter to the elevators explaining the county's position.

Public Works Director Curt Way said that a Kansas Department of Health and Environment inspector had found that the way the county has been accepting grain dust and spoiled grain does not meet state regulations.

He said the county received about 669 tons of dust and spoiled grain over the past year, and that is more than the county's new compost operation can handle. Way said the state inspector wrote up the county for the way they are

taking the material, which the state classes as "industrial waste."

Tom Stewart, operations manager for Mueller Grain, said the decision to ban the dust would create a problem for their operation. He also said he could not understand the state's regulations which call this "industrial" waste.

"I agree, I have a problem with it being called industrial waste," Davis said. "I thought it was biodegradable."

"We will have to adapt," Stewart

said. "We have an option because we do have property in Sherman County where we can spread this."

"It will increase our cost," said Lynn Hoelting, general manager of Mueller Grain, when interviewed today. "We will have to invest in additional equipment, but it is important to us to remove the dust to provide a safe workplace and to keep it from expelling into the air. It will become another part of the cost of doing business."

Hoelting wondered about being able to use the dust and spoiled grain in the county compost operation.

Commissioner Gary Townsend said at the meeting Tuesday that the county was moving to set up a five-acre compost site. He said the county did not have the equipment to turn the material, and that they would be looking to purchase something in the next year. Townsend said that there was too much dust and grain to work into the compost.

Irrigation pioneer's son plans return to dryland way

By Cheryl Wittenauer

Associated Press Writer

SHARON SPRINGS — William Mai settled in Wallace County during the Dust Bowl. In 1948, he drilled the first irrigation well in the region.

Discouraged by irregular cycles of rain, a small-time farmer next door to Colorado, he wanted the land to produce enough to feed his family and a handful of cows.

Neighbors, impressed by his results, began drilling their own wells in the Ogallala Aquifer, especially during the parched years of the mid-1950s.

Early, modest wells like Mai's foretold what would become a near explosion of irrigation in western Kansas that took off in the 1950s.

Mai, who farms 2,000 acres on the land where his parents settled in the '30s, says it's time to stop sucking up the precious resource.

Next planting season, he will switch to dryland farming, raising corn and wheat without the benefit of irrigation. He'll compensate by leaving land fall some seasons to maximize use of soil moisture.

Irrigation, far and away above all other uses, places the biggest demand on the aquifer in western Kansas.

"Sure, we can pump it, who's to stop us?" Mai asked. "But is it the right thing to do, particularly if we don't need it? If we can produce crops without it, it doesn't seem like a smart thing to do."

Experts say the future of the Ogallala and the economies that sprang from it

depend on conservation and careful planning to slow the rate of depletion.

Continued tapping of the aquifer presents perhaps the biggest natural resources challenge for Kansas in the next century.

The Ogallala Aquifer won't last forever, especially with the arrival of large hog and dairy operations in western Kansas, said David Kromm, a professor of geography at Kansas State University who has been researching the Ogallala for 20 years.

Bill Mai started his experiment with 100 acres of dryland corn in 1984, gradually adding acres until he was confident it would work.

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New techniques may save water

COPELAND (AP) — Hulking steel contraptions that turn ever so slowly deliver water pumped from underground to thirsty crops across western Kansas.

Center pivot irrigators, a fixture on the High Plains, move outstretched arms from a stationary center. The monsters spew water through nozzles to a circle of crops on a square piece of ground.

But as concerns about depleting groundwater echo across western Kansas, a type of underground irrigation that saves water and improves crop yields is getting attention.

Sub-surface drip irrigation, pioneered in Israel and used for years in vegetable fields of California and Texas, holds promise as a water-conserving form of irrigation, Kansas farmers and researchers say.

The technology is in its infancy in western Kansas, researched for 10 years by Kansas State University. Whether it will overtake conventional methods remains uncertain, but it is seen as a way to slow down the Ogallala Aquifer's depletion.

"I wish we would have had this 30 years ago," said southwest Kansas farmer Eldon Schmidt of Copeland.