

weather report

50°

at noon



Today

- Sunset, 4:23 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 6:54 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:23 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 35 degrees
- Humidity 25 percent
- Sky Mostly cloudy
- Winds Southwest 20
- Barometer 29.69 inches and falling
- Record High 74° (1923)
- Record Low -9° (1978)

Last 24 Hours*

- High 55°
- Low 20°
- Precipitation —

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Becoming cloudy; 20 percent chance of snow; low 20-25; wind northeast 5-15. Wednesday: Cloudy and windy; chance of snow 50 percent; high 30-35; winds northeast 20-30; lows 15-20.

Extended Forecast

Thursday through Saturday. Thursday chance of snow early; high 30-35; low 15-20. Friday and Saturday; dry; highs 40-45; lows 15-20. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.10 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.92
 - Loan deficiency payment — 53¢
 - Corn — \$1.61 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.65
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 34¢
 - Milo — \$2.38 hundredweight
 - Soybeans — \$4.04 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.07
 - Loan deficiency payment — 56¢
 - Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$5.85 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.

NASA give up on lost probe

PASADENA, Calif. — The last realistic opportunity to contact the silent Mars Polar Lander ended today with no sign of life from the missing spacecraft, all but ending hope that the \$165 million mission can be saved.

NASA Administrator Dan Goldin said today that the investigation will examine the space agency's entire Mars program and could delay upcoming missions.

Engineers have now eliminated all simple explanations for why they have not heard from the probe since its descent into the Martian atmosphere Friday. Two micro-probes that were to have landed separately also were lost.

"After four increasingly difficult days, the Mars Polar Lander flight team played its last ace," a somber Richard Cook, the spacecraft's operations manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab said.

Schools reopen in Colby

Teachers, police help students cope with taped threat

By Patty Decker

The Colby Free Press

As Colby students returned to classes today, after closing Monday because of threats made in a tape mailed over the weekend, law enforcement officials and school administrators continued kept an eye on things at all three schools.

Police Chief Randy Jones said the taped message was forwarded to the Kansas Highway Patrol for analysis while other law enforcement agencies continue to work on the case.

Chief Jones also said today that one of his department's first priorities was to get the schools secured, and the investigation now shifts to finding who is responsible for the threats.

While police are developing leads, school Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said that he believes, "there is a feeling of security returning" after the initial scare.

"We have had a lot of parent volunteers at the high school and other buildings," Nielsen said, "and the police have worked well with us."

"The atmosphere was positive and overall students and teachers were in good moods."

High School Principal Bryan Bullington reported that out of 418 students, only 20 were absent.

"It's a great day," Bullington said. During the first class of the day, Bullington said, students were divided into small groups and allowed to ask questions and given information about the incident.

In a statement, students were told that a threat was made and is being taken seriously. Students were also advised of the safety plan that is in effect. Some of the details included updating everyone on what the police have been doing and will continue to do, along with what precautions the administration has taken.

The idea of talking with the students today, Bullington said, was to give them the facts and not rumors about the threats.

"We had six parents volunteer to monitor the hallways and meet students on the curb," Bullington said. "Most kids knew these people and I think it comforted them to know that they cared."

The story was similar at Colby Middle School, where Principal Robb Ross said that the morning went "very smooth."



When spring arrives, drivers will find a cone zone to negotiate as the reconstruction of K-27 from Broadcast Plaza north to Business U.S. 24. Kansas Department of Transportation and the City of Goodland begin. Photo by Janet Craft / The Goodland Daily News

Compromise cuts city's K-27 cost

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

It took some lengthy negotiations, and both the Kansas Department of Transportation and the City of Goodland had to give a little to reach a new agreement on the delayed K-27 project, but the work will get done.

The state plans to rebuild the road from Broadcast Plaza north to the intersection with Business U.S. 24.

City Manager Ron Pickman told the Goodland City Commission Monday evening that the state had made some changes which lowered the cost, and changed the classification to be more of an 80 percent 20 percent project. He said the change would increase the city's share by about \$60,000

"I am against this because I feel the city should not be paying anything ... because it is a state highway."

- Rick Billinger
City Commissioner

The Commission voted 4-1 to approved the contract, with Commissioner Rick Billinger the lone No.

"I am against this because I feel the city should not be paying anything for this because it is a state highway," Billinger said in explanation of his vote.

The project had been delayed because the first round of bids came in very high and the city commission turned down the agreement because it would have increased its cost by about \$600,000. A second round of bidding was completed in mid-November when Smith Sand Co. of Garden City was the low construction bidder at \$1,295,256.

The bid was lower, but it still left the city about \$300,000 away from being able to agree to the project. With negotiations, the state agreed to handle \$233,146 in construction engineering while the city's match increased to \$305,680. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1,528,402.

With the approval of the city commission, the matching funds are to be

paid to the state by Jan. 6 to allow the project to begin in the spring.

Under the supplemental agreement approved by the city, "the secretary and the city agree that additional funding is now available which eliminates the secretary's maximum amount of participation for the project, ... It is mutually agreed that the secretary's participation will be limited to 80 percent of the total actual cost the city's participation will be 20 percent of the total actual cost.

Included in the project is the replacement of the asphalt under the I-70 overpasses with concrete and the removal of the medians along the stretch of K-27 from Broadcast Plaza up to the intersection with U.S. 24.

Goodland closes out water tower grant

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

With approval to pay the final \$1,000, the Goodland City Commission closed out the water tower project at its meeting Monday evening.

The project began nearly two years ago when the city received a grant for \$400,000 to build the new 500,000-gallon water tower in the southwest part of the city. Construction of the tower began earlier this year and the tower was completed in late summer.

Amy Griffey, of the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission, was present to see the commission close out the grant. She has been assisting the city in administering the grant, and continues to work on the water improvement project.

The commission also approved a contract with the commission to assist in administering a new Community Development Block Grant to do demolition that the city has received from the

Kansas Department of Commerce and Development.

Under the new grant, the city will be able to continue its demolition program, and this grant also allows for the demolition of dilapidated commercial buildings as well as houses.

The city receives \$57,500 from the state and will match it with \$51,360 to bring the total project to \$108,860. The administration contract with the planning and development commission will be for \$6,700.

In other business, the commission:

- Agreed to allow the High Plains Museum to be closed on Sundays during the winter because of a lack of volunteers and visitors. Museum Curator Linda Holton said the plan would be to close on Sunday from October to March, but that the museum could be opened by appointment for large groups. Holton showed that over the past couple of years the number of visitors on Sunday has been very low.

• Approved bids for a new metal roof on the administration building at Renner Field, and a new sign for the airport. City Manager Ron Pickman said the money for the project is available because of savings in earlier capital projects. The total for the new roof is \$77,972, with the low bidder being Miller Construction. The sign would be from Commercial Sign Co. at a cost no to exceed \$6,000. The other bidder on the roof was A-Lert Roof Systems of Erie, at a total cost of \$102,873.

• Approved bids for chain-link fencing and a pole barn for the new city vehicle impound area to be located on the east side of Arcade between 17th and 18th Street. Low bidder for the chain-link fence was Rasure Do It Center for \$3,118. The low bidder for the 120-foot-by-24-foot pole barn was Miller's Electronics at \$11,493. Other bids for the fence were received from Miller, \$3,204, and P.J.s Home Improvement Center, \$3,324. Other bids on the barn

were from P.J.s, \$14,986, and Rasure, \$12,385.

• Approved the city pay plan for next year with a 1 percent cost of living raise, and modifications in the merit pay provision. Included was a change in some of the position descriptions to allow for better utilization of the employees within departments.

• Approved employee Christmas bonuses at a cost of about \$10,000. Employees who have been with the city for a minimum of a year will receive \$100 (73 employees); for three-quarters of a year \$75 (one employee); half a year \$50 (three employees); and one quarter of a year \$25 (two employees).

• Reappointed Darla Mosbarger and Dennis Stone to the Recreation Board for three-year terms.

• Approved a grant to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of \$250 to help purchase Christmas candy.

• Approved a request from The Goodland Daily News to block 11th Street between Main and Center on Saturday, Dec. 18, for the Christmas On Us drawing to be held at 1:30 p.m.

• Scott Woodard, K-18 baseball coach, asked the commission about the status of the field project for next year. Pickman said bids are to be opened on Dec. 16 for the pool project, and if approved by the commission at their Dec. 20 meeting, the project to move the Steever Ballpark should be completed in time for the summer season.

• Pickman announced that Eagle Cable Vision was planning a rate increase of \$1.88 per month to become effective in January. The new monthly rate would be \$33.60. Also it was noted that there will be a change in channels, with Denver Channel 9 KUSA being replaced with Denver Channel 2 KWGN. The cable channel being effected is 33.

• A plan was discussed to convert the fire equipment bays at the airport and the city building from gas heat to infrared heat. Low bidder on this conversion was Townsend Construction at \$3,963. Pickman said the savings should pay for the installation within a couple of years. He said the city has paid \$3,212 in gas at the airport this year.

• Announced there would be a public focus meeting on the city comprehensive plan at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H building at the fairgrounds.

• Following a short executive session, the commission approved a motion to enter into a contract with Goodland Motors to buy land for street improvements.

'Now just sit still and be a good dog...'



Noelle Hutchison, (above) petted her sister's schitzu to get him to stay in the sleigh while getting his picture taken at "Santa Paws" day Saturday at Wal-Mart. Nine-week-old Toby (left) was one of 26 pets brought in during the money-raising photo session sponsored by the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter. Photos by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News