

weather
report

66°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 4:31 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 7:06 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:32 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 36 degrees

• Humidity 17 percent

• Sky mostly sunny

• Winds north 20 mph

• Barometer 30.11 inches

and falling

• Record High 67° (1922)

• Record Low -10° (1924)

Last 24 Hours*

High 49°

Low 29°

Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear; low 25-30;

winds northwest 5-15 mph. Tomorrow:

Mostly sunny; high 60-65; winds

west 10-20 mph; low 25-30.

Extended Forecast

Thursday through Saturday.

Thursday: dry; high 50; low 25-30.

Friday: dry; high 50; low mid 20s.

Saturday: dry; high mid 40s; low 20-

25.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info, at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

Hijackers demand millions

Group wants cash, freedom for fighters held by Indians

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) — The hijackers of an Indian Airlines jetliner have demanded the release of 35 guerrillas and \$200 million, India's foreign minister said today.

As negotiations with Indian officials continued, conditions deteriorated for the 155 people held hostage by five hijackers aboard the Indian Airlines plane for the past five days. Many of the passengers are believed to be honeymooners returning from Nepal.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh revealed the hijackers demands at a news briefing in New Delhi, India, saying "let the international community and the nation understand the demands."

The negotiations with India began after hijackers threatened Monday to start killing the passengers and crew. It was not immediately clear when the new demand was made.

At least one hostage has been killed since the crisis began.

"We will send an appropriate response through our negotiating team," Singh told reporters in New Delhi after a cabinet meeting. He did not elaborate.

The plane's engines shut down early today, interrupting talks and cutting radio communications. Walkie-talkies had to be brought in to start the third round of negotiations.

The engine problems also caused concern among Indian engineers who said that without power there would be no air circulation. Also, without working engines, heat will no longer be available for the passengers as temperatures at night hover around freezing.

There was no indication as to why the engines were turned off, but engineers said it was not surprising given that they had been running since Saturday morning, when the plane landed in Kandahar.

Singh said earlier today that Indian engineers had direct contact with some of the hostages after they were allowed to approach the plane on the runway and that conditions had improved slightly.

Singh said the aircraft's doors and rear chute were opened to air out the interior of the plane. He also said the hijackers refused to release the remaining women and children.

The Indian government has come under heavy pressure from relatives and supporters of the hostages to end the crisis.

Earlier reports said the hijackers have demanded that India release several Kashmiri fighters and Maulana Masood Azhar, a Pakistani religious leader.

Azhar, who traveled to India in 1992 to help the militants, was arrested in 1994 and is imprisoned in Indian-held Kashmir.

Muslim militants have been waging an insurgency in Indian-held Kashmir, demanding either independence for the Himalayan state or union with Islamic Pakistan.

The hijackers also have demanded that the body of Sajjad Afghani, a former leader of the Harkat-ul-Ansar rebel group, be exhumed from a grave in India-held Kashmir, the Press Trust of India reported.

Indian officials have said there are five hijackers armed with grenades, pistols and knives. They seized Flight 814 some 40 minutes after it took off Friday from Katmandu, Nepal, on a flight to New Delhi. The plane made stops in India, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates before landing in Afghanistan on Saturday.

Passengers who have been released said the hijackers stabbed and killed Rippan Katyal after he disobeyed their orders not to look at them.

One passenger, an Indian, was released Sunday for medical reasons. The captors freed 27 hostages and unloaded Katyal's body during a stopover in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday.

The plane had 178 passengers and 11 crew when it took off Friday.



Stacy Dinkel, communications officer for the City of Goodland, works in the central dispatch office in the basement of the city building. She said there have been upgrades on two of the dispatch computer systems to be ready for the Year 2000 and the radios, recording systems and phone links for 911 calls have also been checked and tested.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

Goodland ready for Y2K bug to bite

Businesses, officials say computers ready

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Goodland area businesses and governments says they've done what they can to prevent the infamous "Y2K bug" from biting, and expect few problems when the calendar rolls over to the Year 2000 this weekend.

Now, all they can do is sit back and wait. And be ready if there are any problems.

From banks to the city and central dispatch, computers have been upgraded or replaced, always with an eye to whether they will be "Y2K compatible" — that is, they'll correctly handle dates in the next century. That could be a problem because older computers recorded years only with two digits, not four. A new century could confound the main computer or a program written to read only two-digit dates.

Larry McCants, president of the First National Bank, said the bank started evaluating its systems four or five years ago. Three years ago, they converted to a new core accounting system. At that time, it was designed to be Y2K compliant, he said. A year ago, they converted the check processing system.

As the bank replaced computers and account-

ing systems to keep current with technology, they made sure they were designed for 2000. But they went beyond just replacing equipment, McCants said; they went to the expense of testing it also. The cost for this was high.

They checked with their suppliers to see if equipment was compliant. It wasn't a wasted effort, as they will be ready if there would be any other sort of disaster, such as a tornado.

In addition, McCants said, the bank informed its customers of potential problems they might run into with their own computers.

"We are quite comfortable," he said, "and we need to celebrate the new millennium."

At Goodland Regional Medical Center, Administrator Jim Chaddic said the hospital's compliance officer, Jason Scheopner, has been working for two years to test all of the equipment. Some of it, like monitors, the x-ray, ultrasound and CAT scan machines, had to be upgraded to be Y2K compliant. The phone system and several computers were also upgraded.

Chaddic had all department heads check the equipment in their departments and develop contingency plans in case some of the equipment didn't work when the new year came.

Scheopner and Chaddic will be on call over the weekend in case there are any problems.

Marvin Selby, superintendent of Goodland schools, said the district hasn't made any major changes, but he feels like they are ready for 2000. They were most concerned with the businesses that

they rely on to provide them services, whether or not they were Y2K compliant, in particular the company from Lawrence that gives them information for the school's bookkeeping system.

Selby said the school paid to send Technology Coordinator Karla Murray to some workshops. Murray maintains the Internet system and has assured school officials that they are all set for the new year, Selby said.

"We haven't spent any money to speak of, other than sending Karla to a couple of workshops," said Selby.

City Manager Ron Pickman said the city had very few changes to make to be ready for the new year and anticipates no major problems.

Some changes were made to older computers, he said, but all of the work could be done by city employees.

Pickman said the city has done what checks it needs to do and have received assurance letters from its vendors that the equipment they have is Y2K compatible.

Fortunately, a lot of the city's computers were replaced last year, he added.

The city power plant is compatible and someone will be on duty New Year's Eve, Pickman said, but he doesn't foresee any problems in that area.

Pickman said electricity is supplied by a company outside of Goodland, but if there is a problem, the city can generate its own power.

"Everything we need is in place and we'll be operational," he said.

Farm problems still top agenda in Congress

By Libby Quaid

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Farm aid and farm trade will stay on the front burner for Kansas lawmakers in 2000, but Social Security and tax relief will be on the 2000 agenda for the two Kansas senators and four House members.

For most Kansas lawmakers, 1999's victories came in the form of cold, hard cash, from transportation projects to military construction and pay raises to emergency assistance for cash-strapped farmers.

Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., noted several accomplishments in his role on the Armed Services and Intelligence committees, from a military pay raise and retirement package to construction money for Kansas installations to forcing the president to bring the new blueprint for NATO's future before lawmakers as though it were a treaty.

There also was increased funding for emerging threats to U.S. national security, an issue Roberts oversees on a special subcommittee. He traveled to Russia this year as he examined the issue.

On the front burner for Roberts is expanding farm trade to help fight a two-year downturn in farm commodities. While House Agriculture Committee chairman in 1996, Roberts was a key player in the market-oriented farm reforms that some lawmakers, particularly Democrats, have held responsible.

Roberts and many other Republicans argue key elements — repealing sanc-



Rep. Moran

tions, opening markets, a crop insurance overhaul and regulatory reforms — were left undone. Among many trade bills Roberts has pushed is legislation to give the president more flexibility in imposing trade sanctions.

The senator, who attended December's World Trade Organization talks in Seattle, plans to introduce his own package of farm reforms in 2000.

Rep. Jerry Moran, a Hays Republican, also went to Seattle for the trade talks.

"We face a very difficult time getting the Europeans to modify their policies and without that kind of modification, then I think we've got to look at other ways to ensure profitability on the farm, including what the farm bill looks like," Moran said.

All the Kansans in Congress touted the final, \$390 billion spending bill, which will shave the national debt by up to \$150 billion, despite an increase in spending of \$30 billion over fiscal 1999.

Lawmakers also passed a politically charged budget deal that, besides enacting annual spending bills, keeps an estimated \$131 billion in Social Security tax revenue from being spent, either on

GOP tax cuts or administration spending priorities.

GOP Sen. Sam Brownback called the debt paydown this year's top accomplishment, along with Social Security protections, for which he will keep pushing. Brownback also was a key sponsor of sanctions reforms that stalled amid House objections to re-opening trade with Cuba.

He also said he attracted more mainstream support for his efforts to curb the elements of sex and violence in the media and in American culture, and he noted the Senate passed a voluntary code of conduct for Hollywood.

"It's out there," Brownback said. "People are not comfortable with where this culture is. They're very comfortable with the economy, but they're not comfortable with the societal values and mores of the day."

Rep. Dennis Moore, the only Kansas Democrat in Congress, introduced his own version of the Social Security "lockbox" bill early in the year, along with a less-successful measure taking Social Security completely off-budget.

He also supported legislation, which failed narrowly, to use half of future budget surpluses for debt reduction, a quarter for tax cuts and a quarter for Social Security and Medicare.

Next year, Rep. Todd Tiahrt, R-Kan., wants to work on a narrowly-drawn tax cut package aimed specifically at families, as well as legislation to make health care more available to the unin-

sured. Directing more federal education dollars to local authorities — by-passing the U.S. Department of Education — is another priority.

The tax cut should be in the \$5 billion to \$10 billion range in the first year, Tiahrt said.

"We've proven that if there's money in Washington, a need will be generated to spend it," he said. "The question isn't who's going to spend the money, it's who's going to spend it more wisely."

Moran's agenda revolves around keeping rural America alive and prosperous, with issues ranging from small business to agriculture to transportation to health care to technology. Agriculture and health care saw big victories this year, Moran said.

And Congress approved upwards of \$400 million in emergency assistance to Kansas farmers under an \$8.7 billion package sent to President Clinton. With the exception of Nebraska's massive congressional district, Moran's vast western Kansas territory got the biggest chunk of money.

"What I do in Congress does not change dramatically from year to year; it's a goal of keeping Kansas communities and the people who live there viable," Moran said.

Meanwhile, Republican Rep. Jim Ryun mentioned several victories, from passage of reforms aimed at stopping closure of home health centers to money for transportation projects in his northeast Kansas district.

afternoon
wire

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

Freight lines target of suit

AURORA, Colo. — Three black employees of a national trucking company have filed a federal lawsuit claiming they were subject to racial taunting and epithets.

Driver Matt Antoine, and dock workers Lilbert Beasley and Sam Burnett filed a lawsuit last week in U.S. District Court in Denver against Yellow Freight Systems Inc., a Kansas-based trucking company with a center in Aurora.

The employees allege that they were demeaned and discriminated against on several occasions and were often called racial slurs at Yellow Freight's predominately white trucking center in Aurora.

Antoine accused shift manager Steve Smith of approaching him in February 1998 to say: "I'm not prejudiced or anything, but a lot of you black guys look like monkeys."



local
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.09 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.95

Loan deficiency payment — 50¢

Corn — \$1.63 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.71

Loan deficiency pmt. — 28¢

Milo — \$2.33 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$3.88 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.88

Loan deficiency payment — \$1.01

Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$5.85 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$4.16

Confection current — \$11/\$7 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$13 (new crop)

(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and Prairie Pea and Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

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