

weather
report

61°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 4:32 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 7:06 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:33 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 39 degrees

• Humidity 18 percent

• Sky partly sunny

• Winds northeast 10 mph

• Barometer 29.78 inches
and falling

• Record High 63° (1996)

• Record Low -09° (1946)

Last 24 Hours*

High 67°

Low 33°

Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear; low 25-30;
winds north 10-20 mph. Tomorrow:
Mostly sunny; dry; high lower 50s;
winds north 10-20 mph; low mid 20s.

Extended Forecast

Friday through Sunday. Friday:
dry; high 50-55; low mid 20s. Satur-
day: dry; high mid 40s, low 20-25.
Sunday: dry; high mid 40s, low lower
20s.

(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 — \$1.96

Loan deficiency payment — 49¢

Corn — \$1.62 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.72

Loan deficiency pmt. — 27¢

Milo — \$2.32 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$3.85 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.89

Loan deficiency payment — \$1

Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$5.80 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$4.16

Confection current — \$11/57 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$13 (new crop)

(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Silgo
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.

Koch charged
in oil debate

TULSA (AP) — New allega-
tions that Koch Industries took
more oil from Oklahoma wells
than it paid for are being raised in
a Seminole County lawsuit.

The allegations in a lawsuit filed
Dec. 22 are similar to ones consid-
ered by a federal jury last week.
Sam Adkisson, Ronny Mosely,
Ferrel Nutley and the city of Elk
City allege the Wichita-based
company collected more oil than
it paid for from leases in Seminole
County in which they own an in-
terest.

“From 1975 through 1989,
Koch consistently reported vol-
ume gains from the measurement
of oil and condensate,” the lawsuit
states. “These volume gains have
resulted in Koch receiving hun-
dreds of thousands of barrels of oil
and condensate in the state of
Oklahoma which it has not paid
for.”

Commissioners to fill board vacancy

The Sherman County commissioners plan a short session for their last meeting of the year at 8 a.m. Thursday in the Commissioner’s Room of the courthouse.

The morning will begin with the approval of the minutes of the last meeting and a review of the mail. If there are any requests from taxpayers to make changes in the tax rolls, these will be handled. End-of-the-month bills will be approved or disapproved.

An appointment to the Communications Board will be made to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Steve Craft a couple of months ago.

Time for continued discussion on the use of a separate fund for the Good Samaritan Center Health Care Service is also being allowed, as Commissioner Kenny Davis has some questions he didn’t get answered at the last meeting.

There will be discussion on when to do county

employee evaluations, whether at the end of the year or spread throughout the year.

A recommendation will be made concerning a school for Road and Bridge employees to attend. County department heads will be able to appear if they have problems they need to discuss.

Under old business, the finalization on farm leases will take place. The commissioners have been working on a generic lease to fit all lessees

of county owned property. Bonnie Selby, county attorney, was checking over changes that needed to be made and will be at the meeting to let the board know what she has come up with.

The agenda will end with an update from the Smoky Gardens Board. Usually this is a time for the board to let the commissioners know what is planned for the next year and what has been done in the current year.



Construction is going fast at Wheat Ridge Acres Assisted Living Center on Eighth Street, and with summer-like weather, the crew was going full blast today. In the picture above, Brian Myers (top) nailed a board to brace a wall while Jim Backes (center) held it in place for him. Doug Bryant (right) checked on their progress. At left, Jeremy Smith, Goodland, nailed particle board insulation in place on the outside of the building. Below, Paul Dyer (left) and Jeff Parson put siding on the north side of the center. They work for Affordable Vinyl Siding, Colorado Springs, which is in charge of the siding job.

Photos by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News



Officials taking final precautions before Y2K

WASHINGTON (AP)—While confident that the rollover will cause no severe problems, federal officials are taking final precautions nonetheless and offering last-minute advice to help Americans sail smoothly into 2000.

Hoping to ease the transition, officials are getting benefit checks for veterans and Social Security beneficiaries to the Postal Service early in order to ensure on-time delivery. They are also advising citizens to keep emergency numbers and battery-operated radios handy. And they are shutting down some public Internet sites to safeguard against hackers.

The Department of Veterans Affairs said Tuesday it always processes its paperwork a few days before the end of the month each month and that an estimated 4.5 million veterans and survivors should receive their benefits by the 30th of the month as usual.

A spokesman said today the department did process a relatively small number of educational benefit payments a few days earlier than usual this month to avoid potential delays related to the Y2K computer bug.

The early mailings “will mitigate unexpected year 2000 interruptions of benefit payments arising from anything outside our control,” VA spokesman Terry Jemison said Tuesday.

Social Security’s 44 million beneficiaries learned last week of the Social Security Administration’s plans to get paper checks and electronic payments on their way to post offices and banks a day early. Beneficiaries should expect their checks or direct deposits to show up on the normal day, Jan. 3 for most people.

While generally optimistic about communications, including 911 calls going through and emergency broad-

cast alerts reaching people, federal officials urged people not to forget the basics.

“There was a way to call the police, to call ambulance services, long before 911,” said Federal Communications Commissioner Michael Powell. He advised people to keep on hand direct numbers for emergency services.

Powell also recommended that people have radios with batteries handy. Officials foresee no difficulty in getting out emergency news to the populace, he said, because so many broadcast stations are available.

In other Y2K news:

• The Pentagon is shutting down some of its public Internet sites this weekend to keep them safe from computer hackers. While it intends to keep its central Web site — www.DefenseLink.mil — in operation, one site being temporarily blocked is that of the

Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which oversees military pay.

• Also being taken off line this weekend is the site maintained by the Office of Personnel Management, which services the rest of the government payroll.

• Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said people are not hoarding pharmaceuticals, so there won’t be any shortages of medicine over New Year’s.

As for civilian communications, industry and federal leaders reiterated caution against people picking up the phone early Jan. 1 just to see if it is working or dialing 911 just to check it.

Too many callers at once could clog the network, meaning some might get fast busy signals. Even so, the FCC’s Powell said, that wouldn’t necessarily indicate any Y2K-related problems.

Hijackers drop two demands

Breakthrough now possible as crisis goes into sixth day

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) — The hijackers of an Indian Airlines plane dropped their demands today for \$200 million and the return of a Kashmiri militant’s body, a possible breakthrough in negotiations aimed at ending a six-day hijacking, the Taliban’s foreign minister said.

Officials of Afghanistan’s Taliban militia interceded at the request of the Indian negotiators, Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil told reporters at the Kandahar airport. They convinced the negotiators to drop the demand for money, saying it violated the tenets of Islam, as did removing a body from its burial ground.

On Tuesday, the hijackers demanded the money, the release of 35 Kashmiri militants and a Pakistani cleric from Indian jails, and the body of a militant Kashmiri killed earlier this year.

Indian Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan told reporters that the dropping of the two demands would not have much of an impact on negotiations.

Muttawakil said the hijackers have refused to lower the number of Kashmiri fighters they want released from jail. They also are insisting on freedom for Masood Azhar, the ideologue of the Harkat ul-Ansar, an Islamic militant group active in Kashmir and on a U.S. list of terrorist organizations.

Azhar’s group has tried several times to use kidnappings as a way of freeing him, but have failed. The most famous of the attempts was the kidnapping in 1995 of six Western tourists. One was killed, one escaped and four are still missing and now feared dead.

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

Muttawakil repeated today the position the Taliban took early in the hostage crisis that it will not allow the aircraft to remain here indefinitely.

“If the two sides are unable to solve their problems soon, the Taliban will force the hijackers to leave Afghanistan,” he said.

On Monday, the hijackers threatened to start killing passengers. It was then that India agreed to negotiate with them, sending a seven-member negotiation team as well doctors, nurses, technicians and a replacement flight crew.

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

“Talks are making progress. Negotiations are give and take,” said A.R. Ghanashyam, an Indian diplomat in Kandahar. “We are not talking about details until the negotiations have finished.”

The mood on the plane appeared to be improving. Earlier this week, soldiers from Afghanistan’s Taliban militia who delivered food to the hostages said the smell inside was strong and unpleasant, a sign that people had been sick.

However, hostages recently were seen passing the time playing cards, chess and board games, a Taliban soldier who boarded the plane said today. The soldier, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was one of several Taliban members who were allowed on board the aircraft Tuesday to collect the garbage and clean the toilets.