

weather
report

69°

at noon



Today

- Sunset, 5:14 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 6:46 a.m.
- Sunset, 5:15 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 37 degrees
- Humidity 12 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds west 10 mph
- Barometer 30.13 inches and falling
- Record High 76° (1943)
- Record Low -22° (1936)

Last 24 Hours*

High 58°
Low 23°
Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy; low 25-30; winds light becoming west 10 mph.
Tomorrow: Partly sunny; dry; high 65-70; winds west 10 mph; low 25.

Extended Forecast

Thursday through Saturday.
Thursday: dry; high 45; low 25. Friday: chance of snow; high 40; low 20-25. Saturday: dry; high 45; low 15-20.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets



Noon

Wheat — \$2.24 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.08
Loan deficiency payment — 37¢
Corn — \$1.75 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.86
Loan deficiency payment — 13¢
Milo — \$2.70 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$4.20 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.33
Loan deficiency payment — 56¢
Millet — \$3.80 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$5.85 cwt.
Loan deficiency prmt. — \$3.50
Confection current — \$13/\$8 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$12 (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.

Nurse joins ranks of slain

GIRARD — Waneta Boatwright picked up the telephone to report she'd just walked into a home and found two people murdered.

While she was talking, she became a victim herself in what authorities say is Crawford County's first multiple homicide in more than two decades.

Boatwright, a nurse arriving to care for an 88-year-old woman, found a man and a woman, both shot, on the floor of the home Monday morning.

She then was fatally shot herself as she talked with a 911 dispatcher, Crawford County Sheriff Sandy Horton said.

The son of one of the victims was held without bond, suspected of all three killings, Horton said.

The 88-year-old woman, who was not harmed, was the suspect's grandmother and the mother of the man who died, a family friend said.

Ball field to move out by freeway

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

On a 4-1 vote at Monday's regular meeting, the City Commission approved preliminary plans to relocate the Steever Field ballpark near the city pool to Centennial Park, near the softball fields behind Wal-Mart.

City Manager Ron Pickman asked the commission to reconsider the decision not to proceed with the ballpark project, which had been made at the previous meeting when the water park bids had come in over budget.

"I think we should be doing this," Commissioner Curtis Hurd said.

"I don't think we should do anything," countered Commissioner Rick Billinger. "I think we have a diamond

now, and we should wait until we decide where the pool is going to go. Or we could move the lights and fence back to make it a proper field."

"If we are going to move the lights back, we can put them on a truck and haul them 100 miles," Hurd responded.

Billinger suggested that for the cost, maybe the city did not need a baseball diamond because it is only used by the K-18 and American Legion teams.

"I think we need both the ballpark and the water park," Hurd said, "and this is a step forward."

Pickman said this was a good time for the city crew to begin the project, and that it would take several weeks to get a survey of the location so the field could be properly laid out.

"I can see both sides," Mayor Chuck Lutters said, "but would like to see it moved out by the other fields."

Hurd made the motion to move ahead with the ballpark, and Commissioner Jim Mull seconded. Hurd, Lutters, Mull and Tom Rohr voted in favor while Billinger voted against.

The new ballpark, with better lighting and an underground irrigation system, is estimated to cost under \$200,000, which is part of the total funding package for the water park.

The commission turned down a request from Kyle Railroad for \$4,800 to assist in paying for the new Cherry Street crossing.

Under an agreement with Kyle and the Kansas Department of Transporta-

tion, Kyle is responsible for all the costs of the new crossing which are not covered by a grant from the Department of Transportation.

On another 4-1 vote, the commission approved a \$5,000 grant to the Goodland Arts Council to help with expenses, and be used as part of the funding match for a state grant.

Rebecca Downs, new director of the Carnegie Arts Center, and Arts Council President Dr. Sue Jennings presented the request.

Mayor Lutters said while he thought the arts center did a wonderful job and was important, he felt the \$5,000 was too high, as it was half what had been budgeted for all similar grants.

"Maybe next year we need to look at

budgeting more," Hurd said "We covered the bases pretty well last year. This is a necessary thing in a community, like our ballfields and swimming pool."

"I think it is the least we can do," Billinger added.

Hurd, Mull, Billinger and Rohr voted yes and Lutters no.

Banking services for the next three years will be through Bankwest, which offered the best proposal of the three banks. Bankwest offered the city an interest rate of 5.83 percent on all accounts, and said that Bankwest would be offering Internet access in the second quarter of the year.

The First National Bank proposal

See FIELD, Page 4

Closing off yet another intersection



Allied Inc., the contractor replacing water lines for the city, is working on the south side of U.S. 24 heading east. Crews have reached Caldwell, and for the next few days, Caldwell will be closed going south

by the Armstrong Addition. People wanting to enter the addition will have to get to it by going south on K-27 to 31st Street, at Broadcast Plaza, and then going east.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

City cuts medical package to save costs

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland City Commission wrestled Monday with keeping medical insurance costs in line while maintaining benefits for employees, finally deciding that it would cut costs and return to a more traditional program.

After about an hour of detailed discussion about the insurance plan and alternatives, the commission voted 4-1 to move to a new plan which adjusts the benefits and reduces the cost to the city. Commissioner Rick Billinger was the lone vote against.

Under the plan, the city will continue to pay the entire premium for an employee and family, but employee and family deductibles will double. Payments for prescription drugs will change also.

Charles Krull from Blue Cross and Blue Shield, who has been working with the Goodland plan for 10 years, brought bad news to the commissioners. He said that the amount of claims in the past year had been about \$50,000 higher than expected.

This coupled with the addition of six new employees meant the city was facing a shortfall of about \$120,000 to keep the insurance benefits the same as they have been since the plan was adopted in 1992.

For the past nine years, the city has been using a self-funded shared-pay plan and pays all of the employee and family premiums. The plan was set up so that an individual would have \$250 out of pocket expense and a family would have \$500 in out of pocket expense.

The plan also had a prescription drug card which had a cost of \$5 for a generic drug and \$10 for a name brand drug.

Krull said the drug portion of the plan has grown tremendously over the last few years and in the past year \$75,000 of the claims were for drugs.

The monthly premium for the current city plan is \$296 for a single person and \$662 for a family. Krull said for 1999 there were 11 singles and 49 families under the plan.

With the addition of the new employees this year, the new plan was figured

on 9 singles and 57 families, he said. With the new employees and the need to increase the rates to overcome the shortfall in the claims, the cost to maintain the benefits at the same level the single premium would be \$369 and the family would be \$824. The increase over the 1999 plan is 24.5 percent, and the total increase, Krull said, is 34 percent.

He presented two options for adjusting the benefits in order to cut the costs and bring them closer to the budget.

Under Option B, the shared pay would raise from \$250 for a single and \$500 for a family to \$750 for a single and \$1,500 for a family as out of pocket expense. Also the plan would change the drug to a pay direct system where the employee would pay the first \$50 as a deductible and then would be reimbursed for other drug bills from the city fund. The drug prices would not be the retail price, but a network price, Krull said.

He said under this plan, the drug claims would be about half, and would reduce the monthly premiums to \$324

for a single and \$723 for a family. Also, the city's stop loss level would raise from the current \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Under Option C, the plan would be a comprehensive major medical rather than a shared pay, and there would be a \$500 deductible for a single person and \$1,500 for a family. There would also be a coinsurance where the person would pay 20 percent until they had paid \$200.

The plan also has an office visit co-pay where the employee pays \$10 per visit to a doctor's office. There is also \$300 allowed for x-rays and lab work if required by the doctor.

All accidents would be paid in full. The dental coverage would allow two visits per year paid at 100 percent, and there would be a \$25 deductible and then the plan would cover 80 percent of the additional costs.

This plan would have the same prescription direct pay as the other option. Under Option C, the single total premium would be \$311 and the family

See MEDICAL, Page 4

Legislature debates abortion practices, reporting of agricultural deals

By David Miles

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — Abortion and agriculture were the dominant themes for legislators, who also grappled with education funding.

Monday, the House easily passed a bill to restrict what state law calls "partial birth" abortions, though Gov. Bill Graves has vowed to veto it and any other bill that doesn't meet his specifications.

The bill cleared the lower chamber Monday 85-37 — one more vote than needed to override a veto. It now goes to the Senate, where its future is dim.

Rep. Tony Powell, who carried the bill, said he doesn't want to start talking about overriding a Graves veto.

"I'm going to try to get him to sign a bill or let it become law without his signature," said Powell, R-Wichita.

The partial-birth procedure involves partially extracting a fetus through the birth canal, cutting the skull and draining its contents.

The bill bans the partial-birth procedure except when two physicians determine it's necessary to save a woman's life. It also would make restrictions applicable at any point in a pregnancy.

The governor says he will accept a ban on the procedure except when needed to save the life of the mother.

But he wants legislators to clarify another law to make all other forms of late-term abortion possible to save a woman's life or to preserve her physical or mental health.

In other legislative action, the Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing on a bill designed to make livestock markets more competitive.

The proposal would require records of all business transactions involving livestock and poultry.

That would cost the state \$308,000 during its first year for staff, equipment, travel and litigation costs in the attorney general's office, according to the state Budget Division.

Meanwhile, university officials said Monday their schools need more money than what's been proposed by Gov. Bill Graves.

Presidents from Emporia State, Fort Hays State, Pittsburg State and Wichita State told their budget concerns to an Appropriations subcommittee

Parties differ on budget

Republicans want less spending and bigger tax relief

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton was so proud of what his final budget would do about eliminating the publicly held part of the national debt that he used a paint brush to draw a plunging blue line on a wall chart.

Angry Republicans probably would have chosen the color red for Clinton's last budget.

"The president proposed a laundry list of expensive, big-government programs the country doesn't need and tax increases the Republicans in Congress will never support," said Rep. J.C. Watts, R-Okla.

Both sides in the debate wasted no time in staking out their positions for a debate that is certain to last all the way into November, when voters go to the polls.

Republicans contend that what voters want is less government and bigger tax cuts. Clinton argues that what the country needs to keep the current prosperity going is a more balanced approach that addresses pressing needs such as a lack of health care, pays down the federal debt and offers "targeted" tax relief.

Clinton administration officials faced skeptical Republican lawmakers today as they fanned out on Capitol Hill to defend the president's budget. Jacob Lew, head of the president's Office of Management and Budget, told the House Budget Committee today that the administration had put together a balanced spending plan that would meet the nation's priorities.

At the Senate Finance Committee, Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said Republicans should not assume that rosy surplus projections will materialize to pay for large, irreversible tax cuts.

"It is a new economy, but it makes old virtues all the more important," Summers said. "Those virtues are savings and prudence."

The panel's chairman, Sen. William Roth, R-DeL., argued that the administration's refusal to consider tax cuts prior to larger overhauls of Social Security and Medicare amounted to "moving the goal posts after the kick-off."

"In effect, you're sort of ruling out a tax cut," Roth said. "You're sort of laying down conditions that you have to recognize are not going to be realized."