

weather report

33°
at noon



Today

• Sunset, 5:58 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 5:49 a.m.
• Sunset, 5:59 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 41 degrees
- Humidity 92 percent
- Sky overcast with light drizzle
- Winds east 12 mph
- Barometer 29.78 inches and steady
- Record High 80° (1997)
- Record Low -17° (1965)

Last 24 Hours*

High 59°
Low 22°
Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Cloudy, 60 percent chance of rain changing to snow, low mid 30s, winds northeast 15-25 mph. Tomorrow: Cloudy, 70 percent chance of rain, high 40-45, winds east 10-20 mph, low 30-35.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: chance of rain or snow, high 50-55, low 35-40. Thursday and Friday: chance of rain, high 50s, low 35-40.

(National Weather Service)

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

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.30 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$2.23
 - Loan deficiency payment — 22¢
 - Corn — \$1.85 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.98
 - Loan deficiency payment — 1¢
 - Milo — \$2.83 hundredweight
 - Soybeans — \$4.50 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.55
 - Loan deficiency payment — 34¢
 - Millet — \$3.70 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$6.30 cwt.
 - Loan deficiency prnt. — \$3.73
 - Confection current — \$13/\$7 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.

Clinton seeks peace in Asia

DHAKA, Bangladesh — President Clinton abruptly canceled travel plans today that would have taken him by helicopter to a village in densely crowded, impoverished Bangladesh and instead delivered encouragement for a young democracy and a multimillion dollar aid package in the capital city.

But as the first American president to visit the 29-year-old, flood-prone nation, Clinton today saluted political activity here as "vigorous... and I hope it will be peaceful."

Clinton brought with him a package that included food aid, assistance for clean energy projects and incentives to keep children out of factories and in school.

His visit occurred under extremely tight security. Soldiers with rifles stood alongside the Dhaka airport runway when Clinton's plane came in.

Crews ready to shift I-70 to two-way traffic

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Crews from Trancon, of Lincoln, Neb., were working near the I-70 Edson exit this morning, preparing the crossover to move traffic off the westbound lanes and back to the eastbound lanes while a six mile stretch of the eastbound is rebuilt this summer.

Despite a gloomy forecast, the crews were moving orange barrels into place and striping the westbound lanes which will handle the head-to-head traffic while construction is underway.

Kristen Brands, of the Kansas Department of Transportation district office in Norton, said that Koss Construction is planning to close the eastbound lanes tomorrow, weather permitting.

"The last that we knew they were planning to move the traffic on Tuesday," Brands said, "but if the weather is bad they may wait a day or two."

The I-70 project, which began last year on the westbound lanes, is to wrap up sometime in September. Koss



Despite a gloomy beginning to spring this morning, crews from Trancon of Lincoln, Neb., were working near the Edson ramp, preparing to move traffic back onto the eastbound lanes of I-70. Koss Construction is planning to begin work Tuesday. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Daily News

is ripping out two layers of old pavement, repairing the subgrade as needed, and laying new, high-

standard concrete pavement and shoulders. About three-quarters of the work was completed last year, including

both east and westbound lanes through town and the entrance and exit ramps for Goodland. This year, the remain-

ing work is the eastbound pavement from east of town to Edson, and the eastbound ramps at Edson.

Farmers' fuel bill threatens profit in tough market

By Rachel Miscall

The Oberlin Herald

Farmer Vernon Ketterl says high fuel prices are sucking up profits all over his operation.

Not only could he wind up paying 60 percent more to fuel farm vehicles this year, he said, but the high cost of gasoline and diesel is making it more expensive to irrigate and fertilize.

"It affects us all the way," said Ketterl, who has 3,000 acres of crop and pasture land in northwest Decatur County with his brother David, "and there's no getting away from it."

He said as fuel and oil prices increase, so does the cost of fertilizer, since it's a derivative of fossil fuel, and irrigation, since it takes natural gas to run the water pump.

Farming isn't like other businesses, Ketterl noted, where the extra expense can be recovered by increasing product prices. Prices are set by the markets with no thought of what grain or animals cost to produce.

"We can't pass it along like other businesses can," he said. "We just have to absorb it in production costs."

Dennis Ritter, who farms about 1,600 acres in Lyon Township extending into Sheridan County, said the high fuel prices are another blow to farmers already suffering from low grain prices.

"Just when you are up on one battle and you think things will be on an even kilter," he said, "along comes another expense."

A crop management specialist with Kansas State University said the high cost of diesel fuel could indirectly cause grain prices to drop even further.

On Monday, the market price for a bushel of wheat was \$2.29 and \$1.83 for a bushel of corn. Milo was going for \$2.90 a hundred weight. Those prices are about a dollar below what it costs farmers to produce the crops.

Terry Kastens, with Kansas State's Department of Agricultural Economics, said the higher cost of diesel fuel could increase freight rates by 30 to 50 percent, which he roughly estimated could knock a nickel off what farmers get for a bushel of grain.

He said that's bad news to farmers,

who are already facing a "bad income year" because of low commodity prices.

That means, he said, farmers' incomes could drop as much as \$9,000 next year.

Farmers here average \$30,000 to \$35,000 net income a year, said Kastens, and spend an average of \$9,000 on fuel and oil to farm a 2,500 acre piece of land.

He said if prices continue to rise (as the government has forecast), farmers' fuel and oil costs could double this year. That doesn't include the increased costs for fertilizer, irrigation, shipping or other aspects of farming high fuel prices affect.

Farmers here in northwest Kansas, who had big yields last year, are better off than others across the state, who have even lower incomes.

In 1998, the average Kansas farmer made \$16,800 net income, said Kastens. On average, he said, that farmer spent \$7,200 on fuel and oil for a 1,684-acre farm.

If the average farmer's income remains around \$17,000 this year and that farmer pays double for fuel and oil, he is looking at ending the year below the poverty level with a \$10,000 income.

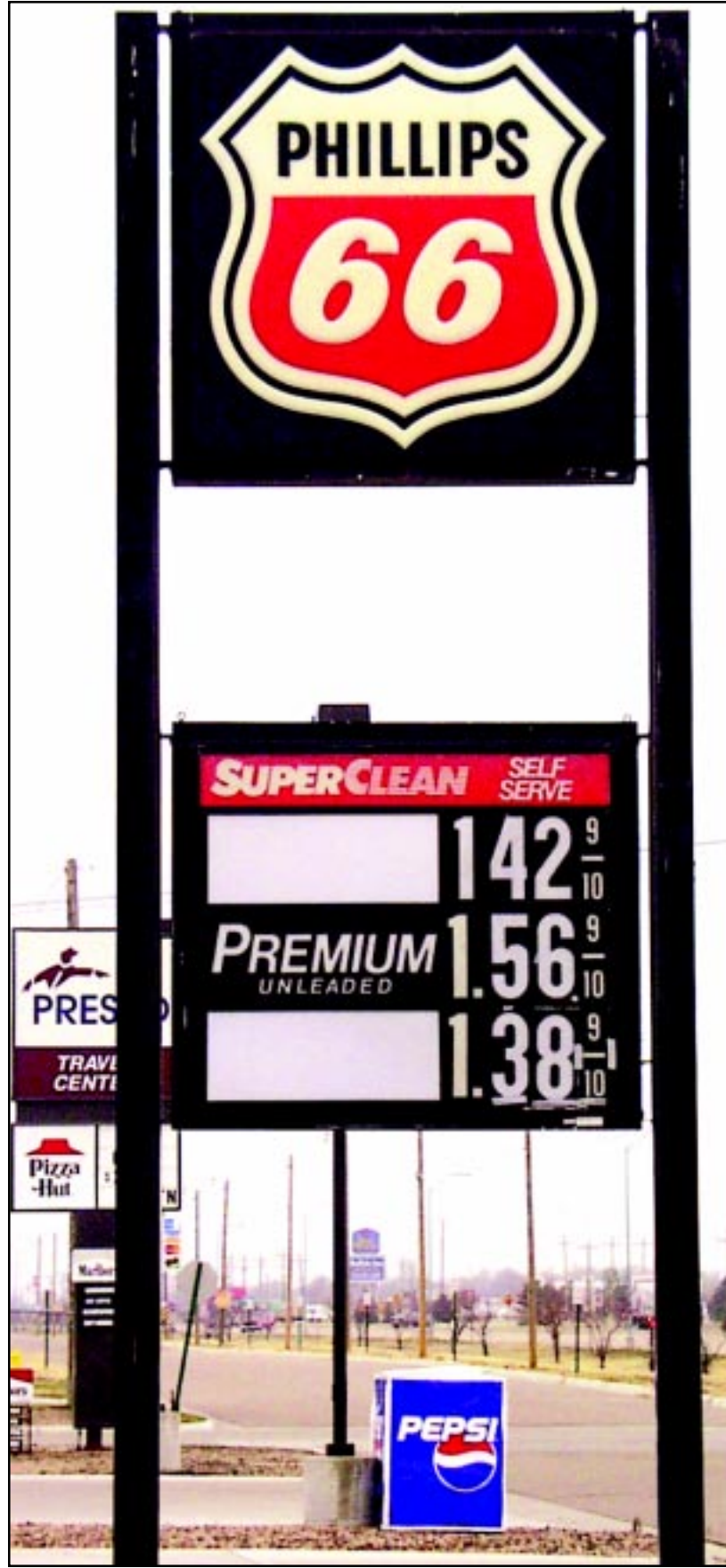
U.S. Census Bureau numbers, released Jan. 19, say a family of four making less than \$17,028 is considered impoverished.

Kastens said higher yields have helped area farmers make more money by giving them more to sell and qualifying them for more government assistance.

In 1999, yields hit record highs, but crop prices were historically low.

To compensate for low prices, the government paid out \$4.4 million in marketing loss assistance payments and \$3.2 million in loan deficiency payments to Decatur County farmers. That's \$7.6 million in government aid to the nearly 900 farm operations in the county. (However, just because there are 900 farms, doesn't mean there's 900 farmers, because one farmer could own multiple operations.)

Ritter said U.S. citizens and the government are partially to blame.



While gas was high around the country, prices in Goodland stabilized at the \$1.43 level over the past two weeks. Prices Saturday were \$1.53 in Tribune and \$1.60 in Lamar, Colo. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Daily News

"I think it's a damn shame that the U.S. is so dependent on foreign oil," he said.

He said the government should invest money in developing ethanol (alcohol) and other fuel products made from corn and other grains American

farmers produce. But, Kastens said farmers should remain hopeful.

"Right now it looks scary, of course," he said, "but just because fuel prices are higher than heck right now, that doesn't mean they will continue to rise."

Defendant returned for retrial

COLBY — It's just like starting over for Tod Alan Pabst, who returned to Colby last week to be retried in the murder of his live-in girlfriend.

Pabst was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for the March 1997 death of his companion, Phoebe Harkins.

He was to arrive shortly after 1 p.m., said Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones, and will remain in custody at the Thomas County Jail awaiting the trial.

The state's Secretary of Corrections ordered Pabst be transferred to Colby from Lansing State Penitentiary.

The new trial was granted by the Kansas Supreme Court in mid-February, citing inappropriate comments by the prosecutor during closing arguments at Pabst's trial.

"This is a rare case in which the prosecutor's improper remarks during closing arguments were so prejudicial that a new trial is order," the court said in its unanimous opinion.

"The controlling question is whether Pabst was denied a fair trial by prosecutorial misconduct. We hold he was. The state is free to retry Pabst because there was sufficient evidence of guilt presented at the first trial."

In the first trial, Pabst testified that the shooting with his double-action revolver was accidental and came during a struggle as he tried to take the weapon from Harkins. The state offered evidence to counter Pabst's claim.

During the trial, Stephen D. Maxwell, an assistant attorney general, was the prosecutor. In its summary, the Supreme Court noted that during closing arguments, the prosecutor told the jury: "I look into each one of your eyes and I tell you he lied."

After the defense attorney objected and the trial judge told the jury to disregard that remark, Maxwell said, "The state tells you he lied, ladies and gentlemen. He lied to you."

In its opinion, the state's highest court noted that, "Whether couched in terms of the state or the prosecutor, the assertion that Pabst lied was improper."

Based on the Supreme Court's decision, Pabst's return to Colby and a subsequent new trial means that the first trial is null and void and that he has not been convicted of anything, said District Court Judge Glenn Schiffner.

Pope joins hands with Muslims, Jews on historic tour of the Holy Land

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — A frail John Paul II embarked today on the first papal visit to the Holy Land in 36 years, a highly personal pilgrimage that will see him retrace the footsteps of Jesus from birth to baptism to crucifixion.

The pope's plane from Rome touched down this afternoon at the Amman, Jordan airport. Dressed entirely in white, he waved and slowly descended the steps of his Alitalia plane, where he was welcomed by Jordan's King Abdullah along with Christian and Muslim clerics.

The 79-year-old pope no longer kisses the

ground upon arrival, though he made the sign of the cross after receiving a pot of Jordanian soil from a Muslim boy.

"All Jordanians — Muslims and Christians — should consider themselves as one people, one family," the pope said in a slow, scratchy voice.

"In this area of the world, there are grave and urgent issues of justice, of the rights of peoples and nations which have to be resolved," he said. "No matter how difficult, no matter how long, the process of seeking peace must continue."

John Paul planned to travel directly to wind-

swept Mount Nebo, where tradition says Moses first saw the Promised Land.

The pope hopes to ease historical friction between Christians, Muslims and Jews, and Mount Nebo is a fitting first stop. Looking over the Dead Sea and across Jordan's border to Jerusalem, Mount Nebo is holy to all three.

The trip through Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories was born out of the pope's desire to see Christendom's holiest sites in this millennial year, though the mission is freighted with much broader religious and political signifi-

cance in this volatile region. Several sacred places on the pope's itinerary burn with modern-day disputes, and the pontiff's tour is viewed as a unique opportunity to mend long-standing religious enmities.

Due largely to political sensitivities, no pontiff has visited the Holy Land since Pope Paul VI visited in 1964. The Vatican and Israel had no diplomatic ties until 1994, and the two sides were so estranged that Paul VI traveled only to Christian sites and never mentioned Israel by name in public.