

weather report

51°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 6:08 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 5:33 a.m.

• Sunset, 6:09 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 42 degrees

• Humidity 46 percent

• Sky mostly cloudy

• Winds light and variable

• Barometer 30.11 inches

and steady

• Record High 87° (1943)

• Record Low 2° (1987)

Last 24 Hours*

High 41°

Low 24°

Precipitation .23 inches

Snow 1.8 inches

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Cloudy, 70 percent

chance of rain; low 30s; wind south-

east 5-15 mph. Tomorrow: Cloudy,

70 percent chance of snow; high low

40s; low 30s; wind northeast 15-25

mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: dry, high 65, low 30s.

Sunday: chance of rain, high mid

50s, low 30. Monday: dry, high 50s,

low 30.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.15 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.01

Loan deficiency payment — 44¢

Corn — \$1.83 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.85

Loan deficiency payment — 14¢

Milo — \$2.79 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$4.63 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.49

Loan deficiency payment — 40¢

Millet — \$3.60 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$6.40 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.44

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.

Father may come for Elian

HAVANA — President Fidel Castro says the father of 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez is ready to travel to the United States to stay with his son if the U.S. government would turn the boy over or at least make a maximum effort to do so.

Wednesday's announcement on Cuban television came at a crucial time: the eve of the U.S. Justice Department's deadline for Elian's Miami relatives to sign an agreement promising to give up the boy if they lose their legal appeal.

After talks Wednesday between officials and Elian Gonzalez's great-uncle, federal officials delayed revoking the boy's temporary permission to remain in the United States until 9 a.m. Friday.

Lazaro Gonzalez, the Miami great-uncle Elian has been staying with, has said he would be willing to release the boy to his father if he personally came from Cuba.

End of air service may come Sunday

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

When the United Express plane takes off for Denver on Sunday, it may be the last commercial flight from Goodland without further action from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"I understand there are people who have tickets for the Sunday flight," Ron Harding, executive director of the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce. "I also know that there are no tickets being sold for any time after Sunday, because that is when the order to terminate service becomes effective."

"I have received information from Congressman Jerry Moran's office about the efforts they are making to get the Department of Transportation to grant a six-month extension of air service to

Great Bend and Goodland," he said, adding that the congressman had not been able to get a firm reply from the administration.

Congress passed the new aviation bill on March 15, and it has been sent to the President for action. A check with the White House clerks' office indicates the last day for presidential action on the bill is Wednesday. The President has the option of signing the bill or vetoing it then, and if he chooses not to sign or veto the legislation it will become law without his signature.

When asked if there was any indication that the president would sign the bill, a spokesperson said no action has been announced.

Moran's office is requesting that the secretary of transportation extend air service to Great Bend and Goodland for six months with 12 weekly

round-trip flights from Denver to Goodland and then to Great Bend. The estimated cost for the flights for the six months, \$1.9 million, would qualify for a subsidy of \$776,750 for each city. Moran estimates the per-passenger cost would be \$347 for Great Bend and \$406 for Goodland.

Harding said Moran's staff members have said their office is not getting much reaction from the Department of Transportation so far, but expect that to change when there is an announcement about what action President Clinton will take on the aviation bill before April 8.

Efforts are being made to keep the door open for air service to Goodland, and to find a new carrier. Harding said he has been in contact with two air carriers who are interested in providing flights to Goodland through Denver.

One of the new carriers is currently handling a lot of United Parcel freight into Denver, and wants to add passenger service. The other carrier is a subsidiary of Key Lime Air, a Denver based contract air freight provider which is looking at moving into the passenger and has been in contact with communities in Colorado. The firm has expressed interest in adding Goodland as a service location. Harding and city officials are to meet with representatives from Key Lime's Denver Air Connection next week.

Denver Air Connection has been in contact with Lamar, Colo., about providing service to Denver. Lamar City Administrator Jeff Anderson said the Colorado town is interested in the proposal, as Great Lakes has indicated they will stop providing flights to Lamar on Friday.

Economy gives boost to security

WASHINGTON (AP) — Social Security and Medicare are benefiting from the continued strong economy, experts say, resulting in more optimistic predictions about how long the retirement programs will be able to support aging baby boomers before running short of cash.

The improvement is expected to be reflected in the annual report of the Social Security and Medicare trustees, scheduled for release today.

"The cliff will recede," said Robert Reischauer, a former head of the Congressional Budget Office.

The good news could wipe out what little drive remains in Congress to risk changing the nation's popular pension and elderly health care programs in a hard-fought election year.

"I think politically, you will find a lot of people that don't want big reforms to the programs will latch on to the trustees report and say 'Aha, we don't need to do anything,'" said Robert Bixby, director of the Concord Coalition, which promotes budget discipline.

Stronger-than-expected economic growth has added new years of life to the retirement programs in recent years, even as lawmakers have debated what to do about projections that they will ultimately be overwhelmed by the huge baby boom generation — the 77 million Americans born from 1946 to 1964.

Just three years ago, when Congress was trying to pass legislation to balance the federal budget, Medicare had been projected to run short of cash in 2001. The trustees have gradually pushed that date back, however, and last year pegged it at 2015.

Likewise, Social Security's insolvency date has been extended from 2029 in 1997 to 2034 in last year's trustees report. The trustees have said that in 2014, the program will need to start drawing on its currently accumulating trust fund when incoming taxes are no longer sufficient to cover benefits.

"I think the message is that we don't need to be stampeded into action by imminent financial collapse. We should carefully consider in what ways the structure (of retirement programs) should be retained and what ways it should be changed," said Henry Aaron, economist at the Brookings Institution.

Give or take a few years, however, the bottom line remains, Reischauer said: "Sooner or later the nation is going to have to restructure Social Security and Medicare and the longer we wait to take on that challenge, the more wrenching those adjustments will have to be."

Commission to pay bills

The Sherman County commissioners will meet at 8 a.m. Friday at the courthouse to take care of end-of-the-month business.

They will review mail and make corrections to the tax rolls if there are any.

There are no items of business or any scheduled appointments on the agenda. However, the time from 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. is set aside for county department heads.

Unless something changes, the commissioners will meet again at 8 a.m. on Tuesday for their first April session.



Santos Lopez, owner of M & M Welding in Kanorado, and Goodland city employees took down light poles at the old Steever Park baseball field on Monday. City crew members (above) lowered a pole. Lopez (left) used his crane to lift another pole off its base while city workers watched.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

City, volunteers move equipment out to new ballfield

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

The old baseball field by Steever Park looks pretty bare these days.

City employees took out the fence posts, chain link fence and light poles, and moved them to the new baseball field at the baseball complex by I-70, which will be used by both K-18 and American Legion teams.

On Monday, Santos Lopez, owner of M&M Welding in Kanorado, used his crane to take down the huge light poles, weighing about 4,500 to 5,000 pounds each with the help of city workers.

Lopez said he has three sons who play baseball and donated his time and the use of his crane. He will also install the light poles at the new field.

City Manager Ron Pickman said he didn't have any idea how much money the city would save. "It definitely will help us stay in the budget," Pickman said, adding that the city would wait until Lopez gets the light poles put up at the new field before they figure the amount.

For the most part, Pickman said, city workers are finished with work at the old ballfield.

Public Works Manager Ed Wolak and other city employees were putting up the fence at the new ballfield today.

There is no date set for the completion of the new field, but Pickman said the city would like to have it ready by

the end of April or the first of May.

Scott Weber, head coach for Goodland K-18 baseball, for kids 13-15, said the team will start playing around the middle of May. He says he hopes that the new field will be ready by then. The team has been practicing since December.

The Goodland Baseball Commission is trying to raise money to put in bullpens, batting cages and a perimeter fence at the new field, said Weber, who also is president of the commission. Donations can be made to honor family members, advertise a business, or just support Goodland baseball.

The commission has different levels of donations. The categories for the "Sluggers Club" are single, \$100; double, \$200; triple, \$300; home run, \$400; and grand slam, \$500. A plaque will be posted for each club member.

The "Hitters Club" it will cost \$50 for the first year, and \$20 for each year after that. A member's name will be posted on a sign. The "Pinch-Hitters Club" requires a one time donation of \$25. All club members will receive a "Memorial Field" inaugural season bat.

Donations may be made to the Goodland Baseball Commission and sent to Scott Weber, 202 N. Main, Goodland, Kan. 67735 or taken to the Sherman County Star at 1015 Main or the Goodland Chamber of Commerce Office at 104 W. 11th.

