

## weather report

42°  
at noon



### Today

• Sunset, 5:28 p.m.

### Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 5:27 a.m.

• Sunset, 6:13 p.m.

### Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 41 degrees

• Humidity 43 percent

• Sky mostly cloudy

• Winds north 20-28 mph

• Barometer 30.29 inches  
and rising

• Record High 86° (1943)

• Record Low 15° (1936)

### Last 24 Hours\*

High 58°

Low 30°

Precipitation .01 inches

### Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear; low mid 20s;  
winds north 5-15 mph. Tomorrow:  
Sunny and dry; high 65-70; low 30-35.

### Extended Forecast

Wednesday: dry, high 80, low mid 30s. Thursday: dry, high mid 70s, low 30-35. Friday: chance of thunderstorms, high 60-65, low 30-35.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.



The ticket counter at Renner Field is empty today except for a small sign saying "Time to Go" left behind by Great Lakes Aviation, which terminated service to Goodland with a final flight Saturday. A new entrance sign for the airport was erected Friday has space for an airline.

Photos by Tom Betz / Goodland Daily News

## Airline pulls out on time

### Great Lakes leaves Renner counter bare

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Workers erected a new sign at the entrance to Renner Field last week, but there is no mention of United Express or Great Lakes Aviation as the airline cleared out after its final flight on Saturday.

The ticket booth area is vacant and the United Express sign has been scratched off the door. A sign left on the counter says, "Time to go."

With the suspension of flights by Great Lakes, Goodland officials are working to recruit another air carrier. Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ron Harding and city officials have met with at least one company and plan to meet with another this week.

"I am confident we can be successful in getting a new air carrier," Harding said. "I think the most important part is getting one that truly wants to provide reliable service to our community."

Part of the puzzle is the continuation of the federal Essential Air Service subsidies for Goodland, and that is tied to the bill currently awaiting the president's signature. A check with the



White House Clerk's office this morning indicated that no announcement about when the bill will be signed has been made. President Clinton has until Saturday to sign the bill.

"We expect him to sign the bill, especially with the overwhelming support it received in both houses of Congress," said Tobi Edwards of Congressman Jerry Moran's office. "This was a bipartisan effort, and there is little doubt it will be signed."

The bill, the "Airport Investment Act for the 21st Century," has a provision which would extend the subsidies for air service for Goodland and several other cities that are facing termination.

Efforts are continuing by both the Kansas and Colorado Congressional delegations to be sure the Secretary of Transportation interprets the section extending air service to help Goodland, Great Bend and Lamar, Colo., in obtaining a new air carrier.

## Commissioners to work out plan for new restroom

### Measurements off from regulations

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Blaine Davis from Architecture Plus and Mike Miller with Miller Construction will meet with the Sherman County commissioners on Tuesday morning to discuss the handicapped restroom project at the courthouse.

It was recently discovered that some of the measurements on the project were incorrect, and commissioners want see how the situation should be handled.

The commissioners will decide whether they want to set aside money in the county budget for an economic development proposal which was presented to them by Stephen West and Ron Harding, representatives of the Goodland Chamber of Commerce, at the March 21 meeting. The Chamber asked the county to provide \$50,000 for

a feasibility study, labor survey, wage survey and someone to help Harding with the work on the project, in an effort to bring new businesses to Goodland and Sherman County.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby is to let the commissioners know what she has found out from the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau's 1999 expenses.

William McKnight is to give the bids that were turned in to him for wind damage repairs on buildings at the fairgrounds.

Other business on the agenda will include an appointment to replace Anna Marie Daise, who resigned as trustee of Grant Township.

Fire Chief Dean Jensen will give commissioners the names of volunteer firemen who are to have emergency lights on their vehicles.

A decision will also be made by the commissioners on whether additional expenses on a pre-employment physical should be paid.

The meeting begins at 8 a.m. on the first floor of the courthouse.

## County pays bills, questions lawyer pay

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Commissioners Chuck Frankenfild and Gary Townsend approved \$190,792 to pay bills submitted to the county at Friday's end-of-the month meeting, but first spoke on the phone with Karlin Barton, district court clerk, about the collection of indigent defense expenses on a claims voucher.

These are fees for people who can't afford an attorney, but need representation in court cases.

Barton said if the client is found not guilty, then they aren't expected to pay the attorney's fees. If they are found guilty, then the judge orders them to pay the fees, and they are expected to do so.

She said the money that is collected is paid back to the county treasurer's office and is then put back in the county budget to go towards future attorney's fees.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby came in to talk with the commissioners about the sale of the Medical Arts Clinic. They agreed to sign the contract to sell the building to WWB, LLC, a group of local investors, with the understanding that the Goodland Regional Medical Center would pay the closing costs.

There were no orders to correct the tax rolls and no appointments on the agenda. Commission Chairman Kenny Davis was not at the meeting, which adjourned by 8:30 a.m.

## local markets

### Noon

Wheat — \$2.19 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.12

Loan deficiency payment — 33¢

Corn — \$1.84 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.96

Loan deficiency payment — 3¢

Milo — \$2.81 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$4.72 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.68

Loan deficiency payment — 21¢

Millot — \$3.70 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$6.55 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.54

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.

## Japanese chief kept in coma

TOKYO — Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was in a coma and on artificial respiration today after suffering a stroke, and a senior Cabinet minister was named acting premier.

A television station quoted unidentified doctors as saying the Japanese leader was brain dead.

Obuchi, 62, was admitted to Tokyo's Juntendo University Hospital early Sunday, said acting Prime Minister Mikio Aoki.

Officials stressed after an emergency Cabinet meeting that Obuchi's illness would not bring any change in policy. Obuchi's ruling coalition split up on Saturday, but his Liberal Democratic Party remains the strongest in Parliament, and its power is not in question.

Aoki, who became acting prime minister early today, said Obuchi's condition deteriorated shortly after they met in the hospital Sunday.

## 'Consensus Estimate' key to state spending

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — A meeting Tuesday represents a crucial event in the Legislature's budget debate and is likely to set the tone for the end of the 2000 session.

Interestingly enough, the meeting is closed to the public, and no legislators will participate.

It is the semiannual meeting of the Consensus Estimating Group, the panel of economists and state officials who forecast how much revenue the state is likely to collect in coming months.

Legislators and Gov. Bill Graves will use those numbers in drafting the final version of the state's budget for fiscal year 2001, which begins July 1.

If the group's new estimates are significantly more optimistic than the ones it issued in November, legislators will find resolving budget issues less difficult.

But legislative leaders think the opposite — a decrease in revenue projections — is more likely.

If the numbers are revised too far downward, legislators will have to review budget decisions they've already made to trim spending. They are planning to spend every dollar available.

"When we're budgeting this close to the line, it's more important than in a

year when we're fat," said Senate Ways and Means Chairman Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson. "Most people I've talked to believe the most likely change will be downward."

The new revenue estimates will be for the state's \$4.5 billion general fund. The general fund is the largest source of money for Kansas government programs and where the state deposits most of its tax revenues. Legislators worry far more about general fund spending than any other source.

The group will revise estimates for fiscal 2000, which ends June 30, as well as fiscal 2001.

Through the end of February, revenues collected in the state general fund were \$12.8 million short of estimates.

"There's nothing to suggest at all that we're in line for a huge swing upward," said State Budget Director Duane Goossen, one of the group's members.

Legislators have deferred some of their toughest decisions until their wrap-up session in late April, when they will draft the last spending bill.

They hope to resolve many issues before the Legislature recesses its session Friday for its traditional 2 1/2-week spring break. The consensus group will meet as House and Senate negotiators gather to draft the final version of budget legislation.

Reaction from the Department of Transportation has been cool so far, Harding says, but as the bill signing date gets closer more attention is expected.

The new sign at Renner Field was to have had a panel for United Express, but City Manager Ron Pickman canceled that as soon as Great Lakes announced it was terminating service.

It is an improvement to the entrance of the airport, Pickman says, and will be more impressive as soon as the lighting is wired. The new sign cost \$6,000.

## A little too cold to finish



Paving has been underway at the Caruso bridge about four miles west of Goodland on old U.S. 24, but the chilly weather today had halted the final section. With the predictions of warmer weather later this week, the paving could be completed, but Construction Engineer Donna Binning of the Kansas Department of Transportation, said it will be a couple of weeks before the road is reopened because the contractor has to complete the guard rails and dirt work before the bridge can be used.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

## Farm income near record despite prices

MANHATTAN (AP) — The farming industry is not in a financial crisis, and Congress will probably pass legislation this year similar to the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, says Barry Flinchbaugh, chairman of the federal Commission on 21st Century Agriculture.

"The truth of the matter is that 1999 is roughly tied with 1997 as the second-highest net farm income year on record," said Flinchbaugh, a Kansas State University Extension agricultural economist whose 11-member commis-

sion will advise the president and Congress on farm policy to follow current legislation, which expires Dec. 31, 2002.

The industry's good financial health is not the result of a strong economy, however, Flinchbaugh said Thursday in a speech updating visitors to Kansas State on options for the next farm bill.

Prices for farm commodities stand at a 25-year low. The value of exports has dropped from more than \$60 billion in 1996 to \$49 billion in 1999, and the

trade balance, which stood at a healthy \$26.8 billion in 1996, was \$11.5 billion last year.

But despite the fact that the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act was meant to end farm subsidies, money from the federal government has kept the farm industry from going under, he said.

"There are individual farmers in trouble," Flinchbaugh said. "That's always true, however. But U.S. agriculture, in the aggregate, had a good year in 1999, thanks primarily to Congress."