

weather
report

58°

at noon

Today

• Sunset, 7:18 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:16 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:19 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 51 degrees
• Humidity 37 percent
• Sky cloudy
• Winds north 22-28 mph
• Barometer 29.93 inches
and rising

• Record High 87° (1977)

• Record Low 4° (1989)

Last 24 Hours*

High 71°

Low 23°

Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy, low 30,
winds light. Tomorrow: Partly sunny,
dry, high 55-60, winds southeast 5-
15 mph, low 30s.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: dry, high 65-75, low
30s. Thursday: dry, high 65-75, low
35-40. Friday: chance for rain, high
55-65, low 30s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

Junior high might expand or move

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Declining enrollment in Goodland schools may drive decisions about what to do with Grant Junior High, and those attending a strategic planning retreat for the district Saturday at the Elks Lodge had some suggestions.

Recommendations, which include adding a two-story science addition to the high school and possibly a lunch room and gym at the junior high, may go to the school board tonight. Another option is to eventually close the junior high building and move the classes to the high school.

About 30 people attended the session, which focused on future building needs in the morning, and then spent the afternoon looking at future needs for teachers and support staff.

In the morning, Superintendent Marvin Selby gave the group a quick background on the strategic planning session held in January 1995, and a projection of the district budget picture for the next year.

Selby said he believes the state aid level will be \$3,820 per student for the next year, \$50 higher than the \$3,770 schools received this year. This means that Goodland can expect to receive about \$58,000 in additional state money.

While that seems like a lot, Selby said a 1-percent pay raise for everyone in the district would cost about \$50,000, and that adding a person to the staff would cost about \$40,000.

Looking at the strengths and weaknesses of district facilities, the group felt the buildings were being well main-



Goodland School Superintendent Marvin Selby led the discussion at a school district retreat held at the Elks Lodge on Saturday. Strengths and

weaknesses of the district buildings were taped to the wall for the more than 30 people attending.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

tained, and that they were all paid for (with the exception of the three payment remaining on the expansion for Max Jones Fieldhouse).

Among the weaknesses were a lack of storage, lack of storm shelters, need for a lunchroom and gym at the junior high, need for a place to store maintenance equipment and the need for up-

dated science classrooms at the high school.

There were other things listed, like soundproofing walls at West Elementary to cut the noise between classes, and better air circulation at West and North. There was mention of the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements in relation to Central, and

that while the new elevator makes the high school technically in compliance, it is very inconvenient for kids in wheel chairs to get around in that building.

The Edson gym was mentioned, with several saying the major drawback to continued use is the 10 miles distance from the other district buildings. High School Activities Director Dick Liess

noted that while building a new junior high gym at the Max Jones Fieldhouse was a real improvement, there is still a need to use an outside gym because they have been using the Kansas National Guard armory the past few years.

He said the coaches have been asked

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Class sizes change with kids, but staff stable

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Changing enrollment seemed to drive the afternoon discussion about staff needs at the Goodland School District's retreat Saturday, with several changes projected at the elementary level and a need for additional staff at the high school.

The group, made up of board members, administrators and a few invited citizens, agree that having smaller classes was good for kids in kindergarten through second grade. The target is to keep them down to 17 or below.

With anticipated changes in the kindergarten, administrators said they expect that another section will be needed next year to keep the class size at about

15. At the first-grade level, numbers indicate a possible reduction from five classes to four that would still be around 17 students each, and the second grade would still have five classes keeping them at the 14-15 student level.

One major discussion was that the shifting of classes would not mean the elimination of any staff, but it might mean a teacher would have to change buildings or class level. Selby also said he expected a couple of retirements, which would cover any real reductions that were needed.

The group agreed the class size could be increased a bit at the third and fourth grade levels, with the optimum being 16-20 students per class. With this in mind, it appears there may be one less

third grade class, five sections with a class size of 16 each. At the fourth-grade level, there would continue to be five classes with 18 students each.

Moving to the fifth- and sixth-grade level, the group felt a class size of 20-23 was appropriate. It appears the current four classes at the fifth grade would be a little tight with 24 per class, but it did not appear the numbers would justify adding a teacher. In the sixth grade, the current five classes could be cut, as there would be 18.4 students per class otherwise.

The other area considered was the non-certified support staff, of which Selby said there are 107 currently. In looking at schools in the area and of a like size in the state, the average num-

ber of support staff is 60. He said part of the problem is that the best pay level these people can get to start is \$6 per hour, and there are many jobs in the community starting at a better wage with more benefits.

The group weighed the various possibilities and recommended that the top priority was to add a science and math teacher at the high school; to evaluate the pupil-teacher ratios at the lower grade levels to make adjustments; and to add more counselors. It was also suggested the counselor might be someone who was currently a teacher, and wanted to go back to school to become a counselor with financial assistance from the district.

The other recommendation was to

improve support staff salaries, and that this could possibly be done through the combining some positions. Selby suggested having a committee sit down and try to develop a support staff salary schedule which would allow experience and other factors to be taken into consideration when a new person is hired.

On the subject of adaptability, it was suggested the superintendent should keep the staff informed about changing needs, possibly through a superintendent's newsletter.

Also, the group said there needed to be more communication with the principals, and that some way to inform the staff about actions taken at school board meetings.

County to hear gripes on lodging tax board

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Hotel and motel operators are scheduled to meet Tuesday morning with the Sherman County commissioners to discuss the Convention and Visitors Bureau board and the use of its guest tax money.

Karl Hildreth, manager of the Best Western Buffalo Inn in Goodland, came to last week's meeting to talk about the bureau. He said the board does not adequately represent hotel owners and felt that the tax was being used for things other than promoting tourism.

Commissioner Gary Townsend asked him how the commissioners were supposed to appoint board members from the hotel businesses if many of those people are not willing to serve or are unable to attend the meetings.

Hildreth said the hotel people are willing to serve, but that the meetings are held at a time that is busy for them.

The Chamber of Commerce makes recommendations to the commissioners as to who should serve on the board. Members have not been appointed yet for this year.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby, who was also at last Tuesday's meeting, said she had received a letter from Vernon Jarboe, a Topeka lawyer who represents Hildreth. Jarboe asked that Selby get a separate report from the bureau of their expenses in addition to an accounting from the Chamber of Commerce. Selby said she is working on a flow chart which shows who the past board represented. She is also getting

the revenue totals received from the guest tax and will show how the money was distributed and how the board spent the money it received.

Hildreth added that he would like to see the commissioners appoint a new board made up of a majority of hotel operators, so that they could have a voice in how the tax, which is collected only on room rentals, is spent.

Townsend said he wanted to see the hotel people come to commissioners and tell them what they want, rather than taking Hildreth's word for it, and find out if they are willing to serve on the board.

Hildreth said he would get in touch with other operators and have as many as possible attend Tuesday's meeting.

Also at the meeting, Paul Rainbolt, administrator of the Good Samaritan Center, will talk to the commissioners about possible expansion.

The commissioners are to make a decision about whether to set aside money for economic development. Stephen West and Ron Harding from the Chamber of Commerce met with the board recently to ask for \$50,000.

The commission will also talk about a wall in the time clock room at the courthouse. The wall was built over a heat register during some remodeling in the building.

However, William McKnight, county building manager, was concerned about its location. The commissioners are to discuss what to do about the situation.

They will meet at 8 a.m. in the commissioners' room of the courthouse.

Out enjoying spring weather



Sunday was a warm spring day, with a high of 71 degrees. This group of adults and children played soccer Sunday evening on a field by West School.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

Legislature gets it all done in final days

TOPEKA (AP) — The Legislature began its traditional spring break Saturday after resolving a budget impasse and approving an ethics bill.

Lawmakers even took time once again to debate a proposal designed to restrict late-term abortions. A vote in the Senate was a demand of conservative House members, but senators rejected a plan from anti-abortion legislators.

The House and Senate finished business early Saturday morning. They plan to reconvene April 26 to wrap up their work for the year, with their most no-

table chore being to draft and pass a final budget bill.

The 85th calendar day, out of 90 allotted by the state constitution, was a busy one.

Republican legislative leaders appeased House conservatives to get a compromise state budget to Gov. Bill Graves.

They dismissed Democrats' criticism that the proposal was seriously flawed and didn't have enough money for education or social services.

The bill contains nearly \$8.65 billion, enough to cover the operations of

most Kansas government agencies during the fiscal year 2001, which begins July 1.

The increase in spending over the current budget would be \$152 million, or about 1.8 percent.

The House approved it late Friday night, 68-52, and the Senate adopted it, 28-12, sending it to Graves.

"It's important for the orderly close-down of the session," said Sen. Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson, chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. "If everything else falls apart, we still have a budget."

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.13 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.10
Loan deficiency payment — 35¢
Corn — \$1.77 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.94
Loan deficiency payment — 5¢
Milo — \$2.68 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$4.57 bushel
Posted county price — \$4.63
Loan deficiency payment — 26¢
Millet — \$3.60 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$6.05 cwt.
Loan deficiency prmt. — \$3.30
Confection current — \$13/\$7 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$12 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigo Co. 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.

KU student killed by train

LAWRENCE (AP) — A University of Kansas freshman remained in critical condition today with injuries suffered early Saturday in a car-train accident that killed his roommate.

Another man hurt in the wreck just east of Lawrence was released from a hospital in Overland Park.

They were injured shortly before 1 a.m. Saturday in an accident that killed freshman Ryan James Travis, 19, of Beresford, S.D.

Douglas County Sheriff's Cpl. Gayland Guinn said the railroad crossing gate was down with bells ringing and lights blinking when a car containing the three men stopped at the gate, the car then went around the gate and was struck by a westbound Amtrak passenger train. No one on the train was hurt.

Sheriff's officials haven't said who was driving.