

weather report

69° at noon

Today

Sunset, 8:16 p.m.

Tomorrow

Sunrise, 5:20 a.m.

Sunset, 8:17 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 65 degrees

• Humidity 46 percent

• Sky mostly sunny

• Winds northwest 10-17 mph

• Barometer 29.98 inches and steady

• Record High 105° (1936)

• Record Low 40° (1946)

Last 24 Hours*

High 93°

Low 59°

Precipitation 0.35 inches

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly clear, low 50-55, winds north 5-15 mph. Tomorrow: Partly sunny, high 80, low 50, winds southeast 5-15 mph.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: dry, high 90, low 50.

Friday and Saturday: chance for thunderstorms, high 90s, low 60s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.47 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.32

Loan deficiency payment — 13¢

Corn — \$1.82 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.67

Loan deficiency payment — 32¢

Milo — \$2.36 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$4.21 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.44

Loan deficiency payment — 46¢

Millet — \$3.60 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$6.00 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.87

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.

Feds to probe high gas prices

WASHINGTON — Kansas and Missouri lawmakers want a federal probe into soaring Midwestern gas prices to focus on Missouri, and Kansas City in particular.

Democratic Reps. Dennis Moore of Kansas and Ike Skelton of Missouri were among members of Congress who asked Monday that their home turf be added to an investigation into why drivers are paying more than \$2 a gallon in Chicago and other Midwest cities.

On Friday, U.S. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde said the Federal Trade Commission will launch a full-scale review into price-fixing in the oil industry. Moore said the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy and Department of Transportation are also investigating and asked the agency chiefs to include Kansas City.

Moore, who as a local prosecu-

City insures power plant, buys truck

By Rachel Miscal

The Goodland Daily News

Saying it's cheaper to pay for insurance than for failed machines, the Goodland City Commission decided Monday to insure equipment at the city's power plant that has never been covered before.

Commissioners accepted a quote from the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Co. at its second regular meeting of the month. They said they would rather pay the \$68,216 annual premium than up to \$2.5 million to replace one engine in the plant.

City Manager Ron Pickman said under the policy, there will be a \$50,000 minimum deductible on a new engine, but he said the city would have saved a lot of money over the years if the equipment would have been insured.

Commissioners voted to buy a \$25,203 one-ton flat-bed dump truck with a tool box mounted on the frame for the parks department.

Dan Brenner Ford of Goodland had the low bid \$25,435, but commissioners bought a GMC truck from Finley Motors of Goodland because that company's bid included everything they wanted. The Brenner bid, which was on a 2001 truck, would have been the same or more after a model-year price increase is figured in, commissioners said. Finley's bid was on a 2000 model, subject to availability.

The commission accepted an annual audit report from Jim Vonfeldt with Vonfeldt, Bauer and Vonfeldt, an accounting firm from Larned, and decided to hire the firm for another three years.

Vonfeldt said that the city did not break any state laws in their money handling over the past year. He said most cities do.

Commissioners decided to give the Chamber of Commerce \$500 for this year's Fourth of July fireworks display, and accepted souvenir bats commemorating the new baseball field from Eric Yonkey with the Goodland Baseball Commission. The bats were to thank commissioners for their help raising

money for the field.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Gave the High Plains Museum permission to set up an endowment trust, which would allow the museum to seek and collect donations.

- Passed a resolution approving changes in the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency's bylaws. The city is a member of the agency.

- Discussed asking the Kansas Department of Transportation to put up signs directing large farm vehicles and semi-tractor trailers to detour routes around roadwork near I-70 and K-27. Pickman said later that the state usually won't detour traffic from a paved road to a dirt road, which would be the case.

- Talked about how to control bindweed in the city, with Pickman saying it's a statewide problem. Ed Wolak, public works director, said the city can't start a spraying program because a resident might take legal action if their tree or bush is accidentally killed.

- Heard from Pickman, who said workers have begun digging a hole for the city's new swimming pool.

- Approved reducing the amount the city agreed to pay Allied Inc. for new water lines, which have been installed. The project turned out to cost \$60,658 less, with a final price tag of about \$1.5 million.

- Voted to make the final \$48,144 payment on the water line project, and ask the state, which loaned the city money to pay for the project, for a reimbursement.

- Decided to transfer \$2,530 in grant money to use in demolishing condemned houses. The city got a \$50,500 grant from the state to tear down residential structures and commercial buildings, which requires a 50 percent match, but the city is spending more on houses than commercial buildings.

- Approved asking the state for a reimbursement in grant money on \$20,967 the city spent tearing down old buildings. The city must spend the money before the state will give the grant funds.

High wind starts fire; rain helps put it out

High winds snapped an electrical pole at ground level Monday night in rural Sherman County, sending hot wires into a wheat field and sparking a blaze that burned 80 acres of Melba Curry's crop.

Luckily, the storm that started the fire also helped put it out.

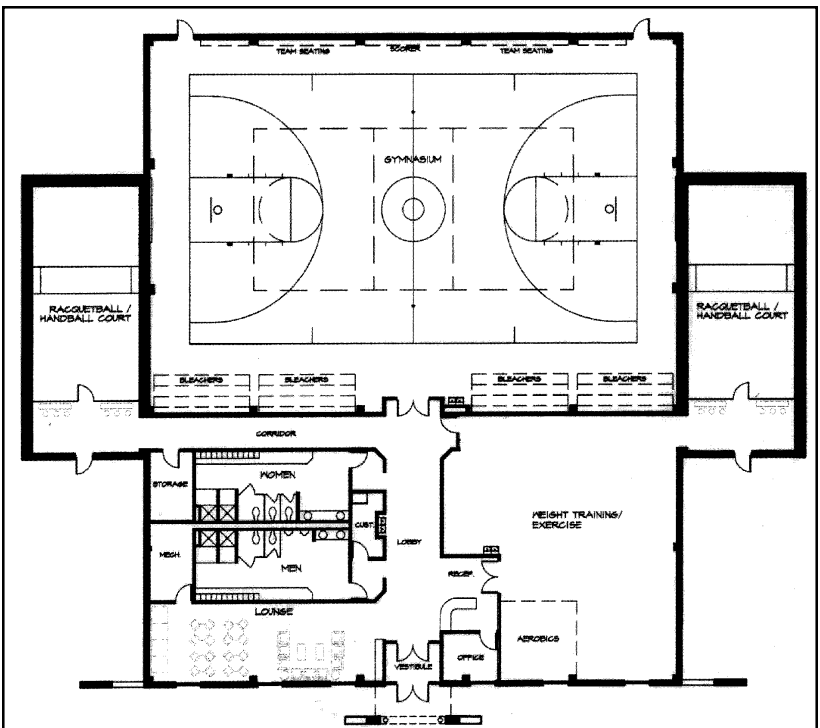
"We were fortunate enough that it rained," said Ken Griffith, rural fire chief.

He said about 7:30 p.m., rural firemen were called northwest of Good-

land as flames roared across the standing wheat. The chief said the winds, gusting to 60 mph at times, fanned the flames, but the downpour helped snuff them.

It took the volunteer firemen about 30 minutes to get the fire under control, Griffith said.

The fire was on County Road 15, between Roads 69 and 70, the chief said, adding that Midwest Energy was called to fix the electrical lines.



This is a floor plan of the student fitness center being built at the Northwest Kansas Technical School in Goodland.



The crew unloads a pre-inflated balloon from the back of a U-Haul truck (above). The crew had parked along side of the Armory Road to unload the balloon, which was released into the storm building behind it. A supercell storm (below) built over McCook, Neb.

Photo by Dana Sulsberger/The Goodland Daily News

Gang seeks answers in storms

By Dana Sulsberger

The Goodland Daily News

Storm clouds are rolling in from the west, and the radio is telling everyone to take cover, but a gang of people dressed in yellow from head to toe stands in the open, trying to hold down a giant blue beast as the wind tries to rip it into the sky.

These guys, who stand in the face of any storm that they can find, are the weather balloon crew working with the Severe Thunderstorm Electrification and Precipitation Study, known as STEPS. Soon they'll be chasing across half of western Kansas, looking for just the right storm.

The weather balloons are used to get a look at the inside of a storm, said David Rust, chief of the mesoscale research and applications division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who heads the balloon team.

The crew waits for a storm to start brewing and then they gather and get into vans. Their caravan is made up of one van containing electronic equipment, a U-Haul that holds the balloons and the helium, and the final van hauling whoever will not fit in the other two.

When the right storm is found, which can sometimes be hours of searching and frustration, the crew takes inflated balloons from the U-Haul and attach electric field measurement devices. When a balloon is released, it carries the instrument into the storm to measure wind speed and the electrical charge in lightning.

Monday, the crew drove from Goodland up to Colby and then to Oberlin, then waited for a half an hour for something to happen.



Storm dumps rain, breeds twisters

A thunderstorm last night dumped .35 of an inch of rain in Goodland, said Bob Wile, a weather service forecaster here. Winds reached a peak of 66 miles per hour at 6:24 p.m.

Two tornadoes were spotted in Sheridan County at 8:45 p.m. The first was spotted five miles east of Selden by sheriff's officers. The base

of the tornado was reported as 100 yards wide. There were no reports of any damage other than some downed tree limbs.

At 9 p.m. another tornado was reported by a storm spotter seven miles northeast of Sheridan County. No damage was reported from this storm.

When it didn't look like any of the storms were going to cooperate, they moved back to Colby, and waited in between two storm systems, trying to decide which storm would not die.

Eventually, they decided to return to Goodland and released the balloon on Armory Road, near the National Weather Service.

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Fitness center becoming a reality

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

Work on the student fitness center at the Northwest Kansas Technical School is well under way, and students should be playing basketball and racquetball and doing aerobics by spring.

Work began earlier this month on the 13,000-square-foot center, which will have two handball/racquetball courts, a gym, a fitness room, men's and women's restrooms with showers, a lounge and reception area and an office.

The general contractor is Mike Miller with Miller Construction of Goodland.

Dependable Glass and McClure Plumbing and Heating, both of Goodland, are subcontractors on the project.

Director Larry Keirns said a year ago the school surveyed its students to see if a fitness center was something they wanted and would be willing to pay for.

He said 90 percent of the students said they were willing to pay \$50 a year to support the center.

If the students hadn't been willing to support the project, Keirns said, then the school never would have gone ahead with it.

Each student will be charged that amount in his or her fees, and the center will only be used by students.

Keirns said the metal building should be here the last part of July.

He said there will be a concrete floor, and once that is completed, then the building can be put up.

So far the footings and rebar are in place.

There will be a brick portal to the building with an illuminated clock above.

It will not be enclosed, but will have a roof over the area between it and the front doors.

A lounge area at the front of the building will seat 20-30 people.

The gym, which is to be high school official size, will be at the south end of the building between the two handball/racquetball courts.

It will have seating for about 160 spectators on its north side and benches for players on the south side. The gym will be used for the school's intramural sports.

The handball/racquetball courts will have six stools outside its glass fronts for people to watch players. The fitness room will have exercise and weight training equipment and an area for aerobics.

Keirns said the fitness center is the first building to go up on the 18.2 acres of land that the school bought from the Goodland Elks Lodge a couple of years ago. The tentative date for completion is late spring.