

weather report

76°
at noon



Today

- Sunset, 6:05 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 7:01 a.m.
- Sunset, 6:04 p.m.

Middy Conditions

- Soil Temperature 60 degrees
- Humidity 25 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds southwest 14 mph
- Barometer 30.23 inches and steady
- Record High 87° (1958)
- Record Low 24° (1989)

Last 24 Hours*

- High 74°
- Low 36°
- Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Clear, low 40-45, south winds 5-15 mph. Tomorrow: Clear, high 80, low 35-40, south winds 10-20 mph.

Extended Forecast

Friday: dry, high 75-80, low 35-40. Saturday: dry, high 75-80, low 40. Sunday: chance of rain, high 55-60, low 40.

(National Weather Service)

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

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.76 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.68
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Corn — \$1.87 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.67
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 32¢
- Milo — \$2.80 hundredweight
- Soybeans — \$4.13 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.86
- Loan deficiency payment — \$1.04
- Millet — ask
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$5.25 cwt.
- Loan deficiency pmt. — \$4.50
- Confection current — \$15/\$6 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$15

(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

afternoon wire

Late news from the Associated Press

1 p.m.

Debate makes for close race

ST. LOUIS — Al Gore and George W. Bush traded parting debate shots, the vice president calling the governor an ally of big business, the Republican nominee retorting that Gore stands for more federal spending and Washington power.

With that, the contestants in a White House race rated dead even headed into the final dash to the Nov. 7 election, urging their supporters to the polls and trying to win over uncommitted voters like those chosen to question them Tuesday night in the closing debate.

"This is going to be a close election. Nobody should take anything for granted," Bush told supporters at an airport rally in Eau Claire, Wis., urging them to spread the word about the differences between himself and Gore.

Hospital losing patients and money

Officials partially blame loss on federal law

By Janet Craft

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland Regional Medical Center has been losing money this year with fewer patients and reduced reimbursements from the federal government, but officials say other hospitals are having the same problem.

"We're going through some tough times, as are all hospitals," said Andy Laue, chief financial officer.

Laue said the hospital here is not in trouble.

"We need to weather through this storm until things get better," he said.

Hospital Administrator Jim Chaddic said there are very few hospitals making a profit right now.

The two men attributed most of the

loss to the federal Balanced Budget Amendment passed in 1997, which affected the reimbursement rates the hospital received from Medicare.

Chaddic said it affected not only small rural hospitals, but large city hospitals as well. It was not all effective in one year, Laue said, but was phased in over several years.

To a certain extent, private health insurance has followed along the guidelines of the Medicare program, Laue said, so those companies have reduced their payments.

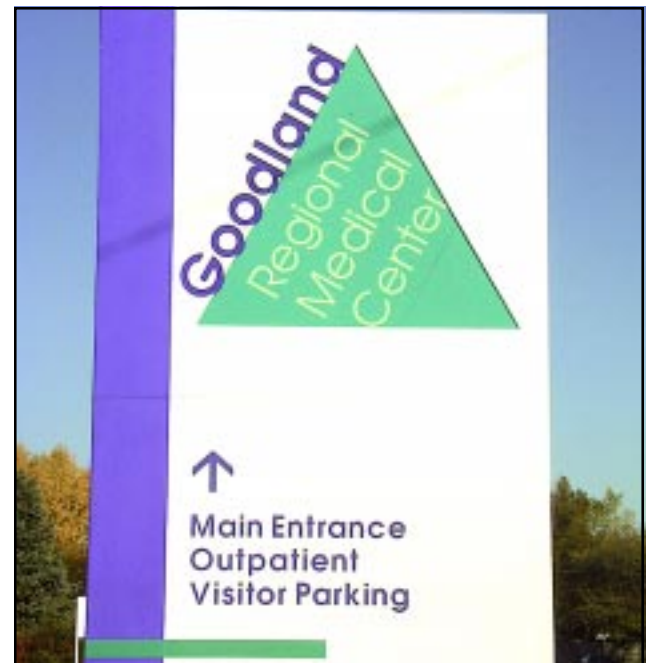
He said private insurance companies come to the hospital to negotiate contracts for discounts on normal charges for services. While the hospital is not obligated to sign, if they don't, the per-

son who has private insurance has to pay a larger portion themselves or go to a hospital that has a contract.

The amendment hurts those hospitals that have Medicare patients most, Laue said, and rural hospitals treat a big percentage of elderly patients.

Medicare also determines how much they will pay to treat a patient. If it costs more than the reimbursement amount allowed, then the hospital has to write off that amount. Most private insurance companies don't pay 100 percent of the bill, Chaddic said, so the patient is billed for that portion. All the hospital can do is try to cut costs and live with the situation, the men said.

See HOSPITAL, Page 7



A sign in front of Goodland Regional Medical Center points the way to the entrance of the hospital. The facility has been losing money this year, but officials are optimistic that things will improve.

The cycle of life



Sunflowers in Sherman County have turned from bright yellow to a drab brown as fall rolls in. With the change in season, combines are rolling through fields cutting corn, sunflowers, milo and soybeans during a harvest that is winding down. Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

County looking to fill job

Commission reviews office space proposal

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

The first advertisements for the new Sherman County administrator position appeared Tuesday, and the commissioners decided during their regular meeting to wait on a proposal to make office space on the third floor for the new person.

Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld said the advertising has begun through Randy Allen of the Kansas Association of Counties, and that the resumes and applications will be taken through Nov. 17. The commissioners are having Allen screen the applicants and provide a list of finalists for interviewing.

Building Maintenance Supervisor William McKnight and Deputy Clerk Mary Ann Sneath had suggested moving the clerk's supply room from the third floor to the old men's restroom on the main floor to open a space for the administrator.

Commissioner Kenny Davis asked what the change of the restroom would cost, and if there were any historical obstacles to making such a change.

McKnight said he could do most of the work removing the restroom fixtures, but would need some help removing the marble at the entrance.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked what the move would entail, and whether the restroom is big enough.

Sneath said the move would make it easier for the clerk and treasurer employees to get to the supplies and do the monthly inventory. McKnight agreed, and said it would also make it easier to handle the supplies because they would not have to be loaded onto the elevator.

Sneath said the restroom space was smaller than the current room on the third floor, but that the supplies would fit snugly in the restroom area. McKnight said some of the space in the restroom might be unusable, however, because of where the fixtures have been.

Frankenfeld said he did not feel there was any rush on this, and there might be some other ideas for locating an administrator's office in the courthouse. He thought it would be better to see how the recruiting process goes before making any decisions.

The commissioners also delayed the appointment of a person to the hospital board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Randy Schoenthaler. Davis said he had been contacted by someone interested in the position, and wanted more time to consider the appointment.

Commissioners Rasure and Frankenfeld also said they had some names of people who were interested in the appointment. The commissioners said they would put the item on the agenda for the next meeting, which will be at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 31.

Voter registration books close Monday

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Advance voting will start today and voter registration books will close on Monday for a general election with only one county and one state race on the ballot in Sherman County, though two people are running write-in campaigns.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel, Sherman County election officer, said anyone who wants to register to vote or change party for the Tuesday, Nov. 7, election must do so by Monday. Anyone who wants to vote early can start today.

She said those who will be 18 by the election date and are residents of Sherman County can register at the courthouse, 8th and Broadway, or at the city offices at 11th and Center.

Incumbents came out on top in August's primary election, with all the county officials who faced opposition holding onto their seats. Sheriff Doug Whitson, a Republican, beat two opponents in the primary, but is still facing a Democrat challenger in the general election.

Kenny Davis, a Democrat commissioner in the 2nd District who did not have opposition in the primary, doesn't have an opponent on the ballot, but has a Democrat business owner campaigning as a write-in for his seat. Carol Armstrong, the Republican register of deeds who didn't have a primary oppo-

nent, is facing a write-in Republican candidate who works at the county jail.

At the state level, Sen. Stan Clark, an Oakley Republican who represents the 40th District, is being challenged by Billie Flora, a Democrat from Quinter, after winning a tough primary race against Steve Mangan of Tribune.

One national race is on the ballot, as U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, a Hays Republican who represents the 1st District has no Democrat opponent, but faces Jack Warner, a Libertarian from Dodge City.

With three weeks left, candidates are beginning to sprint, with many taking out advertisements and answering calls from the media. The presidential race is the big news, but voters in Sherman County have other important decisions to make.

Undersheriff Arthur "Dee" Albers is seeking the sheriff's job, saying he will improve the department's relationship with the community and schools and find ways to crack down on drug use.

Sheriff Whitson, who has been in office for four years, says if he's re-elected, his policies won't change, though he wants to get tougher on drug use and emphasize education to keep people away from drugs.

Commissioner Davis, who has been in office since 1996, says he wants to keep taxes low while providing as many county services as possible. He is facing write-in candidate Mitch Tiede, who says he can bring "common

sense and a knowledge of roads" to the office.

Lynn Swayne is campaigning as a write-in candidate for the register of deeds job, saying she has computer experience and is ready to take on a new challenge.

Armstrong, who has held the office since 1994, said she likes the research aspects of her job and working with others and wants to continue.

For information on registering to vote or advance voting, call the county clerk's office at (785) 899-4800.

Ten chosen for class that teaches leadership

They're already leaders in their community, but they're striving to be more.

The fourth Leadership Sherman County class met at the Wheat Ridge Acres retirement center on Tuesday night to kick off the 2001 session, which officially begins today.

The 10 participants, who were nominated by their friends and co-workers, will participate in seven day-long classes that will teach them about the major issues facing Sherman County. This year's topics include education, media, agriculture, economic development, law enforcement and city, county and state government.

Today, the group will meet at the

Sherman County 4-H building, where Rhonda Williams, the Goodland High School counselor, will lead class members through the "ropes course" designed to teach them about working together. They will end the day with a tour of the county.

Dana Belshe, county Extension Agent and a member of the leadership board, said the group sent out letters and class members were nominated by people in the community. He said an anonymous selection committee reviewed the nominations and chose the 10.

Belshe said the program targets

See LEADERSHIP, Page 7