

Insurance agents review county coverage

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News

Insurance agents Jack Eklund and Jeanette Ruddell met with the commissioners about the county's property and worker's compensation insurance, and proposed a safety school for county employees and an inspection of county buildings.

Ruddell said she had asked the company to get the annual quote earlier in the future, and said she would send a letter in August to get a head start on the process this year.

She said that a representative of the company, Jim Harms, was to contact the county about conducting a safety school and inspecting county buildings. County Clerk Janet Rumpel said she had not been contacted, and Ruddell said she would follow up.

The commissioners asked on what basis the county buildings were insured. Eklund said they are all on a re-

placement cost coverage, but he did not know if the stated values were up to date.

"They increase those each year by a percentage, but they may not reflect the actual cost of replacement," he said. "With an inspection, these could be adjusted either up or down."

Rumpel said she thought the replacement cost value on the courthouse was about \$2 million, and that she did not believe the building could be replaced for that amount of money.

The buildings have a deductible of \$1,000 per incident while the autos have \$500 deductible for collision and \$250 for comprehensive. The vehicles are each insured separately, Ruddell said.

She said auto safety would be a part of the safety program, along with ways to cut down on employee accidents related to workers compensation.

Eklund said the county has seen an

increase in the cost of the auto section because of recent accidents. He said the loss experience for the county had gone from a plus 30 down to a minus 40. He said the cost of covering the emergency medical vehicles was up some, but that the majority of the increase was for the sheriff's department.

On the workers compensation, Eklund said the county has had a low experience rate for years, with its risk rating staying below one (.79 this year). However, he said because of a recent large loss, that will certainly increase to over one next year.

He said the county now has a blanket coverage on computers and some contents, so it is easier to keep track of what equipment is being replaced.

Mike Niernberger of American Fidelity Assurance Co. met with the commissioners about short-term disability insurance coverage for the county employees.

He said the cost would be about \$200 a month less than what the county is now paying, and that it was the same rate as the City of Goodland.

He said the rate would probably not go up, as it has been the company's experience that there is a large enough pool to handle the usage. He said the experience rate is based on a three-year average so one bad year wouldn't make much difference.

He asked about the employee benefit cafeteria plan he had proposed.

Commission Chairman Chuck Frankenfeld said it had been tabled for more information. Commissioner Kevin Rasure said they felt the county employees should have a chance to be informed about the plan and look at it. Frankenfeld asked if Niernberger could provide information to the committee or possibly meet with them. He said he would work out the details with Rumpel.



This is one of three containers holding over \$426,000 that sheriff's deputies in Thomas County found in a rental car during a traffic stop on Wednesday.

Traffic stops on I-70 yield over \$800,000

By Patty Decker

The Colby Free Press
COLBY — A Thomas County Sheriff's deputy stopped a rental vehicle on a routine traffic violation Wednesday and found more than \$426,000 in cash inside.

In all, \$830,000 in cash was pulled off Interstate 70 this week in two incidents — one near Hays, one near Colby — and in both cases, the drivers said they had no knowledge of the money.

The driver stopped in Colby was a man in his late 30s, Sheriff Tom Jones said. In a search of the vehicle, the deputy found the money, all U.S. currency, in three cardboard boxes inside a black suitcase.

"He made no claim to the money," Jones said. "At this point, the money will be recounted and deposited in a drug forfeiture account pending forfeiture proceedings."

Once a firm amount has been established, paperwork will be forwarded to Thomas County Attorney Alan Taylor for the forfeiture proceedings, Jones said.

Should no claim be made for the

money, it could be awarded to Thomas County. In the case of the \$3.7 million that was seized by the City of Colby in January 2000, he added, the forfeiture procedures took nearly five months.

Jones said that since it's not illegal to have large amounts of money, the driver was released.

Monday afternoon, Kansas Highway Patrol troopers seized \$405,000 and a 1991 Ford two miles west of Hays. The car, containing two New York residents, was stopped for illegal registration.

The driver, Hector R. Gomez, 40, and passenger Mayra Pena, 25, denied knowledge or ownership of the money, according to Sgt. Rick Langdon of the Highway Patrol.

He said troopers became suspicious while talking with the couple. After being given consent to search, they found a concealed compartment in the cargo area. The money, Langdon explained, was in the compartment wrapped in bundles.

While the money and vehicle were seized by the highway patrol, Gomez and Pena were released.

Highway official will talk about road closing

ROADWORK, from Page 1

the road — including widening shoulders, cutting down hills, filling in low areas and eliminating the "pretzel" at the intersection of North Caldwell and K-27.

Crews will also reconstruct parts of adjacent streets, including Cattle Trail, and install a stop light at the intersection of K-27 and Business U.S. 24, where there is now a four-way stop. The official detour is 30 miles to the east through Colby and Atwood, though drivers can take gravel roads in Sherman County.

The state offered at one time to pave a detour on Sherman County roads, but commissioners turned the plan down. They said it would cost the county too much.

Binning said that she will hand out a construction schedule during the meeting. The \$11-million project will start a week from Monday, as the state signed a contract with Ritchie Paving of Wichita this week. Binning said Ritchie will also do repaving work on K-27 from Interstate 70 south to the Wallace County line this spring or summer.

That part of the highway will remain open, she said, noting Ritchie's paving crew will repave the south section of

K-27 while subcontractors do dirt work and structures on the north section.

City Manager Ron Pickman said he wants to keep access to Goodland as open as possible to tourists by coordinating projects. The city plans to start the Cherry Street project — where a new, straight road will be built connecting Cherry Street and Business U.S. 24 — this spring, and the county wants to repair a portion of Old U.S. 24 east of Goodland this summer.

Pickman said he'll be at the meeting to talk about coordinating projects and to ask questions about construction.

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NEW LISTING

5620 Hwy. 27-
Property is located 6.5 miles south of Goodland, Kan. on Hwy. 27. 160 acres more or less which consists of 80 acre farm, 75 acre grass, and 5 acre (approx.) homestead. 2 houses, barn, 2 car detached garage, 9 x18 shed, and 2 domestic wells. 5000 watt gen. 2nd house is 1264 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 1 bath, utility room in basement.

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