

weather
report

51°

at noon



Today

- Sunset, 6:06 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 5:36 a.m.
- Sunset, 6:07 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 35 degrees
- Humidity 50 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds southwest 14 mph
- Barometer 29.77 inches and steady
- Record High 89° (1963)
- Record Low 8° (1931)

Last 24 Hours*

High	37°
Low	29°
Precipitation	0.12 inch
Snow	trace

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly cloudy with 30 percent chance of scattered showers, low 30, northwest wind 5-15 mph. Tomorrow: Partly cloudy, 20 percent chance of showers, high 55, low 30-35, north wind 10-20 mph.

Extended Forecast

Friday: chance of thunderstorms, high 55-65. Saturday and Sunday: chance of rain or snow, high 45, low 25-30.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets



Noon

Wheat — \$2.74 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.62
Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
Corn — \$1.89 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.82
Loan deficiency payment — 17¢
Milo — \$3.03 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.87 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.85
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.05
Millet — \$6.00 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$6.60 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.14
Confection current — \$15/\$7 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$14 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, 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.

Israelis answer
suicide attack

JERUSALEM — Israeli forces shelled targets in Gaza City and the West Bank today in response to a series of bombings, including a suicide attack that killed two Israeli teen-agers and the bomber.

The Israeli military said it was hitting specific targets in the Palestinian territories, aimed at the “elements responsible for terror.” In Gaza, Israeli helicopter gunships hit Palestinian police positions in Gaza City and in Deir Al-Balah.

Before the nighttime shelling, Palestinian officials evacuated the main Palestinian Authority headquarters building in Ramallah, saying that the Israeli military warned them to leave, signaling an impending attack.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called his security Cabinet into special session minutes before the Israeli offensive began.



Center nearly ready for tech students

Larry Hodgen (above), a floor finisher with El Paso Floor Co. in Colorado Springs, painted the center circle Tuesday on the gymnasium floor of Northwest Kansas Technical College's new student fitness center. Hodgen has been working on the floor for two weeks and will try to finish it by Friday. The school name and center circle (right) are on the floor. Larry Keirns, director of the college, said the school hopes to have the center done by April 27 and plans an open house after that.

Photos by Janet Craft
The Goodland Daily News



Senate moves to double limit

By Jim Abrams

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Senate moved to at least double the amount an individual may contribute to a political candidate, providing a counterstroke to the drive to ban the largely uncontrolled “soft money” flowing to political parties.

The Senate voted 54-46 today to keep alive an amendment by Sen. Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., raising the limit on donations an individual can give a candidate during an election from \$1,000 to \$2,500. It would be the first such increase since 1974.

Hours later they also voted 54-46 to keep in play a different version by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., with generally lower increases that were acceptable to more Democrats. Feinstein would raise the individual limit to \$2,000.

That opened the way for negotiations on a compromise. Regardless of the outcome, it made certain that the final

campaign finance bill that could pass the Senate later this week will have a “hard money” increase.

Without the increase, said Thompson, “we will continue to have a system made up of nothing but multimillionaires and professional politicians who have Rolodexes big enough to barely fit in the trunk of an automobile.”

Opponents argued that the increase, if unavoidable, was too big. “It would be a great tragedy in our view to finally close the door on soft money and then open up the barn door on the other side to a flood of hard money,” said Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn.

Hard money is the term for limited contributions to candidates; soft money is the unregulated amounts given to political parties to promote issues rather than candidates.

On Tuesday, Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Russ Feingold, D-Wis., sponsors of the bill, scored a major victory when the Senate rejected, 60-40, an alternative measure by Sen. Chuck

Hagel, R-Neb.

It would have thwarted the main goal of McCain-Feingold by limiting not banning soft money contributions from corporations, unions and individuals to political parties.

In the 2000 election cycle the two parties took in nearly \$500 million in such soft money donations.

President Bush, who has opposed the soft money ban as drafted, signaled that he was prepared to sign the bill if it clears Congress, said Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., who spoke privately with the president Monday.

Today, Bush stubbornly refused to answer reporters’ questions on the issue. “I’m talking about the budget today. There will be ample time to talk about bills in progress,” Bush said.

With the soft money issue largely settled, the Senate’s focus turned to hard money, with even the strongest advocates of reducing political spending acknowledging that some increase was inevitable.

California farmers eye power bills

FRESNO, Calif. (AP)—California farmers are reconsidering the way they use and purchase power after facing months of low crop prices and soaring energy costs.

In an attempt to stave off some of the worst economic pain, some growers are organizing themselves into power buying groups or investigating alternative sources of energy.

Farmers in San Diego County are forming a power buying cooperative with the help of the local farm bureau, several rural food processors are building their own power plants and some Central Valley dairymen are trying to mine manure lagoons for meth-

ane gas to generate electricity.

“We got started with this co-op last year about July or August, when electric rates went crazy in San Diego County,” said Eric Larson, executive director of the San Diego Farm Bureau.

“We will bring all buyers into one pool and then go out and negotiate for all growers at one time, Farmers have lots of experience with co-ops, the difference is we’re going to be buying power as opposed to selling agricultural products,” Larson said.

Farmers in San Diego County are eager for any salve for their power woes because a wrinkle in the state’s

deregulation scheme allowed that county’s large-consumer power bills to soar while they remained capped in the rest of the state.

The co-op, expected to be up and running within weeks, will use the combined purchasing power of hundreds of farmers to buy gas and electricity at discounted rates, but won’t invest in power plants, pipelines or transmission lines.

The billing details have yet to be worked out, and Larson and his staff are preparing for power contract negotiations by trying to find out just how much energy the county’s farmers use every month.

Area figures
holding steady

2000 census numbers show
smaller drop than expected

By Rachel Miscal

The Goodland Daily News

Goodland’s and Sherman County’s population has dropped a little over the past 10 years, but the picture isn’t nearly as gloomy as some predicted. The actual figures came across as good news to economic development leaders here.

State estimates predicted the city’s population had fallen by 60 people in nine years — while Sherman County’s supposedly fell 403 — but official census figures show a decline since 1990 of only 35 in the city and 166 in the county.

The city’s population was 4,948 in 2000, down just .7 of 1 percent from 1990. The county’s was 6,760, down 2.4 percent, focusing the decline on the farm population. In the same time, the Hispanic population grew to 8.4 percent of the county’s total.

Goodland’s city manager and the Chamber of Commerce director say they never bought the estimates, as their records have never shown a big fluctuation in population.

They said civic leaders have tried to keep the population stable by bringing in new businesses, replacing those that have left, and making Goodland a place where people young and old want to live.

“Preliminary information showed a drop of 300 or so,” City Manager Ron Pickman said, “but we weren’t buying those numbers. When we look back over our utility customers, we haven’t seen any major changes.”

The population here hasn’t dropped much, but census figures show the mix has changed.

The county’s population of Hispanics, now the nation’s largest minority group, has increased by nearly 100 since 1990, rising from 474 to 571, from 6.8 percent of the total to 8.4 percent.

Pickman and Ron Harding, Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce director, say an increase in Hispanics hasn’t affected the city’s or the county’s economy — though school officials say

it has caused communication problems in classrooms.

“There could be language-based issues that arise,” Pickman said, “but we haven’t seen that yet.”

The city’s economy has continued to grow along with the rest of the country, he said, noting that sales tax revenues have jumped each year.

County Treasurer Shelby Miller said the 1.5 percent county sales tax brought in \$20,000 more last year than it did in 1998.

“It has gone up every year,” Miller said.

Census numbers show the Hispanic population increased across the state, and many cities and counties — especially those in northwest Kansas — declined in population. While Sherman County followed the trend, the loss here was light compared to others.

The state estimates had 4,923 people living in Goodland in 1999 — nearly 100 less than in 1995 — but 2000 federal census numbers show the city’s population was 4,948, a difference of 25. That means Goodland’s population has dropped just .7 of 1 percent since 1990, when the census counted 4,983 people here.

While estimates showed Sherman County’s population had fallen 403 people between 1990 and 1999, census numbers say the drop was much softer, with a 2.4 percent decline from 6,926 in 1990 to 6,760 in 2000. Census workers counted 248 people in Kanorado, a drop of 28 (or 10 percent) from the 276 counted in 1990.

“We didn’t drop as low as the projections said,” Harding said. “Hopefully, we’re starting to see a stabilization.”

The figures were grimmer for officials in other counties and cities, who discovered populations had dropped by up to 16 percent in 10 years.

Wallace County’s population fell by 4 percent, while Sheridan County’s population took a 7 percent dive and the number of people in Decatur County

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Census shows
boom and bust

Sherman County second largest

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

County figures from the 2000 Census show the slow, steady decline in population continued for northwest Kansas, with a loss of 5 percent in nine counties over the past 10 years.

City figures indicate slower declines and even some gains, but these figures just confirm the continued movement from the countryside into the towns.

The U.S. Census Bureau has historic figures for counties going back to the first census here in 1860, but figures from 1900 to 2000 have been examined for nine counties in northwest Kansas: Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Greeley, Logan, Rawlins, Sherman, Thomas and Wallace.

Total population for the nine was 30,642 in 1900, and in 100 years has grown by 10 percent to 33,940 in the 2000 census. That sounds like progress, but the 1930 census showed a high-water mark of 52,292 people in the nine, which steadily declined over the next 70 years for a total drop of 35 percent.

Sherman County

Sherman County hit the turn of the century with a modest population of 3,341, and representing about 11 percent of the area’s total residents. The county grew pretty rapidly over the next 30 years, more than doubling to 7,400 in 1930. At this time the county now had 14 percent of the area’s inhab-

itants and seemed destined to continue the climb.

However, Mother Nature had different ideas and as the winds of the 30s began to blow, the population slipped to 6,421 in 1940. It did a bit of a see-saw over the next three decades, rising to 7,373 in 1950; falling to 6,682 in 1960; and rising to its highest level of 7,792 in 1970.

Since that point, Sherman County has seen a slow decline down to 6,760 in the most recent figures. However, the county has been the second largest by population in the area since the 50s, and today has 20 percent of the total residents.

In 70 years, Sherman County grew by 57 percent. In the last 30, the drop in population has been 13 percent total, but the most recent drop was 2.4 percent. Sherman County remains 100 percent ahead of where it started the 20th century.

One of the stabilizing forces has been I-70, and in recent years development of the area as a large player in sunflower production for both the oil and confectionery.

Another has been the continued expansion and development of the Northwest Kansas Vocational and Technical School, which began more than 35 years ago and this month, with help from the Kansas Legislature, became

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