

weather
report

44°

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 93 percent
- Sky cloudy
- Winds north 14 mph
- Barometer 29.67 inches and falling
- Record High 87° (1977)
- Record Low 4° (1989)

Last 24 Hours*

High	66°
Low	42°
Precipitation	none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Cloudy, 80 percent chance of rain possibly mixed with snow, low 35, north wind 15-25 mph. Tomorrow: Cloudy, 50 percent chance of rain, high 45-50, low 30, north wind 20-30 mph.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: dry, high 55-65. Friday: dry, high 60s, low 25-35. Saturday: dry, high 65-75, low 30s. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.66 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.59
Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
Corn — \$1.93 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.84
Loan deficiency payment — 15¢
Milo — \$3.09 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.77 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.75
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.15
Millet — \$6.00 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$6.60 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.00
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.

Plane crash
kills Kansans

DEER, Ark. — Armed with the right coordinates, search crews went directly to the wreckage of a small plane that crashed in the Ozark Mountains during the weekend, killing two Kansans, the pilot and a passenger.

Byron McLaird of the Civil Air Patrol said the four-seat, single-engine Cessna 190 crashed Saturday near the Hurricane Creek Wilderness Area in southeastern Newton County. Pilot Mike Huckins and Virginia Wilson, both of Derby, Kan., south of Wichita, died in the crash.

Authorities shifted their search for the missing plane late Monday after learning they had inaccurate information from the Federal Aviation Administration, McLaird said. The initial search began at sunrise Sunday with five aircraft from the Arkansas wing of the Civil Air Patrol searching.

Goodland bank buys branch offices

The First National Bank of Goodland announced Monday that it had bought the Oberlin and Colby offices of Commercial Federal Bank, with the ownership changing the latter part of June.

“We’ve been expanding for the last 15 years,” said Larry McCants, president of the Goodland-based bank, “and we saw this as a good opportunity to expand into Oberlin and take a bigger slice of the Colby market.”

He said First National, an employee-owned bank with the majority of stock held by its officers and staff, had been eyeing the branches for



Larry McCants

aggressive search for farm loans. He said the change will mean more services and larger loans.

“There are \$3 million in deposits involved in

those branches,” McCants said. “That will help present funding of existing loan customers.”

In October, Commercial Federal officials in Omaha announced they were looking for buyers for several branches, including those in Oberlin and Colby. The units didn’t have a competitive market share and weren’t growing at the pace they wanted. Officials said the demographics, or population mix, weren’t good enough to keep the banks running.

With 105 years of banking experience in Goodland, First National has expanded in the last 15 years to St. Francis, Sharon Springs, Quinter, Colby and Kirk, Colo. Customers shouldn’t be disrupted during the

changeover, McCants said, adding that the company will try to keep the same staff, especially in Oberlin. He said the bank will try to maintain ties to the community and will aggressively sponsor youth and school activities.

With Oberlin’s bank changing hands several times, McCants said, he was surprised at the stability its deposits have shown. He attributed that to good management and staff.

“One thing that has maybe not been there in the past is stability with ownership, and one of the things you will find with us is stability,” said McCants. “We have been under the same management for the last 18 years and have a low staff turnover.”

Temperature’s rising



Jim Wedermyer, a Goodland Kiwanis member, was one of several community leaders to paint the Pioneer Park fund-raising thermometer during a noon dedication ceremony Monday in front of the city building. The Rev. Gene Tromble, project co-chair, and City Manager Ron Pickman summarized the project. Donors so far have raised \$380,000 of the \$601,377 the city needs to completely fund the project.

Photo by Eric Yonkey/The Goodland Daily News

School enrollment takes another dive

District may get less money next year, but mistake may bring more this year

By Rachel Miscal

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland School District’s enrollment dropped 13 students last month for a total of 54 this school year, and if the trend continues, it could put a big dent in the amount of state money the district receives next year.

“That’s really bad news,” said Superintendent Marvin Selby after the Goodland School Board’s meeting Monday. The superintendent gives board members monthly enrollment updates. There has been a significant drop each month, with 18 students leaving in January.

The amount of state money Kansas districts receive each year depends on enrollment, and a significant drop here could mean hundreds of thousands less for the district.

Selby did have some good news for the board. He said the district stands to receive \$32,000 more from the state this year because of an enrollment count mistake on vocational students at the high school.

The enrollment report the superintendent passed out at the regular meeting showed the district had 1,168 students on Sept. 20, when the state takes its annual school count, and 1,114 students on March 24.

The state uses the Sept. 20 count to calculate how much money each district receives, giving a certain amount per student. Districts can get more money for students with special needs or those who fit in a certain category.

Selby said the district receives more money for students in the high school’s vocational education program, but the amount depends on how much time each one spends in those classes.

On count day, the superintendent said, the district thought its vocational education students spent an average of 42 minutes per day in the program, but realized later that it was more like 43 1/2 minutes. Selby said a state auditor, who reviews districts’ enrollment numbers each year, caught the mistake and said the district is entitled to \$32,000.

That means, he said, that the board will have to republish its budget and hold a public hearing. The board agreed to hold the hearing at the next regular meeting on Monday, April 23.

District residents are allowed to protest, but Selby said he doesn’t expect it because the money is coming from the state and not directly out of local pockets. He said he plans to give \$8,000 to the vocational program, and put the remaining \$24,000 in the district’s utilities account, which is running low because of unusually high heating bills this winter.

Board President Dick Short asked if the superintendent has heard from Chamber of Commerce representatives, other city leaders or parents about the declining enrollment.

“No one questions it very closely,” Selby said. “People say they’re sad to see the students go, but not much more than that.”

Recent census figures show Goodland’s population has remained steady, but Selby said that’s because the older population has grown, while the younger population has shrunk.

“Those people who are young are always looking for a better paying job,” he said, noting that some parents who attend college in Goodland and have children in school move away after they graduate.

Bad budget news good for slot machine bill

TOPEKA (AP) — The state’s bad budget news is good news for supporters of a proposal to legalize slot machines.

Forecasters have slashed their estimates for state revenue collections over the next 15 months, leaving a gap of more than \$185 million between spending approved by legislators and the amount of money the state expects to take in.

The new revenue estimates have revived the hopes of legislators who want to permit slot machines at dog and horse racing tracks. They’ve tried to sell their plan as a way to raise money for state government.

While many opponents insist that tough financial times won’t cause enough lawmakers to change their positions on slot machines, not all of them are sure.

“With our crunch and our financial situation, this may be the year it gets passed,” said Senate Ways and Means Chairman Steve Morris, R-Hugoton.

Less than three weeks ago, the Senate voted 23-17 to kill a slot machines bill, in what some opponents of the legislation hoped would be the final word on the issue.

House leaders have consistently deferred to the Senate on slot machines, because proposals have failed there

repeatedly in the past. A new proposal probably would be debated by senators first.

Before senators debated their bill earlier this year, supporters tried unsuccessfully to postpone the debate until last Friday. They wanted to wait until after the new revenue estimates were announced.

Supporters suspected the news would be bad. But they and legislative leaders — whose scenarios anticipated at worst a \$100 million shortfall — were surprised at how bad the new numbers were.

“I think we’d be fools not to seriously consider slots,” said Sen. Mark Gilstrap, D-Kansas City, a supporter. The bill the Senate rejected would have permitted slot machines only at Wichita Greyhound Park; Camptown Greyhound Park, north of Pittsburg; and The Woodlands in Kansas City, which has separate dog and horse racing tracks.

The machines would have been overseen by the Kansas Lottery and would be required to return at least 87 percent of players’ money in prizes. The state would get 30 percent of the remaining revenue.

Supporters estimated the bill would have raised \$75 million a year for the state.

Detained crew gets freedoms

U.S. still refusing apology to China

By Christopher Bodeen

Associated Press Writer

HAIKOU, China — The U.S. air crew detained on this Chinese island has been granted extra privileges, including freedom to exercise in the building where they are being held by Chinese authorities, an American official said today.

As the standoff dragged into its 10th day, China welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell’s weekend statement that Washington was “sorry” for the fate of a Chinese fighter pilot missing since a collision with the spy plane. But it repeated its insistence on a formal apology for the incident.

U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Neal Sealock, the U.S. embassy representative who met the crew for a fifth time today, said the 21 men and three women were aware of the political deadlock and the intense feelings that blocked their freedom.

In Washington, President Bush urged patience, saying “diplomacy sometimes takes a little longer than people would like.” He renewed the U.S. demand for the release of the crew.



Standoff U.S.-China
Navy pilot Jeff Vignery
and 23 crew detained

10 days



“The longer this goes, the more likely it is that it could — could — jeopardize relations,” Bush said. “And we certainly don’t want that to happen.”

Meanwhile, the Rev. Jesse Jackson offered to lead an ecumenical delegation to China to work for the release of the crew. But the State Department turned down the offer. Spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington would work through “diplomatic” means.

The crew members of the U.S. Navy EP-3E reconnaissance plane have been held on Hainan island since making an emergency landing there following the April 1 collision above the South China Sea.

“They have great faith in what’s taking place,” said Sealock, the military attache at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. “They fully understand the circumstances that they are under.”

He said the crew members now

have more freedom to move around the Chinese navy’s Nanhang No. 1 Guest House where they are being held. Chinese authorities have given them copies of the China Daily, a state-owned newspaper, as well as cigarettes, he said.

To help the crew fight boredom, U.S. diplomats have supplied snacks, toiletries, novels, crossword puzzles and copies of news reports about their families. The crew members also have received printed copies of e-mails from their families but are not allowed to reply.

Despite the improvement in living conditions, there was no change in China’s position that the United States owed an apology.

“The U.S. side should apologize,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said. “We hope the U.S. side will adopt a pragmatic and cooperative manner and treat seriously the demands of the Chinese people.”