


weather report

38°
at noon



Today
• Sunset, 7:19 p.m.
Tomorrow
• Sunrise, 6:15 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:20 p.m.


Midday Conditions
• Soil Temperature 49 degrees
• Humidity 96 percent
• Sky overcast
• Winds north 41-53 mph
• Barometer 29.21 inches and rising
• Record High 83° (1968)
• Record Low 14° (1940)

Last 24 Hours*
High 51°
Low 42°
Precipitation trace

Northwest Kansas Forecast
Tonight: Partly cloudy, 20 percent chance of snow, low 30-35, northwest wind 15-25 mph. Tomorrow: Partly cloudy, 20 percent chance of rain, high 55, low 35, southeast wind 5-15 mph.


Extended Forecast
Friday: chance of thunderstorms, high 60s. Saturday: dry, high 65-75, low 30s. Sunday: dry, high mid 60s-70, low 35-45.
(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets



Noon
Wheat — \$2.70 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.57
Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
Corn — \$1.94 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.81
Loan deficiency payment — 18¢
Milo — \$3.11 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.82 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.71
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.19
Millet — \$6.00 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$6.70 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$3.00
Confection current — \$15/\$7 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$14 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigoo 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.
Wind and hail strike Kansas
TOPEKA — Tornadoes, hail and high winds lashed parts of northcentral Kansas late Tuesday and early today, damaging homes and knocking over a cable television tower.
There were no reports of injuries.
One tornado hit Plainville just after midnight, causing major damage to 25 homes and minor damage to 54 others, said Joy Moser with the Kansas adjutant general's office. The twister also damaged 14 businesses and one mobile home outside Plainville, a town of about 2,000 about 25 miles north of Hays. Twenty-one new mobile homes were damaged at the Shult Mobile Home Factory.
Washington County, along the Nebraska border, was hard hit, with high winds damaging a shed and roof and knocking over telephone poles and a cable tower.

China to let crew go

Navy pilot's parents get good news

By Rachel Miscall
The Goodland Daily News
A Naval officer called Ron and Judi Vignery at 5:15 a.m. this morning with the best news the Goodland couple has heard in 11 days.
China had agreed to release their son Jeff and the 23 other members of the U.S. spy plane crew held on Hainan Island since April 1, when a midair collision with a Chinese fighter jet forced an emergency landing.


The decision came after President Bush sent Chinese officials a letter Wednesday apologizing for the unauthorized landing and the Chinese pilot's death, though it has not been confirmed.
The accident had escalated into a dramatic standoff between the two superpowers — with China demanding an apology and the U.S. refusing to admit fault — and had turned the Vignery's life upside down. The couple's home phone is off the hook most of the time, as they have been bombarded with calls from reporters, and news anchors armed with a camera come knocking at their door early in the morning.

Ron Vignery, a partner in Vignery and Mason law firm and a former Navy lawyer, said this morning that the past two weeks have been hard, but now that an end is in sight, things are looking up.
"Well," he said, "we're doing a heck of a lot better."
After hearing last weekend that Jeff, 27, a lieutenant (junior grade), was one of three pilots on the plane, the Vignerys waited a couple of days before talking to reporters because they didn't want to jeopardize their son's safety.
Now that their son, a 1992 graduate of Goodland High School, should soon be on his way home, Vignery said he and his wife Judi plan to lay low until they know his feet are on U.S. soil.
"I don't want to say anything," he




Larry Blunt, a reporter with KCNC Channel 4 News in Denver, interviewed Ron and Judi Vignery last Tuesday, two days after the Goodland couple heard their son Jeff, a Navy pilot, was being held in China after a military

plane accident. China agreed to release the crew Wednesday, but the Vignerys said they won't talk to reporters again until they know their son is coming home.
Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News



Standoff U.S. China
Navy pilot Jeff Vignery and 23 crew detained 11 days



said, "that will stop the Chinese from releasing the crew. I don't want to get everything fired up."
Ron Vignery said the Naval officer, who is assigned to the Vignerys and calls with reports two or three times daily, told him a Continental Airline jet is supposed to fly from Guam to Hainan today to pickup the crew. Vignery said he was told it would be a five-hour flight and the crew members would be taken first to Hawaii.
U.S. officials have several plans for repatriation — returning of a person to their country — Vignery said, but the officer didn't tell him which one would be used.
Once Jeff, a University of Kansas graduate who was commissioned as a Navy officer in 1997, is back at the Naval Air Station in Whidbey Island, Wash., his dad said, the family plans to fly out to see him.
"I'm sure the Navy will give the crew some time off," Vignery said, adding that Jeff, who lives with his wife Julie on Whidbey Island, will probably want to visit his hometown. Goodland will surely want to see him.
Residents have tied or pinned hundreds of yellow ribbons to trees, fences, mail boxes, bushes, cars and clothes to signal their support for Jeff and the Vignery family.
"It's had a tremendous affect on us," Vignery said, "the visible support driving to and from work."
Community leaders have talked about organizing a homecoming for the Navy pilot, but Vignery said nothing is set. Jeff has to get out of China first.
News reports said the 24 crew mem-



A West Elementary first grader tied a yellow ribbon to the school fence last Tuesday to show support for Jeff Vignery.
Photo by Janet Craft
The Goodland Daily News

bers would be allowed to contact family members by e-mail, but Vignery said he hasn't heard from his son because he wasn't given an e-mail address. He said married crew members were only allowed contact with their spouses.
"His wife got one message from him yesterday," Vignery said. "It's a cute message to his wife."
He said he would wait to release the content until his son is home, but said he thought it showed that Jeff is mentally and emotionally stable.
"I don't think he's been mistreated," he said, noting that he feels U.S. officials have worked hard to bring the crew home as soon as possible.
Vignery said he's anxious to see his son again, and he's anxious to have his life return to normal. Until then, though, the Vignerys will remain in the spotlight.
"I appreciate why celebrities get upset," he said. "It's an invasion of your privacy. That's not the way I want to live — in a fish bowl like that. Can you imagine what Tom Cruise and Julia Roberts go through?"
Besides, Vignery said, the one who deserves attention when he gets home is Jeff.
"I don't know if he's the town's hero," he said, "but he's our family's hero."

China ends stalemate after Bush sends letter

BEIJING (AP) — China agreed today to release 24 crew members of a U.S. spy plane, ending a dramatic, 11-day stalemate that threatened U.S.-China relations.
The agreement came after the United States sent a letter saying it is "very sorry" for the plane's unauthorized landing and the assumed death of a Chinese pilot.
China said it would hold the sophisticated reconnaissance plane pending talks expected to begin April 18.

Hours after the agreement, a chartered Continental airlines Boeing 737 took off from the Pacific island of Guam for China's Hainan island, an official at the Guam International Airport Authority said. At the Pentagon, officials said the plane would pick up the crew members on Hainan and take them to Hawaii after a brief return stop-over at Guam.
Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said the crew would be released "on humanitarian grounds" as soon as

an in-flight collision with a Chinese fighter jet. The Chinese pilot is missing and presumed dead. China had demanded an apology. The letter U.S. Ambassador Joseph Prueher delivered Wednesday afternoon to the Chinese Foreign Ministry twice used the words "very sorry." The letter appeared to be a complex linguistic compromise worked out during days of arduous negotiations to satisfy China while also accommodating President Bush's refusal to offer an apology for what his

government believed to be an accident. Immediately after the letter's release, though, Chinese translations of its wording differed.
Sun, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said the letter expressed "shenbiao qianyi" — translated as deep apology or regret — but he was not reading directly from the text as he spoke. A copy of the Chinese-language letter released by the U.S. Embassy

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Ten get degrees in leadership

By Janet Craft
The Goodland Daily News
Ten students who spent the last six months learning about Sherman County and the issues it faces graduated from the county's leadership program this week.
Leadership Sherman County members who received their diplomas during a ceremony Monday at the Goodland Elks Lodge were Rich Hoffman, Dan Hayden, Lori Leonard, Brad Schick, Deedi Hoss, Rebecca Downs, Susan Bellamy, Jim Neal, Cesar Miller and Nathan Rather.
Librarian Janet Warren, president of the

program's board, said it exposes the class members to city and county and teaches them about what goes on, so they can serve the community. Classes began in October and will end with a class project.
Students Schick and Leonard spoke about what activities the group had done and what they learned. They said they had visited businesses in Goodland including the hospital, banks, a grain elevator, a feedlot, a sunflower plant, farm implement dealership, the radio station and newspaper office, and government boards and commissions,
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County may start recycling

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News
Members of the Sherman County Solid Waste/Recycling Committee were given several tasks to investigate during a joint County/City Commission meeting Monday, including a possible recycling program for the whole county.
Nine of the 10 committee members attended the meeting, along with city and county commissioners, to talk about what the group should focus on.
The committee tentatively set its next meeting for 5 p.m. next Tuesday.
City Commissioner Curtis Hurd said the city

would be looking at the cost and feasibility of changing the current collection system during the upcoming budget process.
"We wanted to wait until after the election so we could see who we would be working with," Hurd said. "We will look at this during our budget. I realize there is no perfect solution, but I believe the individual containers (for recyclable materials such as paper) would be a step in the right direction."
County Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld and Mayor Chuck Lutters agreed one step that needs
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Spring blizzard closes highway, sweeps plains

A spring blizzard in Colorado closed I-70 from the state line to Denver early this morning, but by the time the storm moved into Goodland at midday, the north wind was driving mostly rain.
At mid-morning, the Kansas Highway Patrol closed the highway to westbound traffic from Goodland to the Colorado line as a very intense low-pressure system moved into Sherman County.
Joni Wilson, manager at New Trail Travel Center in Goodland, said there were about four times as many semi-trailer rigs at the truck stop as usual because of the road closing. She said the trucks began coming in between 10 and 10:30 a.m. this morning.
Aaron Dorn, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Goodland, said a blizzard warning was issued for Yuma, Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties in eastern Colorado. Winds there were blowing at a constant speed of 45 miles an hour, he said, and spotters reported gusts of over 70.
He said the storm was being caused by an intense low pressure system across northwest Kansas.

Dorn said the slow-moving system crawled out of southeastern Colorado during the night and was moving to the northeast.
A high wind warning was issued for Sherman, Cheyenne, Wallace and Greeley counties in Kansas and Dundy County in Nebraska until late afternoon. A wind advisory was in effect for the remaining counties of northwest Kansas, which include Rawlins, Decatur, Norton, Thomas, Sheridan, Graham, Logan, Gove and Wichita.
Pea sized hail, rain and high winds hit Goodland at late morning. The forecast for the rest of the day is cloudy with strong winds and rain, possibly mixed with snow at times. Winds will be out of the north at 35 to 45 with gusts near 60 possible. Highs will be from 40 to 45 and the chance of precipitation is pegged at 90 percent.
For tonight, skies should be partly cloudy and with a low from 30 to 35. The chance of snow is 20 percent and the wind will be out of the northwest at 15 to 25 mph.
For Thursday, there is a 20 percent chance for rain. The high is expected to be around 55 and low around 35.