

weather report

48°
at noon

Today

• Sunset, 7:20 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:13 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:21 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 43 degrees

• Humidity 49 percent

• Sky Partly sunny

• Winds calm

• Barometer 30.01 inches and steady

• Record High 80° (1936)

• Record Low 9° (1953)

Last 24 Hours*

High 47°

Low 34°

Precipitation 0.18 inch

Snow trace

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, low 30-35, south 5-15 mph. Tomorrow: Mostly cloudy, high 60-65, low 30s, north-west wind 10-20 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday and Sunday: dry, high 65-70, low 35-40. Monday: chance of thunderstorms, high 60s, low 30s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.79 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.62

Loan deficiency payment — 0¢

Corn — \$1.96 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.83

Loan deficiency payment — 16¢

Milo — \$3.14 hundredweight

Soybeans — \$3.80 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.

Ashcroft to let families watch

WASHINGTON — Attorney General John Ashcroft has decided to allow a closed-circuit telecast of Timothy McVeigh's execution to be broadcast to Oklahoma City bombing survivors and victims' families, a government official says.

Survivors and families will be able to watch the telecast in Oklahoma City, said the official said Wednesday.

The decision fulfills the wishes of some 250 victims and family members who want to see McVeigh die. There are only eight spots available for victims' witnesses at the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, Ind., where McVeigh, 32, is scheduled to receive a lethal injection on May 16.

Ashcroft was expected to announce his decision at a news conference today, after meeting Tuesday with families in Oklahoma.

Crew back in U.S.

Pilot's parents watch son walk off plane

By Rachel Miscal
The Goodland Daily News

Goodland's Jeff Vignery was the sixth Naval officer to step off the plane Wednesday night and walk across the tarmac at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam.

Military families and officers cheered as Vignery and the 23 other freed crew members walked by.

Along with millions of other CNN viewers, Jeff's parents, Ron and Judi Vignery, watched from their living room in Goodland — cheering at their son's arrival and that 11 worrisome days were over.

It was an emotional moment for Ron, a former Navy lawyer, and Judi, who were prepared to wait months for Chinese officials to release a Navy spy plane's 24 crew members. They were held on Hainan Island for 11 days after a mid-air collision with a Chinese fighter jet forced an emergency landing.

"I can't describe it," Judi Vignery said, her voice breaking with emotion. "Ron and I didn't hope for certain dates because then we'd be disappointed when our son didn't come home. I was prepared to wait a lot longer."

It was an emotional moment for Jeff, too.

Ron Vignery, a partner in Vignery and Mason law firm, said his son called his wife Julie at the Naval Air Station in Whidbey Island, Wash., then phoned his parents, talking with them for half an hour.

Jeff sounded quiet and reserved, Ron Vignery said, because he was tired. He said his son, a Navy pilot, told him he'd been awake for over 24 hours, but was too wound up to get any

rest.

Vignery said Jeff told him, "I'm just so wired, Dad."

Ron and Judi said they did most of the talking, telling their son, a 1992 Goodland High School graduate, about the yellow ribbons people have hung around town to show support and the overwhelming number of phone calls from reporters across the country and world.

"He says, 'I'm no hero,'" Judi Vignery said about the conversation with her son. "I said, 'You better just go ahead and get used to it. You and the other crew members have united the country.'"

The hundreds of calls from news reporters have upset Ron and Judi — who don't want to put themselves or their son in the spotlight — but they have appreciated the letters and calls of support from people around the country. Judi Vignery said the family has received letters from other parents whose son or daughter had been held captive.

"The cards thanked our son for doing his duty," she said. "It has just been enlightening."

Of course, she added, it's not an experience she'd like to relive.

"I'm hoping we don't have to go through this again," she said.

Though his son didn't say much, Ron Vignery said, it was apparent that he was happy and relieved to be back on American soil.

Jeff told him he couldn't put into words what it felt like to walk up the stairs, off Chinese territory and onto a U.S. plane, or what it felt like to walk off the plane, greeted by clapping and cheering.

"Those two experiences really meant a lot to him," Vignery said.



Navy Lt. j.g. Jeff Vignery looked for a seat as he waited to see that the rest of his crew made it aboard the Continental Airlines flight that brought them back to U.S. soil today.

Photo by Staff Sgt. John A Giles/3rd Marine Division Combat Camera

Standoff U.S.-China

Navy pilot Jeff Vignery and 23 crew detained

12 days

Family: on the way to Washington. See Pg. 3

Storm strands motorists

By Janet Craft
The Goodland Daily News

Trucks packed the lot at the New Trail Travel Center Wednesday after I-70 was closed at Goodland due to a blizzard in Colorado. Drivers from all over the country were waiting around for the road to open again.

The freeway was closed in Burlington shortly before 6 a.m. as drifts piled up east of Denver and Limon, Colo. Then around 10 a.m., the Kansas Department of Transportation was asked to close the road at Goodland. As motels and lots filled up here, the gates were closed east to Colby about 3 p.m.

The usually busy freeway was eerily quiet last night, with almost no west-bound traffic and little moving east-bound, until the gates were opened about 9 p.m. A steady stream of cars and trucks began pouring onto the highway.

Three truckers at the Goodland station said they had never had this happen to them before.

Calvin Dalton, 49, Stoneville, N.C., said he had picked up his load at Reno, Texas, and was heading for Ogden, Utah, but encountered problems along the way. He had to pull off the road Tuesday night at Bunker Hill in to a hailstorm. After he started up again about 9 a.m. Wednesday, he got as far as Goodland only to find out that the highway was closed. He said he was hoping to be home for Easter, but didn't know if he would make it.

"If everything goes OK," he said, "I'm looking at getting to North Carolina Saturday or Sunday morning."

The trip from Utah to North Carolina will take about 22 hours, he added.

Ray Grubba, 32, Lakeland, Fla., said he was already running behind in delivering his load to Henderson, Colo., as he had been delayed by two accidents in Virginia which held up traffic. He was supposed to deliver at 7 a.m. Wednesday.

Grubba, who drives for Dick Simon, said he had picked up his "hot" load from Martinville, Va., early Tuesday morning and got as far as Goodland by mid-afternoon Wednesday.

"This is my first time being in this situation," he said.

But Grubba said he wouldn't leave until Thursday morning.

"I'm not leaving with this madhouse," he said.

Tim Reasons, 23, Visalia, Calif., who also drives for Simon, has been out on the road for nearly six weeks.

He said he picked up his load of M&Ms in Waco, Texas, on Monday and was to deliver them to Longmont, Colo., on Wednesday.

"I've been on Interstate 70 quite a bit," he said, "but this is the first time I've been shut down like this."

Reasons said he planned to take a shower, eat supper and get a good

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A sheriff's deputy pulled a fallen road sign off Business U.S. 24 Wednesday afternoon. Winds gusting up to 67 mph knocked over signs, shook trees and picked up dust.

Photo by Rachel Miscal/The Goodland Daily News

Board to fill administrator position open for five months

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News

Employees at Goodland Regional Medical Center were told Wednesday morning that a oral agreement had been reached with a new administrator and that he is expected to be on the job by May 1.

The announcement was made to the staff by Andy Laue, head of the hospital's interim management team.

Hospital Board Chairman Doug Irvin said Jay Jolly of Brazil, Ind., had agreed to take the

administrator's job during a phone conversation Tuesday evening.

"We hope to have a formal contract completed by next week," Irvin said. "It is our hope that Jolly can be here by May 1."

"We are very pleased that he has accepted the position, and believe we have found a very good person to help direct our hospital."

Jolly has been interviewed by the board twice, and was the leading candidate after the final interview.

Irvin said they were a bit nervous about his ac-

cepting the position because he had several other offers.

"I was feeling more positive as I talked to him several times before he accepted the job," Irvin said. "I don't think there will be much to getting the formal contract, as we have already worked out most of the details."

Jolly has been a hospital administrator in Brazil, Irvin said, adding that details will be available after the contract has been signed.

The board has been looking for a new administrator since they terminated Jim Chaddic in No-

vember. At the time, the hospital had accumulated a \$500,000 loss for the year, despite board demands to trim spending.

Since then, the hospital has been run by a team including senior managers Andy Laue, Dale Schields and Mary Ann Elliott, who have been working to get the hospital back in the black and help the board get on the right track.

With the help of the team and an increase in patients, the hospital has edged into the black the last couple of months, and expects to balance the budget by the end of the year.

Spring blizzard paralyzes Plains states

DENVER (AP) — A powerful storm battered the Plains with snow and tornadoes Wednesday, killing at least two people. Parts of Colorado and Wyoming were paralyzed by a blizzard that closed hundreds of miles of highways and the region's biggest airport.

A tornado tore through a community food pantry in Iowa, killing one and burying the body in rubble.

A tornado also killed a man in Oklahoma.

Up to 18 inches of snow fell along the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains and winds gusted to 70 mph, heaping the snow into deep drifts. Parts of Wyoming got up to a foot.

"I don't think we've had this much snow forever. This is ridiculous," Sarah Mischke said after walking to work in Cheyenne, Wyo., where schools and govern-

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See PLANE, Page 3