

Sunflower dedication put on hold

PAINTING, from Page 1

working on the painting, plans to come to Goodland for the dedication. He is now working on putting other Van Gogh replicas in Amsterdam, South Africa, Argentina and Japan.

People have been writing intemperate letters complaining about the "stupid, ugly" sunflower painting recently, and now there is talk of people shooting bullets at it as well.

Law officers and city officials all say they either haven't heard the rumors or don't think they are true. A close examination of the huge paint-

ing shows no apparent damage. "I've heard the same thing," said Neufeld. "I've looked at the painting every couple of days and I don't see any evidence of damage at the site from anything."

Neufeld, with Evans, Bierly, Hutchinson and Associates in Goodland, is at the site almost every day because he is also overseeing work on the road and park, creating a new entrance to downtown Goodland.

Neufeld said he checks the base of the huge easel holding the 24-by-32-foot painting every couple of days to see if vehicles have hit it and scans

the painting from the ground for damage.

"I can't see anything wrong," he said, noting that it would be dangerous to shoot at the painting because the shooter couldn't know where the bullets would land or who they might hurt.

"Anyone foolish enough to shoot at it takes the risk of the bullets landing in town," he said.

Police Chief Ray Smee said he hasn't heard anything. Golden said she hasn't even heard the rumors.

City Manager Ron Pickman said he hasn't heard about people shooting at the painting, either.

Judge finds Sedgwick County in contempt over budget request

TOPEKA (AP) — Sedgwick County commissioners have asked the Kansas Supreme Court for relief after a state judge found them in contempt for not fully funding his budget request.

The request filed Monday is the latest round in a dispute between commissioners and District Judge Paul Buchanan, which began this spring when he submitted a supplemental budget request for his department.

Buchanan, chief judge of the 18th Judicial District, submitted a list on April 17 of eight items totaling \$493,900 for equipment and salary for the court offices for the 2002 budget. Commissioners denied the request and Buchanan issued a court order on

May 25 the items "shall be included in the budget for 2001." The judge did not hold hearings or file pleadings before issuing the order.

Buchanan issued a contempt order on Aug. 9, a day after commissioners approved their 2002 budget without his funding request. The five-member commission was ordered to appear Aug. 24, and a restraining order was issued to keep the board from certifying the 2002 budget.

Named in the contempt citation are Commissioners Besty Gwin, Carolyn McGinn, Tim Norton, Ben Sciortino and Tom Winters. Attorneys representing the commissioners declined to comment.

In the petition, the commission's at-

torney referred to state law giving county government the authority to set the budget for district courts.

"Nowhere in any of these statutes does it provide the chief judge with the authority to order a governing body to include additional funds in its budget for the district court," according to the petition.

The petition also states that without action by the Supreme Court, other chief judges will be permitted to take similar action when counties fail to fully fund their judicial budget requests.

Buchanan has until Aug. 27 to respond to the petition filed in Topeka. The higher court could rule to stay the contempt order or grant an injunction and hold hearings.

Sunflower Festival starts Friday

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lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Judging competitions will begin at noon. These include best sunflower arrangement, crafts, a sunflower-decorated hat contest, best decorated bike or trike, and the Sunflower Olympics at 1:30 p.m.

At 2:30 p.m. a balloon car race will be held and a piñata bashing will follow at 3 p.m.

Several businesses are holding competitions at their locations. Children up to age 13, bring your pet to Luci's Aquarium at 9 a.m. Saturday for a best decorated pet contest. Bring the oldest pocket watch you can find into Mann's Jewelry all week for the oldest pocket watch contest. Also, check Julie's Interiors, Knott Just Books, Garcia's Home Furnishings, Jacque's Hallmark, *The Goodland Daily News*, and webkansas.net all

week for other contests.

A quilt show will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday at the Central School gym.

There is an art display at the Carnegie Arts Center. A Sunflower Art Showing can be viewed now until Monday and a special show by Brazilian sunflower artist Socorro Maia will open at 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

Overall sponsor for the festival is the Chamber.

Cooler weather welcome relief for fields

TOPEKA (AP) — Cooler weather provided relief last week to areas that had been baking under extended periods of hot, dry weather, the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service said Monday.

Despite the showers, much of Kansas remains in need of moisture.

The service said topsoil moisture was rated 28 percent very short, 40 percent short, 31 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus.

Subsoil moisture was rated 19 percent very short, 41 percent short, 39 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus.

There were 6.7 days suitable for field work, the service said.

The state's corn crop was rated 13 percent mature, with harvesting under

way in the southeast. Of the crop, 85 percent was in the dough stage and 48 percent dented.

Corn was rated 6 percent very poor, 10 percent poor, 33 percent fair, 43 percent good and 8 percent excellent.

Ninety-five percent of the soybean crop was blooming. Seventy-six percent of the soybean crop was setting pods. Four percent of the crop was dropping leaves.

Soybean condition was rated 6 percent very poor, 13 percent poor, 32 percent fair, 41 percent good, and 8 percent excellent.

Eighty-two percent of the sorghum crop was headed. Thirty percent of the crop was coloring. Eleven percent of the crop was mature.

Sorghum condition was rated 5 percent very poor, 14 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 40 percent good, and 4 percent excellent.

Some grain sorghum fields with heavy infestations of earworms were sprayed last week.

Harvest began last week in the southeast district.

Pasture conditions were rated 11 percent very poor, 20 percent poor, 43 percent fair, and 26 percent good.

Hay and forage supplies were rated 2 percent very short, 18 percent short, 76 percent adequate, and 4 percent surplus.

Stock water supplies were rated 5 percent very short, 20 percent short, 74 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus.

Year starts with teacher shortages

TOPEKA (AP) — School administrators are making tough decisions as they deal with nearly 500 teacher vacancies at the start of the new school year.

According to a Kansas Department of Education survey, there are 492 teacher positions unfilled in 125 districts, with the bulk of the openings in special education and elementary grades.

"They'll hire substitutes or combine classes," said Dale Dennis, deputy commissioner of education. There may be some cases where classes will not be offered."

In addition, districts filled another 144 teaching positions on a temporary basis — one year or less. Dennis said this was the first year the 304 districts were asked to report this figure.

The vacancies cover all disciplines, from music to math, where there are 19 openings. There also are 16 foreign language openings, which will be filled by using teachers not certified to teach language, offering the courses through the Internet or dropping them altogether.

"A lot of people are really concerned about this and worried about this," Dennis said. "It's not just compensation, it's a matter of fringe benefits and health insurance."

Christy Levings, Kansas National Education Association president, said

that is likely to worsen as more teachers near retirement. The average age of Kansas teachers is 46 to 48 years old.

Levings said the challenge for districts and legislators is to provide enough resources to retain young teachers already in the profession and make a career in the classroom an attractive option.

The State Board of Education members meets Tuesday afternoon to finalize its budget request to legislators for the fiscal 2003. Last month, the board

gave tentative approval to a \$352 million plan, the bulk of which would be dedicated to teacher salaries.

Board members indicated their desire to raise teacher salaries to the national average over a three-year period and explore the option of providing health insurance to all teachers.

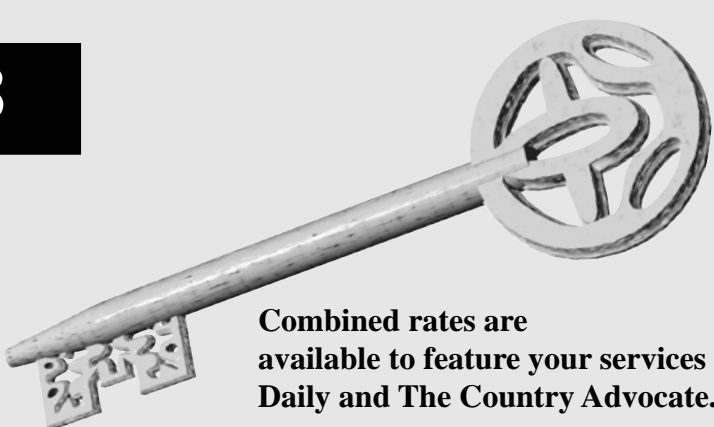
The state spends more than \$2.3 billion on public education. Legislators added \$67 million to the school budget during the 2001 session.

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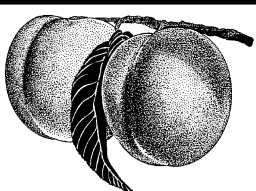
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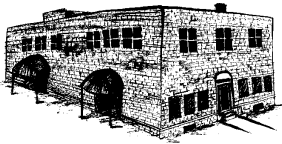
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