

County to upgrade 911

COUNTY, from Page 1

impact of some heavy rains that brought to water up to the level of his patio.

At one point the commissioners suggested that Scott talk to the people who sold him the property.

Scott also said he only saw one culvert under the road, but Curt Way, county road and bridge superintendent and Butch Vandiver, road foreman, said there are three and that they have been in place for many years.

"I can see I am not going to get any help here," Scott said before leaving.

Mary Messamore, head of the county emergency management and the central dispatch system, brought the commissioners up to date on the next step in handling the 911 identification of wireless cell phone calls.

She said the county needs to install equipment to handle these calls at a cost of \$5,400, and that the monthly cost for this will be \$158.

The commissioners ask if there was any state aid on this, and Messamore said there is nothing at this time. The county collects a montly fee on each phone line in the county, but not on

cellular phones. An attempt to broaden the fee failed earlier this year.

"We have tried for five years to get some state help," she said. "Last year, we got through the House with a plan, but it fell apart in the Senate."

Included in the upgrade, she said, will be two additional 911 lines to handle the cell phone calls coming into the dispatch center.

Commissioner Tiede made the motion to proceed with the update, seconded by Rasure. The motion passed unanimously.

State Rep. Jim Morrison and State Sen. Stan Clark arrived to say hello, as they had been participating in the ribbon cutting for the new Cherry Avenue.

When asked about the state aid on the cell phone question, Morrison said he was not sure it would get out of the House again, and Clark said he was sure that the current plan would not pass in the Senate. Neither representative indicated what the answer would be, or when it might be accomplished.

The next regular meeting will be 8 a.m. Tuesday in the Sherman County Courthouse, Eighth Street and Broadway Avenue.

Schools need more young families

ENROLLMENT, from Page 1

dents this year, he said, while seven enrolled at Grant Junior High, four at Central Elementary School, 15 at North Elementary and nine at West Elementary. Selby said many of the new high school students will be gone within four years, and at least six could leave before this year is up.

Of the 22 new students, he said, 16 have moved in from out of town, and six have joined the district's drop-out prevention program — designed to allow older students, or those who would otherwise leave school, to finish requirements in a non-traditional setting.

Selby said those students are counted in the senior class, which has an enrollment of 81, and will likely graduate before the end of the year.

"We may have 81 now," he said, "but a month from now we could have 75."

Though enrollment remained stable over the summer, Selby said that doesn't mean student numbers will start increasing. He said he expects stu-

dents to continue leaving as their families move away from Sherman County.

"Kids have moved in from out of town," he said, "but by the same token we had that many move away."

As enrollment continues to decline, he said, the district will stop replacing teachers who retire or resign and may have to consolidate the high school and junior high.

Selby said what the district needs is a new business to bring young families to Goodland.

Remodeling high school



Mike Miller, of Miller's Construction in Goodland, worked on a window at Goodland High School as part of the remodeling to the upstairs.
Photo by Reaghan Smith/The Goodland Daily News

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State tries to cushion the fall with extra money to schools

MONEY, from Page 1

said the state is helping to cushion the fall by giving more money to schools with low enrollments and allowing districts to use enrollment numbers from the prior year when figuring their budgets.

Selby said administrators take a preliminary head count at the start of school, which is used to figure the district's estimated budget, but the official count doesn't come until Sept. 20. He said the state considers the number of students counted on that day as the official enrollment.

After the count day, Selby said, the state sends out auditors, who spend about a week in each of Kansas' 304 districts, thoroughly checking enrollment numbers and how schools spend their money.

The actual number of students counted isn't always the number used to figure state aid. Selby said kindergartners and some other students are counted as half or part of one student because they only attend school part of the day.

Districts receive money, he said, according to their "full-time equivalency" enrollment. With 1,091 students at the start of last year, the district had an equivalency enrollment of 1,128.

Selby said as the number of students declines, the amount of money the dis-

trict gets per student goes up.

Veryl Peter, team leader for school finance with the state Department of Education in Topeka, said schools with less than 1,725 students qualify for "low-enrollment weighting." He said the district's enrollment is plugged into a formula that figures how much more money that district will receive per student.

Selby said the Goodland district received money for an additional 314 students last year under low-enrollment weighting. He said the district also receives extra money for students with free lunches, those in the vocational program and those who can't speak English.

Peter said the state allows low-enrollment weighting because it costs more to educate fewer students.

"It's a lot more costly to educate 100 kids than 300 kids," he said, noting that small schools still have to pay a teacher a competitive salary and maintain space and equipment.

"The costs are higher for small districts," he said. "Large districts can absorb more kids into the classroom."

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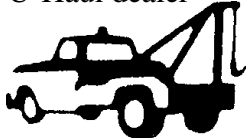
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