

weather
report

67°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 6:04 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 7:02 a.m.
• Sunset, 6:02 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 55 degrees
• Humidity 16 percent
• Sky sunny
• Winds northeast 17
• Barometer 30.05 inches
and falling
• Record High 90° (1958)
• Record Low 19° (1925)

Last 24 Hours*

High 57°
Low 40°
Precipitation none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: clear, low upper 30s, wind southwest 10. Tomorrow: sunny, high upper 70s, low upper 30s, wind west 10-15.

Extended Forecast

Sunday and Monday: sunny, high upper 70s, low mid 30s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets



Noon

Wheat — \$2.59 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.53
Corn — \$1.96 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.73
Loan deficiency payment — 26¢
Milo — \$1.68 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.60 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.67
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.25
Millet — \$3.75 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$7.25 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$2.36
Confection current — \$13/\$6 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$19 (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.

Special forces
in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Shrugging off the deployment of U.S. special forces in their territory, Afghanistan's Taliban regime challenged Washington today to send a full force of troops. "Then it can be a fight between our soldiers and theirs," a Taliban official declared.

After a pre-dawn pounding, U.S. jets eased their round-the-clock bombardment of Kabul today, Islam's holy day. Frightened families seized the opportunity to flee homes near likely targets.

Thousands of Afghans were streaming to the Pakistan border from another battered city, Kandahar, the U.N. refugee agency said.

AU.S. government official confirmed that a small number of U.S. special forces troops were now operating in Taliban territory in southern Afghanistan.

K-27 opens to drivers today

Contractor finishes work 11 days early

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Finally it is possible to drive from Goodland to St. Francis on a paved road. K-27 opened about 1 p.m. today from Goodland to the Cheyenne County line, after the state had closed it for about 8 months.

People driving the county roads can now return to the state highway, and business owners hope their customers, who have found it difficult to get to the stores in Goodland, return to the city to shop.

The state closed the highway in March to rebuild and repave the road and fix bridges along the highway. Drivers were forced to detour to Colby or Burlington or drive gravel roads to get to St. Francis. The closure made some business owners mad because of the decline in customers from Cheyenne County.

Project Foreman Randy Testa from Ritchie Paving was in consultation with Donna Binning, construction engineer for the Kansas Department of Transportation, and Eric Delschlager, contract manager for the Department of Transportation, and all agreed the highway

will be opened today.

Delschlager said there are some minor details that need to be completed, but nothing that would prevent the highway from opening. He said the striping north of milepost 180 isn't done, but the paint crew will be back in a week to 10 days.

At 10 a.m., Leonard Knox, paving plant foreman, was helping Randy Burnett, road foreman from Ritchie Paving, put up the last two signs on the curve at the Sherman County and Cheyenne County line. With these in place, the project foreman said all that remained was to clear the equipment off the roadway, and move the barricades off the highway.

"I have them ready to be moved," Testa said. "I am planning to have it open by 1 p.m., and the last step will be having men pull the barricades off the highway."

Knox said the paving plant will remain for the next part of the project, which will get underway in the spring.

The second portion will include replacement of the intersection at K-27 and Business U.S. 24 and installation of a stoplight. There will be a new road

built east of the intersection, just east of Sharon's Taco, to connect U.S. 24 with 19th Street, and 19th will be improved to handle large trucks.

Included will be improving the "hook" which exits K-27 north of the intersection on the east side. Earlier plans were to eliminate the hook, but the current plan is to make it a one-way exit from K-27, connecting with Cattle Trail.

Some additional work along the shoulders remains, and some seeding where the shoulder work isn't complete. This work will be done in the next week, and drivers are cautioned to watch for heavy equipment.

Binning said there should not be any problems, but there may be some minor delays with the seeding and the striping of the north portion of the highway.

The K-27 project is opening 11 days ahead of the state schedule, and should mean bonus money for Ritchie Paving. The Department of Transportation included a bonus to give the contractor an incentive to finish as early as possible and avoid the type of delays on a smaller K-27 project last year.



Randy Burnett, Ritchie Paving road foreman, placed the next to last curve indicated sign on the east edge of the curve on K-27 at the Sherman County line this morning. The highway reopened today after being closed for eight months.

Photo by Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News

What happened to Christina?

She was healthy when she entered the center, but died 13 days later. Her mother blamed the staff and so did a jury. But the question remains...

Area center blamed for woman's death

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Nellie Lake said the family doctor found her daughter Christina in good health before she entered the Golden West Skills Center in Goodland on Jan. 15, 1996.

That's one reason why Lake, who lives in Denver, says she was so horrified when she got a call from the center 13 days later saying her 23-year-old daughter was dead.

She said she brought Christina, who was developmentally disabled, with an IQ between 51 and 58, to the facility to learn skills and live with others. Not to die.

"My reaction?" she said. "I started screaming and dropped the phone. My husband had to finish the call."

After investigating the cause of Christina's death — which still hasn't been determined — Lake said she was convinced employees, doctors and nurses at Golden West killed her daughter with abuse and neglect.

She filed a civil lawsuit two years later, claiming the facility used drugs and physical restraints to control her daughter, gave her inadequate medical attention and lied about Christina's condition.

Brad Pistotnik from Wichita, Lake's lawyer, told a jury during an eight-week trial this year in federal district court there that Golden West employees "warehouse" clients, using chemicals to subdue them.

"I have a very poor opinion of individuals that worked there," he said in a recent interview. "They treated humans worse than dogs."

Golden West's lawyers said it is the center's policy never to use chemical or physical restraints and they brought in experts with theories explaining Christina's death, but they couldn't convince the jury.

Lake won the case last month, with the jury awarding the family \$4 million

See MALPRACTICE, Page 6



Christina Zelner died at Golden West Skills Center in Goodland on Jan. 28, 1996, 13 days after she entered the facility. Nellie Lake, her mother, sued the center for malpractice and won last month. The writing and drawings on Christina's headstone at Golden Cemetery in Denver were done by the young woman before she died.

Family won't get \$4 million

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

A jury decided Nellie Lake should receive \$4 million for the death of her developmentally disabled daughter at the Golden West Skills Center, but she'll only receive a portion of that — and how much still hasn't been decided.

Lawyers representing Lake and Golden West said jurors advised the judge to order the skills center and its parent company, Res-Care of Kansas Inc., to pay \$2.5 million in punitive damages — with responsibility for the remaining \$1.5 million divided among other defendants, the plaintiff herself and her daughter. Lake and her daughter Christina were found to be 40 percent responsible for the death.

The lawyers said state law and other factors will stop Lake from receiving the whole \$4 million — the largest jury award in Kansas for medical mal-

practice in three years.

After Lake's lawsuit had been in litigation for more than three years, there was an eight-week trial at the federal courthouse in Wichita. The jury announced its decision on Tuesday, Sept. 4, but the case is far from over.

The lawyers said there is a limit on the amount of money a person can receive for a specific type of damage. That means Lake will probably only get up to \$100,000 of the \$1.5 million the jury awarded.

There are different rules for punitive damages, and Lake could receive the whole \$2.5 million from Golden West and Res-Care — a portion of which will go to her lawyers — or she could get more or less. That's up to U.S. Magistrate Judge John Reid now.

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Changes made center better

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

From new ownership to changes in state laws and regulations, the Golden West Skills Center has survived many transitions since it opened at 108 Aspen Rd. on the west side of Goodland in 1974.

Administrators say the changes have helped the facility, which serves developmentally disabled adults, contribute more to Goodland and raise the quality of life for its clients.

Beverly Enterprises first opened Golden West as an Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded, and at the time the center was licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to care for 53 people.

Meripat Bowman, the executive director who has worked at Golden West since 1989, said the facility was considered an institution, as clients

were required to live in the center. But, she said, that's all changed.

Res-Care Kansas Inc. bought Golden West in May 1995, Bowman said, and the facility switched from an institution to a community-based care provider in June 1998.

The center is now licensed by the state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, she said, and can serve as many people as its staff can handle. Bowman said 40 people live in 12 homes around Goodland, paying rent, going grocery shopping and living their lives with help from the center's staff.

She said clients who don't have jobs spend about eight hours each weekday at the center, taking classes, doing arts and crafts, receiving therapy and working in the computer lab.

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