

weather
report

19°

at noon

Today

• Sunset, 4:25 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:45 a.m.
• Sunset, 4:25 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 40 degrees
• Humidity 54 percent
• Sky sunny
• Winds north 23-28 m.p.h.
• Barometer 30.18 inches
and falling

• Record High 75° (1949)
• Record Low -10° (1952)

Last 24 Hours*

High 36°
Low 12°
Precipitation trace

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: partly cloudy, low 5, winds north 5-10 m.p.h. Tomorrow: mostly sunny, high 20s, low 10, winds northwest 5-15 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast

Thursday and Friday: partly sunny, high 40-45, low 20s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.55 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.55
Corn — \$1.95 bushel
Posted county price — \$2.82
Loan deficiency payment — 18¢
Milo — \$1.65 hundredweight
Soybeans — \$3.80 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.78
Loan deficiency payment — \$1.14
Millet — \$3.75 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$8.80 cwt.
Loan deficiency pmt. — \$1.19
Confection current — inquire
Pinto beans — \$19 (new crop)
(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigo Co 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.

Girl charged
in murder plot

BOSTON (AP) — A 17-year-old girl who authorities say agreed to take part in a Columbine-style massacre at her school but then spilled the secret by warning her favorite teacher that the woman's life was in danger has been charged with conspiracy to commit murder.

Amy Lee Bowman pleaded innocent today.

Three students — brothers Eric McKeehan, 17, and Michael McKeehan, 15; and Steven Jones, 15 — were charged earlier in the plot to kill "thugs, preps, and faculty" at New Bedford High School.

They pleaded innocent Monday to conspiracy to commit murder, possession of ammunition and other charges.

Unlike the other defendants, Bowman was released pending her next court appearance, on Dec. 17.

Board OKs
grant writer

City, county, school collaborate

By Rachel Miscal

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland School Board agreed Monday to join city and county officials in hiring a professional grant writer, who will be paid \$36,000 a year to find money for city, county and school projects.

Member Ron Schilling, who had represented the district on a joint committee that researched the new position, told the board at its regular meeting that if the grant writer works hard, the district could see a bunch of money roll in. Even if the schools don't get any money, he said, the district would benefit from any grant the city or county wins.

"It could help create jobs," he said, "and bring in families and kids."

Schilling said the position would pay for itself if it brought in one and a half new students. He said the city, county and school district will each pay \$12,000 a year for the program, and could otherwise get their money back from administrative fees on each successful grant.

"I'm enthused about it," he said, noting that the city and county commissioners have already agreed to pay their

share. "Maybe it will work, maybe it won't, but I think we should give it a shot."

One person who thinks it will work is Schyler Goodwin, president of the Goodland Development Corp., which was formed to push public service projects in Sherman County. He brought the idea to the three groups, with the city and county approving it earlier this month.

Goodwin, who attended the meeting with two other corporation members, said they hope to fill the position by May with someone who lives in Sherman County or is willing to move here.

Perhaps, he said, a college student from northwest Kansas would return home for the job. Most towns in Kansas have declining populations, as agriculture is requiring fewer workers and farm children are taking jobs in bigger cities.

Goodwin said a five-member advisory board, consisting of one school board member, a city and a county commissioner, and two at-large members, will run the grant program, picking

See SCHOOL, Page 6

Holiday contest
fills two wallets

By Rachel Miscal

The Goodland Daily News

Duane Hanke and Charlene Fritsch both have fattened their wallets a little this week, as they are the first of 10 instant winners of \$50 in the Goodland merchants' fourth annual Christmas on Us cash giveaway.

The contest, which features a \$1,500 grand prize, started on Thursday, Nov. 15, with sponsoring Goodland businesses handing out one ticket for each \$10 spent on products or services. Shoppers can collect up to 250 tickets per transaction.

Employees at The Goodland Daily News pick up to six instant winners each week, putting the winning numbers in random ads in the weekly Christmas on Us section, which is printed on Wednesday. Ticket holders have four business days to collect their prizes at the newspaper office, 1205 Main Ave.

All remaining tickets will be entered in the grand prize drawing, which is set for 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 15 at 11th and Main Avenue in downtown Goodland. Winners must be present to collect a \$1,500 grand prize or a \$500 second prize.

But Hanke and Fritsch are already winners.

Hanke, who is retired, was the first instant winner, receiving his winning ticket from Grass Roots Lawn Service, 1901 Cherry Ave. He said he plans to give the money to the Genesis Food Bank.

"I just figure someone needs it more than I do," he said.

Fritsch, operations officer at First National Bank, said she received the maximum number of tickets when she bought a car from Dan Brenner Ford, 222 W. U.S. 24, on the day the contest started. She said she may buy Christmas presents with the money, or maybe not.

"Maybe I'll just buy something for myself," she said with a smile.

Shoppers aren't the only ones benefiting from the contest.

Ashley Rawlings, secretary at Brenner, said the dealership has so far given away 4,250 tickets and almost



Fritsch



Hanke

every customer is aware of the contest.

"When people come in, that's one of the first things they ask," she said. "It's amazing. Even when people get an oil change they ask, 'Do I get my three tickets?'"

Other shop owners say they don't hear much talk about the contest until they forget to give out a ticket.

"If I forget to give out tickets, a few people have asked," said Julie Mann, owner of Julie's Interiors and Gifts.

Mary Jane Spomer, an employee at Jacque's Hallmark, said she gives out dozens of

tickets each day.

"They ask about it if they don't get a ticket," she said.

The last day to collect tickets will be Thursday, Dec. 13. Any unclaimed instant prizes will be drawn along with the two big prizes at the grand prize event. All winners will be paid in script, which can only be spent at sponsoring businesses.

No purchase is necessary; anyone can get one free ticket per week at the newspaper office or The Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce.

Sponsors so far include Antique Warehouse, Bankwest, Unruh Family Chiropractic, Hayden Chiropractic and Wellness Center, First National Bank, Goodland Sheet Metal, Goodland Medical Arts Pharmacy, Goodland Machine and Automotive, Jacque's Hallmark, Shores Bros., Elliott's Furniture, Knott Just Books, Garcia's Home Furnishings and Appliance, Wane's Carpet, Aten Department Store, Mann's Jewelry and Julie's Interiors and Gifts, Miller's Electronics, American Communications, Grass Roots, Cowboy Loop, Frontier Equity Exchange, Dan Brenner Ford and WebKansas.



Danny Edwards, manufacturing supervisor, adjusted the control panel Monday at the Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizer Plant. A high-tech system determines the amount of various ingredients that go into the fertilizer mix for each product.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

Fertilizer plant eco-respectful

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Daily News

An fast-growing business began production in Goodland earlier this month when the Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizer plant made its first batch of fertilizer.

The 100-foot-by-120-foot plant is used to store raw materials and produce fertilizer. It is capable of loading two trucks at a time for shipping and was built with a 52-foot ceiling to accommodate vertical tanks for storage.

The plant is run so efficiently, said chief executive officer Troy Bancroft, that it will employ only five to eight people.

The plant's roof is made of a vinyl fabric that was pulled over galvanized steel beams with ropes and tractors in October. Production began on Monday, Nov. 12.

And despite the technically inclined world we live in, with factories, automobiles and other modes of transport spewing filth into the air and leaching harmful spills into the water supply, Bancroft said the plant will produce products that won't harm the environ-

ment.

"NPK products," containing nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium that are manufactured at the plant, Bancroft said, are environmentally friendly and easy for farmers to use.

The products are organically enhanced, he said, a process that keeps the nutrients where they are more available to the plants. And the products are applied to the soil, where the nutrients are directly taken up by the plants, he said, avoiding the leaching of nutrients.

Though drinking the fertilizer is not recommended, Bancroft said, it would not be harmful if accidentally ingested.

The products produced at the plant can be used on all crops and include: High Energy N, containing nitrogen; pro germinators, which are NPK products; Sure-K, containing lots of potassium; and Micro 500, a combination of zinc, manganese, iron, copper and boron.

Agro-Culture was recognized by Congress and DuPont Corp. in 1998, Bancroft said, for having a site that

was environmentally above and beyond requirements. He and Dale Ruff, production manager from the corporate office, went to Washington to accept the "environmental respect" award.

The plant in Goodland will produce fertilizer for the western half of the United States, Bancroft said, until growth forces them to build another. Though the plant only employs five to eight people on site, he said, it will hire several truck drivers for hauling the products.

The plant is south of the railroad yards on 19th Street, where the company has had a storage site since 1999.

The company, with headquarters in St. Johns, Mich., has been in operation since 1963 and now employs 50 salespeople.

Agro-Culture owns a 200 acre research farm, Bancroft said, under the direction of Dr. Jerry Wilhm, a research agronomist.

The company works to improve its products at the farm, he said, and determines how they can be used most effectively.

Car thief extradited back to Colby

By Patty Decker

The Colby Free Press

COLBY — One of the two people who escaped capture during a high-speed chase in Thomas County last August is back in jail here and facing multiple charges for her part in aggravated burglary and assault, kidnapping and felony theft.

Tina Janice Pearce, 23, had her first appearance in Thomas County District Court last Monday. District Magistrate Judge Rick Ress appointed Scott Showalter, Goodland, to represent Pearce and ordered her to appear again on Thursday, Nov. 29, at 10 a.m., to consider terms of release if she can meet a \$100,000 bond.

Since the first appearance, Showalter has filed paperwork asking for a bond reduction hearing on Tuesday at 10 a.m., but Pearce remained in custody at the Thomas County Jail.

After months of eluding authorities across many states, Pearce and her companion, Kristopher Aaron Lambert, 21, were finally captured in Angelton, Texas, on Oct. 8, when a domestic disturbance at a motel led authorities to their room. Pearce surrendered without incident, police in

Angelton said, and Lambert was caught later that day.

At first, Pearce refused extradition to Kansas, signing waivers instead to Mississippi on charges of accessory to auto theft, said C.D. Hopper, an investigator with the Thomas County Sheriff's office.

However, earlier this month, she signed extradition waivers to return to Kansas.

"The reason she signed the waiver and returned to Kansas," Hopper said, "was because she and her family said they want to get this over with, since the more serious charges are here."

The couple's alleged crime spree started long before they reached Kansas, Hopper said, dating as far back as a year ago.

Apparently, the auto theft charges last November in Mississippi were only the beginning of an alleged series of crimes that took the couple from Mississippi to Pennsylvania, Florida, Washington, Wisconsin, Kansas, Utah and Texas.

Authorities in Thomas County were brought into the alleged crime spree path on Aug. 8, after they were told that a pickup, stolen from Wausau, Wis., on

Aug. 5, had been involved in a gas skipp out of Grinnell.

A Thomas County officer spotted the vehicle later on I-70 and started a chase which ended when Lambert and Pearce drove off the highway, through a fence and into a cornfield. They allegedly accosted a teen-ager at knifepoint, stole her vehicle and later stole another vehicle, a white Jeep Cherokee, from an elevator in Hoxie.

Even though at that time the couple was still on the loose, Hopper said, a criminal complaint was filed in Thomas County on Aug. 30.

Lambert is still in Texas, facing charges of aggravated assault and burglary after fleeing on foot from the motel.

Authorities there said that Lambert was eventually subdued after being hit by a 20-year Air Force veteran with a 12-inch wire brush he used for cleaning his barbecue grill.

The Texas man, Rudy Karen, 59, beat the 21-year-old with the brush as he tried to escape capture.

Within minutes, authorities arrested Lambert as he tried to get away from Karen by breaking in the door of a nearby house.