



Bruce Gouker, a Greeley, Colo. man, who has been picked to manage a co-operative grocery in Goodland, talked with Connie Grieve, a Goodland resident, on Thursday. Photo by Rachel Miscal/The Goodland Daily News

Grocery investors coming forward

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the meetings have called committee members with questions or to say they want to invest.

After the meeting, many audience members signed non-binding contracts saying they will commit either \$2,000 or \$10,000 — with organizers asking for a larger investment for companies. Most said it sounded like a good idea.

Bruce Gleason, who works for Schlosser Concrete and at the hospital, said he knows many older people who don't like to shop at Wal-Mart because it's not locally owned.

"Even if I have to pay an extra 10 cents for milk, I will shop at the new grocery store," he said. "What you spend there will stay here."

He said he thinks \$2,000 is a fair price, but added that many families may not be able to afford it.

"People can still support it by shopping there," he said. "I think it's a fair investment. I'd rather put my money there than in the stock market."

Gouker, who manages a food brokerage in Denver, told the audience he is tired of commuting two or more hours to work each day, and he and his

wife are looking to move to a small town.

When he was 6, he said, he started helping his father, a butcher who now lives in McCook, Neb., stock groceries at the King Soopers store. Gouker said he's been in the business ever since, working for and managing groceries and food brokerages.

The new store will provide services Wal-Mart doesn't, he said, and will offer 25 to 30 full and part-time employees better wages and benefits.

West said a grocery study the city and Chamber of Commerce had done showed the Sherman County area can support another store, but it's going to take a bunch of money to open.

"If this could have been done for \$50,000," he said, "heck, Roxann (Kling, a committee member) would have done it by now."

The committee and Gouker have researched cooperative groceries, he said, visiting one in Iowa in a town similar to Goodland.

West said that store has made a profit four out of five years, despite having competition.

The only real difference, he said, is that the store is a corporation and not a cooperative.

Gouker said if the grocery here is successful it will put Goodland on the map.

"It will be one of few cooperative grocery stores," he said.

West said if the grocery makes a profit, owner-members, will receive a share, and will receive a rebate on the money they spend in the store.

An audience member asked if families or businesses would be able to buy more than one membership.

West said he doesn't think so.

"We're not interested in letting one family own 50 membership units," he said. "We don't want them running things."

After the meeting, West said every member of the steering committee plans to invest in the grocery.

Another man in the audience asked if non-members would be able to shop.

West said they will encourage non-members to buy at the grocery, and pointed out that there is no guarantee that members will see any return on their investment.

"We want to be honest," West said. "If you invest \$2,000, you may lose

part of it."

The audience clapped when Gouker said there will be a full-service deli and bakery.

"The meat will definitely be cut in the store," he said, adding that his father may come to work at the grocery.

An audience member asked where the store will be located.

West said the committee wants to put it in the old Jubilee building, which Fleming Foods closed in September 1999, but the owner lives in another country, and Fleming still has a 13-year lease on the building. He said the committee plans to send a low bid to the owner, but they may not be able to get the building.

In that case, he said, they will consider buying another building or building their own.

Garcia ended the meeting by saying Goodland once supported three groceries, two of which shut down for reasons other than Wal-Mart moving to town.

"The sooner you join us in this venture," he said, "the sooner it will happen."

Grocery manager says city 'has potential'

Bruce Gouker lives in Greeley, Colo., and commutes two hours a day to his job managing a food brokerage in Denver.

He says life managing a proposed new co-operative grocery in Goodland looks pretty good to him.

At a meeting Thursday night at the high school auditorium, people asked about his background, what type of benefits the store will offer employees, for his vision for the grocery and how committed he is to the project.

Gouker said he is tired of commuting and he and his wife want to move

to a small town.

When he was 6, he said, he started helping his father, a butcher who now lives in McCook, Neb., stock groceries at the King Soopers store. Gouker said he's been in the business ever since, working for and managing groceries and food brokerages.

He said when people ask him, "What do you want to come to Goodland for? What does Goodland have?" he always gives the same response.

"What does Goodland have?" he said, "Goodland has potential."

With his experience and connec-

tions, Gouker said, he thinks the store can be successful in a market where two stores have closed.

"Nothing against Wal-Mart," he said, "but I think we can do a better job. I know we can do a better job."

The new store will offer services Wal-Mart doesn't, he said, and will offer 25 to 30 full and part-time employees better wages and benefits.

Gouker said the store's focal point will be customer service.

"That's how we plan to compete against Wal-Mart," he said. "It'll be sort of like Cheers; everybody will

know your name."

Responding to a question, Gouker said he'd be willing to sign a contract committing himself to managing the grocery for three years. He said most people here don't know him, so he understands that some will be leerie, but he added that he's committed to the plan and excited.

"I'm not going to come in and in three years when my contract is up I leave because I miss Starbucks," he said. "I look to maybe retire in this place. That's my dream and reality usually follows your dreams if you work hard."

Dollmaker says work gets her out of the house

DOLLS, from Page 1

with their dolls, Schippert said, to keep the dolls clean longer. And apparently her advice worked.

One of her daughters still has a walking doll that she bought in the 1950s, Schippert said, and it's still in good shape. Only the shoes and socks needed to be replaced.

She volunteers to do the mending at the Good Samaritan Home, Schippert said, and helps with the home's Bingo game on Wednesdays and she's a volunteer cashier at the gift shop at Goodland Regional Medical Center.

Schippert said she enjoys working, as it gives her a chance to get away from the house. And volunteering and doll making keeps her busy.

"If people keep their hands busy,"

she said, "they don't have time to worry."

Schippert has lived in Goodland since January 1946. She was born in Elmwood, Neb., and lived in Colby and Atwood before moving here.

Her husband Paul served in the army during World War II, and served in Europe from 1941-45. She lived with his parents in Atwood during that time.

She began working at a drug store in 1955 and worked there for 28 years, Schippert said, then worked at

Gibson's for 13 years before retiring in 1992.

Paul had not been well for several years, she said, and she wanted to spend more time with him. He died May 2.

Paul was a street and alley superintendent for the city for 28 years, Schippert said, and worked alongside the men under him, painting curbs on his hands and knees.

Her two daughters, Schippert said, are Loretta, who lives in Mound Val-

ley in southeast Kansas and Pauline, who lives in Castle Rock, Colo. Both graduated from Goodland High School, and Pauline went to the technical school here.

She has grandchildren and great grandchildren, Schippert said, and her great grandson's wife is expecting a child next year.

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