

**weather report**

**58°**

at noon



**Today**

• Sunset, 4:40 p.m.

**Tomorrow**

• Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.  
• Sunset, 4:41 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil Temperature 31 degrees
- Humidity 33 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds northwest 20 m.p.h.
- Barometer 30.10 inches and falling
- Record High 72° (1965)
- Record Low -13° (1988)

**Last 24 Hours\***

High 42°  
Low 19°  
Precipitation none

**Northwest Kansas Forecast**

Tonight: mostly clear, low 32, winds west 10-20. Tomorrow: mostly cloudy, high 68, low 32, winds northwest 10-20 m.p.h.

**Extended Forecast**

Wednesday and Thursday: cloudy, high 55, low 20-25.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local markets**

**Noon**

- Wheat — \$2.66 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.58
- Corn — \$1.97 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.85
- Loan deficiency payment — 14¢
- Milo — \$1.69 bushel
- Soybeans — \$3.71 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.67
- Loan deficiency payment — \$1.25
- Millet — \$3.50 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$9.15 cwt.
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 78¢
- Confection current — inquire
- Pinto beans — \$20 (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.

**Bombers blast Taliban tanks**

WASHINGTON — U.S. bombers blasted a large cache of Taliban and al-Qaida armored tanks and weapons as part of the effort to eradicate the remnants of the terrorist network inside Afghanistan, U.S. military officials said today.

"It's an ongoing operation," Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem said of the strikes on the military compound and cave complex in Afghanistan.

U.S. warplanes have conducted three strikes in recent days at the site, where terrorist leader Osama bin Laden's followers have been regrouping, and where U.S. officials spotted a major weapons cache and equipment including tanks, Stufflebeem said.

Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke said U.S. aircraft flew a total of 118 sorties and conducted four airstrikes in the Zawar and Khost area Sunday.

# 2001 in Review

*Year brought tears and smiles to Sherman County residents*

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Like all years, 2002 brought Sherman County residents heartache and happiness, love and loss, good times and bad and sunshine and rain.

Businesses opened and others closed. There were deaths and births. Some issues divided the county, while others brought us closer together. Roads were opened and closed, torn up and replaced. City and county officials were criticized and congratulated.

There were a few national and local events that set 2002 apart from other years.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington shook the country and made us all realize how vulnerable we are. Sherman County residents said they felt anger, pain and sadness and many looked to their churches for answers and ways to cope.

Goodland was pushed into the national spotlight when a native who has family here was held in China for almost two weeks after a military plane accident. A new swimming pool opened in Goodland and a giant painting was erected near a new street, creating a new city entrance.

The staff at *The Goodland Daily News* reviewed newspapers from the past year and picked what we thought were the top 10 stories. The choices focused on issues or events that hit a wide range of people either in the heart or wallet.

Some of the stories are sad, some are happy, some will make you shudder while others make you laugh. But each is a piece of the past year.

Here are the top two stories. The rest will follow during the week.

**1** Goodland native Jeff Vignery and his family became the center of the nation's attention and inspired millions when China held the Navy pilot and 23 crewmates for 11 days in April after their U.S. spy plane collided with a Chinese jet.

Lt. Vignery, hailed as a hero at home and across the country, recounted the terrifying details of April 1 for a crowd of hundreds at a homecoming ceremony held for the 1992 Goodland High graduate on May 5 at Max Jones Fieldhouse.

He said the EP-3E surveillance plane he was helping to fly was about 60 miles southeast of Hainan Island over the South China Sea about 10 a.m. when two Chinese fighter jets intercepted the plane.

From the left pilot's seat, he said, he had the best view of the Chinese pilots. They approached the four-engine turboprop plane three times, he said, before one of the jets came in too fast and close, running into one of the Navy plane's propellers and knocking off its nose cone. The Chinese pilot was killed in the accident.

Vignery said his plane started to plunge 4,000 feet per minute toward the water below. The collision happened at 22,500 feet, he said, and it wasn't until around 10,000 feet that he and Lt. Shane Osborne, the lead pilot, were able to gain some control.



Lt. Jeff Vignery (far left) and his wife Julie talked and laughed with friends and family at a homecoming celebration on May 5 at Max Jones

Fieldhouse. Hundreds of people welcomed Vignery home after he was held in China for 11 days following a military plane accident.

Photos by Rachel Miscall and Tom Betz/The Goodland Daily News

Being the third pilot, Vignery said, he let another lieutenant take his seat while he and crew members prepared to ditch the plane. That wasn't necessary, and Vignery said when he heard the landing gear start to descend, he knew they would come down safely.

The crew landed on Chinese controlled Hainan Island, but their adventure wasn't over.

Angry over the unauthorized landing, the death of the fighter pilot and past events, Chinese officials held the officers and demanded the U.S. apologize. A carefully-worded letter from President Bush saying the government was "very sorry" ended the 11-day standoff between the two superpowers.

After being debriefed at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam, Vignery, whose parents Ron and Judi and sister Jessica live in Goodland, and his fellow officers arrived at the Naval Air Station on Whidbey Island, Wash., on April 14.

Vignery, 27, lives at the station with his wife Julie, who he met while attending the University of Kansas. He graduated in 1997 and joined the Navy in May of that year.

The crew was greeted by their families and 7,000 other cheering Americans.

Ron Vignery, a partner in the Vignery and Mason law firm, said he was overcome by emotion when his son, who had just stepped off the plane, walked

up to him.

"I couldn't talk," he said. "I was crying. Everybody was crying."

The accident and standoff dominated the national news in the month of April and reporters from across Kansas and Colorado flocked to Goodland to talk with Ron and Judi. The couple received calls from national newspapers and networks at all hours of the day until they took the phone off the hook. They said they didn't want to attract attention to their son while he was being held.

The Vignerys said they also received numerous letters and calls from friends, family and other people who wanted to show support and say they admired their son's bravery.

Jeff Vignery, who was called a hero along with the other crew members, got plenty of attention. He was asked to do several television interviews and hundreds of people came together in May to welcome him back to Goodland.

People in Goodland and across the nation decorated trees, fences, flag poles, stop signs and other objects with yellow ribbons as a sign of support.

Kansas lawmakers and Gov. Bill Graves commended the pilot at a ceremony in Topeka, presenting him with a resolution usually reserved for distinguished state officials.

At the homecoming celebration,

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Richard Hurd, a World War II and Korean veteran, saluted as the American flag was presented at a homecoming ceremony in May for Lt. Jeff Vignery.

## Little hope for farm economy to recover this year

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sluggish world economy and the strong U.S. dollar offer little hope to American farmers for a turnaround in crop prices this year. That means Congress will be under pressure either to pass a new farm program quickly or provide growers a fifth bailout in as many years.

Prices for major crops, such as wheat, corn, cotton and soybeans, collapsed in the late 1990s and have not recovered. Prices for beef and pork were strong last year, but the beef industry is now feeling effects of a collapse of demand in Japan

after discovery there of mad cow disease.

"Nobody in the agricultural sector is really happy where commodity prices are," said Leon Corzine, an Illinois farmer who grows corn and soybeans. "We have to work to develop markets to use this grain. That's going to be the answer to low prices."

Soybean prices, running above \$7 a bushel in the mid-1990s, have been mired near \$4 as production has boomed in recent years. Corn generally trades at around \$2 a bushel, half its 1996 value, and often much lower depending on a

farm's location.

Net farm income was expected to exceed \$49 billion last year, up from \$46 billion in 2000, according to the Agriculture Department. Most of that growth came from livestock sector, however, and the farm economy remains propped up by government cash. Direct government payments to farmers last year topped \$20 billion for the third consecutive year, almost triple their level in 1997.

"I don't see a big increase in market incomes for producers. We're talking about a rebound in the world economy that is expected to be fairly

modest," said Keith Collins, the Agriculture Department's chief economist.

In addition, the dollar is expected to remain strong, which makes U.S. products more expensive than those from countries with weaker currencies, and there is a glut on the market of some crops, said Collins. Congress is working on an expansion of farm subsidy programs that could take effect in time for this spring's crops. It probably will include a new program that would provide payments to farmers when commodity prices are relatively low, as they are now.

## Commissioners will choose leaders at first meeting of year

The first meeting of the year for the Sherman County commissioners will be Tuesday, and top items of business will be deciding who will be the commission chairman and vice chairman for the year.

Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld has been chairman and Commissioner Kevin Rasure has been the vice-chair.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede may become the vice-chair with Rasure moving up to chairman. In the past, commissioners have rotated the duties.

The commissioners will also designate the banks for county deposits, and name the official newspaper for publication of the county notices.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby will

meet with the commissioners in an executive session as the first department to bring in her employee evaluations.

The commissioners will review estimates from Curt Way, county public works director, for cost of a building and related equipment, including a baler and forklift, to be included in the cardboard recycling grant request

County Clerk Janet Rumpel is drafting.

Jack Eklund of Eklund's First Insurance has asked to meet with the commissioners about their decision to change insurance companies.

Roger Sneathen of the Sherman County Racing Association will meet with the commissioners to discuss calendar dates for the upcoming racing

season. At 11 a.m., the commissioners are to meet with the Goodland Regional Medical Center board for a joint audio conference program on "Conflicts of Interest" in the main board room at the hospital. The commissioners meet in the commission room on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway Ave.