

weather report

31°

at noon

Today

• Sunset, 4:57 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 7:00 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:58 p.m.

Middy Conditions

- Soil Temperature 31 degrees
- Humidity 81 percent
- Sky cloudy with very light snowfall
- Winds north 16 m.p.h.
- Barometer 30.00 inches and falling
- Record High 69° (1981)
- Record Low -9° (1963)

Last 24 Hours*

High 66°
Low 23°
Precipitation trace

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: becoming mostly clear, low 10-15, winds northwest 5-10 shifting to west. Tomorrow: sunny, high mid 40s, low near 20, winds northwest 10-15.

Extended Forecast

Friday: mostly sunny, high 60s. Saturday: clear, low lower 20s, high upper 50s. Sunday: clear, low lower 20s, high lower 60s. Monday: partly cloudy, low upper 10s, high mid 40s. (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 — \$1.94 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.87
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 12¢
 - Milo — \$1.66 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$3.73 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.78
 - Loan deficiency payment — \$1.14
 - Millet — \$3.50 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$8.75 cwt.
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 81¢
 - Confection current — inquire
 - Pinto beans — \$23
- (Markets provided by Mueller Grain, 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.

Plan to raise alcohol taxes

TOPEKA — A Senate committee's chairman outlined a new proposal today for increasing tobacco and alcohol taxes to prevent cuts in the state budget.

The Assessment and Taxation Committee voted to introduce the plan from Sen. David Corbin, and he scheduled a hearing for Monday. The bill would raise nearly \$87 million for the 2003 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Cigarette taxes would increase 35 cents a pack, to 59 cents, and the tax on other tobacco products, such as snuff, would double to 20 percent. Taxes would increase on all alcoholic beverages.

The plan is less ambitious than Gov. Bill Graves' proposals to raise cigarette, sales and motor fuels taxes and vehicle registration fees to raise \$228 million for fiscal 2003.

Senator focuses on 'heart of matter'

By Rachel Miscall
The Goodland Daily News

While Kansas lawmakers are wrangling over whether to raise taxes to solve the state's budget problems, Sen. Stan Clark said he wants to keep an optimistic outlook and focus on the heart of the problem.

The Oakley Republican, who represents District 40, including Sherman County, said the problem isn't a lack of money, it's a lack of people. He said a new approach to economic development could allow young people to stay

and raise families in the state's rural areas, ending the long-term decline in population.

The approach the senator is talking about was developed by the Sirolli Institute of Minneapolis, Minn. In coming months, he said, the institute will be working with state and county officials to start businesses and build populations.

Sherman County is part of a six-



Stan Clark

county group that received a \$200,000 state grant to start a business development program based on the Sirolli approach. Two other multi-county groups received \$200,000 each and Clark said Gov. Bill Graves may set aside money for other counties that want to participate.

But, the senator said, communities can improve their economies without money from the state. He said the Sirolli concept is to

create businesses using resources found at home, not bring in outside companies.

"The dollars with the grant are meaningless," he said. "It's the ideas behind the grant that are priceless."

Clark, who has been in office for six years, says many of the problems legislators are facing stem from disappearing populations in rural areas. Schools are struggling because state aid is tied to enrollment and Main Street and the agricultural economy are hurting as youths move away and residents grow

older. Spending more money isn't the answer, he said. The solution lies within the struggling communities.

"If we grow from within, everyone will benefit," he said. "That's the message I want to communicate."

Clark said one idea is to stimulate the imagination of high school students and help them turn their dreams into businesses. That way, he said, the youths would be able to stay in rural

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Answers to budget questions

Reporter explains state's money woes

By John Hanna
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — The state is confronting what many officials say is its most serious budget squeeze in years. Legislators face decisions on cutting programs, increasing taxes or both.

With the budget ranking as the most pressing issue of the 2002 legislative session, here are questions and answers to help explain the problems:

Q: How did the state get into this situation?

A: The problems are the result of several trends.

State budgeting runs in boom-and-bust cycles, typically lasting five to 10 years.

In good years, the state collects more than expected, as it did during the mid-1990s. Legislators use the money to finance new program or to cut taxes — or both, as they did during Gov. Bill Graves' first term.

The state sometimes can't do enough of either to keep up with revenue collections, leading to large balances in its general fund. Later, when revenue growth starts to cool, spending outpaces revenues, and the balances disappear.

In down years, spending must be brought back into line with revenues. After two or three years of tight budgets, the cycle begins again.

The state is now in the down part of the cycle, having cut taxes while still increasing general fund spending during the mid-1990s. Also, in a slowing economy, state revenue grows more slowly as consumers buy less and wages rise more slowly.

Finally, the state is facing higher costs for some programs.

Q: How big is the problem?

A: The Graves administration projects a \$426 million gap between revenues and required for fiscal 2003, which begins July 1. Legislative estimates are different, but not by much.

Much of the problem is on the spend-

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Officials set session to talk trash

Sherman County commissioners will hold a special work session at 5 p.m. Thursday in the commissioner room at the courthouse to discuss trash issues.

Commissioners Kevin Rasure and Chuck Frankenfeld and County Clerk Janet Rumpel will be attending a meeting that morning in Leoti to discuss plans to implement an enterprise facilitation program with a grant that was recently awarded to the six counties in western Kansas.

The next regular commission meeting will be 8 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 31, in the commission room on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway Ave.

Young daredevil?



Ren Scherling, a sixth grader at North Elementary School, popped a wheelie on his scooter after school on Tuesday. Students and other people in Goodland took advantage of the unseasonably warm weather

on Tuesday, with temperatures in the 60s, before snow started falling this morning.

Photo by Skilar Boland/The Goodland Daily News

Snow flurries give city taste of winter

By Rachel Miscall
The Goodland Daily News

Mother Nature teased Sherman County this morning, spitting some snowflakes from the sky, but not enough to make much difference.

In a farming area that hasn't seen much moisture this winter, a good snow would be welcome, but a National Weather Service meteorologist says it's still a waiting game.

Randy Coleman at the Weather Ser-

vice office here said a narrow band of light snow followed a cold front that moved over northwest Kansas last night.

He said the storm should bring snow flurries, but there won't be much accumulation.

"Nothing that you can measure," he said, adding that the clouds should break up this afternoon, leaving the sky mostly clear tonight. Coleman said the storm was dissipating as it moved south

and should die out this afternoon.

There had been reports of flurries north and west of Goodland, he said, and some accumulation in Yuma County, Colo.

He said this area shouldn't see as much of the white stuff as Limon, Denver and other areas in Colorado, where there were reports of snow up to a foot deep.

Coleman said highs today should be in the mid- to upper-30s, with tempera-

tures dropping to around 10 degrees tonight. Temperatures are expected to rise later in the week.

Who knows when Sherman County will see a real snow.

"Well, we don't have any in the forecast through Tuesday," Coleman said, noting that it could be a while before much moisture comes.

He said there often are big storms in March or April because there is more moisture in the air as spring arrives.



Goodland High School students gathered across the street during a fire drill Tuesday afternoon.

Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

Students pass test in fire drill

By Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News

Goodland High School was evacuated Tuesday afternoon, and students and teachers were left wondering what was going on.

It was a test, and they passed.

Mary Messamore, county emergency services director, called that surprise fire drill at the school about 2:15 p.m. Tuesday. She said she had warned the school that there would be a surprise

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