

**weather report**

**69°**  
at noon



**Today**

• Sunset, 5:18 p.m.

**Tomorrow**

• Sunrise, 6:42 a.m.  
• Sunset, 5:19 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil Temperature 32 degrees
- Humidity 16 percent
- Sky cloudy
- Winds northwest 10 m.p.h.
- Barometer 29.97 inches and falling
- Record High 78° (1962)
- Record Low -13° (1981)

**Last 24 Hours\***

High 43°  
Low 16°  
Precipitation none

**Northwest Kansas Forecast**

Tonight: mostly cloudy and breezy, low upper 10s, winds north 15-25 gusting to 35 m.p.h. around midnight. Tomorrow: sunny and cooler, high mid 40s, low mid 10s, winds northwest 10-15 m.p.h.

**Extended Forecast**

Wednesday: partly sunny, high mid 50s. Thursday: partly cloudy, low near 20, high lower 50s. Friday: mostly clear, low lower 20s, high 50s. (National Weather Service)  
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.  
\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local markets**

**Noon**

- Wheat — \$2.62 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.55
- Corn — \$1.90 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.82
- Loan deficiency payment — 17¢
- Milo — \$1.62 bushel
- Soybeans — \$3.71 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.66
- Loan deficiency payment — \$1.26
- Millet — \$3.50 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$8.95 cwt.
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 69¢
- Confection current — \$15/\$7 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$25

(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.

**Lay will not talk on Enron**

WASHINGTON — Former Enron chairman Kenneth Lay plans to assert his right against self-incrimination and will refuse to answer questions when he appears before Congress under subpoena this week.

"Under the instruction of counsel, Mr. Lay will exercise his Fifth Amendment rights at the Tuesday hearing," Lay's spokeswoman, Kelly Kimberly, said Sunday night from Houston. She declined further comment.

Lay, who resigned Jan. 23, was a friend and political backer of President Bush and moved easily within the corridors of power in Washington.

He has not spoken publicly about Enron's collapse since the company entered the biggest bankruptcy in U.S. history in December, and lawmakers had hoped for his testimony.

## Storm blows snow, dirt across city

### Near blizzard causes crashes, kills two on I-70 to the west

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Wind, dirt and snow. Brooke Taber, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, said he's never seen anything like the howling storm which hit Sherman County on Saturday.

"There was a layer of white near the ground," he said, "and a layer of brown above it."

The white was snow and the brown was dirt. Both were blowing across the county up to 70 mph, causing something close to a white-and-brown out. The storm closed highways and roads, caused car accidents, canceled events and left Goodland really dirty. There were no serious accidents reported in Sherman County, but a storm-caused wreck did kill a 10-year-old girl and her 9-year-old sister in a car accident near Arriba, Colo., about 65-70 miles to the west on I-70.

The storm left hundreds of motorists stranded in western Kansas.

Taber said the winds, gusting up to 71 mph, kicked up dust from parched

fields, covering cars, houses, streets, lawns and businesses with grit. Car washes in town were busy Sunday, after the storm had moved out, and business owners spent much of Monday morning wiping grime from shop windows.

"It's pretty bad," Taber said. "Everything is just covered with dust and dirt." He said a strong pressure gradient between high pressure over the Rocky Mountains and low pressure over central Kansas caused the storm, which brought near-blizzard conditions.

About 2 inches of snow fell in Goodland, with the strong winds forming drifts up to 4 feet high. Taber said blowing snow and dust reduced visibility to half a mile.

The Kansas Department of Transportation closed I-70 from Hays to the Colorado state line. The freeway was closed in Colorado all the way to the C-470 junction west of Denver. Most highways and county roads in northwest Kansas were closed or impassable

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Mother Nature blew through Northwest Kansas Saturday, depositing ice, snow and dirt. Jim Bowker (above) of *The Goodland Daily News* braved the snow-sand mixed winds Saturday afternoon to shovel the sidewalk. With the return of the sun Sunday and today (left), people were flocking to the car washes to clean the mud off their vehicles.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Daily News



## Kansas commissioner rejects Blue Cross merger

TOPEKA (AP) — Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius today rejected the proposed acquisition of the state's largest health insurance company by an Indiana firm.

Sebelius said the proposed purchase of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Kansas by Anthem Insurance Companies Inc. of Indianapolis, would raise consumer premiums too much.

Sebelius said when she was elected to office in 1994, voters expected her to protect consumers.

"It would cost Kansas businesses, small employers, and families millions of dollars," she said.

Critics said the only way Anthem could make its new Kansas affiliate profitable was through increased premiums, limits on coverage, or both.

Outside counsel and attorneys for the Insurance Department told Sebelius in documents

filed two weeks ago that the deal would harm consumers.

That legal team, working independently of the commissioner, said if the deal went ahead, premiums would have increased an additional \$248 million over the next five years to meet Anthem's profit margins.

Anthem and Blue Cross officials disputed the team's conclusions and called its documents "inflammatory and perplexing."

Anthem officials have said the people who depend on Blue Cross to cover their medical expenses would see a name change and new insurance cards but would not see any significant coverage differences.

Anthem operates former Blue Cross plans in eight states: Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire and Ohio. It covers about 7.8 million people.

Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Kansas is by far the largest health insurer in the state, with 45 percent of the market. It has 172,000 group and individual policies that cover 400,000 people, and another 315,000 people who work for employers who self-insure but have their plans administered by the Blues.

Blue Cross is owned by its policyholders, and as part of the deal, they would receive up to \$321 million for the company.

Much of the money represents premiums policyholders paid but the company held in reserve to offset future claims.

Blue Cross officials argued that their company was vulnerable in a competitive industry with national players like Aetna and United HealthCare.

As a mutual company, policyholders are the only source of capital for the Kansas Blues, which

cannot reach beyond their territory — all of Kansas except Johnson and Wyandotte counties.

In January, Blue Cross policyholders approved the deal.

The vote was 63,504, or 63.4 percent, in favor and 36,618, or 36.6 percent, against. The 100,122 who voted represented about 58 percent of the 172,038 eligible to vote.

But Kansas doctors, hospitals and nurses, as well as an advocacy group for poor and working-class families were nervous about the conversion of a Kansas company owned by policyholders into a branch of an out-of-state firm with stockholders.

The Kansas Medical Society, the Kansas Hospital Association, the Kansas State Nurses Association and the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved intervened in the proceedings before Sebelius.

## County to review long distance

Sherman County commissioners will review a long distance phone proposal from S & T Telephone of Brewster and set weight limits on Old U.S. 24 at Tuesday's regular meeting.

Both decisions were delayed last week, and the commissioners asked County Attorney Bonnie Selby to re-write part of the resolution dealing with the truck weights.

S & T has asked the county about switching it's long distance account. The commissioners had Deputy Clerk Mary Ann Sneath do a detailed investigation of the county's phone services.

She told the commissioners the local service was under contract for at least three years, but she did not find any restrictions on the long distance service.

The commissioners passed a resolution limiting through truck traffic on old U.S. 24, and are looking at establishing a fine for violations as well as setting maximum weight limits on the road to reduce damage caused by overweight trucks.

Steve Evert and Jeff Krall of the hospital ambulance service will appear to talk to the commissioners about a proposal for getting a new ambulance.

The commissioners also will:

- Update the emergency vehicle designation list and review a request for an emergency vehicle designation,
- Have a report on working with the Thomas County household hazardous waste program.
- Consider dues for the year for Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development, and Northwest Kansas Planning and Development.
- Hear from Charles Krull of Blue Cross and Blue Shield about the county health insurance plan.

## Stores gamble with love this week

The second annual "Don't Gamble with Love" Valentine's promotion begins today and continues through 5 p.m. Thursday, St. Valentine's Day.

When you visit any of the participating Goodland businesses, collect one randomly drawn playing card.

To encourage visits to the participating businesses, the cards differ significantly. Winning hands must be from at least four of the seven participating businesses. Players also may collect up

to two randomly drawn playing cards from *The Goodland Daily News*.

Once you collect at least five cards, present your best poker hand to the paper's business office by noon Friday.

In observance of Valentine's Day, hearts will be the high suit for this game of five-card poker.



Hallmark, American Communications, Second Chance Bar & Grill, Aten Department Store, B-E's Jewelry, Serendipity Flower Shop and *The News*.

The high poker hand will receive a free dinner for two, on Saturday at Second Chance.

You must be 18 or older to win, but no purchase is necessary.

## Tech college plans events for students, townspeople

By Doug Stephens  
The Goodland Daily News

The city has proclaimed this week as National Technical College Week, and the Northwest Kansas Technical College has events planned for every day.

Tonight, the college is planning a "Vegas Night" at 7 p.m. at the student union. Students can purchase play money and gamble with it at roulette, blackjack or poker, or by shooting craps. At the end of the night, they can purchase prizes with their winnings.

The event will probably not raise any money, said Patti Purvis, admissions coordinator at the college. It is more of a student social, she said, and is sponsored by the student council.

On Tuesday, the school will hold a reception to honor retired and former employees.

Wednesday is "Bring a Friend to School Day," and students are asked to bring a friend to attend classes with them. Thursday is Staff Appreciation Day.

Friday is the annual senior day. Area high school seniors are invited to tour the campus and attend presentations of each of the school's programs.

Along with the daily events, staff members have written two columns for publication in *The Goodland Daily News*, which will appear later this week.

All week, the college will be open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for anyone who is interested in seeing the school. The college would prefer any who want a tour call ahead, but appointments are only necessary for large groups, said President Kenneth Clouse.

This year's theme is "Want Career Success? Get Career Skills." The week is an annual event, Purvis said, but this is the first year the school will have events for each day.

The purpose of the program is to allow schools to emphasize the importance of technical careers, said Purvis, and to encourage others to attend the school.