

weather report

61°

at noon



Today

• Sunset, 5:42 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:14 a.m.

• Sunset, 5:43 p.m.

Middy Conditions

• Soil Temperature 24 degrees

• Humidity 15 percent

• Sky mostly sunny

• Winds south, variable

• Barometer 29.91 inches

and falling

• Record High 75° (1956)

• Record Low -15° (1948)

Last 24 Hours*

High 52°

Low 17°

Precipitation —

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy, low in mid 20s, winds west at 10. Tomorrow: Mostly cloudy, high in upper 50s, southwest wind at 10.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday evening, partly cloudy until midnight, then becoming cloudy, low in upper 20s. Thursday, Mostly cloudy, then becoming mostly sunny, high in mid 60s. Friday, partly cloudy a chance of snow during the night, low in mid 30s, high lower 60s.

(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 — \$2.45

Corn — \$1.89 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.89

Loan deficiency payment — 10¢

Milo — \$1.62 bushel

Soybeans — \$3.94 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.82

Loan deficiency payment — \$1.10

Millet — \$3.25 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$9.40 cwt.

NuSun — \$9.70

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$1.16

Confection current — (ask)

Pinto beans — \$26

(Markets provided by Mueller Grain, Sigo 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.

U.S. pressing al-Qaida caves

WASHINGTON — After a bloody day of combat for American forces in Afghanistan, with seven killed and 11 wounded, Pentagon officials said a U.S.-led force of about 2,000 would continue fighting dug-in al-Qaida and Taliban fighters until the enemy were either dead or captured.

The latest American casualties in the five-month-old war came Monday during intense fighting at the opponents' snowy eastern Afghanistan mountain hideout as two twin-rotor troop-carrying helicopters came under attack. Military officials said the opposition force used machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

President Bush said the deaths made him more determined to wipe out al-Qaida. Details on the two helicopter battles were sketchy, and officials initially had said eight U.S. troops had died.

City keeping dumpsters for trash

By Doug Stephens

The Goodland Daily News

After months of debate, the city commission unanimously passed a solid waste ordinance Monday which keeps the existing neighborhood dumpsters and will allow residents to get yard waste dumpsters for a fee.

Acting on a new recommendation from City Manager Ron Pickman and the city staff, given to the commissioners in a memo before the meeting, the city will keep the trash collection system mostly the way it is, making a push to educate people on what can and can't go in their trash. Pickman said it would be the city's last chance to keep costs down.

The memo outlined a reversal of the city's

thinking after weeks of debate, listening to taxpayers and talking with the county. The city had been pushing a system where each home would have its own roll-out container, but that would have been expensive, with consumers having to pay for the containers and the city buying new trucks equipped to dump them.

The large dumpsters will stay in alleys, and homes without alleys will keep their roll-out dumpsters. Residents will be held responsible for what goes in their containers, and people can be fined for putting inappropriate waste in them.

In the memo, Pickman wrote, "At this time staff recommends the municipal solid waste collection system remain as it is. However, it is imperative all customers be informed that Sherman County has

set rules ... and there is a zero tolerance for contaminated loads. That means we have one chance and one chance only to comply with these regulations."

The county has already pulled 11,000 pounds out of the city's trash this year, Pickman said.

"This is our last chance," the manager said. "If we don't follow the rules, we will have to drastically change the system."

Pickman said individual roll-outs for every household would work, but after examining the costs, he said he believed the old system deserved one last chance. Changing the system will be costly, require higher fees, and will cause problems and headaches, he said.

The commissioners decided to give the yellow

yard waste dumpsters back to customers who ask for them. Alley dumpsters will cost \$12 a month, and the cost can be split between the households that use it. It will be the responsibility of the person who signed for the dumpster to pay the cost and collect from neighbors who signed up for it.

The yard dumpsters will be fitted with plastic lids, and customers can put locks on them. The dumpsters have to be unlocked on collection day, or the city won't pick them up, Pickman said.

They will be available from March through November. The dumpsters will be picked up and stored in November, Pickman said, and will be placed in March.

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Senate districts vetoed

Governor cancels rural-Dem victory

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Bill Graves on Tuesday vetoed a bill redrawing state Senate districts, saying he questioned the proposal's legality and fairness.

In his veto message to legislators, Graves pointed out that the plan, which came up as a floor amendment, did not receive committee or public review.

"This bill did not go through that process, and received no review by any committee or by the general public," he said.

The proposal before Graves was drafted by a coalition of Democrats and conservative Republicans and offered as an amendment during Senate debate.

The coalition substituted its proposal for one endorsed by the Senate Reapportionment Committee and backed by Senate President Dave Kerr.

Coalition members said their proposal was fairer to Democrats and conservative Republicans and preserved the existing cores of each of the 40 Senate districts. Critics suggested the proposal was designed to help conservatives, particularly in Johnson County.

Graves noted that by tradition one chamber does not alter a redistricting proposal for the other chamber. The House approved the Senate plan last week.

The tradition meant, Graves said, the public had no chance to pressure legislators for changes.

"Clearly, this does not protect the core of existing districts," he said. "But more importantly, it negatively impacts the people of these districts and their ability to have a voice in the Senate."

Another key difference between the coalition's plan and the one backed by Kerr was the treatment of Sen. Janis Lee, D-Kensington.

In the bill before Graves, Lee would have shared a district with Sen. Larry Salmans, R-Hanston. The plan supported by Kerr put her in a district with Sen. Stan Clark, R-Oakley, one Democrats said would be tougher for her to win.

Lee said that in an effort to drive a wedge between the Democrats and their conservative Republican partners, Kerr last week offered a deal to give Lee her own district, freeing her from having to run against Salmans.

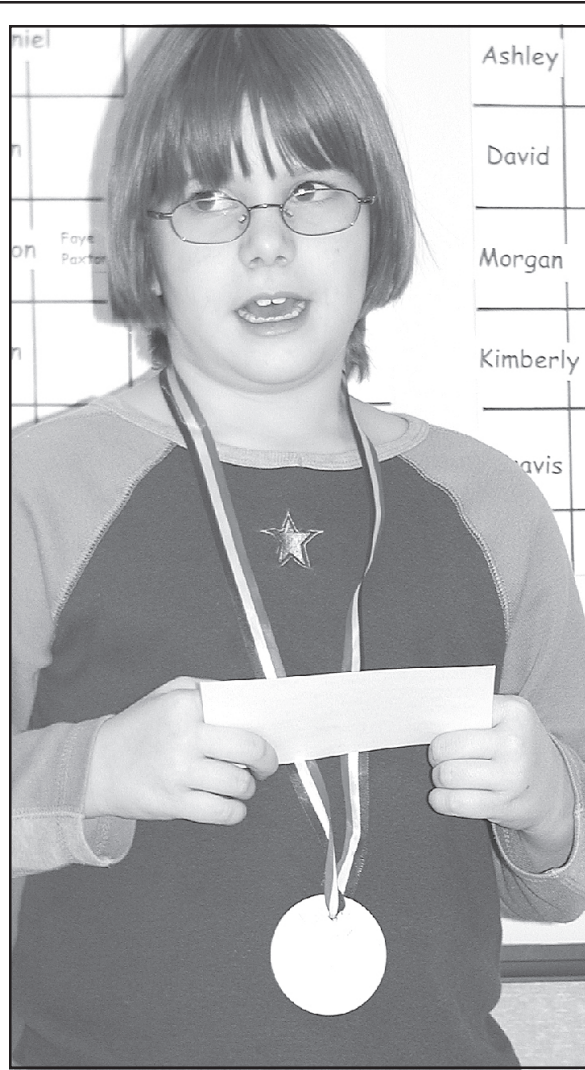
But she would have to sell out the 11 GOP conservatives who joined with the Democrats to form the coalition. Lee said she isn't willing to do that.

Kerr said he did not offer her a deal. All 21 of the senators who voted for the map sent to Graves signed a letter to Graves last week urging him to sign it into law.

But Kerr said Friday that the outcome of Senate redistricting was "extremely distasteful for everyone," and promised the process would start over in the event of a veto.

Graves urged Democrats and Republicans to reopen negotiations and promised that he would not make a deal involving other issues.

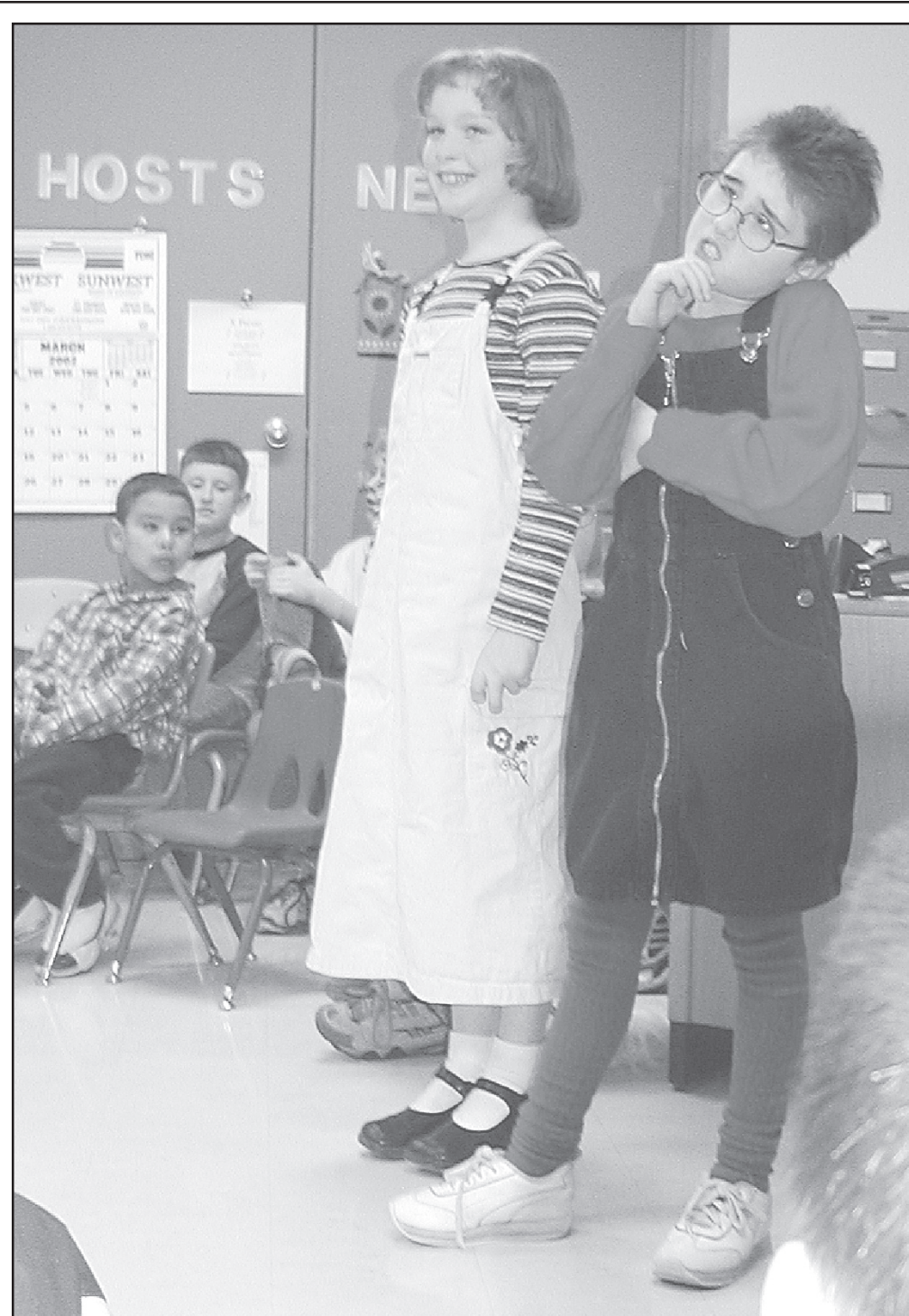
"I would discourage anyone from thinking this issue should be tied to the many other issues we face this session," he wrote in his message. "I will not negotiate or 'trade' votes on this issue for any other issue this session."



Show for board

Page Seeger, a West Elementary second grader from Pat Pickett's class, (above) showed the Goodland School Board Monday the silver medal she won in the class Olympics. Sydnee Thornburg and Haley Linnell (right), second graders from Susan McCall's class, recited a funny poem they memorized "I wonder why Dad is so thoroughly mad?" for the board, which met at the school.

Photos by Rachel Miscal / The Goodland Daily News



County, hospital agree on ambulance

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

The Sherman County commissioners Thursday approved paying half of the cost of a new box-type ambulance for the hospital and additional money for doctor recruitment.

Hospital Administrator Jay Jolly and Steve Evert of the ambulance service told commissioners the hospital board had approved spending \$32,500, half the cost of the ambulance.

Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld asked if the new ambulance would need any equipment. Evert said there was enough between what can be transferred from the old ambulance and what is already on the new one to equip it.

Jolly said there would be a need for

additional equipment when the move is made to advanced life support service. Evert said they will wait until air ambulance operator Eagle Med is up and running here to be sure the new equipment matches what they are using.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the money should be taken out of the special health services sales tax.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede asked if there was an effort to recruit people in Kanorado to help with the ambulance there, which is short of volunteers.

Evert said a class is being planned for rural responders, which is the first step, and that the state may help. He said at least three people from Kanorado have indicated interest. He said the class takes about six months.

Jolly said the hospital has another request for assistance with paramedic training and that the board has agreed to pay Bruce Gleason \$3,500 for expenses. He said the total cost is about \$20,000 and that Eagle Med has agreed to pay half. Of the other half, the hospital was asked to pay one-third, the county one-third and the hospital foundation the final third.

Rasure made a motion to approve the \$32,500 for the ambulance purchase. Tiede seconded, and it passed unanimously with Chairman Chuck Frankenfeld voting in favor.

The commissioners asked about the doctor recruitment efforts, and about a recounting of what has transpired over the past year.

Jolly said they are working with a Goodland native, Dr. Travis Daise, who is about to enter his third year of residency in Salina. He said they hope Daise can be one of the temporary doctors who come on the weekends.

The commissioners asked that the county and hospital exchange checks to show that the funds are being reimbursed for Dr. Jed McKee and Dr. Greg Bongers, who have moved away, and that then the county would then return the money to continue the doctor recruitment effort.

Jolly said that could be done. He said the county would receive \$58,723 in reimbursement and asked that the county issue a check for \$74,204 for the costs of Daise's education.

Farmers fighting stress, woes

By Roxana Hegeman

Associated Press Writer

WICHITA — For years, Helen Holcomb watched her husband drag himself out of the house each morning to work on his farm. She listened to him complain about the low commodity prices and high cost of tractors. She saw his health deteriorate.

"I don't sleep as well at night. My blood pressure is higher. I guess mentally I just don't have the fire that I used to have," said Chuck Holcomb, who farms in Pratt and Kingman counties.

Helen Holcomb finally got tired of all the complaining and told her 50-year-old husband it was time they did something. They began calling their farming neighbors in five counties to put together the Agricultural Task Force of

Southcentral Kansas.

Saturday, the group is holding its first seminar — the Farm Crisis Seminar. It includes workshops on ag law, mediation services, financial planning, career choices, restructuring, stress reduction and legislative issues.

The seminar begins at 8:45 a.m. at the Skyline Schools in Pratt.

"We are all pretty much in financial trouble — one way or the other," Chuck Holcomb said. "We need to get some help from some experts, especially stress reduction. My wife has told me, no matter what else, you will be at that workshop."

The Holcombs probably won't be alone.

After years of low commodity prices — made worse by last summer's

drought — many Kansas farm families are struggling to pay their operating loans and household bills.

The number of cases at Kansas Ag Mediation Service has increased between 25 and 35 percent compared to the same time last year, said Forrest Buhler, attorney for the agency.

Many are farmers dealing with years of low cash flow, while others come from drought-stricken areas. Last summer's drought hit hard in parts of south central and western Kansas.

But initial farm loan delinquency figures are showing farmers in far better shape than many people were expecting. Most of the loans at Farm Service Agency — the lender of last resort for

Crop stressed by dry season

WICHITA (AP) — Recent moisture has not been enough to improve the drought-stressed Kansas wheat crop, the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service said Monday.

The agency rated wheat condition as 12 percent very poor, 24 percent poor and 38 percent fair. Only 24 percent was rated good and just 2 percent excellent.

Statewide, wheat has a poorly developed root system — particularly in the western parts of the state, the agency reported.

About 61 percent of the wheat has no wind damage, and 59 percent has no freeze damage.

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