

New president quits in Venezuela

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — President Hugo Chavez, the former army paratrooper who polarized Venezuela with his strong-arm rule and whose friendship with Cuba and Iraq irritated the United States, resigned under military pressure Friday after a massive opposition demonstration ended in a bloodbath.

Chavez, 47, presented his resignation to the military after top commanders confronted him at the presidential palace. Before dawn he left the palace — wearing a military fatigues and red beret, as he did when he led a failed 1992 coup — and was put in detention at Caracas' Fort Tiuna army base to face possible charges.

Pedro Carmona, head of Venezuela's largest business association, announced he would head a transitional government to be installed later Friday. Carmona quickly ended a strike that had slowed down oil production by Venezuela — the third biggest supplier to the United States — and promised to throw out Chavez-era economic laws opposed by the private sector.

Chavez quit just hours after at least 14 people were killed and 250 wounded during a 150,000-strong opposition demonstration in downtown Caracas. Chavez had ordered National Guard troops and civilian gunmen to stop the marchers from reaching the palace, military officers said.

But opposition to Chavez's three-year presidency had been growing for some time. His one-time 80 percent popularity ratings plunge to below 30 percent this year as he repeatedly accused business leaders, labor, the news media and even Roman Catholic Church leaders of conspiring to overthrow him.

The armed forces — which has traditionally strong ties to the U.S. military — resented Chavez's distancing of Venezuela from Washington. Many also disliked Chavez's ties with leftist Colombian guerrillas and with Fidel Castro's Cuba: Many senior officers had fought Cuban-backed communist guerrillas in the 1960s and early 1970s. President Bush called Friday for a quick return to peace in Venezuela. Bush "is saddened by the loss of life, and the president hopes now that the situation will be one of tranquility and democracy," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

Police warned Friday that "Chavistas" — supporters of the president — were distributing weapons, especially in the hillside slums surrounding the capital. Officers raided storehouses, seizing dozens of fire-

arms. Security forces searched for members of Chavez's Cabinet and arrested ex-Interior Minister Ramon Rodriguez Chacin. Civilians tried to attack Chacin as he was led from a building by police officers.

With Chavez's ouster, jubilant executives at Venezuela's state oil monopoly, who had been engaged in a work slowdown, promised to bring production up to speed as quickly as possible. Venezuela is the world's fourth biggest exporter.

Oil prices dipped on news of Chavez' downfall amid expectations of a production increase. Oil markets have been concerned over supply after Iraq's decision this week to suspend exports to Israeli allies.

Chavez was being held at the army base while investigators decide what charges he could face for Thursday's violence, said army commander Gen. Efrain Vasquez Velasco. Chavez asked to be allowed to go into exile in Cuba, but the military turned him down, army Gen. Roman Fuemayor told Globovision television. "He has to be held accountable to his country," Fuemayor said.

In downtown Caracas, streets were littered with debris — and in some places, stained with blood. After a night when thousands went out and celebrated, shops and businesses remained closed, and most people simply stayed home, stunned and wondering what would come next. Buses were half-empty, and those reporting to work hurried amid rubble-strewn sidewalks.

Carmona, who backed the strikes that helped bring down Chavez, said one of his first acts as interim president would be to reinstate several military officers sacked in recent months for criticizing Chavez.

"Everyone will feel that there exists plenty of freedom, pluralism and respect for the state of law, for values, and ethical and moral principles," Carmona said.

Carlos Ortega, head of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation, which also called the strikes, said the interim government must "immediately resolve the problems facing workers," including unpaid salary increases and some \$21 billion in back wages and pensions.

Cuba, whose leader Castro is a personal friend of Chavez, denounced the Venezuelan's overthrow, with the Communist Party daily Granma saying it was the result of a "conspiracy" by the country's wealthy classes, corrupt politicians and news media.

City to vote on mayor

Goodland city commissioners will appoint a mayor and vice mayor at their meeting Monday at the city administration building.

Every April, the commission votes picks two of its members to hold those positions, said City Clerk Mary Volk. The current mayor is Tom Rohr, and Rick Billinger is the vice mayor.

The commission will also talk about yard waste collection and repealing part of the solid waste code. They plan to make up a committee to address

ways to handle construction and demolition debris.

They will appoint a member of the commission to serve on the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency, and will make three appointments to the museum board.

The commission also is expected to adopt the 2002 edition of the National Electric Code.

City Manager Ron Pickman will talk about an ethics session at the Municipal Leadership Academy.

Man in hospital after arrest

A Goodland man was arrested after a fight with his family Wednesday night and later was taken to the hospital.

Charges of aggravated assault, domestic battery and disorderly conduct are pending against the man, police reports say.

Between 7:30 and 9:40 p.m., police say, Billy Carson allegedly argued with two of his children, Marshall Carson, 19, and a 13-year-old daughter, at their home at 910 W. 17th Street. During the

argument, witnesses say, he allegedly threatened Marshall with a knife or cutting object.

Police reports say Carson may have been drinking.

After the man was arrested, officers reported that he was suffering a seizure-like fit, and took him to Goodland Regional Medical Center.

Carson was in stable condition at the hospital Thursday, said Dale Schields, resource development director at the hospital.

public notice

NOTICE

In order to help encourage the clean up of the City of Goodland and Sherman County, the Sherman County Commissioners will waive all C & D charges (Construction and Demolition) to all entities of Sherman County, including the City of Goodland and ESC (Kevin Butt's) trash services until January 1, 2003. The charges for tires, freon recovery, and concrete material, block and brick will remain in effect.

During this time, we propose creating a seven person committee to come up with proposals to help facilitate recommendations to eliminate C & D items going into the

municipal solid waste stream and solutions to get the items to the landfill in a convenient and economical method. This seven person committee would consist of one county representative, one city representative, two citizens each chosen by the county and city respectively, and one member by the six members.

We all realize that the days when we could take all of our trash to one big hole and bury it were much easier on everyone; however, we now need to keep in mind that as we continue to create more and more trash we need to learn to deal with it more responsibly, not only for

Helping out at the art center



Rich Whitmore put a doorknob in the door he was installing at the Carnegie Arts Center on Thursday. He had help from Duane Hanke — both are on the board at center. The door and the rental tools to install it were donated by Rasure Lumber.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

County will waive fees at landfill

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Daily News

Sherman County commissioners Tuesday approved suspending most fees for construction and demolition debris until the end of the year, and delayed for at least a week a decision on a new loader for the landfill.

Commissioners said the suspension, effective Monday, is to help encourage a clean up of the City of Goodland and Sherman County and keep construction debris out of city trash dumpsters. Fees for tires, freon recovery and the concrete and brick to be crushed will remain in effect.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure presented the proposal, saying he believes the city is interested in working out a mutual solution to trash disposal problems.

Last month, the county stopped taking city trash for a few hours because people were dumping so much debris in dumpsters.

Public Works Director Curt Way said the city has stationed two people at the transfer station to help sort out the unwanted material.

"There was less of the contamination this past week," Way said. "Most people seem to understand that we are trying to keep from contaminating the ground water at the new landfill, which is what caused the closing of the old site."

He said representatives from Thomas County had wanted to attend a presentation about a trash baler last week, but had the wrong date on their calendar. Way said Thomas County is going through the process to build a new cell in its landfill because water contamination has appeared at their current site.

Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld asked if Way had received any new figures on the trash baler, but Way said he hadn't.

Because they want to look at the baler option, the commissioners delayed a decision about purchasing or

leasing a new loader for the landfill. The loader would cost about \$92,000 and comes with a factory-built landfill package to protect vital parts from being damaged by the trash.

Way said if the commissioners opt for the baler, they could sell the compactor at the landfill. He said the machine cost over \$200,000 used.

Later, the Rev. Steve Rains of Calvary Gospel Church talked to commissioners about plans for the National World Day of Prayer to be held from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. May 2. He said in the past, the ceremony put on by the Ministerial Alliance and has been a 15-minute program. However, this year they plan to expand the program to use the full time.

To do that, they'd like to use a stage or move the ceremony from the grass area to the south.

The commissioners said they thought that would work and asked that Rains keep them informed of his plans.

In other business, the commissioners:

Approved a resolution transferring ownership of Union School building to the city.

Received bids from Yost Farm Supply and Goodland Greenline on a tractor for use at fairgrounds and courthouse.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede asked that for time to review the bids and told the representatives of the two firms the decision would be on the next regular agenda.

Signed a proclamation for communications director Mary Messamore declaring next week as National Telecommunicator Week. She said this is an annual week to honor those who handle the dispatch and technical support.

Received a counter-offer on the lease of county farmland from Alan Townsend and said they would take a look at it and give him a decision soon.

Heard that Daryl West, noxious

weed director, has agreed to handle taking samples from the sewer lagoons at Northern Sun under the direction of a supervisor from Hays until he can be certified by the state. This is expected to be effective on May 1.

"I am game for another challenge," West told the commissioners.

Heard from Crystal Linsner that the state has canceled the household hazardous waste training she had planned to attend.

She said there is another one scheduled in May, but she is not sure this will work out.

She said the state officials said that without the training, the only way Sherman County could do a collection would be to have someone from another county who has been trained come to supervise.

Linsner said she felt the people in Hays would be willing to help with the first collection.

Approved an application form for anyone who is interested in serving on a county board or commission. They plan to establish a list of all the boards in the courthouse to let people know what boards there are and who is serving on each.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m. The next commission meeting will be 8 a.m. Tuesday in the commission room on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway Ave.

Sherrer a possible candidate

GOVERNOR, from Page 1

choice. Gov. Bill Graves, a moderate, cannot seek a third term under the Kansas Constitution.

"The moderate wing of the party seems to have a lot of trouble finding a candidate it can settle on," said Sen. Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, a moderate.

Shallenburger and Wichita Mayor Bob Knight still are in the GOP race. Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer is considering a run, as is House Speaker Kent Glasscock, Stovall's lieutenant governor running mate.

Sherrer said Friday that he plans to make an announcement early next week.

He said the weekend will give him time to talk with family and friends about a possible campaign.

"It's my timetable, not anyone else's," Sherrer said.

Senate President Dave Kerr plans to announce his intentions after the Legislature ends its session in May. Sen. David Adkins, of Leawood, now a Republican candidate for attorney general, would not rule out the governor's race Wednesday.

Shallenburger said he views Sherrer as a likely candidate even if Glasscock decides to run, and that there is a good chance Kerr will enter the race.

"I still think not everybody is in the race," he said.

As the only announced Democratic candidate, Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius no opposition so far.

Many GOP moderates argue that as a conservative nominee, Shallenburger would be unable to unite the party, allowing Sebelius to win. Some moderate leaders, including Graves and Sherrer, wanted the party to unite behind a single candidate to have a better chance of capturing the nomination.

But Sherrer said he is not sure moderates can unite.

"I don't know if there's a big game plan at this point," Sherrer said.

So far, prominent moderates haven't viewed Knight as being in their camp.

Budget sent; money needed

TOPEKA (AP) — Senators have accomplished their goal of sending a budget to the House for its consideration.

Now they must find the money to fund it.

On a 22-18 vote, the Senate approved a plan that would narrow the state's estimated \$700 million budget gap to somewhere between \$306 million and \$416 million at the end of the next fiscal year, depending on how much lawmakers take from the state's rainy day funds. Fiscal 2003 begins July 1.

In explaining their votes, few senators called the budget bill good public policy.

"I vote no," said Sen. Christine Downey, D-Newton, "because I didn't get a darn thing I wanted."

Sen. Robert Tyson, R-Parker, another no vote, said: "Our number one priority is not to any agency or department. It's to the taxpayers."

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Let's all try to make our trash system work better for us and the people of tomorrow.

NOTE: THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OFFICIALLY WAIVED THE C & D FEES AT THEIR APRIL 9, 2002, MEETING AND IT WILL GO INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 15, 2002, UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2003.

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