

**weather report**

**69°**  
at noon



**Today**

• Sunset, 7:37 p.m.

**Tomorrow**

• Sunrise, 5:50 a.m.  
• Sunset, 7:38 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil Temperature 47 degrees
- Humidity 23 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds calm
- Barometer 30.09 inches and falling
- Record High 88° (1967)
- Record Low 25° (1956)

**Last 24 Hours\***

High 74°  
Low 31°  
Precipitation none

**Northwest Kansas Forecast**

Tonight: mostly cloudy with 20 percent chance of showers, low lower 40s, winds southwest 10-15 m.p.h. Tomorrow: mostly cloudy with 30 percent chance of rain after midnight, high near 70, low near 40, winds northeast 10-20 m.p.h.

**Extended Forecast**

Wednesday: partly sunny with 30 percent chance of rain in the afternoon, high mid 50s, low upper 30s.  
(National Weather Service)  
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.  
\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

## Storms bring rain, hail

*Water helps wheat; stones don't hurt*

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

Weekend storms dropped a little more than half an inch of rain on Sherman County and threatened young wheat plants with dime-sized hail — but probably did a lot more good than harm.

Brooke Taber, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Goodland, said .69 of an inch of rain fell in Goodland on Friday night and Saturday. He said there were reports of pea-sized hail in Goodland early Saturday morning and dime-sized hail 11 to 13 miles southwest of town that evening.

Farmers growing wheat southwest of Goodland say they saw a few stones, but there was no damage to the crop, which broke dormancy last month and is starting its spring growth spurt. They say the rain helped the thirsty plants, which haven't had a good drink in more than a month — but more moisture is needed.

Linda Townsend, who farms with her husband Alan south of Goodland, said a few stones fell at the beginning of one of the storms, but the hail didn't damage the short plants and didn't pile up in the field. She said she hasn't heard any talk of crop damage from her neighbors.

Townsend said she thinks it was the biggest rain they've seen since last July. It helped a little, she said, but the wheat needs more moisture to continue growing.

Nathan Emig, who farms 12 miles southwest of Goodland with his father Richard, said the crop in that area was in poor shape before the rain. He said the rain came too late for some of it, but will help plants that are still growing.

Like Townsend, Emig said the plants could use more water.

"Some still has the potential to do well," he said, "but we're definitely behind on moisture in the subsoil."

Emig said lack of rain stunts growth and cuts yields.

Taber said the rain this weekend may have broken a dry-cycle.

"The main problem," he said, "is that we've been lacking in low-level moisture from the Gulf of Mexico."

Without low-level moisture, Taber said, storm systems and cold fronts that moved through recently had nothing to feed off and just brought in strong winds.

"Now that pattern may start to change," he said, noting that there is a chance for rain on Tuesday and Wednesday night.

Taber said Sherman County hasn't seen significant moisture since March 24, when a spring storm dropped 6 inches of snow, which translated into .34 of an inch of moisture.

It's been a dry year, he said, as Sherman County is so far 1.63 inches below the average rainfall level. The average is 3.42 inches by May 1 and just 1.79 inches of rain has fallen on the county this year.



A clay fairy drank water off a leaf at the Home and Garden Show on Sunday at Max Jones Fieldhouse. The fountain was a feature of the Cobblestone Floral and Garden Center display.

Photos by Rachel Miscall and Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

## Hospital seeks tax credits

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland Regional Medical Center will apply for nearly a quarter of a million dollars in tax credits to finance a new computer information system.

The board approved the tax-credit application at its meeting Tuesday, but put off a decision on changing the liability policy for the airplane used to fly specialists in from Denver and Hays.

The hospital is applying to the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing for \$245,000 in tax credits to pay for a new information system. The current system is obsolete, Administrator Jay Jolly said, and the hospital would need to upgrade the mainframe anyway.

With the present system, he said, the hospital staff has to enter information manually at each stage of service. This wastes time that doctors and nurses could better spend caring for patients, he said, and there is a greater chance that errors will be made when information needs to be entered several times by different people.

Some information is handwritten in the present system, he said, but with the system the hospital wants to get, all information would be entered electronically.

Handwriting can be misread, and the patient's information is entered separately for each department instead of being a single comprehensive file.

Jolly said more than one person could have access to a patient's file at a time with the new system, which in many cases would save time.

And the system would include a fiber optic data line that would handle all modem, Internet and other types of computer traffic. With the present system, information is transmitted on phone lines, Jolly said, which has at times makes the phone lines inaccessible.

The hospital's aircraft insurance policy covers liability up to \$10 million, Jolly said, but it may be wise for the hospital to increase the coverage to \$25 million. This would increase the premium by \$6,300 year.

Board member Larry McCants suggested negotiating for \$15 million. The hospital needs to watch its spending more, he said, and \$15 million would give them \$5 million per doctor when they have three on board.

"If we can't get \$15 million in coverage," he said, "maybe we should keep it at \$10."

The board voted to ask if the coverage can be increased to \$15 million before making a decision.

## Extra time unpopular

AGRA (AP) — At this town's small grocery store, manager Bette Latham worked the counter and talked about the Legislature between customers.

She wasn't happy with the news coming 190 miles away from the Statehouse to her hometown, a farming community of about 300 residents along U.S. 36 in Phillips County.

What upset her one recent evening was the idea that Gov. Bill Graves might call legislators back into special session in June.

Earlier this month, Graves said there was a good chance he would have to call the first special session since December 1989 to get a budget he is willing to sign.

"I think they haven't done their job," Latham said of legislators. "I think they knew finances were a problem, and they could've settled it."

Melanie Molzahn pushed a cart to the counter and joined the conversation. Molzahn, 28, lives on a farm north of town and teaches computers and technology to middle-schoolers in the Eastern Heights school district.

"It would be nice if something were decided," she said. "I wouldn't mind if I knew they were going to do something worthwhile, rather than pay the Legislature and bureaucrats."

**local markets**



**Noon**

- Wheat — \$2.49 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.40
- Loan deficiency payment — 5¢
- Corn — \$1.77 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.76
- Loan deficiency payment — 23¢
- Milo — \$1.46 hundredweight
- Soybeans — \$3.99 bushel
- Posted county price — \$4.07
- Loan deficiency payment — 85¢
- Millet — \$3.25 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$8.90 cwt.
- NuSun — \$9.05 cwt.
- Loan deficiency prmt. — 54¢
- Confection current — \$16/\$8 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$27

(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.

## Tornadoes kill at least 6

LA PLATA, Md. — Tornado-ravaged cities from Missouri to Maryland picked up the pieces today after an unusually wide and potent swath of thunderstorms plowed across the eastern half of the nation, killing at least six people.

Maryland was hit especially hard Sunday evening, with a tornado causing at least three deaths and 93 injuries in two counties south of the nation's capital. A twister caused serious damage to at least a 10-mile stretch of this town of about 6,500.

"They're banged up and shocked, and they're frightened," said Civista Medical Center chief executive Chris Stefanides.

Jack Cahalan, a spokesman with the Maryland Emergency Management Administration, said 12 people were critically injured and 81 had minor to serious injuries.

## Snakes feature of show

By Doug Stephens

The Goodland Daily News

A constant stream of people ambled through the KLOE/KKCI/KWGB Home and Garden Show on Saturday and Sunday at Max Jones Fieldhouse, starting first with a chance to touch a snake.

Tammy Robben, who helped work the Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup booth, said it was a good-sized crowd. The group displayed two rattlesnakes in a cage and let people pet Patty, a much safer 10-year-old python.

"There seem to be plenty of people here," she said. "Not everyone wants to touch the snake, but they all look."

After kids, and some grown-ups, conquered their fears and touched Patty, there were cooking shows to watch, products to test, demonstrations to watch and people to meet.

"I like coming here just to catch up and talk to people," said Josh Walker of Goodland. "The products are nice to see, and the food's not bad, but for me, it's a social occasion."

Jim Tester, a member of the traveling cooking show Health Craft from Tennessee, says he enjoys shows like the one here.

"People here have been much



Cooper Slough, age 7, touched Patty the Python on Saturday at the Home and Garden Show. Patty was part of the display at the Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup booth.

friendlier than most places I go to," he said. "No hecklers."

Sunday was the big day for the show, said station owner Marty Melia, but with the help of the weather, Saturday may have been a

little busier than expected.

"The rain helped us out some," said Curtis Duncan of KLOE/KKCI/KWGB, which hosted the show. "People couldn't work on their yards, so they came out here."

## Hospital asks county to renew tax levy

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Goodland Regional Medical Center has asked Sherman County commissioners to renew the special 6-mill property tax levy for the hospital, and Tuesday the commissioners will consider a resolution to continue the levy for three years.

The hospital has had the tax for several years, and the levy was last renewed in 1998. At that time, there was no opposition and no election to vote on the tax.

Having the commissioners' approve the resolution is the first step in the process. State law says if there is no petition filed within 30 days after the second publication of the resolution, the levy will go into effect without a vote of the citizens. If a petition is filed, the commissioners can decide to drop the

request or place the issue on the ballot for the Aug 6 primary election.

If the resolution is passed by the commissioners Tuesday, County Clerk Janet Rumpel said, it should be published on May 15 and May 22. She said people will have 30 days after the second publication to file petitions, which is June 21.

The timing is to allow the issue to be placed on the August ballot if a petition is filed and the commissioners decide to put it to a vote.

"The money generated by the mill levy will be used to help offset reimbursement shortfalls from third-party payers for services to patients and to improve services and programs offered to the citizens of Sherman County," said a letter from the hospital requesting the renewal of the property tax in a letter in November, signed by Doug

Irvin, board chairman.

The property tax is separate from a special one-quarter-percent sales tax collected by the county to help pay for health care services.

Dale Shields and Penny Nemecheck from the hospital are scheduled to talk to commissioners about an application for tax credits to help pay for the second phase of the hospital's computer accounting and information system. The hospital is seeking \$350,000 from tax credits,

\$50,000 from its budget and \$100,000 from the special sales tax fund. In other business the commissioners will:

- Consider bids for a farm lease on ground near the landfill.
- Make appointments to the Smoky Garden and Rural Fire District boards.
- Appoint someone to represent

Sherman County on the Southeast Colorado and East Central Recycling Board.

• Discuss information from Rhoads Construction on possible expansion and remodeling of the county transfer station.

• Receive a letter of resignation from Dr. Robert McCullough as the county's deputy district coroner.

• Hear the annual report and budget request from High Plains Mental Health.

• Hear Dorendo Harrel, county health department head, about a contract for a day care program.

• Discuss a fairground lease for a special tractor pull program.

The commissioners meet at 8 a.m. in the commissioner room on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway Ave.