

weather report

49°
at noon



Today

• Sunset, 7:40 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 5:46 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:41 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 50 degrees
- Humidity 58 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds west 9 m.p.h.
- Barometer 29.98 inches and falling
- Record High 94° (1965)
- Record Low 23° (1967)

Last 24 Hours*

High 53°
Low 35°
Precipitation .03

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: mostly clear, low mid 30s, winds south 10-20 m.p.h. Tomorrow: partly sunny and warmer, high mid 70s, low mid 40s, winds southwest 10-15 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: mostly sunny, high mid 70s, low upper 40s. Sunday: partly cloudy with chance of showers and thunderstorms, high mid 70s.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.52 bushel
- New Crop — \$2.50 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.45
- Corn — \$1.79 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.77
- Loan deficiency payment — 22¢
- Milo — \$1.48 bushel
- Soybeans — \$3.99 bushel
- Posted county price — \$4.03
- Loan deficiency payment — 89¢
- Millet — \$3.25 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$8.95 cwt.
- NuSun — \$9.10 cwt.
- Loan deficiency prnt. — 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.

Arafat let out of Ramallah

RAMALLAH, West Bank — A pale but jubilant Yasser Arafat emerged from his West Bank headquarters today, blinking in the sunlight and flashing victory signs after Israeli troops withdrew from his compound and released the Palestinian leader from months of confinement.

As the siege in Ramallah came to an end, the monthlong standoff at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity took a turn for the worse. Israeli troops fired at three armed Palestinians walking from the besieged compound into Manger Square, killing one and wounding at least two who staggered back into the shrine, the army said. Palestinians returned fire.

Hours earlier, a fire broke out during another gunbattle, damaging several rooms and offices in the compound, but not the church itself.



Planting respect for trees

Mayor Tom Rohr (above) took pictures and momentos from Central Elementary students to fill a time capsule which was planted with a tree (right) Wednesday at Chambers Park. Ed Wolak, city director of public works (bottom right) and City Manager Ron Pickman watched K and K Tree Service plant the tree, which replaces one that recently died and was cut down. The event was to commemorate Arbor Day, usually the last Friday in April in Kansas.

Photos by Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News



Tools help blind live independent

By Eric Yankey

The Goodland Daily News

Kansas Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired wants Kansans to understand that losing one's vision is not the end of independence.

The organization's mission is to help blind people by providing them with services and tools to overcome not only the physical barriers brought on by blindness, but the fear of change.

A team of visually impaired people with the state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired visited Goodland last week.

After doing a lunch presentation for the Business Advisory Council, the group stopped by the Goodland Regional Medical Center.

Team members told business council members that the division can help with job searches, life skills training, access to medical services and techni-

cal assistance. They talked about tools they use to make their lives and jobs easier and about a rehabilitation center in Topeka that helps blind people become independent.

Dianne Hemphill, the division administrator from Topeka, is visually impaired herself.

She said she uses a variety of helpful technologies in her job. Hemphill said she wants to help all visually impaired or blind Kansans to "maintain dignity and self-confidence."

Abio-Tona Sokari is both a medical doctor and a doctor of philosophy. He currently is a professor of Human Anatomy and Patho Physiology at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He has taught and practiced medicine all over the world, including Scotland and Nigeria.

Recently, Dr. Sokari became an "ambassador" for the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

in Topeka. Besides developing a diabetic education course at the center, he said, he also is the center's public relations representative.

Why would a well-known medical researcher and a teacher named Fellow in London's royal Society of Health take on the job of getting the word out about services provided at the Topeka-based rehabilitation center?

"I came to the center, and within four weeks, it turned my life around," Dr. Sokari said. "I thought I would try to give back."

Dr. Sokari said he went blind more than 2 1/2 years ago.

He said his surgeon told him seven years earlier that blindness could occur because of degenerative myopia. The surgeon did not recommend any preparation for blindness and just had him continue to come in for checkups until

County gives center money

Hospital to buy new system

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland Regional Medical Center is seeking money to upgrade the hospital computer system, and asked the Sherman County commissioners Tuesday for money to support the program.

Hospital representatives asked the county to give \$100,000 for a computer system that will save time and improve service at the hospital. The commissioners agreed to give the hospital the money out of a fund for health services.

In related action, the commissioners unanimously approved the resolution to provide a special six-mill levy for the hospital.

This will be published in May, and if there is no protest petition it would be part of the county property tax levy for the next three years. If there is a protest petition, it could go to a vote of the people in August.

Dale Schields and Penny Nemecek appeared on behalf of the hospital to explain the program. Schields said Jay Jolly, the hospital administrator, was out of town and unable to attend the meeting. He said Jolly had talked individually to the commissioners about the need for the program.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he had made Jolly explain it several times to be sure he understood it. Commissioners Kevin Rasure and Chuck Frankenfeld indicated they had spent time with Jolly on the issue.

Schields said the total of the program would be about \$500,000, and that the hospital would be seeking approval of tax credits from the state to raise about \$350,000, and would contribute \$50,000 from operating savings.

Nemecek explained that the current information system is unworkable, and that the hospital has to work around systems to accomplish what a new sys-

tem would handle with ease.

She said there is a problem with the number of phone lines that connect to the Internet, and that at times they have to issue a "Code 0" to have everyone using the phone lines disconnect so people can call the hospital or make calls out.

The current system does not allow coordination of many of the departments, and means nurses spend many additional hours manually updating charts. There are many other examples, she said, and the new system is expected to save quite a bit in labor costs.

Schields said the hospital is asking the county to provide \$100,000 from the special health services fund, which is raised by a one-quarter percent sales tax.

The commissioners jointly agreed that the computer program was important, and wanted to know what would happen if the tax credits are not available.

Nemecek said they should know about the tax credits by July 1, and that if they were not available it would delay the project. She said they would continue working on it by piecing it out over the next couple of years.

"We cannot afford not to do this," Schields said. "We have to move forward and reduce the manual data entry hours."

Rasure asked if the \$100,000 request was for this year, and Schields said yes it would be needed later this year.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel was asked to determine the balance in the sales tax fund. She said there was about \$158,000 available at this time.

Rasure made the motion to approve giving the hospital \$100,000 for the computer upgrade program. Frankenfeld seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with Tiede voting in favor.

"We cannot afford not to do this. We have to move forward and reduce the manual data entry hours."

- Dale Schields
hospital representative

Mental health has increase in patients

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

Members of the High Plains Mental Health Center board told the Sherman County commissioners Tuesday there was an increase of about 10 percent in the number of people seeking help last year, but they were not asking for any increase in tax money.

Executive Director Kermit George said the High Plains Mental Health Center board had developed two budgets — one with the same level of state aid, and one with a cut in state aid.

"No matter which way it goes with the Legislature we are not asking you to increase your budget," George said.

Last year, George had reported an 8 percent increase in Sherman County, and said the largest group was young people from 10 to 19 years of age, who accounted for 22 percent (53) of the 238 patients seen.

In the report, George said there were less in the 10-19 age group, but it remains the largest with 49 patients. The second largest age group was people from 45-59 years of age with 42 patients. George said over 72 percent of those being seen are from families with an annual income of under \$25,000. Of that group, the largest number (29 percent) are those with \$5,000 or less annual family income.

This year, the number of married people accounted for 38 percent (69) while the singles had dropped into a close second at 37 percent (67).

People with a high school education made up 39 percent of the patients (52). Those with some college or vocational schooling were 19 percent (25).

Looking at the source of referrals, George said most were made by the person themselves, family or a friend in 54 percent of the cases. The courts and law enforcement referred 6 percent, schools referred 6 percent and doctors or hospitals referred 17 percent.

Mood disorders continue as the largest diagnosis with 94. Looking at the diagnosis breakdown for the previous year, George said the largest number, 66, were mood disorders, which includes depression.

Turning to the budget, George said the difference between the cost of service and total revenue received for Sherman County patients was \$37,271 which the center had covered.

"We are mandated to provide what is needed," George said.

John Peptis, manager of the Sherman County Center, said his people are working well with the schools and that case managers are helping a number of people. Meripat Bowman, Sherman County board member, was present as was Diane Stithem of Hoxie and Karen Beery of Hays.

George said the mental health center covers 20 counties and was established 38 years ago. He said the board was trying to work through things with Trego County, which decided not to provide money for the program this year.

"The center is owned by the counties," George said, "and there is no overall funding formula. State law says the county can provide up to two mills for the program. Trego has said they were upset because there was a question of fairness in how much each county is asked to pay."