

City gives \$12,000 to new development group

By Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News
 A new county economic development group got \$12,000 after it reported its progress to the City Commission at a meeting Monday.
 Harlan D. House, a Sherman County farmer and board member of the group, said a finance committee had been appointed which set a goal of raising \$170,000 for the year.
 They are asking \$50,000 from both the city and county, House said, and hope to raise \$20,000 through dues and contributions. They also want to use the grant writer who was recently hired to find money for city, county and school board projects.
 "We will need full cooperation from

businesses, individuals and corporate entities," House said.
 The Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce executive board met with the group last week, House said, and gave its support. The Chamber said it has \$3,000 it can contribute, House said, after it finishes a couple of development projects it is already working on.
 "We're all for that," House said. "We'll take development any way we can get it."
 City Commissioner Dean Blume said the chamber's economic development committee has done a good job, and needs the money. He holds a non-voting advisory position with the chamber.

"You don't want to leave them any money to work with?" he asked.
 "We don't want to take away from anyone," House said. "The chamber wants to work with us."
 The group plans to organize under Sherman County, House said, because it is the quickest way to get started.
 "There is an urgent need for economic development in this county," House said. "We need to get on the ball."
 Under the county, the group might be able to raise property taxes to raise money, but County Commissioner Kevin Rasure, a member of the group, said that might not be available for several years.
 "They need money now," City Com-

missioner Curtis Hurd said, adding that while he doesn't mind the city helping the group get started, he hopes it will later be funded by the county. Hurd is a member of the development group.
 "In my mind, this is a county project," Hurd said, "because it affects everyone in the county. You, me, everybody."
 Mayor Tom Rohr told House that if the city gave the group \$50,000, it would have to come out of the general fund, which would have to be made up with an increase on property taxes.
 "People will be in here jumping all over us because we raised their taxes a little bit," Rohr said.
 House said the new agency has to explain to people that the money had

to come from somewhere, and tell them how badly Goodland needs to build up its economy. The group is holding a public meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Elks Lodge, he said, to tell people what is going on and answer any questions.
 "People want to know," House said. "People deserve to know."
 Commissioner Rick Billinger asked if the city could afford to give away the \$12,000 left in the development account this year.
 "Yes, we have it set aside in case you wanted to do this," City Manager Ron Pickman said, adding that the city staff is willing to do without a few things to help economic development.
 "The viewpoint is the city has the

same bills whether there are 3,000 or 5,000 people living in the city, and it is a lot easier to pay them with more people around."
 Blume said every time the chamber came to the city to ask for money, there was always a specific project for it and Hurd said that he would like an accounting of all the money the city gives to the group.
 "We intend to be cooperative," House said. "We will be transparent under the county, with open meetings."
 Commissioner Chuck Lutters said he was glad the new group would be open to the public, because he felt that the chamber is too selective.
 Blume was the only commissioner who did not vote to give the money.

City hears complaints about roof on old building it bought

The city has gotten complaints about the condition of the old IGA building it approved buying in March.
 City Manager Ron Pickman gave a copy of a letter from Jerry Nemechek, city building official, to the commissioners at a meeting Monday.
 Nemechek said he had gotten complaints from two people who own property near the building. During a recent

windstorm, they said, pieces of the roof, including insulation board and rubber materials, had blown onto their property.
 "They feel the city should be required to make repairs to city buildings if the city expects the same from the general public," Nemechek wrote.
 The building, which used to house Mosburg's IGA, suffered fire damage

in 1999.
 Nemechek said he told the property owners he would pass along the information to the city manager.
 Pickman asked the commission if he should start getting bids to tie down the roof, repair it, or demolish the building. There is a question whether the building is structurally sound.
 The commissioners said they would

like to find out what kind of shape the building is in before repairs are made.
 "If it can't be repaired, there is no use repairing the roof," Commissioner Rick Billinger said.
 "I'd like to get all the options before we go to far," Commissioner Chuck Lutters said.
 Pickman said he would arrange for the commissioners to take a look at the

roof during a budget workshop at the end of June or early July.
 In other business, the commission:
 • Approved beer licenses for Goodland Sinclair Convenience Store and Buffalo Inn Restaurant.
 Buffalo Inn recently changed ownership.
 • Approved a bid from B&H Paving of Scott City for \$136,684 for a street

sealing project.
 • Learned the city had passed a safety audit, and earned a gold certification.
 "It means these guys are paying attention and doing everything they are supposed to," said Lutters.
 • Tabled making appointments to a construction and demolition debris committee because no one had volunteered for the job.

Five Goodland businesses win state economic awards

AWARDS, from Page 1
 community development, working to expand the business and community leadership.
 Harding said he was excited that organizations outside Sherman County recognized businesses here.
 The only other city that matched Goodland's number of awards was Russell, he said, and no businesses there won a regional award.
 "We did really well," he said.
 Steve Hanson, who works for Pioneer Country, said Bankwest and First National have worked with the organization to provide several new businesses with Small Business Administration-guaranteed loans.
 "They support their communities very well," he said, "and provide funding for businesses. We wanted to thank them."
 Chad Tuttle is one of two commercial lenders at Bankwest who work with Pioneer Country.
 He said they knew the bank had been nominated but didn't find out it won the regional award until it was announced at the ceremony.
 "To tell you the truth," he said, "we thought it was a real big honor. We were

especially excited to see so many people win from Goodland. That's tremendous."
 Ron Lucas, Goodland Greenline owner, said almost every one of the John Deere dealer's 21 employees is a member of a civic group or involved some way in the community and the business strives to help in anyway it can. He said it means a lot that someone noticed.
 "It's kind of cool," he said, "but we don't do it just for recognition. We do it because we feel we have an obligation to be involved."
 Lucas said three employees are volunteer firefighters and two are Boy Scout leaders.
 The employees refurbished and run the swings ride at the county fair, the business sponsors the annual Topside Tipoff basketball tournament and participates in school and technical college career programs.
 Sheryl Davis, assistant director of the Fort Hays business center, said the center nominated Knott Just Books for contributions the business has made to the community.
 "It's a very nice way to recognize business people who do a good job in their business," she said.



A glass plaque the state gave five businesses in Goodland last week for their work to improve the economy in Kansas and lives of people in Sherman County.
 Photo by Rachel Miscal/The Goodland Daily News

City to review trash fees for accounts with none

Goodland charges some people for trash pickups even though they don't have any garbage, and they would like to see that changed.
 The city charges a "solid waste fee" to any active utility account, City Manager Ron Pickman said at a meeting Monday, even if a building is empty. The city has received two complaints, one from a landlord and the other from the home-owned carnival.
 The landlord says he has an empty house which doesn't even have a dumpster, Pickman said.
 He keeps an active account so he can have electricity to make repairs, and is automatically charged for trash service.
 The home-owned carnival receives no trash service from the city at all. It is served by county dumpsters, but is charged by the city for year-round service.
 "The city ought to look into helping," Commissioner Curtis Hurd said.
 Commissioner Chuck Lutters said that it would be hard on the city's billing department to sort out the charges, and that a change might create a loophole, but the city ought to look into it.
 Commissioner Rick Billinger agreed.

"We should not charge for trash if no trash is being generated," Billinger said.
 Commissioner Dean Blume said he wasn't sure the policy should be changed.
 "If we went through the whole city, there are a lot of things which might be injustices," Blume said. "Somewhere along the line, though, we have to find a way to pay for all the services."

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