



# Progress Edition

Friday, July 19, 2002

## Phone company expanding into city

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Daily News*

Over a year ago, Brewster-based S&T Telephone announced plans to expand into Goodland and Colby with modern fiber optic communications services.

The company proved it was serious by obtaining a franchise in each city, and after doing a citizen survey, announced it would be burying cable and offering phone, Internet and cable television services.

S&T made a deal for downtown property south of the school district office for sales and switching offices.

In August, the firm announced Fritz Doke of Edson would be handling the marketing department and Gary Slough of Goodland would serve as director of sales.

The firm planned to start construction right away, and a sign went up on the now-vacant lot, but engineering designs delayed the building. Over the fall and early spring, S&T installed lines between Brewster and Goodland.

Construction began with a groundbreaking on April 27. S&T President Steve Richards and



A sign the Brewster-based S&T telephone company put outside the Goodland office, which is currently being built on Main Ave. The office should be done this fall.

Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

Goodland Mayor Tom Rohr turned spades of dirt and talked about the future of expanded phone services.

Even before the ground breaking, the process of digging holes and burying cable had begun.

Workers are running lines from the alley to homes, then they will lay the main cables down alleys.

A crew from MasTec of Shelvin, Minn., uses a boring rig at the edge of the property line in an alley to

tunnel a hole for cable to each house. The cable is pushed through the ground, and comes out at a hole where the residents have agreed to have a drop.

“We do it this way so we don’t have to dig up the entire yard,” said Eric Swanson, a worker on the crew.

Currently, there are five crews moving through the alleys installing the main lines. Rhodes Construction is doing the work on the office, said Slough, and they are right where they should be or maybe a little ahead.

The floors and basement are poured and the interior frame is mostly finished. The building should be finished by early fall, Slough said.

The first floor will have 6,000 square feet, he said, and the building has a full basement. When it is done, he said, the office will have a sales floor, a commercial production room, and cabling for the firm’s services.

The company is a co-operative owned by its customers. It will offer local and long distance telephone service, Internet and digital subscriber line connections and cable television.

The sales room will display telephones, computers, and whatever

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The EagleMed air ambulance landed in Goodland in April.

Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

## Plane brings better health care

*EagleMed moves air ambulance to Goodland from Hays in April*

By Rachel Miscall

*The Goodland Daily News*

When the EagleMed air ambulance landed at Goodland’s airport on April 15, it brought new jobs and better, faster medical care to this area.

The Wichita-based company moved one of its four twin-turbine airplanes from Hays, where it had been stationed since 1994, to Renner Field, ending five years of discussions and months of preparation.

Don McElroy, EagleMed program director in Wichita, said the company had been considering moving the Beech King Air C-90 to Goodland for five years, but hadn’t made any plans until last summer.

Last June, the Goodland Regional Medical Center board heard presentations from three air ambulance firms that wanted to base planes in Goodland. Board members flew to Wichita to check out the EagleMed operation and de-

cided in July to go with the company.

McElroy said it took seven months to hire and train a crew of 12. Kansans from the Sherman County area and as far away as Manhattan came here to operate the service. Three EagleMed pilots from Hays agreed to take turns living in Goodland to fly patients to larger hospitals.

Moving the plane to Goodland

See AIRPLANE, Page 2

# Some customers may get service as soon as this fall

PHONE, from Page 1

else the company decides to sell, Slough said. In the production room, the company will put together television ads to put on its cable system.

The basement doesn't have a specific use right now, Slough said, but it will probably be used for storage and as a storm shelter.

"We're pretty flexible with the basement right now," he said. "It will give us room to expand."

The switches for the telephone system will be kept in a room with brick walls, Slough said, which the company calls the vault.

"We want to keep them in a heavily-built room," Slough said, "to protect them from storms, so service doesn't go out."

The company can't start service until the switches are installed, Slough said, but the building doesn't have to be completely finished to put them in.

Some people will start to get service in the fall, Slough said, but because the work is done in sections, others may not get any until next year.

"It is still a long-term project," he said.

Up to 10 people will work at the office, Slough said, and several technicians will be based there.

The company also is building an office in Colby.

"We are very excited to be doing this," Slough said. "People in the community have really been receptive to us. We are going to be a local provider for these services."



An S&T worker used equipment to drill holes near homes in Goodland to install cable. Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News



John Borra is one of three pilots from Hays who fly the EagleMed airplane here. Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

# Plane reduces transport time

AIRPLANE, from Page 1

and replacing it with a helicopter in Hays, McElroy said, will make transporting critically ill and trauma patients from this area much faster. Jay Jolly, Goodland Regional Medical Center administrator, said having the air ambulance here will cut transport time in half.

McElroy said the plane, which flies about 240 m.p.h., will cover Colby, St. Francis, Atwood, Oberlin, Oakley and eastern Colorado. John Borra, one of the pilots, said most patients will be flown to hospitals in Wichita and Denver, and most people from Goodland will go to Denver.

He added that he has flown patients to spe-

cialists all over the country.

Jeff Krall, director of emergency medical services at the hospital, said he is excited about having the plane here. It can be in the air within 10 minutes of a call, he said, because Goodland's airport is so close to town and the hospital.

Krall said EagleMed staff is helping the hospital beef up its ground ambulance service, too.

He said the firm is helping to establish an Advanced Life Support ambulance service here, which will allow patients to get better medical care during their trip to the hospital.

The hospital has already bought a more advanced ambulance and is getting extra training for volunteers.

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- The Goodland Daily News staff

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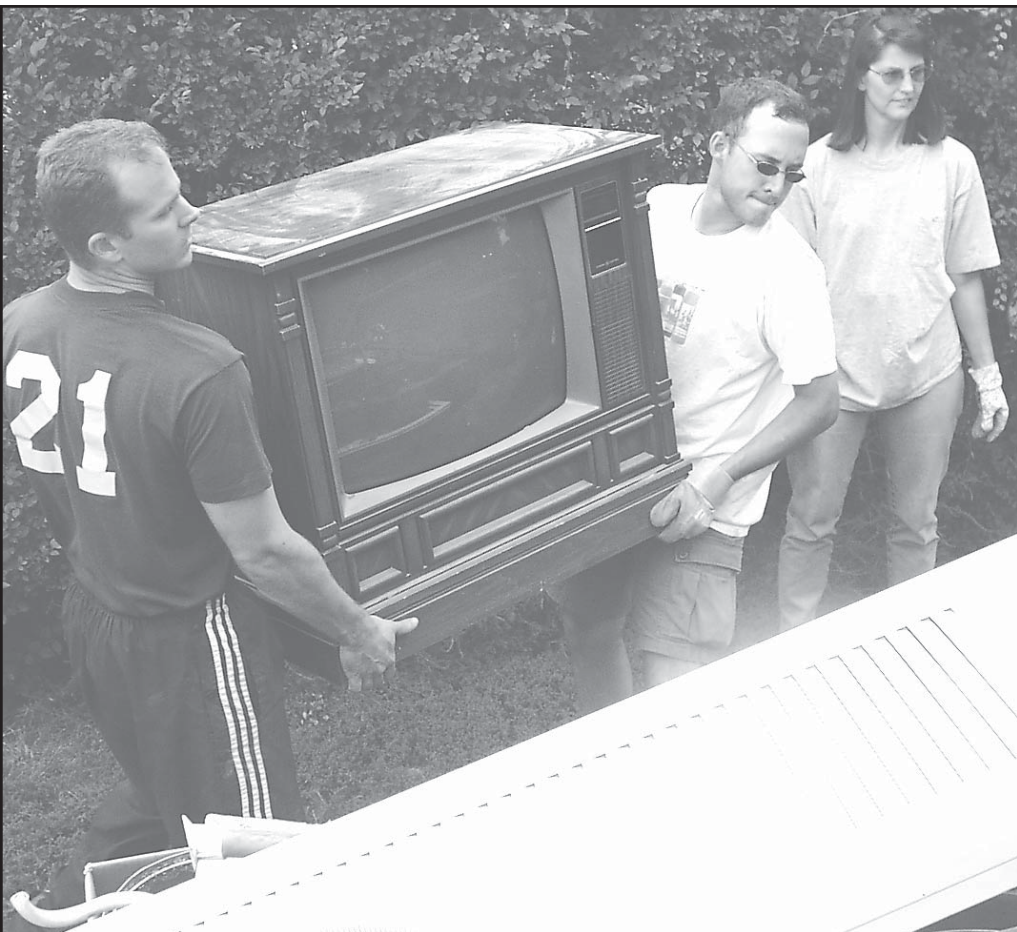
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Goodland Development Corp. members picked up trash people no longer had use for in preparation for the Junk Parade in September.

Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

# Groups working to attract business

*People come together for economic development*

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Daily News*

The past year has brought a new emphasis to the Sherman County economic development efforts, with the appearance of a new promotion group and the loss of another major business on Main Street.

During the year there were rumors about a new packing plant, the opening of a new fertilizer firm, an effort to start a downtown grocery store, the loss of a potential catalogue store, the beginning of the new telephone option and questions about the effectiveness of the existing economic development committee.

In May, a new energetic force arrived in Goodland in the form of Schyler Goodwin, who hit the ground running and began trying to move Goodland forward with his vision of greatness for the city. He began rallying the young troops of the county, looking for ways to affect the future direction, and beginning to ask questions about why things were not changing.

Goodwin, with the help of his family connections at Bankwest, sought to create an economic development foundation that would be able to attract outside money and build a \$3 million sports arena. It seemed to be an unreachable goal, but Goodwin kept saying it could happen with the cooperation of the people of the county.



One entry in the Junk Parade, which will be held again in September.

Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

motto is "Don't worry about the horse being blind, just load the wagon."

Members said it described their purpose. The eight-member group wanted to make changes in the city, some big and some small, and they had faith their plans would come together.

Goodwin said members identified problems they saw in Goodland and came up with solutions. He said they're not interested in

See DEVELOPMENT, Page 4

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# Group starts parade to clean up city

DEVELOPMENT, from Page 1

having long discussions about the problems or listening to reasons why it's impossible to solve them.

One of the group's first actions was to plan a "junk parade" which got people to gather up things that had been cluttering yards and garages and parade it all to the landfill. The parade was a success.

The second junk parade will be held Saturday, Sept. 7. Goodwin said there will be a benefit concert by the Mad Cows and the Carnegie Art Center will hold a recycled art contest.

The corporation also assisted in starting a Big Brothers/Big Sisters program through the Regional Prevention Center. The Goodland Development Corp. closed their offices in February, but the efforts of the group continue in the programs created.

Convinced there was grant money available projects, Goodwin went to the school district, the city commission and the county commissioners with an idea to hire a grant writer. It took some effort and time to organize the program, but it has been accomplished and Penny Nemechek has been hired as the grant writer.

Nemechek told the county commissioners Tuesday she has submitted a grant request on behalf of the school district, and is looking at a list of projects for the city. The county commissioners gave her a short list, and she said she would begin looking for grants to fit the needs. She said she has information on at least two grants that may help the revived economic development program.

At the same time, the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce and Sherman County were working on a grant through the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development of Hill City to aid new businesses through small start-up loans.

The county was approved for a \$100,000 revolving "microloan" program by the state Department of Commerce and Housing. The program provides up to \$15,000 to small businesses seeking to start up or expand. Applications are available at the Chamber



A boy adorned in newspaper and trash bags participated in a costume contest during the Junk Parade in September.

Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

or the county clerk's office.

Another citizen group began holding meetings and seeking pledges to finance a new downtown grocery store. The group raised more than half what they estimated it would take to open a new grocery store, but the effort has run into a snag in finding a suitable location.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks put any hope of a new commercial airlines on hold for a long time with all the new restrictions and requirements that followed.

The same month, the county commissioners attended an economic development session in WaKeeney and heard an inspirational talk by Dr. Ernesto Sirolli, founder of the Sirolli Institute. The state was looking for

regional groups with a minimum of 15,000 population to put the Sirolli idea of enterprise facilitation into practice, and the county commissioners asked the surrounding counties if they would be interested in joining together to form a program.

There was little interest in nearby counties, but Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld attended a meeting in Leoti where another group was trying to organize. Those counties present were willing to accept Sherman County as part of the proposed group, and a plan was drafted to apply for one of three state grants.

Enterprise facilitation is a grassroots way of helping new businesses and existing businesses succeed, the group learned. The idea

is to use the intelligence of the community to find ways to help small businesses.

Dr. Sirolli explained that each person has a passion, and in many businesses that is where the idea comes from. A person can be passionate about manufacturing a product, or marketing aspects or the financial end, he said. The problem is that there is no way for most people to be passionate about all three, which is key to business success. He sees the enterprise facilitation program as a way to make sure each small business has a balance of all three to ensure success.

The six-county consortium of Sherman, Greeley, Wichita, Scott, Lane and Kearny

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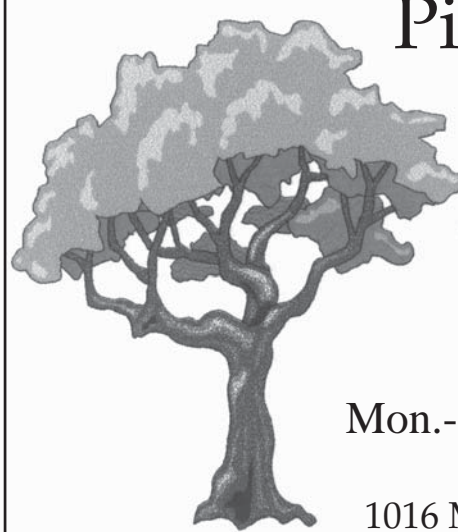
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