

Goodland's taxes not too high

AUDIT, from Page 1

northwest Kansas and had similar populations. Goodland's mill levy for property tax was about \$50 per \$1,000 appraised property last year, higher than Colby at \$38 and Paola at \$42, and lower than Russell at \$51, Concordia \$58, and Larned \$77.

That's not exactly a fair comparison, VonFeldt said, because not every city provides the same services.

His company then compared all of the property taxes levied in the cities, including those collected for counties and school districts. People in Goodland pay a total \$137 for \$1,000 of property, higher only than Colby at \$135. Paola was \$143, Russell \$157, Concordia \$181 and Larned \$200.

The auditors then looked at all fees collected in the cities, including property and sales taxes, utilities, fines and permits. In Goodland, \$632 was col-

lected per person in 2001, higher than Russell at \$577, but lower than the other four cities. Larned collected \$644 per person, Concordia \$662, Colby \$742 and Paola \$952.

"When you do something like this, you can't just look at the city," VonFeldt said. "In other places, the county might provide this function, or the city might take on extra."

"Looking at it as a whole, Goodland is right towards the bottom of the cities. Second lowest, in fact."

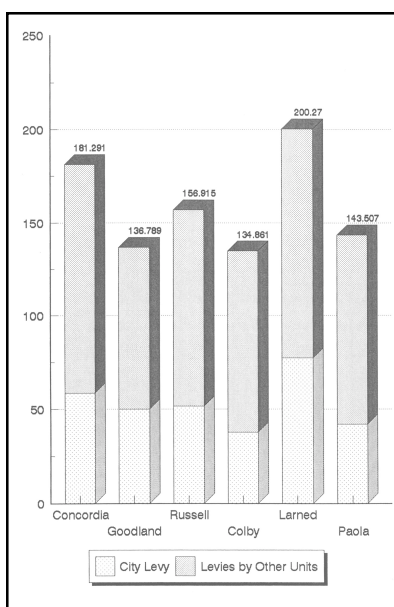
In other business:

- Schyler Goodwin said he was planning a second "Junk Parade" to be held Saturday, Sept. 7, and asked the commissioners if he could use a park for a barbecue and benefit concert by the Mad Cows. They told Goodwin to talk to Ed Wolak, public works director, and find out what was needed.
- Pickman told the commissioners it would not be a good idea to refinance

outstanding city bonds right now. The companies who offered to do the work said they could not guarantee the city would save any money. The time to refinance them, Pickman said, would be if the city decided to issue new ones for a new project.

- The commission amended an ordinance concerning water tap fees. A sentence was left off when the ordinance was first passed and published.
- The commissioners thanked the city employees for the work they did putting together numbers for the budget.

- Commissioner Rick Billinger said he thought there should be a dumpster placed somewhere in town where people could take metal or wood. The other commissioners asked what the city would do with it because the trash trucks can't lift such a heavy dumpster. "I just thought I would bring it up," Billinger said.



A chart shows the total amount of property taxes paid by residents of Concordia, Goodland, Russell, Colby, Larned and Paola. People in Goodland pay less than every city except Colby.

Chart by VonFeldt, Bauer and VonFeldt

School Meeting

At its meeting Monday, the Goodland School Board will:

- Hear an update on the Edson gym appraisal. The board has discussed re-considering an offer on the gym.
- Discuss the high school's discipline policy.
- Hear an update from Penny Nemecek, the new grant writer.
- Review bids on gasoline to fill the

new tanks at the district's bus barn.

- Talk about the 2002-2003 budget.
- Listen to an update on summer projects.
- Discuss where to deposit money.
- Look over Head Start contracts. Head Start is a program to get kids ready for school.

The board will meet at 7 p.m. in the administration office on Main Ave.

Kline disputes statement

KLING, from Page 1

drew on my own consideration to run for attorney general. Anything to the contrary is false."

Kline also suggested reporters contact the White House.

In addition, he said he did not know whether Democratically controlled Senate Judiciary Committee would have accepted his nomination.

Kline told The Kansas City Star he

never received any indication from the White House his qualifications were an issue. He let his Kansas law license lapse in November 1999 but renewed it in January 2001.

The White House had voiced concerns within two months of his nomination, Towns said, and asked for two other potential nominees.

"We would have been very surprised at that point, had Kline been nominated," Towns said.

Candidate wants to change insurance regulation

RILEY, from Page 1

nis Wilson for state treasurer and Phill Kline for attorney general. Riley attended their meeting at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall, which Sen. Stan Clark set up and Rep. Jim Morrison attended.

Riley, a Kansas State University graduate, said for six years he worked in Washington D.C. for "Citizens for a Sound Economy," an organization that fought to stop Hillary Clinton's proposed health care program from being implemented. During that time, Riley said, he became interested in health insurance.

He said he'll work for a more customer-driven insurance industry, in-

stead of one controlled by the government.

"In my opinion," Riley said, "people have the right to be able to choose their own benefits, not have the government tell them what they should have."

As insurance commissioner, Riley said he would push the Legislature to give people the choice of how much they pay for health insurance by making government-mandated benefits optional. That way, he said, people with less money could still afford a basic plan.

A few years ago, Riley said, people may have thought he was crazy, but now it's starting to sound like a good idea.

"Today with prices going up," he

said, "people are desperate for solutions. With some leadership, it's achievable."

He said Democrat Kathleen Sebelius, the current insurance commissioner who is running for governor, sometimes acts for her own political gain, not what's best for customers.

Riley said decisions Sebelius has made, including blocking the sale of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Kansas to an out-of-state company, will ultimately mean higher premiums for Kansans.

Responding to a question at the reception, Riley said he wouldn't "rubber stamp" the deal, but feels Sebelius had no legal reasons for stopping the merger. She did it, he said, to help her

chances of winning the governor's seat.

Stopping companies from raising rates only drives them out of the state, Riley said.

Riley said he wants to make companies feel welcome in Kansas.

"If you create an environment where it's possible for them to make a buck, there will be business here," he said. "If you make it difficult, they'll stay out."

Riley doesn't have experience in the state Legislature like his opponent Sandy Praeger does, but he says that's to his benefit, not his detriment.

"I think having real world business experience is a lot more valuable than being a legislator for the last 20 years," he said.

Glass door shattered at junior high

A custodian at Grant Junior High found the glass in one of the school's front doors shattered when he reported to work Monday morning.

Chuck Lutters, school maintenance, said the man saw that one of the doors facing 12th Street was busted, and noticed the bottle which did the damage. "This is nothing new," Lutters said.

"There are lots of times somebody is monkeying around and throws something through a window or a door or shoots a BB-gun at one. I wish it wasn't like that, but these things keep happening."

The school district reported the damage to the police department, which said it is being investigated.

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