

weather report

47°
at noon



Today

Sunset, 4:32 p.m.

Tomorrow

Sunrise, 6:32 a.m.
Sunset, 4:32 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 40 degrees
- Humidity 49 percent
- Sky mostly cloudy
- Winds north northwest 11 m.p.h.
- Barometer 30.18 inches and rising
- Record High 79° (1963)
- Record Low 5° (1955)

Last 24 Hours*

High 53°
Low 31°
Precipitation .05

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: becoming clear, low mid 20s, winds north 10 m.p.h. Tomorrow: sunny, high upper 50s, low lower 30s, winds west 10-15 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: sunny, high mid 60s, low mid 30s. Monday: sunny, high lower 50s. Tuesday: mostly clear, high lower 60s, low lower 30s. Wednesday and Thursday: clear, high 65-70, low 30-35.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets



Noon

- Wheat — \$4.09 bushel
- Posted county price — \$4.12
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Corn — \$2.57 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.28
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Milo — \$2.24 bushel
- Soybeans — \$5.19 bushel
- Posted county price — \$5.05
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Millet — \$14.00 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$12.10 cwt.
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Confection current — \$17/\$7 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$16

(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.

Security bills move forward

WASHINGTON — Struggling to end a frustrating year with some accomplishments, Congress edged closer to creating a homeland security department today, a day after moving long-delayed terrorism insurance and passing port security legislation.

A measure to tighten bankruptcy law, in the works for years, stumbled over an abortion-related dispute.

By 65-29, the Senate removed another procedural hurdle to creating the new domestic security agency. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., said he believed final passage would occur on Monday.

The House all but finished its work for the year in today's early morning hours, leaving the door open for a Tuesday return to handle last-minute bills passed by the Senate.

Threat warns of 'spectacular attack'

WASHINGTON (AP)—The FBI is warning that al-Qaida may be planning a "spectacular" terrorist attack intended to damage the U.S. economy and inflict large-scale casualties. The White House said Americans should remain vigilant, although it left the alert status unchanged.

"The American people are in many ways the first line of defense," said national security adviser Condoleezza Rice. She said the latest warning contained no new information, calling it instead a "summary of intelligence as we know it."

White House spokesman Scott McClellan cited the lack of any intelligence about specific time, date, location

or method of possible attack as the reason for keeping the nation's official terrorist threat level at code yellow, the middle of a five-level scale of risk developed after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. "We continue to be on high levels of alert, we continue to take additional precautions," McClellan said.

The FBI warning was unusual because of its dire language.

Rice, briefing reporters at the White House on President Bush's trip next week to Europe to attend a NATO summit, said a lot is being done by the administration behind the scenes to protect "critical infrastructure" around the country from possible attacks.

Safeguarding the nation against terrorism

"is a central focus of this administration," she said. The campaign against terrorism is "a war that is many times being fought in the shadows, so it's not always on television screens," Rice added.

"The warnings that have gone out recently really are a summary of intelligence, not a new warning," she said.

Gordon Johndroe, spokesman for the White House Office of Homeland Security, said that the new threats build on ones that the FBI and the White House have been making public since last month.

"Sources suggest al-Qaida may favor spectacular attacks that meet several criteria: High symbolic value, mass casualties, severe damage to the U.S.

economy and maximum psychological trauma," says the alert, which was posted on the FBI's Web site early today after its existence was reported by The New York Times and The Associated Press.

The highest priority targets remain within the aviation, petroleum and nuclear sectors, as well as significant national landmarks, the warning says.

"Target vulnerability and likelihood of success may be as important to a weakened al-Qaida as the target's prominence," according to the warning.

"Thus, al-Qaida's next attack may rely on conventional explosives and low-technology platforms such as truck bombs, commercial or private aircraft, small watercraft, or explosives

easily concealed and planted by terrorist operatives," it said.

Federal authorities previously have issued warnings for specific industries and national landmarks in general. But there is clearly worry that the danger of an attack is growing because of increased "chatter" picked up through intelligence channels, the continuing U.S. showdown with Iraq and the recently revealed audiotaped warnings believed to be from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

The government's additional precautions include unspecified "additional steps to ramp up our protection and prevention measures" within federal agencies, he said.

Legislators to examine sales taxes

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — With the state facing financial problems, legislators expect during their 2003 session to discuss eliminating exemptions to the state's 5.3 percent sales tax to raise new revenues.

Some legislators want an even broader review of tax policy, which Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius has promised.

However, selling any changes could prove difficult.

The Legislature's Special Committee on Assessment and Taxation Committee agreed Thursday to recommend a "global" review of tax policy but endorsed no specific proposals.

"I think a strong argument can be made for looking at tax policy on a grand scale," said Rep. John Edmonds, R-Great Bend, the joint study committee's chairman. "A global view of tax policy is probably in order."

Sebelius said Thursday that she plans to form an advisory committee to review the tax system.

"There's a group that will be coming together to look at all kinds of revenue issues," Sebelius said. "But that's really just in the process of coming together."

The state's most recent fiscal forecast projects a \$310 million deficit on June 30, against spending in the current budget of \$4.4 billion. The same forecast said the shortfall between expected revenues and spending commitments for the next fiscal year is \$858 million.

Last year, when legislators were considering tax increases, Rep. Bonnie Sharp, D-Kansas City, proposed during a House debate that the state eliminate dozens of sales tax exemptions to raise almost \$700 million. The House rejected Sharp's idea but legislative leaders later initiated the joint committee's study.

The joint committee met three times over the past three months.

Some joint committee members are skeptical of the effort, including Sen. David Corbin, R-Towanda, who serves as chairman of the Senate tax committee. He said most exemptions won approval for policy or economic development reasons.

Still, Corbin said he expected exemptions to be debated, with or without encouragement from the joint committee.

"I'd fully expect this coming year for many of those to be reviewed," Corbin said. "We will be looking at many of these issues. There will be bills, resolutions — whatever — to remove them."

But any effort to repeal exemptions is likely to mobilize a corps of lobbyists wanting to keep them in place.

Sharp acknowledged as much, saying she wants a broad discussion, not "looking at exemptions one at a time."

Other committee members said the review should be even broader.

Rep. Nancy Kirk, D-Topeka, said any discussion about the sales tax should include consideration of eliminating exemptions, imposing the tax on services, and lowering the overall sales tax rate.

And Sen. Janis Lee, D-Kensington, said legislators ought to consider eliminating income tax credits as well.

Sebelius indicated that her advisory committee would perform a broad review as well.

Leadership learns about local media



As part of the seven-month Leadership Sherman County class, students toured media outlets in Goodland Wednesday. Don Newell (above), program coordinator for S&T Communications, talked with Dave Floyd, class member, about the Brewster firm's expansion into Goodland. They were standing behind S&T's new building on Main Avenue, which the leadership students had just toured. Steve Haynes (below), publisher of *The Goodland Daily News*, handed out papers to the class during a tour of the newspaper.

Photos by Rachel Hixson and Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News



Openness promised, but some work is secret

TOPEKA (AP)—Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius is soliciting Kansans' ideas for making government more efficient, but she doesn't want those advising her to discuss everything in public.

Sebelius on Thursday announced a telephone hot line and an e-mail address for taking suggestions. She said both will allow Kansans to participate in her planned top-to-bottom review of state government.

The five review teams she's formed will have public hearings, but Kansans won't be able to attend meetings when team members discuss some of the suggestions.

Sebelius doesn't plan to say when or where those teams are meeting for their

discussions. She defended the secrecy as necessary for candid discussions.

She and her aides have said the five groups don't fall under the Kansas Open Meetings Act because they aren't setting policy, only making recommendations.

The attorney general's office was researching the issue after an inquiry from The Associated Press.

"I think there is a balancing act," Sebelius said. "Having every discussion monitored at every point along the way, I don't think is a very productive way to conduct business."

Kansans can make their suggestions by e-mail with a form available on the Internet at the transition team's Internet site.

The hot line is toll free for callers, but the state is paying \$25 a month for the line and 9 cents a minute on each call.

"Many of the people who will be answering the phone are state employees," Sebelius said. "Some of them are former campaign employees who we will be keeping on to do this."

The hot line will be answered from 1 p.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m.-noon on Saturday. Sebelius said the hours are designed to accommodate working Kansans.

"This will make it very easy for those citizens to be involved. They don't have to come to Topeka. They don't have to write a letter. They don't even have to be named," Sebelius said.

County to continue trash talks

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Daily News

The Sherman County commissioners agreed to continue the discussions with the city about taking over the current trash collection system after spending about two and one-half hours Tuesday looking at the figures and options.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure explained the process and handed out some figures he had put together about the financial end of the operation.

"There is an impression that the tipping fee would go away if the county takes over the trash collection," Rasure said, "but the fee would not go away. We must have this or there is no reason to take it over."

"The main thing is the collection system must pay its own way," he said. "If the collection goes out of the county we will lose the tipping fee, but will not lose the expenses it covers."

"It would be real nice if they (the city) would keep it," said Commissioner Chuck Frankenfeld.

"I don't think that is in their mind," said David Daniels of the Sherman County Economic Development Council, "they are just tired of dealing with it."

"I don't like it when people tell me we have to make a decision in a hurry," said Commissioner Mitch Tiede. "I don't work well when I am pressured."

"The thing people need to understand is that they will still have to separate the trash no matter who is collecting it," he said.

"I can't see where you would be losing anything with the city fees and the current county fee," Daniels said. "I think you may be able to save some money."

The commissioners discussed how many people it would take to operate the whole system including the trash collection, transfer station and landfill and the county household hazardous waste facility.

Tiede said he figured it would take 13 full time including a department head to handle all of the operations and to do it right.

After quite a bit of discussion and looking at the needs for the collection process separate from the transfer station and landfill the commissioners reached a compromise which would give the department a total staff of about 10 people.

Part of the discussion was that the county needs to look at the landfill operation and see if the hours might be

See TRASH, Page 7

City to discuss use of credit cards

The Goodland City Commission will talk about making it possible for people to use a credit card to pay utility bills, appoint two members to the city/county recreation board and approve a resolution designating the bank or banks which will be used for the city's money at its regular meeting at 5 p.m. Monday.

City Manager Ron Pickman will reply to the city's request for a new flood insurance rate map and remind the commissioners about a League of Kansas Municipalities leadership workshop.