

weather report

27°

at noon



Today

- Sunset, 4:26 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 6:44 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:26 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 35 degrees
- Humidity 46 percent
- Sky partly sunny
- Winds north 20 m.p.h.
- Barometer 30.43 inches and falling
- Record High 72° (1998)
- Record Low -7° (1952)

Last 24 Hours*

High	31°
Low	15°
Precipitation	none

Northwest Kansas Forecast

Tonight: mostly clear, low near 10, winds northwest 5-10 m.p.h. Tomorrow: partly sunny, high lower 40s, low upper teens, winds west 10 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast

Thanksgiving: mostly sunny, high lower 50s, low mid 20s. Friday: mostly clear, high near 60. Saturday: mostly clear, high lower 50s, low upper 20s. Sunday: mostly clear, high upper 40s, low mid 20s. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$4.03 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.96
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Corn — \$2.55 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.32
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Milo — \$2.27 bushel
- Soybeans — \$5.23 bushel
- Posted county price — \$5.13
- Loan deficiency payment — 0¢
- Millet — \$14.00 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$12.20 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.

Homeland heads named

WASHINGTON — The long-sought Department of Homeland Security will begin taking shape March 1 when the Secret Service, Customs Service and several huge agencies will be folded into the massive new structure.

It is scheduled to be fully operational by Sept. 30, 2003 — more than two years after the attacks that prompted the overhaul. Critics warn there will be problems along the way.

“The threat of mass murder on our own soil will be met with a unified, effective response,” President Bush said Monday as he signed a bill creating the new 170,000-person agency.

Bush chose longtime political ally Tom Ridge and two high-powered deputies to lead the new department and mount a “united, effective response” against terrorism on U.S. soil.

Graves cuts \$78 million

School money safe until January cuts

By John Milburn

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — Gov. Bill Graves announced \$78 million in immediate spending cuts to the state budget today and identified other savings to wipe out most of Kansas’ latest \$310 million shortfall.

The cuts are in addition to the \$41 million Graves made in August to the state’s \$4.4 billion budget to keep Kansas from ending fiscal 2003 on June 30 with a deficit.

Graves did not cut any money from schools, as educators across the state had feared. Education claims about half of the state’s annual budget.

Senate President Dave Kerr said Graves had taken the first step, leaving the problem for Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius and the Legislature to solve.

“The governor has done his part toward bringing this difficult situation to balance. The new governor will have to exercise some of her authority to finish the project,” said Kerr, R-Hutchinson.

The cuts were the governor’s response to a revised revenue estimate made Nov. 5. The state’s estimating panel of officials and economists slashed their projection by \$363.5 million — the largest downward revision the revenue monitoring group has ever made.

Budget projections for fiscal 2004 were not much better. Officials have said without cuts or additional taxes, the shortfall between projected spending and available revenue could be more than \$800 million next year.

Legislators and the governor had hoped that \$252 million in new revenues approved in the 2002 session, along with other adjustments, would have been enough to keep the budget afloat. However, the estimating group said individual income and sales tax collections remain weak as the Kansas economy struggles to grow.

Today’s cuts are expected to be the last time Graves addresses the budget. His term ends Jan. 13, when Sebelius takes office.

Sebelius will submit a revised budget to lawmakers in January, as well as her proposal for fiscal 2004.



Students re-enact big feast

Little Indians and Pilgrims shared a Thanksgiving feast on Monday afternoon at West Elementary School, re-enacting the legendary first Thanksgiving hundreds of years ago. Some of the first graders chose to dress up as Indians, wearing headbands decorated with paper feathers and taking on nicknames like “Running Horse.” Others donned white bonnets and frocks or black hats with a big buckle to become Pilgrims. Miranda Hernandez (above, right) and Katrina Delgado played with candy corn students received before the feast. Holton Witman (left) filled his plate, while Taylen Smith munched on corn on the cob.

Photos by Rachel Hixson/The Goodland Daily News



School budget woes are focus of retreat

By Rachel Hixson

The Goodland Daily News

Goodland School Board members spent most of a 5 1/2-hour brainstorming session Saturday talking about ways to save or make money, as Gov. Bill Graves is expected to cut up to \$379,000 from the district’s budget this week.

Members discussed cutting “padding” from the current budget, charging athletes \$50 to participate in sports, closing Central Elementary School on Main, increasing class sizes, paying parents to drive students to school and cutting the number of elective classes at the high school.

The retreat was planned to give board members a chance to talk about problems that have been looming, especially major budget cuts at the state level. It was only a brainstorming session and members did not vote on any action or agree to any changes.

Five of the district’s six principals attended the retreat. High School Principal Harvey Swager, who was diagnosed with leukemia earlier this month, hasn’t been able to work since. The principals talked with the board for about four hours, leaving about 12:30 p.m.

The session began at 8:30 a.m. and ended about 2 p.m. All board members attended except Ron Schilling. Ben Duell left at 1:10 p.m. because he said he had family obligations.

How to save money was a main topic of the session, and the first the board discussed.

Members consider ways to save

After hearing the district may be facing hard financial times for years to come, the Goodland School Board tossed around ways to save and make money at a brainstorming session on Saturday. Here are some high points:

- Jim Mull, Grant Junior High principal, made a presentation on charging students \$50 to participate in a sport, concluding that “pay to play” would hurt the sports program more than it would help.

- Mull said the district has budgeted about \$168,000 for sports and activities at the junior high and high school this year, which is about 2.5 percent of the \$6.4 million budget. The junior high already charges students \$3 a year for sports, he said, and the high school charges athletes \$10 per sport, but that’s not always collected.

- If the same number of students participated, he said, the district could raise about \$34,000 a year by charging athletes \$50 per sport. Mull noted that many students probably couldn’t afford to pay the \$50, so the number of sport participants would drop.

- “We have 16 cheerleaders now,” he said. “We would probably have two with pay to play.”

Steve Raymer, North Elementary School principal and assistant football coach, said football players are motivated to attend classes and keep their grades up to stay on the team. He said a few of the senior players have only come to school one day since the football season ended.

Member Mike Campbell warned that if the budget problems continue, the district will have to start charging students or cut sports.

“I’m not in favor of pay to play,” he said, “but something has to be on the table. Cuts will have to be made.”

- Member Kathy Russell asked if it would be cheaper to pay parents who live a ways from town to drive their children to school instead of sending a bus to pick them up. The district could save money in gas, bus maintenance and driver wages, she said.

- Superintendent Marvin Selby said many students wouldn’t make it to school if the bus didn’t pick them up. Russell said she thought it was an idea worth considering, but she wasn’t sure whether it would save money. She noted that the change would mean the district would cut

jobs, which wouldn’t be good for the town’s economy.

- The board discussed the pros and cons of closing Central Elementary School. Selby stressed that the board has not decided to close a school, but is looking at it as an option to save money.

The superintendent said Central would be the best school to close because it is not handicap accessible and North and West have better playgrounds. He said enrollment has dropped to the point that Central students could fit at West and North if class sizes were increased a bit.

- Closing Central would save the district about \$392,000 a year in salaries and benefits for staff and an administrator, Selby said. Member Jane Philbrick said that would mean almost \$400,000 would no longer be circulating through the community and there would be another empty building on Main. Campbell said the board should seriously consider closing a school to save money. President Dick Short said the district wouldn’t be able to handle an influx of a large number of students.

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Gov. Graves is planning to announce more cuts in the 2003 budget to close a projected \$310 million gap between

spending and revenues. He said school officials are anticipating Graves will cut up to \$230 per stu-

dent from what legislators promised to give schools this year, which was a base of \$3,890 per pupil. The governor al-

ready chopped \$27 per student earlier this year. That means the district could receive up to \$379,000 less from the state than it expected, Selby said.

The cuts are no surprise, but they could be deeper than anyone expected. The district set aside extra money in case state aid dropped, Selby said, and about \$208,000 in padding can be cut from the budget without affecting education.

He said the rest of the money will have to come out of the district’s contingency reserve account, which had been held back for emergencies until the Legislature lifted all spending restrictions on the account this year. There is about \$230,000 in the account, Selby said, adding that it would be a good idea to leave some.

Board members agreed that the state’s and district’s money problems will likely continue for several years, as enrollment has been dropping and the farm economy is in a deep hole.

Declining enrollment means fewer dollars for the district.

The Legislature has softened the blow by allowing districts to factor in past years’ enrollments, but the steady drop is catching up with the Goodland district.

Enrollment is actually up a few students this year, Selby said, adding that he sees it stabilizing as new businesses are moving into town. But board member Mike Campbell, who works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Duell, a farmer, said it will take the state two to three years to recover from the drought this summer even if it rains.