

2002 year's top stories a mix of news

2002, from Page 1

6402 County Road 16 (west on old U.S. 24).

Reynaldo's Mexican restaurant opened at Cherry and 17th and Taco John's opened on K-27. Curt's Corner Garage expanded and opened a new paint and body shop. In November, the two closed gas stations were bought by Mike and Mark Olderbak, owners of Kabredlo's, of Nebraska, and are to reopen in the new year. Roof work is being done on the one at 8th and Caldwell, and environmental tests are being done at 17th and Caldwell.

Finley's Motor, the Buffalo Inn and Cowboy Loop changed owners. With the openings and closings, the overall business level probably came out even for the year.

3 Contributing to the economic problems were the effects of the drought, which cut the spring wheat harvest. The dry weather forced the city to impose watering restrictions and the county to institute a burn ban. The watering restrictions began in July and the burn ban at the end of June. Both were lifted at the end of September when the county received some much-needed rain. The dry weather all but erased the fall harvest, which was about half of what had been expected. Many dryland fields were never harvested.

The county received enough moisture to help get the winter wheat crop started, but not enough to say the drought is over. Weather forecasts indicate there may be a chance for more normal moisture in the new year, but the High Plains remained dry.

4 S & T Telephone of Brewster announced it would be building new, state-of-the-art fiber optic systems in both Goodland and Colby. Work began in the spring to lay fiber optic cable throughout the two cities, with completion expected sometime this year. The telephone co-operative built offices in both cities and moved into the one in Goodland at the end of December. S&T announced the first phase of customer sign up to begin on Monday for selected parts of the system. The company will provide both local and long distance phone service as well as Internet service and cable television over the same lines.

5 The city's hospital saw progress and problems. Goodland Regional Medical Center announced in May it was undertaking a \$1 million upgrade of the hospital's computer system to improve record keeping and to simplify the clinical, laboratory and billing processes. Administrator Jay Jolly, who was hired at the beginning of the year, said the cost was high, but that the hospital would save about \$300,000 by going to the new computer system.

The hospital sought approval for tax credits to raise money for the project. The board asked the county for money and got \$200,000 from the health services sales tax fund. The computer system is being installed and phase 1 of the switch is underway. As part of the upgrade, the hospital is working with S & T to provide fiber optic connections for telephone and Internet service.

The hospital announced in the fall that it would show a loss of about \$400,000 for the year, and announced a series of cuts and rate increases to help offset some of the red ink. The 2003 budget announced in December shows the hospital losing more than \$200,000 in the next year, but the cash flow



S & T Telephone began laying fiber optic lines in Goodland and Colby and built new office buildings in both cities (above). In March,

should be positive, providing much needed cash in the bank.

6 In May, the city, county and school district hired Penny Nemechek as a grant writer for all three. She is working to find grants for the three boards. The idea is to have someone whose primary job is searching for money to help pay for projects for all three entities, and each has provided Nemechek with a list of priorities.

7 A group of citizens upset with the closing of Alco and what they saw as a lack of effort from the Goodland Chamber of Commerce met to discuss starting a new economic development group.

After several meetings, the largest of which drew about 100 people, the group established a steering committee to organize under the county commissioners. The group presented plans to the county in June and the Sherman County Economic Development Council was approved in July.

The group set out to find a director, and Carolyn Applegate from Norton was hired in October. She set up shop in space inside the JMS Financial office on Main in November and has been meeting business people in the county and working on development projects.

Both the city and county agreed to provide money for the new group, and have budgeted \$50,000 for the program for the next year. Much of the money had been going to the Chamber in past years, but a majority of the city commissioners said they were not satisfied with the chamber's program.

In December, the chamber received another blow to its budget when the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau canceled their management contract. The bureau was created by county resolution in 1991, and under state law raises money to promote tourist business through a tax on motels



and hotels.

The chamber had been handling the board's management and providing the office space since 1991. Since the change, the visitor board has been looking for a new office.

8 The cone zone is gone. In September, the final phase of three years of road construction projects was completed with the opening of the Cattletrail south of 17th and new access roads and stoplight at K-27 and Business U.S. 24.

Over the three years, the state Department of Transportation replaced the 10 miles of I-70 from Goodland to Edson, rebuilt K-27 from Goodland north to the county line, resurfaced K-27 south of the city to the county line, replaced a bridge on old U.S. 24 near Caruso, resurfaced the section of K-27 from

Alco Discount Store (below) closed unexpectedly and the distinctive sign was whisked down.

I-70 to the intersection at Business U.S. 24 and built a new Cherry Street to replace the old wye.

The state had to do some emergency bridge repair before allowing heavier trucks to cross the bridge on K-27 over the North Fork of the Smoky Hill River about eight miles south of the city.

The bridge is supposed to be replaced as part of a project that is to be done on K-27 south of the city in the next few years, but could be delayed by the state budget problems.

9 Goodland schools have new classrooms, but fewer students to put in them, and the school board talked about closing one of the three elementary schools.

The Goodland School District started the year in January with an open house at the new science classrooms that had been completed at the high school. State budget problems cut the district's budget, though, and enrollment was 33 down from last year, forcing a cut of \$20,000 in state funding.

The school district was spared in the latest budget cuts announced by outgoing Gov. Bill Graves, but Su-

perintendent Marvin Selby said he does not expect the incoming governor and Legislature to be able to balance the budget without more cuts in education.

Despite the setbacks, the school district is moving forward with its strategic plan, and in December the Grant Junior High began the process to teach the teachers and then the students how to handle and use small portable computers that will be issued to each student for them to use through high school.

In the spring, board member Ben Duell brought up selling the Edson gym, and after taking bids, the board decided to turn down a \$15,000 offer for the building. Later in the year, with the budget cuts, the subject of the gym resurfaced and again the board took bids. The board accepted a \$20,000 offer on the gym from Jay Herl, who runs Herl Chevrolet, and Chuck Wilkens, owner of Wilkens Truck and Trailer in October. The district wasn't able to reach an agreement on a rental price for using the gym, though, and the sale fell through.

10 The tenth entry is a collection of stories in the good, bad, interesting and weird category.

Good: In November, a good Samaritan found a cash bag from the Eldorado clothing store and turned it into the police. All the money was there.

Bad: In August, there were two fatal accidents in the same day. The morning of Aug. 22, Diane Tompkins, 43, drove off the road at the curve on K-27 south of Goodland and died when she was thrown from her car. That afternoon, Mary Alice Garcia, 35, of Kanorado was killed when her car crashed into a semi-tractor rig about three miles southeast of Kanorado.

Gunplay: In July, two men robbed the Sinclair station out by I-70 of over \$200. A 19-year-old clerk, Casey D. Brock, gave police a detailed description of the robber and a companion, and Colorado officers nailed them just across the state line. She said she was quitting her job, saying one robbery was more than enough.

Violent: A wind storm in August caused damage in Ruleton and Kanorado, ripping up roofs and a grain dryer at an elevator.

Buzz: The West Nile virus, which infects bird, horses and people, was a big story in August. The virus was found in Sherman County in September. It had spread rapidly through the surrounding states and was in more than half of the counties in Kansas.

Bronze: In September, the new Ad Astra statue destined to be placed on the Capitol dome made its first stop in Goodland on a tour of Kansas on its journey to Topeka. It took longer than expected to get the statue on the dome because the holes for the bolts had to be re-drilled. The statue looked a lot bigger on the truck in Goodland than it does on the top of the statehouse.



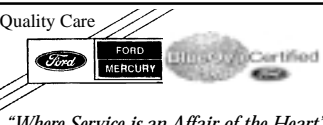



A mystery: While working on the parking lot of the new People's State Bank, workmen came across an old handgun buried beneath the concrete. Sheriff Doug Whitson said he was not sure if there was a crime connected with the gun, but thought there might have been a murder about the time the old concrete was poured in 1959.

On the lam: In late October, Goodland Daily News Sports Editor Doug Stephens left the office to pick up film at Wal-Mart and disappeared. He left behind a wife, Amanda, and two young children.

To the ground: Dec. 1, the Stuckey's restaurant near Brewster burned to the ground. State fire officials were investigating.

Meth: Dec. 19, Sherman County sheriff's officers, Goodland police and agents of the KBI and Quad-County Drug Taskforce, searched Scotty's Motor in Kanorado and found what they said was an active meth lab. Owner Scott Baumfalk was arrested and has been in the county Bastille awaiting a hearing.

Rest stop: The state opened the new tourist and travel center on I-70 near Ruleton in May.

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<p>Goodland All-Star Booster Club</p> <p>January 6 - January 14, 2003</p>			
<p>Monday, Jan. 6 - Classes Resume; "C" Basketball at St. Francis 5 p.m.</p> <p>Tuesday, Jan. 7 - "Gold Day", SEMINAR - GAA & G-Club; ASVAB Interpretation 9-10:30 a.m.; West Site Council Meeting 4 p.m.; North Site Council Meeting 7 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, Jan. 8 - "Black Day", Elementary Bank Day; PDC Meeting 3:45 p.m.; Central Site Council Meeting 4 p.m.; City Recreation, Max Jones Field House and Junior High Gym 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, Jan. 9 - "Gold Day", SEMINAR - STUCO; "C" Teams Basketball, Tribune here 5 p.m.; Junior Varsity - Varsity Wrestling at Colby 5:30 p.m.; City Recreation, High School Gym 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, Jan. 10 - "Black Day", "C" - Junior Varsity - Varsity Basketball versus Colby here, 3:45 p.m.; Varsity Wrestling at Liberal 1 p.m.; End of 2nd 9 weeks</p> <p>Saturday, Jan. 11 - Varsity Wrestling at Liberal; Junior Varsity Wrestling at Wakeeney 8 a.m.</p> <p>Sunday, Jan. 12 - Open Gym, Max Jones Field House, 1-3 p.m.; Junior Olympics Volleyball, Junior High Gym</p> <p>Monday, Jan. 13 - No School Teacher Inservice & Workday; "C" Basketball at Oberlin 4 p.m.; NWKL Scholars Bowl at Oakley 3 p.m.; Board of Education Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday, Jan. 14 - Junior Varsity - Varsity Wrestling at Oberlin 5 p.m.</p>			
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