

weather
report

64°
at noon

Today

• Sunset, 4:41 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:42 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil Temperature 39 degrees

• Humidity 21 percent

• Sky northwest 12 m.p.h.

• Winds northwest 12 m.p.h.

• Barometer 29.95 inches and falling

• Record High 74° (2002)

• Record Low -14° (1937)

Last 24 Hours*

High 62°

Low 33°

Precipitation none

N.W. Kansas Forecast

Tonight: clear, low mid 20s, winds north 15-35 m.p.h. Thursday: partly sunny, high near 40, low near 10, winds north 15-35 m.p.h.

Extended Forecast

Friday: mostly sunny, high 35-40, low mid teens. Saturday: partly cloudy, high mid 30s. Sunday: mostly clear, high lower 40s, low lower 20s. Monday: mostly clear, high lower 40s, low lower 20s. Tuesday: mostly cloudy, high mid 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 — \$3.53 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.45

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$2.48 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.25

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$2.25 bushel

Soybeans — \$5.36 bushel

Posted county price — \$5.24

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Millet — \$10.00 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$10.30 cwt.

NuSun — \$11.35 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Confection — \$17/\$7 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$16

(Markets 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.

‘Devastating’ war faces area

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A top Iraqi official said today the U.S. and Britain were preparing a “devastating” war against Iraq to subjugate the Middle East and renewed charges that U.N. weapons inspectors were exceeding their mandate.

U.S. jets, meanwhile, attacked three air defense sites today in the southern no fly zone, according to a statement by the U.S. Central Command. It was the second attack by the U.S.-led coalition this week in the southern zone, set up more than a decade ago to prevent Iraq’s army from attacking restive Shiite Muslims in the region.

The remarks by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz came one day after the U.S. and Britain announced the dispatch of thousands more troops and weapons to the Gulf region.

700 pounds of marijuana seized



Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones and Deputy Jim Engel inventory and weighed the bundles of marijuana that were confiscated Tuesday during a traffic stop on I-70 east of Colby. Jones said the 700 pounds of grass was the largest bust in the department’s history, and said the bundles weighed between 15 and 60 pounds. Photo by Patty Decker / Colby Free Press

By Patty Decker
Colby Free Press

A record 700 pounds of marijuana worth as much as \$1.5 million was rolled up Tuesday afternoon during a traffic stop nine miles east of Colby.

“This was the largest seizure that the Thomas County Sheriff’s office has ever had,” said Sheriff Thom Jones.

Jones said a deputy stopped a speeding 2002 Ford Explorer east-bound on Interstate 70 about 12:50 p.m. near the Mingo interchange southeast of Colby (milepost 62).

The Lewis Hilbert Constantine, 51, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was driving the rented car with California license plates.

When the deputy approached the car, Jones said, it didn’t take him long to notice the smell and identify the wrapped bundles in the back seat and cargo area, which was covered with blankets.

When deputies weighted the badly-wrapped bundles later, Jones said, they varied from 15 to 58 pounds.

Constantine was arrested and is being held at the Thomas County Jail facing charges of possession and transporting an illegal substance.

Thomas said he and federal authorities are discussing the case and Constantine could be turned over to the federal Drug Enforcement Agency in Wichita.

Although Jones said this was the largest seizure in the county’s history, he is predicting that the figure could be broken in the future as tighter security at airports forces drug haulers to the highways.

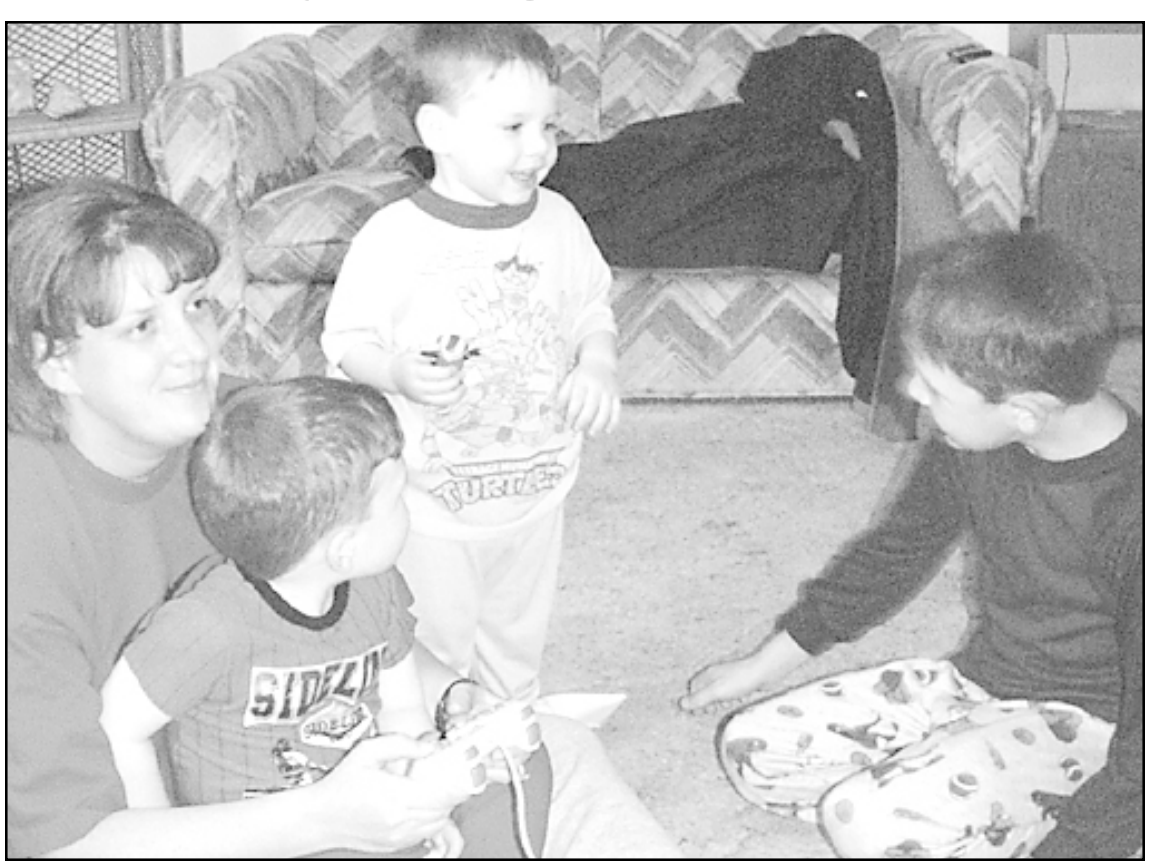
“I can’t foresee the amounts getting less,” he said, “and ever since 9-11, there has been a lot more illegal drug trafficking on the interstates as alternative ways to transport these substances.”

Thompsons try to get on with their lives

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Daily News

A divided Goodland family who started last year with a custody battle and a parental kidnapping, has begun the new year trying to get on with their lives.

The father, Mark Thompson, pled guilty to contempt of court for taking his kids to Texas. He is now living out of state — he wouldn’t say where — and driving a truck, still bitter over the way he feels he’s been treated by the courts.



Tohanna Thompson played video games with Jonah on her lap, and Job (standing) and Jacob (on the floor) in February after the family returned from Texas and began settling into their new home. Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

The mother, Tohanna Thompson, participated in the first December graduation at the Northwest Kansas Technical College and will complete the automotive technology program in the spring.

Both say they are trying to move on with their lives.

Tohanna Thompson reported their four sons, Jaeger, Jacob, Jonah and Job, missing Sunday, Jan. 13, 2002, after the boys had spent the weekend with their father and had not been brought home.

Mark Thompson and the boys were found Monday, Jan. 28, in Bastrop City, in central Texas near Austin, after an anonymous caller told the sheriff’s department she saw a man moving children from a brown suburban into a camper, wrapped in a blanket.

When a deputy checked out the situation, he found Mark Thompson and discovered he was wanted in Goodland.

Tohanna Thompson and her mother, Marge Quast, went to Texas to pick up the boys and returned to Goodland later that week. Mark Thompson was extradited back to Goodland to face

charges of intentional interference with parental custody.

At a preliminary hearing Tuesday, May 28, Judge Jack Burr decided there was enough evidence to hold Mark Thompson over for arraignment. A trial by a 12-person jury was scheduled for December, but Mark Thompson pled guilty to contempt of court in September.

Sherman County Attorney Bonnie Selby said she felt domestic court was the proper place to handle the case. In criminal court, it would be closed after a conviction, she said, but with a domestic case, it’s open until the children turn 18.

Selby said if Mark Thompson was to take the children again, the court could take immediate action. It’s also in the best interest of the children, she said, since he has to work and pay child support and because their father won’t spend more time in jail.

The county attorney said she thought it was too bad the couple wound up in a public fight over the children.

“I always think that’s a sad way to handle things when you have little children,” he said. “They have to go to school; kids can say hurtful things.”

The court file says Mark Thompson was sentenced to 30 days in jail and was credited for the 14 days he spent in jail in Texas and in the Sherman County Bastille after his return.

The rest of the sentence was suspended, but Mark Thompson was placed on six months of unsupervised probation. The charges of interference with parental custody were dropped.

Tohanna Thompson said she was disappointed Mark Thompson was not punished more but is relieved the fight is over.

“My children and family are trying to move on,” she said.

Mark Thompson said he shouldn’t have been punished and should have gotten his kids back.

“They railroaded me,” he said. “They stole my children.”

He maintained the kids have no future with their mother, and said he is angry that he hasn’t been able to spend time with the boys.

“I haven’t seen them since they were taken in Texas,” he said. “When I had them, she could see them whenever she wanted.”

Mark Thompson said he left Christmas presents for the boys with Tohanna Thompson’s mother but doesn’t know whether they got them. He still has the same cell phone number, Mark Thompson says, and welcomes calls from the boys but feels he won’t be allowed to contact them.

“They demonstrated they are gonna lock me up for trying to see my kids,” he said.

Mark Thompson said he has left the state because he didn’t feel he got a fair shake here and is trying to make a life for himself.

When the boys were found, Tohanna Thompson said she wished she could thank the caller who tipped the authorities.

Public invited to trash forum Monday at auditorium

Sherman County commissioners said Tuesday they will be attending the Economic Development Council’s Trash Forum at 6 p.m. on Monday at the high school auditorium.

The development council has been working with the city and county to have the county have over the city’s trash collection to keep trash flowing to the new county

landfill. The city had been talking to a Colorado firm which would haul the trash out of state, leaving the landfill with little business.

Development Council Chairman Royal Reid said the forum will cover the options and costs of this plan. City commissioners are expected to attend as well, but the presentation will be done by the development

council members.

Written questions will be taken from the audience.

At the meeting Tuesday, county commissioners decided to delay employee evaluations until June because of the wage freeze that went into effect for all county employees at the beginning of the year.

The commissioners passed the annual resolution designating First National Bank, Bankwest, Western State Bank and Peoples State Bank as places where county funds can be deposited. Another designated *The Goodland Daily News* as the official publication for county legal notices.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby told the commissioners she would correct the Economic Development

Council resolution and that they can rescind the old resolution and approve a new one at the next meeting. The change is to bring the length of terms into line with the county three-year standard.

In one place, the resolution it says the terms are two years, but later in the same paragraph it says they are three-year terms.