

Eagle Communications drops rates for basic cable

By Michelle L. Hawkins
The Goodland Star-News

Faced with competition from an independent telephone company, Goodland's long-time cable provider is dropping the rate on basic cable.

For nearly 37 years, Eagle Communications has been the only cable provider in town, and since last year, the only provider of high-speed Internet as well.

Now, Brewster-based S&T Telephone has expanded into the area, building a new fiber-optic network, and will also offer cable and Internet services to Goodland customers, along with plain old telephone lines.

Over 25 employee owners from Eagle Communications went door to door this week to deliver care packages to residents, listing services and rates.

The packages included new lower rates going into effect in Goodland, plus goodies such as popcorn, an Eagle coaster, a gift certificate for a free mouse pad, a coupon for a free pay-per-view movie and a \$5 certificate for services.

Robert Bunting, director of business development, said the "We Care" packages were delivered to

S&T provides service in Goodland

S&T Telephone, which has been building an all-new fiber-optic communication system for Goodland and Colby since 2000, ushered in the new year by signing up its first customers on Jan. 6.

The multi-million-dollar expansion will be opened in phases, said Gary Slough, marketing and sales manager for Goodland. The basic cable price is \$29.95 a month, about \$3 more than Eagle Communication's new price.

"There are nine different areas in the Goodland community that will be signed up for service as they are completed," he said.

Completion of the first nine phases are anticipated within the next year and a half, but according to Slough, S&T will never be complete.

"We will constantly be bringing in the newest technology to north-west Kansas," he said.

Brewster-based S&T plans to offer local and long distance telephone service, cable television,

Internet and high-speed digital subscriber line (DSL) service. Customers may sign up for any or all of the services and will be charged for everything on one bill.

"We are investing a lot of money into these two communities," said Slough, adding that the co-operative thinks it is worthwhile to be able to make these services available to rural areas.

The firm had built new offices in both towns, staffed by local people.



Mike Angell, an owner-operator for Eagle Communications, delivered "We Care" packages to Goodland residents.

fordable and convenient service," he said.

Eagle corporate offices are in Hays and the firm provides cable in Hoxie, WaKeeney, Ellis, Hays and

Russell. Bunting says the have offices in each town.

The company also had radio stations in Hays, Salina, St. Joseph, Mo., and other towns.

Teachers host school board candidate forum Sunday afternoon

About 30 people showed up at the high school auditorium Sunday afternoon to hear six of 10 school board candidates discuss their reasons for running and the issues facing the district.

The forum was sponsored by the Kansas National Education Association of Goodland, and most of the audience were teachers from the district.

The school board primary will be next Tuesday, when the people will decide which eight of the 10 candi-

dates will face off for the general election in April. People will be voting for a maximum of four candidates on the primary ballot.

Each of the candidates at the forum was made an opening statement and then the group was asked written questions posed by the teachers.

The main topics were the budget problems facing the district and how that will affect education and staffing. Several questions had to do with how the candidates saw the

needs of the district and how best to provide a good education given the economy.

Everyone who participated said they felt this was going to be a trying time, and that the state money crunch would make it more difficult. There was discussion of closing a building to save money, something the board has discussed for year, and several said that continuing decline in enrollment is making that look like a necessity.

Candidates attending the forum were Marty Melia, Jane Philbrick, Ben Duell, Danny Whalen, Fritz Doke and Burton M. Pianalto. Four candidates were unable to attend, Kathy Russell, Eric Gray, Dr. Gary L. Smith and Pamela Galindo.

Board members seeking re-election in the primary are Gray, a city water department employee; Duell, a Ruleton farmer; Philbrick, a farm wife and part-time employee at Mann's Jewelry; and Russell, county probation officer.

Newcomers challenging for a seat are Whalen, owner of Dairy Queen; Galindo, a daycare provider; Smith, veterinarian at Prairieland Animal Clinic; Melia, owner of KLOE, KWGB and KKCI radio; Doke, a service technician for S&T Telephone; and Pianalto, a deputy in the Sherman County sheriff's office.

Advance voting is available at the county clerk's office until noon on Monday, Feb. 24, said Clerk Janet Rumpel. Voters may call the office at 899-4800 to request a ballot by mail. The voter is required to sign a

form and return it to the clerk's office as soon as possible. The ballot can be mailed out, but must be returned by election day. Ballots will not be mailed out after Friday, Feb. 21, Rumpel said.

There is also a primary for mayor of Kanoarado, where three people have their names on the ballot.

Hazel Estes, current mayor, an insurance agent, is being opposed by Gerald Webber, a part-time postal contract driver, and Bob Handle, a self-employed businessman.

Seven area students get 'second chance' education at Oakley service center

By Michelle L. Hawkins
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Members of the Goodland School Board, visitors and principals from each school heard about the Second Chance School in Oakley at the board's meeting last Monday night.

Director Kurt Brown said the program is in its second year of as a pilot program, operating out of the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center in Oakley. It serves seven students from six districts.

The school provides education for kids who have either long-term expulsions or suspension or long-range individual education plans. Brown said the school can offer local or specialized curriculum from the student's home school or the student can do computerized curriculum. For instance, if needed, the student can do the same school work they would have been doing if they were still in their home school or different work can be assigned through on-line programs.

Students are accepted on referrals from the school district where they were expelled or suspended. Regular students are accepted when the family voluntarily enrolls them into the program. The program was recommended when three Goodland High School students were sus-

pended for having weapons or drugs in their cars after a security sweep last month. At least one is attending.

"We normalize the environment, slow down and attempt to keep it simple," Brown said.

He says the program concentrates on just a few things at a time and teaches behavior as a primary concern and academics as the secondary concern.

The pilot program uses two classrooms where four staff members, a teacher and three paraprofessionals, work one-on-one with the students.

"The length of the day varies kid to kid," he said. "We individualize the program to each student."

Brown says there are still many things to be worked out in the program, such as when to give breaks. Each school district has breaks such as spring break and Christmas at different times. He says it is hard to operate with six different school calendars.

While at the Second Chance School, students continue to earn credits toward graduation at their home school, and technically, they are still enrolled in their school.

Through the pilot program and the service center, costs for administration, teachers and transportation of the students is covered.

School board hears audit report from superintendent

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Superintendent Marvin Selby told the Goodland School Board last week that the annual audit, which establishes state funding based on enrollment, transportation, special education and special needs, had been completed.

In August, the board has to publish estimates of each of these areas based on a three-year-average for the district, he said. In these figures, it was estimated that 1,650.6 students would be counted and the state was allowing \$3,890 for each student, or a total of \$6,420,834.

In September, once school had begun, he said, the budget is re-evaluated and figures were adjusted in each area to come up with 1658.9 students. The state had lowered funding and instead of the \$3,890 per student, the district will only receive \$3,863 per student (\$27 less). The new figures on state funding were estimated at \$6,408,330.

After the auditors finished their report last week, he said, they found the district fairly close to the estimates. There figures show 1654.1 students and say funding will be at \$6,389,788. Selby said the difference is \$31,046 and the budget calls

for a reduction in that amount.

In other business in his report, Selby gave the board members a copy of electricity, water and heating bill comparisons for 2002 and 2003. The information was broken down by building and gave the budgets for 2002 and 2003, what was actually used in 2002 and what has been used so far in 2003.

He reported the calendar committee has two proposed calendars for them to talk about. Both allow a two-week vacation for Christmas.

In other business, the board:

- Approved financial reports.
- Paid the bills and transferred

\$100,000 from local option budget, \$50,000 to transportation and \$50,000 to vocational education

- Hired Amy Phifer as an aide at North Elementary School.

- Listened to the Northwest Kansas Technical College report from Ron Schilling. Shilling said the college is worried about falling enrollment and is cutting costs to make up for the lack of students. He said new programs are being developed to encourage the enrollment of more women.

- Agreed to seek investment bids. Letters will be sent to all four banks in Goodland.

Sherman County Commission to meet this morning

The Sherman County commissioners planned to meet at 8 a.m. today to discuss appointments to the Good Samaritan Center board, the Trego County Juvenile detention agreement and a revised resolution for Economic Development Council.

The detention center agreement asks the county to pay \$1,000 to be a member, and this in turn lowers the daily cost for holding a juvenile from \$250 to \$150. At the meeting last Tuesday, County Attorney Bonnie Selby talked to the commissioners about the agreement and was asked to check out a couple of details before the commissioners make a decision.

The Economic Development Council asked the commissioners last Tuesday to approve an expansion of the council to add four positions to be designated for each of the banks. This change would require the commissioners to pass a new

resolution, and the council was to review the new language at their monthly meeting Monday.

Sandy Rodgers, of the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service will explain and answer questions about the board appoint-

ments to the Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development board.

Dorendo Harrel, county health department chief, will talk to the commissioners about how her office is being affected by the regula-

tions under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act which go into effect in April.

The commissioners will look at bids for the replacement of double-doors for the 4-H building at the fairgrounds.

City Commission hears trash proposal

The Goodland City Commission will meet at 5 p.m. today to continue its discussion about a new sewage treatment facility with engineer John Roth of Evans, Bierly, Hutchinson & Associates.

In other business, the commission will:

- Vote on a contract ordinance between the city and Southwestern Bell Telephone Co.
- Discuss trash collection with U.S. Waste of Colorado Springs.
- Appoint one person to the board of building appeals.
- Talk about the Kansas Depart-

ment of Transportation Road Safety Audit.

- Talk about a contract for engineering services for a land acquisition.

- Talk about a contract of engineering services for rehabilitation of medium intensity runway lights and taxiway lights at Renner Field.

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