

weather
report

52°

at noon

Today

• Sunset, 5:48 p.m.

Tomorrow

• Sunrise, 6:03 a.m.

• Sunset, 5:49 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 33 degrees
- Humidity 33 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds southwest 6 m.p.h.
- Barometer 30.02 inches and falling

• Record High 82° (1972)

• Record Low -20° (1948)

Last 24 Hours*

High 34°

Low 15°

Precipitation none

N.W. Kansas Forecast

Today: partly sunny, high mid 40s, low lower 20s, winds northwest 5-10 m.p.h. Wednesday: mostly sunny, high mid 50s, low upper 20s.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: mostly clear, high upper 60s. Friday: partly cloudy, high upper 70s, low upper 30s. Saturday: partly cloudy, high lower 70s, low upper 30s. Sunday: partly cloudy, high mid 60s, low mid 30s. (National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3.21 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.20

Corn — \$2.42 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.29

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$2.19 bushel

Soybeans — \$5.18 bushel

Posted county price — \$5.08

Millet — \$10 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$9.20 cwt.

New crop oil — \$10.05 cwt.

NuSun — \$10.10 cwt.

NuSun — \$11.05 cwt.

Confection — \$17/\$7 cwt.

New crop — \$17/\$10 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$15

(Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside
today

More local
news and
views from
your
Goodland
Star-News

Drought drops water table 1.5 feet

By Darrel Pattillo

The Goodland Star-News

Collateral damage from the drought has extended into one of the most vital areas of life in northwest Kansas: groundwater levels, which are down an average of 1.458 feet this year.

Above-average use, combined with reduced natural recharge during the drought, is responsible for the decline, said Wayne Bossert, manager of Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, which includes all of Sherman, Thomas, and Sheridan counties, two-thirds of Cheyenne County, and

parts of Rawlins, Decatur, Wallace, Logan, Gove, and Graham.

Some 285 wells are measured each year by the state, he said. The largest decline in northwest Kansas was 7.6 feet while one well actually increased 5.28 feet.

“Going back to 1991,” Bossert said, “the average decline has been about a third of a foot.”

The average decline was .42 of a foot in 2001-2002, 1.18 feet in 2000-2001 and .02 of a foot in 1999-2000.

Northwest Kansas is running about nine inches behind in rainfall, said Dave Floyd, a forecaster at the National Weather Service office in

Goodland.

“We need some help from Mother Nature if we’re going to catch up,” he said. “We’re going to have to get an additional nine or 10 inches, above what we would normally get, to make up the deficit.”

Although a dollar figure can’t be tied to declining groundwater levels, Bossert said, economic vitality is at stake.

“Water affects every part of our lives here in northwest Kansas,” he said. “Every part of the agriculture business is tied to water. The irrigated dollar turns itself over seven times in the community.”

The effect on crops won’t be felt until protective measures have to be taken to protect the Ogallala Aquifer, said Bossert.

“If an irrigator has to go from irrigating 700 acres to irrigating 500 acres, then down to 300 acres, obviously that’s going to determine production. As the water table declines, the ability to irrigate declines.”

Bossert said there’s not much that can be done in the way of conservation that’s not already being done.

“Northwest Kansas irrigation is among the most efficient in the state,” Bossert said. “Conservation-wise, we’re doing everything we

can right now.”

He said that the state water plan is going to divide the Ogallala Aquifer into subunits, then identify which subunits are in decline so that water-use goals can be set to extend and conserve the life of the aquifer. The state will support and expand education and water conservation efforts, he said.

“One thing I disagree with the state about is conservation,” Bossert said. “The state water plan wants more production with the same amount of water used. I’d like to see the same amount of production with less water used.”

Kids win right to throw pies at the principal



Ready! aim! Fire at will!

A teacher at West Elementary School helped a student aim a pie at Principal Gerald Burkett Thursday (above). “Could I get some windshield wipers?” Burkett said as he was hit in the face and down the front of his shirt. He couldn’t wipe the pie off because his hands were taped down (above right). Students lined up to hit Physical Education Teacher Andy Scheopner with pies. Scheopner and Burkett volunteered to let students pelt them as a reward for meeting the school’s goal for box tops for education. The students raised \$650 for the school.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News



Commissioners refine trash proposal

Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County commissioners met Friday morning in a special work session to look at the 17-point trash proposal and see where changes might be needed to make it acceptable to both the county and the city.

The city commission voted 3-2 last Monday to make a final attempt to negotiate an agreement to transfer the trash collection to the county. They set a deadline of Monday, March 17, for the county proposal to be voted on.

If one cannot be agreed upon by that time, the city will send out requests to private companies interested in taking over the trash system.

Commission Chairman Kevin Rasure opened the work session, saying he had met with Mayor Tom Rohr to go over the existing 17-point plan to see what changes might be needed to bring it closer to an agreement.

Both sides have proposed some

changes and there are some questions remaining to be answered, he said.

Changes proposed by the commissioners on were to be discussed again during their regular meeting at 9:30 a.m. today.

Rasure said he was hoping to get a response to proposed county changes from the city so the city

County agenda

On today’s agenda, Sherman County commissioners will:

- Consider appointments to a micro loan review committee.
- Finalize the Sherman County Economic Development Council resolution.
- Discuss a personnel matter with County Attorney Bonnie Selby (8:15 a.m.).
- Meet with Dorendo Harrel of the county Health Department about ve-

hicle bids and requirements of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. (8:30 a.m.)

• Meet with Curt Way, public works director, and Darrell Schrader about the summer roadside mowing contract (9 a.m.).

• Hear an update of the economic development program with Carolyn Applegate, economic development executive director (9:15 a.m.).

• Discuss trash proposal (9:30 a.m.).

commissioners can make a final proposal by the next city meeting on Monday.

One point the county was wondering about is being allowed to upgrade the trash trucks without having to send money to the city. The agreement says that the city will give the county the current equipment, and that there will be no

money exchanged unless the county sells the trucks within five years.

Curt Way, county public works director, said he felt the county would need to upgrade at least one of the older trucks before the five years were up, and that using one as a trade in should not cost the county anything. The commissioners agreed to suggest this change to the city, making it clear that the upgrade of a truck would not be considered the same as a sale of the equipment.

Another question was about the number of dumpsters, and where to store the extra ones and the yard waste dumpsters when they are not in use.

The commissioners discussed the billing process, and how the city handles commercial billing. Rasure said there are about 500 commercial accounts, and there was some question about how those rates could be handled on the monthly billing.

It was suggested that the monthly base rate could be put on the city bill, but the county might need a parttime

person to handle billing and answer a phone for the trash department.

The commissioners agreed to a request from the city that there be a city representative on the county solid waste committee.

In the original 17-point proposal, the city would have continued to handle special pick ups of large trash items, but under the new proposal all of these would be handled by the county.

There were some points that Rasure was to ask Rohr to clarify.

On most of the points, though, the commissioners agreed they were all right as written.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede restated his opposition to taking over the city trash collection.

“We should have stayed out,” Tiede said. “We are getting into a lot of work we don’t need. I knew that if we sent the letter to the city, they would not go forward with their bidding from outside people.”

“I feel we are better able to make it work for everybody,” Rasure said.



Kanorado honors kids

The City of Kanorado held a special dinner at the end of February for kids from the city who were on the school honor rolls. See photos and story on Page 3.