

# Block scheduling may be changed

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*  
Principal Harvey Swager told the Goodland School Board last Tuesday that teachers wanted more time to study the block scheduling plan and asked that they have until December to make a recommendation.

With block scheduling, the school divides the day into six longer periods and rotates class offerings every other day. The idea was to allow the students to spend longer periods in each class rather than the shorter periods in the original seven-hour day.

"This was designed by the teachers," he said, "and it was to be a three-year trial. This is the third year. I talked to the teachers and they want more time to study the program and have asked that it continue as it is until December. If we want to change, it can be done for the second semester."

Superintendent Marvin Selby said he had heard that Ulysses, which has been on a similar schedule, was going to change back to a seven-hour day. In talking to the superintendent there, he said, it was because the block scheduling had adversely affect math scores.

Board member Ben Duell said he felt this is an issue that should be left up to the new board. He said he was ready to vote to go back to a seven-hour day, but that the new board (which will take office in July) should decide on any change.

Board member Kathy Russell asked if the block scheduling had made any difference in the down list, students who are in danger of failing a class. Swager said there has not been any change. He said there is no real evidence that shows that block scheduling helps or hurts the down rate.

Russell said the down list was part of the reason for going to block scheduling.

"Block scheduling gives us a black eye this time of year," member Ron Schilling said. "With the spring sports, there are some who are only going to one class."

Board President Dick Short said he felt it was better to gather some information for the next meeting rather than putting the decision off until December.

"We need to figure out what is best for the kids," Selby said.

In other business, the board:  
• Handed out certificates to Andy Scheopner and Mary Frazier for 25 years of teaching. The awards are sponsored by the University of Kansas.

• Agreed to allow Selby to work with a company that believes they can save the district some money on utilities.

"It might not save us a lot, but I think it is worth a look," he said.

• Heard a report from Central Elementary Principal Sharon Gregory on the School Improvement Profile, which has been compiled and sent to the state. She said the district is above the "cut" score on math and reading at all three levels. This is the lowest score that a district can have before being put on notice, and having their funding threatened.

She said the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges technical assistance team has been helping them, but that nationwide the area of concern for meeting the new "No Child Left Behind" goals is the middle school grades.

"There is an opportunity to improve," she said, "but the bar is pretty high over the next 10-12 years."

• Approved payment of bills totaling \$12,571.

## Burying a bit of history with tree



Mayor Rick Billinger held a time capsule as a Central Elementary School student put something in. Then the capsule was buried in a hole with a new burr oak tree at Chambers Park on

Friday. City officials, tree board members and Central students were on hand for the Arbor Day ceremony.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

# County purchases new car for sheriff, new road grader

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*  
Sherman County commissioners approved the purchase of a new car for the sheriff's department and a new grader for the road and bridge department during their meeting Wednesday.

Sheriff Doug Whitson presented the bids for the car, and the commissioners approved one from Dan Brenner Ford for a 2003 Crown Victoria for \$18,975. The price is after the trade in of a 2000 Crown Victoria, the sheriff said.

Curt Way, county public works manager, presented the commissioners a proposal from Martin Tractor of Colby for a grader to be financed through a lease/purchase program.

The grader would cost \$147,311 after the trade-in of a 1986 model with a value of \$47,000. The total cost would be \$194,311.

Way said it would be his suggestion to finance \$100,000 of the purchase price and pay the other

## Rural fire board wants new truck for Brewster

Members of the Rural Fire District board met with the Sherman County commissioners Wednesday and asked for help to get a new truck for the Brewster area.

"We need one badly," said Fire Board Chairman Marvin Duell. "We have a proposal for a new truck that would be \$75,600, and we would like to do a lease/purchase."

The commissioners asked what the arrangement is for the Brewster area.

Kenneth Palmgren, board member, said there are three townships in Thomas County who are part of the Sherman County fire district and pay an annual fee. He said the City of

Brewster built the firehouse and provides the manpower.

"We provide the equipment," Stan Pettibone, a board member, said.

The fire board members said they were looking for help in how to setup the lease/purchase for a five-year payment program, and they had a proposal from Hays Fire Equipment for the truck.

They said they would ask local truck dealers for bids on the chassis and that Hays Fire would build the tank and compartments.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said the specifications seemed similar to the service truck that had been purchased for the Road and Bridge department last year under a lease/

purchase program.

It was suggested that the fire board members talk to Curt Way, county public works manager, who has handled several of these equipment lease/purchases, and that they should ask County Attorney Bonnie Selby to help.

The board members said they felt the district budget would be able to handle the annual payment.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the truck was a good project to upgrade the district equipment, and that it is the type of program the county has been using to upgrade the road and bridge equipment.

When the commissioners asked what other projects the fire board

had on their want list, Duell quickly said, "We need a new fire house. The one we have is too small, and with the new tankers it is hard to get around inside."

Rasure said there was a plan to build a new firehouse on land the county had purchased north of the present county shops, but wondered if it might be better to do a combined building with the city.

The fire board members were not sure they needed to add the city to the project, but that they certainly needed the new building to house the county fire trucks.

The fire board said they would meet with Way and Selby and bring a proposal back.

paper, glass and cans. He reported that for January and February, there was a total of 221 cubic yards, about 38.5 tons, and that based on the county tipping fee of \$32 per ton, that would be a savings to the city of \$1,232 over those two months. He said the total for the year would be about \$8,000 in tipping fees.

• Approved reappointment of Randy Bellamy, Jason Artzer and Gary Barricklow to the Smoky Gardens Board for three years.

• Discussed a proposed policy dealing with when departments can send flowers on behalf of county employees. The policy would allow departments to send flowers for a hospital stay or death of the employee or their immediate family. Other flowers may be sent with donations from staff members. The commissioners decided to seek the advice of the department heads before approving the policy.

• Reviewed the contract with the city for trash collection. The commissioners agreed that the final changes appear to be OK, but Tiede asked that the commission wait until May 13 to sign the contract. Rasure and Thomas agreed to wait until that meeting, when proposals are to be received from sub-contractors.

## correction

An item in the Brewster Beacon on page 10 of the Tuesday, April 29, issue of the *Goodland Star-News* incorrectly stated that the Brewster city-wide garage sale will be Saturday, June 11. It will be Saturday, June 7. This was a typographical error.

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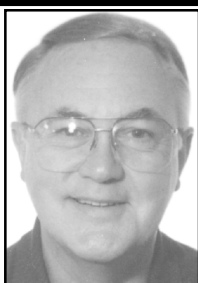
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