

Experts expect good results from fall harvest

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

Farmers and ag experts have good expectations for this year's harvest of irrigated corn and sunflowers as trucks start to roll in, but newly planted wheat needs some rain.

There is not much of a chance of rain in the forecast, but the National Weather Service is saying a 20 percent chance of thundershowers today and Wednesday.

Trucks have started deliver sunflowers and corn. Sigco Sun Products reported it's first load last week.

"Harvest has been drawn out this year," said Dana Belshe, Sherman County extension agent, "but the main effort began about a week ago."

Belshe said that the harvest should be quick this year if the open and dry weather continues. He said he expects a decent crop yield from both irrigated corn and irrigated sunflowers.

Dryland sunflower yields will be good in areas that got sufficient rain.

Belshe said some farmers have been using a desiccant to help dry their crops quicker. The desiccants are herbicides that defoliate and dry the crops so they can be harvested more efficiently.

Although the dry is helping with the harvest, Belshe said wheat needs more moisture to get growing.

"The wheat crop is coming in spotty around the area," he said.

Wheat planting serves two important functions for farmers, Belshe added, to achieve an optimal yield and to cover the ground and prevent wind erosion.

The most recent crop weather report from the Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service listed only 14 percent of the northwest Kansas area as having adequate topsoil moisture and 5 percent with adequate subsoil moisture. Statewide, the averages are 59 percent for topsoil moisture and 40 percent for subsoil.



Rodney Corke of Sigco Sun Products monitored a load of sunflower seeds last Monday.

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

Hearing today to dissolve sewer district at plant

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County commissioners will hold a hearing at 8:30 a.m. today to dissolve the Sherman County Waste Water Disposal District, which serves the sunflower plant at Caruso.

The district was created to provide the plant with a sewer lagoon system, and the county has been turning the system over to Northern Sun Industries, a division of Archer Daniels Midland.

If no one objects to dissolution of the district, the county will turn the lagoons over to the firm.

Later, the commissioners will consider appointing the firm of VonFeldt, Bauer and VonFeldt to do the county audit for this year, and will hear an update on the Good

Samaritan Center from Director Phil Samuelson at 9 a.m.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede told the commissioners at the last meeting that since the county farmland had been approved for the Conservation Reserve Program, they would have to discuss the existing farm lease with Stan Purvis.

The lease was to run for five years, but Tiede said he had talked to Purvis about placing the land in the program earlier in the year.

Other items held over from the last meeting include a report from Commissioner Kevin Rasure about remodeling the Southwest Bell building, the resignation of County Attorney Bonnie Selby from the Northwest Kansas Juvenile Service board and a request from Bruce Gleason to have the county help

with his paramedic class.

Selby's letter was read at the last meeting, but Rasure asked to delay action until the recommended replacement for the board, Cris Lovington, could be contacted to be sure she was willing to serve.

Gleason has approached the commissioners about helping him get his paramedic credentials.

He will be present to discuss the program he is looking at through Barton Community College.

In the past, Gleason has talked to the commissioners about a similar program in Denver and one in Garden City, but an agreement could not be reached on either of those.

Dave Branda, president of the Sherman County Historical Society, will meet with the commissioners at 8:15 a.m. to discuss an appli-

cation for grant money to help with the historic Victorian house.

Mary Messamore, head of the county central dispatch, met in closed session for five minutes with the commissioners at the last meeting on a personnel matter. No action was taken when the meeting reopened to the public.

Messamore said she had a response to the memo from the commissioners about not using cell phones for personal use.

"I won't carry two cell phones, and I have paid for any personal calls as long as I have carried a cell phone in this county," she said. "If I have to change, I will get a personal cell phone and drop the county one, which will make me less available for calls when I am not at work."

Deputy County Clerk Mary Ann Snethen, filling in for County Clerk Janet Rumpel who was on vacation, said she had always told Messamore when there was a personal call and the director had paid it immediately.

The commissioners thanked her for her comments and said they would review the situation.

Rasure said they needed to transfer \$100,000 into the landfill reserve fund.

"We created it at our meeting on Sept. 16," Rasure said, "but we need to make sure the funds are transferred. Otherwise we would have a new fund and not have any money in it."

Rasure ask for a motion to waive the demolition disposal fee for the work being done by the city on the

old Mosburg IGA building. Tiede made the motion and it was seconded by Rasure. Thomas voted in favor, saying it was a way for the county to help an economic development project. The city is fixing the building up for an aircraft gas-ket firm which is moving here from California.

The commissioners approved paying for flu shots for county employees and approved end-of-the-month vouchers totaling \$216,036.

Tiede make a motion to go into closed session for a personnel matter for 10 minutes and it was seconded by Rasure.

The commission returned to open session at 9:37 a.m. and took no action. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Revitalization could get big boost from project

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County could give downtown revitalization a big boost if it can remodel the old Southwest Bell Building at 10th and Main and make it usable.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he had attended a public meeting on Monday Sept. 29, on downtown revitalization, and noted that the county has been talking about remodeling the building to make it usable for more than storage.

"This would be a wonderful opportunity to aid the downtown program and remodel the building," Rasure said. "The things we need to do, like remove the asbestos and install an elevator, should be items that can be part of the grant match."

The downtown project would include replacing the brick on Main Street from 10th south for three blocks to the intersection at 13th. Money for the project would come one third from a grant from the state, one third from the city and one third from the property owners on both sides of the street.

The city has a grant to replace the brick intersections at 11th and 12th, so their part of the project and match is covered. The downtown group is planning to submit an application for a Community Development Block Grant for up to \$200,000 from the state, and that means the property owners need to come up with improvements to the buildings that total at least \$200,000.

Rasure said there could be many uses for the old telephone building. He suggested it would be a good place to have the economic development office, the visitor's bureau office, the chamber office and that the upstairs has a room that would make an excellent community meeting room.

"We need to look at the long-range use of the building," said Commissioner Chuck Thomas.

Rasure said he would try to get some information on the asbestos removal and would like to have other ideas that they could submit as part of the remodeling effort.

"I think it is a good idea, and something we have been talking about for a long time," said Commissioner Mitch Tiede.

Herndon High School to consolidate

By Kimberly Brandt

The Oberlin Herald

The Herndon High School will close at the end of this year, with the students traveling to school in Atwood.

At the end of last year the Herndon and Atwood School Districts decided to consolidate into one. At that time the Atwood School Board agreed that the high school in Herndon would stay open for at least a year and the grade school would stay open for at least four years or as long as was economically feasible.

Superintendent Lee Tarrant said at a board meeting in September the board agreed to close the high school in a seven to zero vote.

Mr. Tarrant said they will graduate a large number of kids in Herndon this year with a senior class of 13. There are only three in kindergarten and not a lot of new kids coming into the school system in Herndon.

The grade school, he said has a better shot at staying open for longer, at least the four-year agreement.

The junior high students in Herndon are already going to Atwood for all sports. There will also be a combined high school girls basketball team and track, golf and wrestling will be combined this year.

Mr. Tarrant took over as the principal in Herndon and is also the transportation director as the district tries to save on some expenses. The past transportation director retired over the summer, he said. Although Mr. Tarrant said he isn't doing the work on the busses, he is working on the routes. Even with the consolidation this is still a small school district. The question is does the district cut a teacher or do you as the superintendent take on more responsibility. Mr. Tarrant said he decided to take on more responsibility.

All of the administrators have chipped in and are doing double and triple times the work.

He said he enjoys going to Herndon. There is a good group of kids there and aren't very many problems.

Mr. Tarrant said a difference from last year in Herndon is that there is

a full staff this year. The board hired an upper level math teacher which the school didn't have last year. The teacher understands that this is only a one-year contract.

Even before the decision was made on Monday, Sept. 15, to close the high school after this year, the teachers were pretty sure that it was going to happen, said Mr. Tarrant. They have wanted to make it the best year ever. They have a good attitude and want to get things done. They are a good group all of whom are willing to volunteer to get things done right.

All of the teachers in Herndon are district employees and some will be able to have jobs in Atwood, but that won't be a great number.

When the two districts consolidated to make one Atwood knew that they could absorb all of the kids from Herndon and none of the teachers. There will be several people, said Mr. Tarrant, who will lose their jobs. He said he has promised if there are jobs open in Atwood that teachers from Herndon can jump into those first before trying

to hire someone new.

Mr. Tarrant said since the consolidation they haven't seen a large decrease in the enrollment in Herndon. They lost 10 students, but five of them decided to go to Atwood for school. Overall the district lost a total of 34 students.

He said they knew that decrease was coming.

Consolidation was a good idea for the district, said Mr. Tarrant and most of the people seem very accepting of it. There are exceptions to that and for some people consolidation will be an issue forever.

Although consolidation didn't give the districts more money it stabilized the budget for the next four years.

So far, he said, everything is going great and consolidation has worked well.

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