

weather report

41°
at noon



Today

- Sunset, 4:33 p.m.
- Tomorrow**
- Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:33 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil Temperature 33 degrees
- Humidity 18 percent
- Sky clear
- Winds southwest 15 m.p.h.
- Barometer 29.92 inches and falling
- Record High 71° (1921)
- Record Low -13° (1990)

Last 24 Hours*

- High 39°
- Low 11°
- Precipitation none

N.W. Kansas Forecast

Today: partly cloudy, high near 54, low near 21, winds west southwest 7 m.p.h. Wednesday: partly cloudy, high near 50, low around 24, winds north northeast at 10 m.p.h. becoming south southeast.

Extended Forecast

New Year's Day: partly cloudy, high near 54, low around 22. Friday: mostly sunny, high around 54, low near 21. Saturday: partly cloudy, high around 45, low around 19. Sunday: partly cloudy, high around 34.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$3.45 bushel
- New crop — \$3.24 bushel
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Corn — \$2.31 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.15
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Milo — \$2.15 bushel
- Soybeans — \$7.24 bushel
- Posted county price — \$6.98
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Millet — \$5.50 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$11.15 cwt.
- NuSun — \$11.40 cwt.
- Confection — \$19/\$6 cwt.
- Pinto beans — Withdrawn

(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



Activity club open 20 years

Young guests enjoyed some refreshments at the Goodland Activities Center Saturday as the center celebrated its 20 years of service to the community. See story and photo on Page 8.

Plant relocation top story of 2003

Looking back over the headlines, the staff of *The Goodland Star-News* has selected the top stories of the year, and today we present the selections for the Top 10.

The top story this year was the relocation of Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. from California.

In second place was the straw poll on the proposed time zone change in April.

Third went to the Cowgirls for winning the state Class 4A Volleyball championship.

Fourth place was the number of Chamber of Commerce directors who quit this year.

Fifth went the beginning of operations by the S&T Telephone system.

Sixth was the arrest of high school

students after a dog found guns and drugs in their cars.

Seventh was the election of three new school board members and two new city commissioners in April, with voters turning out as many incumbents.

Eighth was the county taking over the city's trash collection, which was the top story of last year.

Ninth was the West Nile virus, which affected people in northwest Kansas and Sherman County.

Tenth was a tie between the story of the search for a missing man, and the meth labs and large drug busts in the past year.

Other stories received votes, and the honorable mentions will be highlighted next week.

Plant brings new jobs

No. 1: The top story for the year is the relocation of Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp.'s manufacturing operations from California to Goodland, along with the jobs it will create and the dollars it will bring.

Herb Menold, president and co-founder, said he wanted to save money by relocating out of California, where the cost of doing business was high and getting higher.

Two meetings were held Sept. 3 at the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce, where Menold explained the firm's history, products, operations, capabilities and potential. On Sept. 12, Menold told people at a meeting of the Goodland Rotary Club he was committed to relocating to Kansas, whether to Goodland

or elsewhere in the state. The total cost of the move was estimated at \$800,000 with \$300,000 in guarantees needed to begin moving.

Ten days later, Menold said the firm was moving to Goodland and the fire-damaged Mosbarger IGA building would be the new home for its manufacturing operation. A combination of state pledges, city support and investment by a new venture capital fund set up in Goodland came up with the money.

The plan called for 80 percent of the firm's manufacturing operation to be in Goodland with the rest in Wichita, where product inspections and distribution will take place. Menold said about 30 new jobs would be created here during the first



Aircraft Seal and Gasket president Herb Menold pointed to where he wanted a silicon extruder placed. The extruder was one of the first pieces equipment to arrive from California.

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

few months of operation, increasing to about 100 within the first year.

The city, which owns the building, agreed to allow the firm its use rent free for the first two years. However, the building needed major renovation, especially to its roof and the south wall, which were damaged in an April 1999 fire.

Work began in earnest Sept. 22. Crews started by removing the old air conditioners from the roof. Over the next eight weeks, the roof was removed, damaged steel beams replaced, the south wall repaired, the

exterior renovated, a new electrical system installed and a new concrete floor poured.

In the mean time, Aircraft Seal and Gasket went looking for a new chief executive and a manager for the plant here. At a news conference Oct. 28 at the Northwest Kansas Technical College, Menold introduced John Hartzler as the new CEO and Goodland's Chuck Lutters as the plant manager.

The only tragedy suffered by the project was the sudden death of Goodland Public Works Director Ed

Wolak on Nov. 29. Wolak was a driving force behind the building's renovation.

More than three months of effort by all those involved was realized the morning of Dec. 10 when the first two trucks carrying equipment arrived from California. The rest of the day was spent unloading the trucks and moving the equipment into the building.

More than 400 people have applied for work at the plant. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is being planned for February.

County decides to stay Mountain Climate Capital

No. 2: A group of business people proposed changing to Central Standard Time in February, and asked Sherman County commissioners to support the move, but the effort died in a straw poll conducted in April by *The Goodland Star-News*.

Larry Keirns, retired president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College, and J.D. McClure, owner of McClure Plumbing and Heating, told the Sherman County Economic Development Council at its meeting

in February that it was "Time for a Change."

"We are here to request your support to change the time zone for Sherman County from Mountain Time to Central Time," Keirns said. "With only four of the 105 counties in Kansas on Mountain Time, it is time to join the vast majority of Kansas and change to Central Time. The economic impact will be positive for our county."

The council took no action to en-

dorse the plan, but Keirns and McClure spoke to civic and social groups and ask the county commissioners to support the change.

When the county said they would like to know how people felt, a straw vote was suggested. At first it was planned to do the straw poll at that same place as the city and school board elections in April, but under state law, such an election had to be in a separate location. It was sponsored by the newspaper and held in

the lobby of the Sherman County courthouse.

The straw poll was handled by employees of *The Star-News*, and it was set up so that anyone who was 18 — whether registered to vote or not — could vote. Advance voting was done at the newspaper office.

A total of 1,450 people voted in the straw poll, with 1,062 (74 percent) against a change to Central Time, and 388 (26 percent) in favor. The turnout amounted to 37 per-

cent of the registered voters in the county. A total of 1,675 voted in the city and school board elections, 43 percent of the registered voters.

Research found that Sherman County had switched time zones frequently in the past. The numbers in this straw vote were similar to one conducted by the *Sherman County Herald* and *The Goodland Daily News* in April 1989, when 1,035 voted in favor of staying with Mountain time and 579 voted for change.

Cowgirls state champs, undefeated in Kansas

No. 3: The Cowgirls won the 2003 state Class 4A volleyball championship on Nov. 1.

The Cowgirls finished the 2003 season 38-2 without losing to a team from Kansas. Both their losses came early in the season to schools in Colorado.

Going undefeated in Kansas was not easy. Seven of the Cowgirls' matches went to three games, including one that went 15-13 in the third game against the Grinnell Warriors.

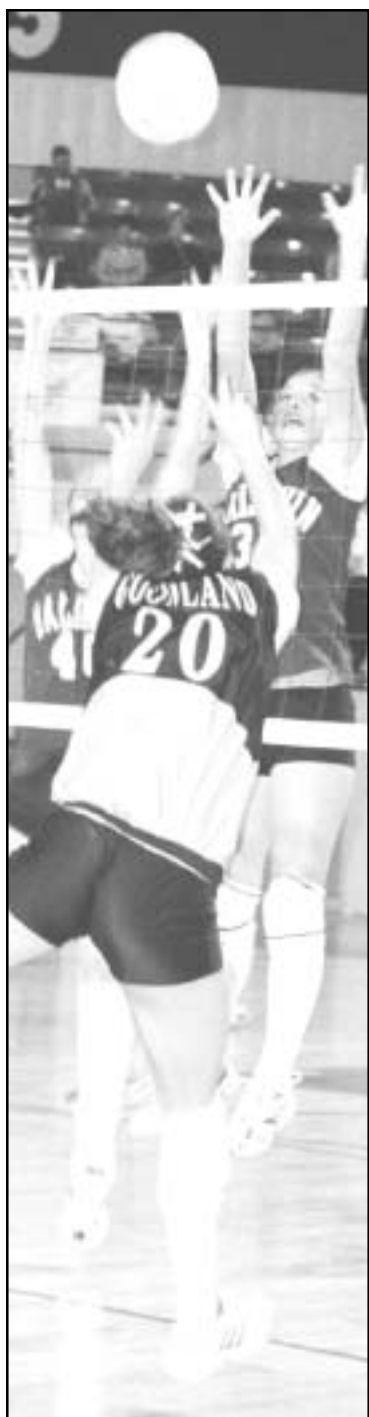
At the state tournament in Salina, Goodland needed three games to defeat the No. 1 seed Abilene. In the championship round, the next day, the Cowgirls won both their matches 2-0, defeating Baldwin City for the title 25-14 and 25-20.

Five Cowgirl seniors will gradu-

ate next May as state champions: Kelsey Herl, Janae McKee, Courtney Schields, Alisha McKee and Tomi Windell. Alisha McKee will play next season for California State University, Fresno.

Some of the credit for the team's success belongs to senior Kristi Boyce, who was the team's manager. Coach McKee said she did an outstanding job which allowed the players and coaches to concentrate more on playing the game.

This was Goodland's fourth state championship since 1974 and the second under Coach Jerry McKee. The Cowgirls won the state Class 3A championship in 1974 under coach Sheila Stiles and the Class 4A championship in 1981 under Sandy Weaver. McKee's first state title came in 1988.



Senior Janae McKee hit the ball over two Baldwin defenders in the championship match for the state Class 4A high school title.

Photo by Liz West The Goodland Star-News

Chamber director changes four times

No. 4: The Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce had a lot of changes this year, and as the year draws to a close, the board is looking for a new manager, the fourth in a year.

The Chamber board got a jolt in mid-January when Ron Harding, who had been manger for 22 years, announced he was leaving to become manager at Aten Department Store.

Harding's assistant, Jo Simmons, who had been office manager and events coordinator for seven years, was named the new manager. In March, she moved the Chamber office from its office at 104 W. 11th to the new Opera House Plaza, 1002 Main.

On May 15, Simmons submitted a resignation to Chamber President Tim Rath of Farm Bureau Insurance, saying her last day would be May 30.

The board turned to one of its own to keep the operation moving, naming Justin Bentzinger as interim manager.

Simmons was hired in July to manage the Goodland Churches Thrift Shop, 1218 Main.

The Chamber had a change of president in the summer when Rath moved to Greeley, Colo., to take

over a new Farm Bureau Insurance office. This promoted Cesar Miller, who had been the vice-president, to the top spot.

In October, for the third time in 10 months, the Chamber was seeking someone to run its office with the resignation of Bentzinger.

Miller said he had received a letter of resignation from Bentzinger, and he was looking for someone to fill the position temporarily.

Bentzinger would not elaborate on his resignation, but it was later learned the Chamber was out of money to pay him.

"This is such a dilemma for us, as the dust hasn't settled from the other resignation," Miller said. "We have picked up members in the past four months, and that it the best thing. We are not in a panic, but hope to get things moving."

In December, ballots for the Chamber board were distributed to members as part of a 2004 membership packet that were either hand-delivered or mailed to everyone on the paid-up list.

The old board met for the last time Dec. 19. Tremon Kizer, who is coordinating the search for a new director, said he has received five applications.

S&T begins service

No. 5: S&T Communications began service in January after building a whole new telecommunication system to serve Goodland.

S&T offered Goodland an option for cable television, telephone and Internet services.

Internet options include dial-up service and high-speed digital subscriber lines, referred to as DSL. S&T signed up its first customers here on Jan. 6, with service beginning Feb. 1.

Don Newell, sales manager in Goodland, says S&T now has about 63 percent of the market. As of Dec. 26, S&T had 1,712 phone lines, 759 Internet customers and 1,032 cable customers.

S&T Communications in Good-

land is a branch of S&T Telephone, a customer-owned cooperative headquartered in Brewster. Other branch offices are in Colby and Dighton.

Work began last year to install the new fiber-optic communication system in Goodland. The work, done in phases, was finished last July. The start of the work was the No. 4 on last year's top 10 list.

Perhaps the most obvious proof of S&T's impact in Goodland is the number of telephone numbers which changed its prefix from 899 to 890 zero." S&T created about 20 jobs in Goodland.

S&T offers packages which include telephone, cable and Internet service under one bill.

No paper on Friday

With the New Year's holiday, there will be no *Goodland Star-News* published on Friday. The next edition will be on Tuesday,

Jan. 6. All government offices and most businesses will be closed New Year's Day. Have a happy and safe holiday.