

# City Commission approves repaving K-27

By Tom Betz  
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The Goodland City Commission has approved the first phase of repaving K-27 with concrete from the I-70 interchange north to the stoplight at Business U.S. 24, and Monday the commission agreed to handle the design costs with a separate contract.

Darin Neufeld, engineer from Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates who is handling the city street projects, said he had talked to the state Department of Transportation about the engineering costs and was told they had changed the rules about who pays what.

He said when the city applied last year, the design costs were included in the total project. The first award from the state would have made the city's cost \$240,902. The state pay a maximum of \$750,000 for each "connecting link" project, he said, and the K-27 improvement was broken into three phases to allow the city to receive the maximum for each one.

The state has approved paying up to \$750,000 (95 percent) for the first phase of the project, and the city's cost would \$37,500 (5 percent).

Neufeld said he is proposing the city do a separate contract with his firm for the design, which would cost about \$100,000 for the total project. He said if the city goes with the state for designing the phases, he estimated the cost around \$159,000 for all the work.

"If we do design through EBH, it would cost us \$137,500?" asked Commissioner Dave Daniels.

Neufeld said the city would save about \$59,000 by going through his firm rather than the state design system.

"We would not design the whole thing in the first year," Neufeld said. "We don't know what the standards are going to be. The design contract would be for the entire maximum, but we would probably actually do it over the three years and bill the city for the work done."

Mayor Rick Billinger asked if the

design cost could be part of the city's five percent.

"They said no," Neufeld said. "If you do that, your percentage would increase up to 7 to 10 percent."

"Do they get to change the rules to fix their road?" Billinger asked.

"That is our road in the city," said Jeff Mason, city attorney and a former member of the state highway advisory commission. "And, yes, you can say no to their money."

Neufeld said if the city decides not to do the project, the state will only patch the road.

"When did they do a patch job?" Daniels asked.

Neufeld said state crews did some patching last fall.

Rich Simon, city public works director, said cracks had come right back through the patches.

"The bottom line," Neufeld said, "is we will do everything we have to during design to keep the city's share to the 5 percent, and if that means changing to four phases, that is the way we will continue to design and turn in applications."

Neufeld said City Clerk Mary Volk had a call from the state urging the city to move forward with the project.

"We need to submit the next application by July," Neufeld said. "Do you want us to submit the application and do you want to have us develop a contract between the city and EBH, or direct it back through the state?"

"We have already said we are going to do this," said Commissioner Josh Dechant.

"Yes, but you need to make the next step," Neufeld said.

"What happens if we sign a contract with EBH and down the line the state changes their rules and we decide not to do it?" Daniels asked. "Would there be anything in the contract in that situation?"

"Under our contract, we would probably charge the city for the expenses on the project to that date," Neufeld said.

"We need to move forward," said Commissioner Annette Fairbanks.



Jerry Nemechek of Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates tested cement being poured for a section of 17th Street at Broadway Tuesday morning. The south half of 17th should be open shortly after

Memorial Day, and work on the north half of the street will start next week.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

"I think it has to be done and we need to do it."

Billinger asked if Neufeld could squeeze the city's cost down to the \$37,500.

"I can't get it down to that as the only cost because the state will not pay for the design," Neufeld said.

"So our cost is \$70,000," Billinger said. "I guess that is where I am puzzled. Why are they not including the design?"

Neufeld said there is no guarantee the second and third phases of

the project will get the state money each year.

Neufeld said the first phase is not expected to be done until 2010, and that the next phases would not be until 2011 or 2012 possibly.

"It looks like you are trying to keep it down as low as it comes," Billinger said.

"I think we should move forward and keep the design out of the state process," Dechant said.

The consensus was to have Neufeld prepare a contract for the

design and go ahead with the application for the second phase.

Neufeld said the 17th Street project is moving ahead. The intersection at 17th and Main reopened a week ahead of schedule, he said, the south side of 17th would be done this week. After a week for the last concrete to cure, traffic will be shifted over to new pavement and construction will begin on the north side. He said the work on the north half of the street should go more quickly since all the underground

drainage and utility work has been done.

On the Caldwell project, Neufeld said, contractor APAC has been delayed a bit and will not begin work until June 6 or 7.

He said that means North Caldwell will be closed through the first part of July.

He said the utility work has been completed on Eighth Street from Cattle Trail to D'Lao, and that will be the last of the city projects.

# Graduate gives money for books

By Pat Schiefen  
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A former student, now a teacher herself, who wants to help children who learn English as their second language, returned to Central Elementary School to give some bilingual books and a \$1,000 donation to the library to buy more.

"I love to read," said Rita Elsten from Tuscon, who was at Central with her husband Neil recently.

She gave a sack of books, some signed by the authors, along with a check, to Principal Sharon Gregory.

Elsten said she got into reading children's books after she took a class in writing them.

Some of the signed books were written by her teachers.

"The books will allow parents who read only Spanish to read to their kids and the kids can read in English," she said.

"I remember my first day at kindergarten," Elsten said. "I loved the library. The principal was Eldon Carver, (Zella) Little was the kindergarten teacher and Ann Kinder was the first-grade teacher. I haven't been in this building since

I went to school here."

"The gift is in memory of the Horta family," she added, referring to her family.

This is the second year for the gifts, she said.

Elsten said she teaches adult literacy at Yuma County College in Arizona. She and her husband were in town for Michael Smith's graduation.

She said Maggie Diaz, Smith's grandmother, and her grandmother were close friends.

While she no longer has family living here — her mother moved to eastern Kansas before she died — Elsten said Goodland is dear to her heart. She was born at the Boothroy Memorial Hospital here and graduated from Goodland High School in 1965.

"I just finished writing a children's book," she said.

"My sister, Joel Horta, illustrated the book."

She said when she started school, she and her parents lived with her grandparents at 1623 Caldwell, now torn down.

"My mother was born in Colby,"



Maggie Hernandez (left), migrant coordinator at Central Elementary School, took books from Rita Elsten, who pointed out which ones were signed and which ones had good illustrations. Elsten donated the books to the school along with a check to buy bilingual books.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Elsten said. "Dad came from Mexico when he was 8 or 9. They came from Mexico by train. A bunch of the family settled in Laramie, Wyo.

"My grandmother did not speak

English. She spoke Spanish, a combination of Spanish and English."

Elsten said she is not bilingual. "My dad didn't want us to speak Spanish," she said.

"When I grew up, it was not cool to be another ethnicity, Spanish, German or whatever. It just wasn't."

"Now it's an advantage in a global world."

## corrections

The article "Woman is new superintendent" in Tuesday's edition of *The Goodland Star-News* said Mary Ellen Welshhon, the new superintendent of the Golden Plains School District, has a son named Lawrence who lives in Lawrence. Her son's name is Ryan Welshhon, and he lives in Lawrence. This was a reporting error.

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The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

## matters of record

### District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court:

**Feb. 28** — Michael A. Lucas, \$123 for over weight load.

**March 10** — Mitaho Hristov, \$166 reinstated for motor carrier safety rules and regulations.

**March 14** — Aaron E. Fischer, \$120 for improper parking.

**March 15** — George N. Smith, \$127 for speeding.

**March 16** — Jason C. Longo, \$166 for motor carrier safety rules and regulations.

John A. Murphy, \$126 for speeding.

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