

**weather
report**

74°

**noon
Thursday**

Today

• Sunset, 8:07 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 5:22 a.m.

• Sunset, 8:08 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 60 degrees
- Humidity 49 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds southwest at 21 mph, gusting to 28 mph.
- Barometer 29.92 inches and falling
- Record High today 106° (2002)
- Record Low today 34° (1917)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	70°
Low Wednesday	47°
Precipitation	Trace
This month	.75
Year to date	6.40
Normal	below .52 of an inch

The Topside Forecast

Today: A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy with a high near 72. North wind between 5 and 15 mph. Low around 47.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 78. Breezy north wind between 10 and 20 mph. Low around 51. Sunday and Monday: Partly cloudy, highs near 79, lows around 51. Tuesday: Mostly sunny with a high near 90, low around 57.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400.MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local
markets**

Noon

- Wheat — \$4.68 bushel
- Posted county price — \$4.59
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Corn — \$3.90 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.66
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Milo — \$3.60 bushel
- Soybeans — \$7.08 bushel
- Posted county price — \$7.08
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Millet — \$7 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- NuSun crop — \$16.65 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$25 (new crop)

(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



**Car racing
this weekend**

Raymond Dechant (00) and Brian Morris (8) both of Lamar, Colo., raced to determine the pole for the bomber class main on May 19. Dechant won the main. Saturday races begin at 6:30 p.m. See photos, story on Page 12.

Fire departments may merge

By Tom Betz

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The Sherman County Rural Fire Department proposed taking over all fire protection for the City of Goodland under a plan presented to the county and city at a joint meeting held Thursday morning, but city commissioners said more time was needed to iron out the details before merging the two departments.

County Commission Chairman Chuck Thomas had the item put on the meeting agenda last week, but the plan written by Rural Fire Chief Alan David wasn't put in the county commissioners' mailboxes until Wednesday.

The city commission will meet at 5 p.m. on Monday, and City Attorney Jeff Mason said some people might bring up the idea at the Shine On Sherman County community forum being held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday at the Goodland Elks Lodge.

City Manager Wayne Hill and four members of the city commission were at the joint meeting Thursday to hear the proposal. The city commissioners expressed interest in pur-

suing the idea but felt all five city commissioners and city staff should come up with some ideas and then hold another joint meeting.

County Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked where the plan came from and said he had not seen the plan until Wednesday.

David said he developed the plan because the city fire chief had resigned and there had been some previous talk about combining the city and county fire departments.

"After I talked to each of you (county commissioners) on that Saturday (after the city fire chief was suspended)," David said, "I talked to Chuck (Thomas) later and asked at that time about putting some ideas together."

"I brought it to Bonnie (Selby, county attorney) to look at to see if there were any legal issues. How it escalated to this (standing room only) I don't know. I thought Rick (Billinger, city mayor) was going to be here to talk about some concerns from the city."

"These are things we have talked about in our department. They are suggestions. That is all they are."

Mayor Billinger said Thomas had talked to

him and said the county had a suggestion for the fire departments. Billinger said he had not seen the plan until that morning. He said he felt it was important for all five city commissioners to discuss any plan.

"I got mine yesterday," said Commissioner Mitch Tiede.

"We have talked about some ideas of consolidation of city and county services," Billinger said.

"Are you interested in this?" Tiede asked. "I think we are interested but not in a takeover," said Commissioner Josh Dechant. "I don't think this is what we had in mind."

"I am like Josh," Billinger said. "I don't think is what we had in mind. It was more like maybe sharing a fire chief; I am not sure we need a full time fire chief now that we don't have the calls on I-70."

"I think this is a place to start. I think we need to take the time to answer all the questions."

"I want to get away from the 'you' and 'us'," said Dechant. "I want to see us get to where the training is for everybody and we are work-

ing together to do the same thing, with the idea of saving lives in mind."

Tiede said it would be good to have people who know how to operate both the city and rural fire trucks and are trained to handle different types of fires.

"The wording may not have been politically correct," David said, "but the idea is to have one fire department handling everything."

Hill asked if the city and county decide to combine the departments, would they take applications to get a fire chief who has the qualifications to handle the job?

Selby said she would agree and that such a position would be advertised.

Mason said that made sense to him.

"We have all talked about doing something," said Commissioner Annette Fairbanks by phone. "No one like the word consolidation, unification sounds better. I am glad we are finally talking about it. It will take some time to get ironed out. The ultimate goal is to

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Jessie Martinez used a chain saw to begin cutting the details of a Lady Liberty from an old dead elm tree at the corner of Broadway and 15th. It is one of two tree sculptures Martinez is doing in town.

Photo by Jordie Mann/The Goodland Star-News

Chain saw artist carves lady liberty

By Jordie Mann

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If you've driven by the corner of 15th and Broadway lately, you may have noticed a man with a chain saw standing on a platform, carving on a dead tree.

Jessie Martinez is carving Lady Liberty out of an old elm stump.

Martinez, who just started the rough draft of Liberty at 15th and Broadway, also is carving a statue of Sacagawea near 16th and Texas.

He has done this before, he said, and has 20 years of experience under his belt as an artist.

The sculptor said he spent some time in Holly, Colo., after a tornado sliced a clear cut through their town park at the end of March.

The Colorado Lottery is contributing money to rebuild this park, he said, and he plans to go back to carve a sculpture from one of the remaining trees. He said he would like to carve a memorial for the woman who lost her life in the tornado, a woman holding a baby, to honor the woman's ultimate sacrifice.

Martinez owns Martinez Sculpting in May Valley, Colo., a few miles north of Lamar. He said he is three-quarters Navajo, and said he draws from his heritage while working.

When he is hired to do a piece, he said, he looks at pictures in several books and then he looks at the tree and tries to see the picture in the wood. Then he moves quickly with a wax pencil and draws a sketch of what he sees on the tree. From then on, he refers to pictures and his drawings of the picture as he sees it completed.

Martinez, a 1989 Lamar High School graduate, received an associate's degree in art from Lamar Community College and in 1994 earned a bachelor's degree from the Art Institute in Denver.

He said he has studied under Justin Young, a widely known wildlife artist from Lamar, learning to do bronze sculptures. He said Young has three large bronzes on display in Lamar.

Martinez said he continues to work with Young, although on more of a business level. Young frequently appraises his sculptures so the owners can insure a piece if they choose, he said.

Martinez said his average sculpture costs \$500, though something like Lady Liberty, with the detail in the robes, might take an investment of \$2,000 and the Sacagawea sculpture will run around \$1,800.

Shine On, Chamber to hold big events

Everyone will have a chance to hear about the goals and progress from the Shine On Sherman County strategic planning group on Monday, and the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce will be out looking for new members all week with an open house planned for Wednesday.

The Shine On group plans a community forum at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Goodland Elks Lodge, which should last about 90 minutes.

People can join roundtable discussions with the action teams, he said, and an open microphone and open discussion will close the meeting.

The Chamber plans a membership drive all week, including an open house on Wednesday set to encourage businesses, people and organizations to join.

Manager Andi Nelson said the Chamber hopes to rebuild its base.

"Membership is one key area where we need help," Nelson said. "Five years ago, we had 171 members. Now we have 92."

She said the open house will run from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday at the office, 10th and Main.

Traffic pattern changes on 17th Street



Traffic on 17th Street is still one-way, but from the railroad tracks to Main, now drivers are on the new concrete south half of the street. Workers switched the side of the street on Monday, and by Wednesday they had removed old bricks all the way to Caldwell. Workers were laying the rebar matting and leveling the base in front of Hank's Café to get this section

poured as soon as possible. Darin Neufeld, engineer from Evans, Bierly, Hutchinson and Associates, inspecting the project for the city, said the work on the north half is going faster because underground water and storm sewer lines were installed under the south half.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News