

County reviews burn permit

By Tom Betz
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Sherman County commissioners decided last Tuesday to keep the county's burn permit process, but asked the rural fire chiefs to take a closer look at controlled burns near the city.

Commissioners said businesses, including the Holiday Inn Express, and some homeowners in the southwest corner of town had complained about a large amount of smoke from the burning of two wheat circles on the east edge of town and south of I-70.

Commission Chairman Chuck Thomas said he had talked to Rural Fire Chief Alan David about the problem, and suggested looking for a way to revise the permit process to keep it from happening again.

Assistant Fire Chief Chris Bauman said he could see both sides of the question when he met with the county commissioners on Tuesday. "How do you determine where to restrict?" he asked. "You could

draw a circle around the town, but then that would include areas like the county transfer station and tree pit.

"One fire has come up that smoked up some businesses and some homes."

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said it was his understanding the farmer had done everything properly.

"Yes, he did," the Bauman said, "and I think the wind should have taken the smoke to the east."

He said he had talked to David, and they agreed it would be good to keep an eye on the burns closer to town.

"I don't think we need to change the permit," Commissioner Kevin Rasure said, "but we need to be more conscious about what we are doing, especially near town."

Sometimes a fire develops a wind within itself, he said, and this on appeared to produce much more smoke than was expected. There was not enough wind to dissipate the smoke, Bauman said.

Thomas said the smoke could be seen from south of St. Francis, and Rasure said it was visible from the top of Mount Sunflower.

"I think he did everything properly," Rasure said. "There are some areas where I think we should not burn."

Bauman said he and David would keep an eye on the permits, and if they are close to town, maybe have the farmer burn the field in strips.

"I don't want to make a big deal about it," he said. "We get a lot of static from people with the permits. I have turned down about eight requests myself and probably that same number by David."

Thomas said under the permit process, the chief can tell people not to burn.

Bauman said he and David get calls from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. from people asking for permits to burn. He said the rule is not to let people burn at night, adding that he or David usually inspects the area before granting the permit.

Tax sale planned for this year

SALE, from Page 1

more. Unless the taxes are redeemed before the sale, the property would be sold at auction and the owner has no opportunity to bid.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked Selby for an outline on what has to be done to get ready for a tax sale.

Selby said after she has the abstracts, the county will have to publish a notice, probably be done by the end of October, and set the sale date before the end of the year.

In other business, the commissioners

- Held a 15-minute closed session with Curt Way, public works manager, and Margaret Russell, transfer station manager, to discuss a matter involving a former transfer station employee. No action was taken afterward.
- Approved a resolution making County Road 64 between roads 33 and 37 at the east end of the county

a minimum maintenance road.

- Approved extension of a bioterrorism contract with the Sherman County Health Department.

- Signed the contract and quit claim deed for the piece of right of way the county sold to Fred Stasser along old U.S. 24 about four miles east of town to allow him to build an entrance to his property.

- Considered allowing a county employee to attend the Leadership Sherman County class being formed now. The commissioners decided to allow any employee to join, but the employee would have to pay half the cost. The commissioners agreed that if it was a non-salaried person, the county would split the days with the county paying half and the employee taking vacation time for the other half. The class includes nine days between September and March, including a trip to Topeka in February.

"That is not a perfect solution,"

Rasure said, "but it might be a compromise."

The commissioners agreed to have a memo sent out to all the county workers.

- Approved a three-year extension of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which provides tax breaks for new construction and remodeling, Rasure and noted that once a similar motion is passed by the City Commission and school board, the papers can be drawn up.

The commissioners agreed the program has been good, and believe it has stimulated some growth and development that may not have happened without the incentive.

- Approved emergency vehicle designations for city firemen Oura Garret, Matthew Breininger and Jamison Miller.

The commissioners will meet at 8 a.m. on Friday in the commission room on the main floor of the Sherman County Courthouse.

Rumpel said it is probably time to have someone look at all the county policies to update them, since it has been about 10 years since that was done.

The commissioners said they would consider that after the budget is completed.

County revises employee hiring policy

POLICY, from Page 1

Rasure suggested they take out the grandparents in-law and uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and first cousins, which the department head cannot hire now. Under the revised definition the hiring ban would extend to the immediate family and in-laws.

Rasure said people need to be clear there are two definitions: one to limit the department head from hiring any of his own family, and the second is to allow him to hire relatives of existing or future county employees.

The commissioners agreed to make the change and have it added to the county policy.

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Street bond sale planned for September

BONDS, from Page 1

should be about 4.14 percent.

City Manager Wayne Hill asked if the rate could change. Loescher said it could, but he felt the market would stabilize and did expect much of a change.

City Commissioner Josh Dechant asked if the bond sale would be handled online the way the joint city-county road bond issue was done in September.

"Not on this small an issue," Loescher said. "We expect this to be more of a regional or local buy, and it would not be done through the electronic process. We will contact

the national bidders, but we don't expect them to have the best rates.

"We will send the information out by e-mail, but on the sale day, the bidders can fax or mail them to us."

Loescher said based on the figures from the city, there could be a cushion of about \$20,000 that could be used on the street projects if needed, or any extra money left over would be put in the bond and interest fund to help pay off the bonds.

The total cost of the bond issue is expected to be \$35,000 or about 1.46 percent. Loescher said \$14,500 would go to Gilmore and Bell as the bond counsel, \$10,800

to Davidson as the financial advisor, \$3,335 to the state of Kansas as the paying agent, \$3,000 for printing and publications, \$618 to the American Banker's Association's Committee on Uniform Security Identification Procedures, \$235 for the attorney general's review and \$2,512 for contingencies.

The commission passed motions to approve Davidson as the financial advisor and to authorize the bond sale. Loescher said he planned to come out Sept. 17 and have the bids tabulated at the city office for approval at the commission meeting that night.

Proposed city street improvement projects

STREETS, from Page 1

to Broadway.

Willow Avenue from Spruce to Maple and an intersection; Aspen Avenue from Poplar to First; Poplar Avenue from Aspen to Acacia; Spruce Avenue from Main to Cottonwood; and Sycamore Avenue from Poplar to Maple.

Ninth Street from Sherman to Cattle Trail; 11th Street from Cald-

well to Eastridge and from Kansas to Sherman; Eastridge from 10th to the dead end; and Sixth Street from Eustis to Sherman.

Third Street from Caldwell to Broadway; 15th Street from Broadway to Arcade; Clark Avenue from Sixth to Toelkes and 15th to 16th; and Fifth Street from Caldwell to Kansas.

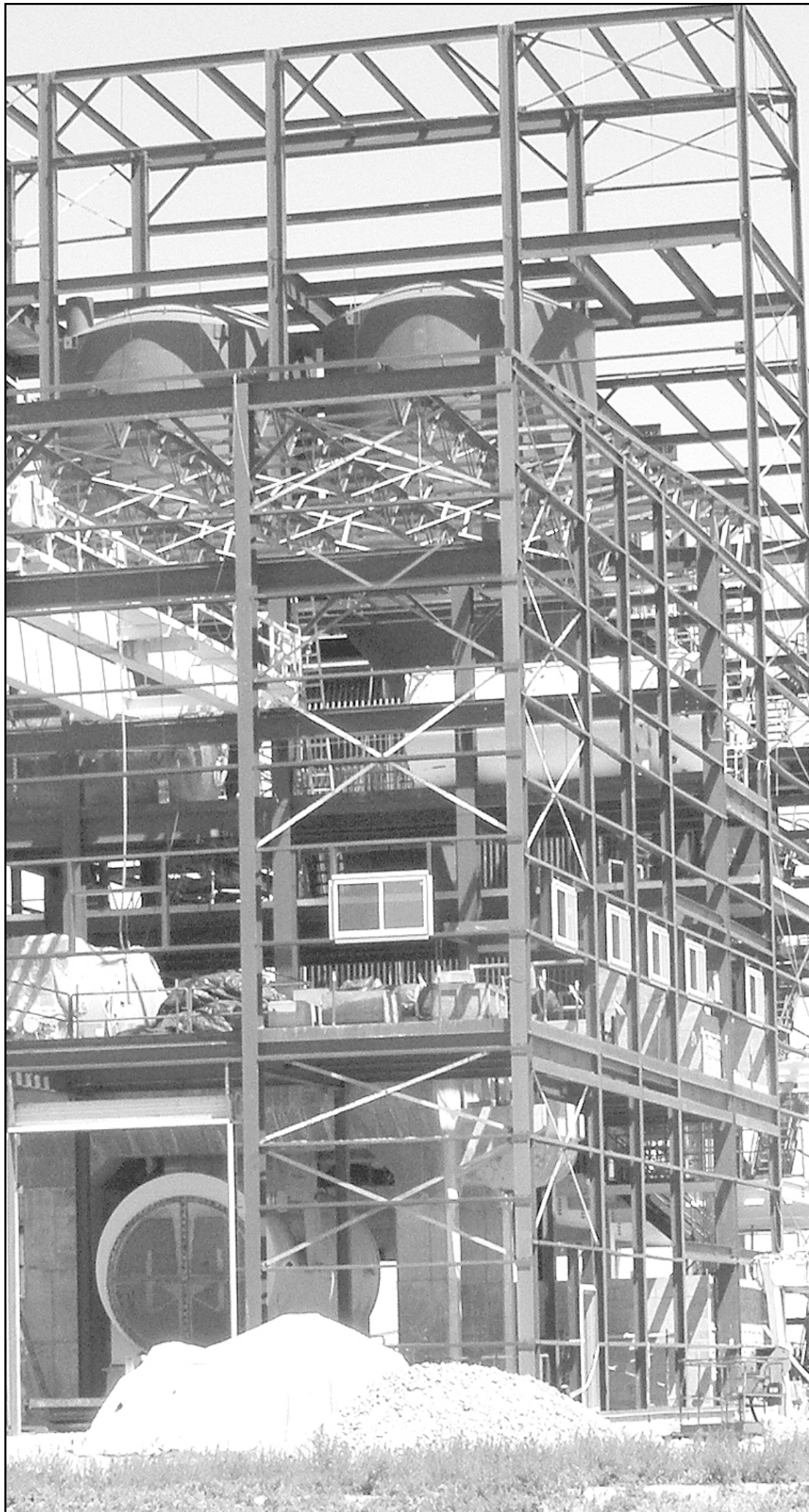
Montana Avenue from 16th to Eighth; 10th Street from Texas to

Syracuse; Broadway Avenue from Seventh to Eighth; and Colorado Avenue from 13th to 17th.

Harrison Avenue from 11th to 12th; Sherman Avenue from Ninth to Eighth and 15th to 16th; Texas Avenue from 14th to 17th and the intersection at 10th.

Syracuse Avenue from 11th to 12th and 14th to 15th and all of Circle Drive.

Windows up at power plant



Window frames have appeared on the Goodland Energy Resources power plant, indicating the progress being made, and Doug Sederstrom, chief financial officer of the firm, said the wall sheeting should begin to go up in the next few weeks. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Flatlander committee asks for money

VISITORS, from Page 1

do the festival to promote Main Street businesses, he said.

In the last two years, he said, they have added the golf tournament and the Sunday Picnic in the Park. They want to add more events, he said, to try to get people here and give them a reason to stay.

This year, he said, the committee is adding a talent contest. People

performing will bring their supporters, he said, and it should draw a lot of people from surrounding towns. Everyone will compete from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday at the grandstand at 11th and Main. Wood said, and three finalists in each age group will compete at the Sunday picnic from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Chambers Park. Winners will be announced there.

The age groups are 9-12, 13-19 and 20 and up. Call Richard

Johnson at 890-3510 or e-mail at johnrie@hotmail.com for information.

Also at the festival will be the annual car show, motorcycle show and events, stock car races, scruffy dog contest, vendors' booths, flea market and garage sale at the Antique Warehouse, food, entertainment and the beer garden.

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