

weather report

78°

noon
Thursday



Today

- Sunset, 8:09 p.m.
- Saturday**
- Sunrise, 5:21 a.m.
- Sunset, 8:10 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 70 degrees
- Humidity 59 percent
- Sky partly sunny
- Winds variable 4 mph
- Barometer 29.82 inches and steady
- Record High today 99° (1933)
- Record Low today 34° (1954)

Last 24 Hours*

- High Sunday 81°
- Low Sunday 55°
- Precipitation .07
- This month 0.07
- Year to date 3.32
- Below normal 3.83 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms at night, a high near 84, winds out of the north at 5 to 15 mph becoming easterly and a low around 56. Wednesday: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon, a high near 81, winds south at 10 mph and a low around 53.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, a high near 73 and a low around 52. Friday: Sunny. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

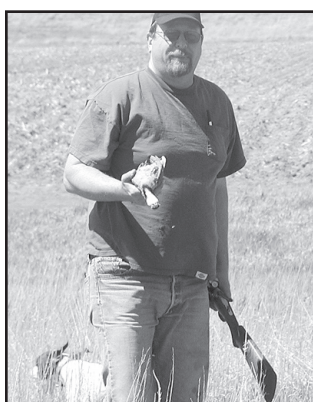
local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$7.61 bushel
- Posted county price — \$7.33
- Corn — \$5.66 bushel
- Posted county price — \$5.54
- Milo — \$5.24 bushel
- Soybeans — \$12.19 bushel
- Posted county price — \$12.70
- Millet — \$7 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$17.90 cwt.
- Confection — \$30/\$20 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$32 (new crop)
- (Markets by Scoular Grain, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news, views from your Goodland Star-News



Hunting dog wins contest

Larry House held a chukar he shot and his dog Rowdy had brought to him. Rowdy pointed to the chukar in the grass on House's farm and waited for his master to shoot it. The dog was a winner in a national contest. See story, photos on Page 10.

Purchase slows power plant work

By Tom Betz

ntbetz@nwkansas.com

Construction has come to a near standstill at the nearly completed coal-fired power plant at Caruso while details for the sale of the plant are worked out.

Doug Sederstrom, chief financial officer for Goodland Energy Resources, which is building the plant, said Friday the company and Energy Holdings Limited of Wilmington, N.C., are working on the "due diligence" investigation after the companies signed a letter of intent in April to sell the plant for \$42 million.

"As these discussions continue," Sederstrom said, "construction activity at the plant site has been temporarily slowed. As soon as the parties have finished their due diligence work and mutually agreed on terms of the

purchase agreement, the construction activity will resume."

The Carolina firm was founded by G. William Eason and Karl W. Miller, also founding shareholders of MMC Energy Inc. The two had been involved in a bid to wrest control of MMC from its current board and management.

Eason and Miller, who own about 9 percent of MMC stock, lost a proxy fight to elect their slate of officers at the stockholders meeting Wednesday in San Francisco.

Sederstrom said Friday the Energy Holdings officials felt they did not have enough votes to win the proxy fight, but that some of the changes they wanted to see are being made to improve MMC operation.

The Goodland City Commission was to

discuss an agreement with Goodland Energy Resources on Monday to allow construction of a power line from the plant to connect with the city power system. The line is to come in along 19th Street, crossing over from the south side to the north side, with the energy company replacing some nearly 40-year old city power poles.

"Acquisition of (the Goodland plant) would provide us with a dependable source of revenue and is consistent with the company's strategy to acquire and control niche opportunities ... for both natural gas and clean coal-fueled assets, as well as alternative and renewable (green) energy projects," said Ketheesch Aran, Energy Holdings chief financial officer, when he talked to Goodland Rotary in April. "This is an important step for

our company as we strive to be a leader in the independent power generation business.

"This plant demonstrates that energy can be good for the environment."

The plant being built five miles west of Goodland is designed to burn coal and biomass, or agricultural waste, but can generate electricity and industrial steam from other fuel sources such as old railroad ties, tires, trash and other waste products.

"Since the plant utilizes waste for fuel, emissions credits will be created, an important element of Energy Holdings desire to produce ecofriendly energy and an asset with significant future value," Aran said.

Aran said his group wants to be part of the community and want to make the plant viable for a long time.

I-70 work beginning

Contractors expected to start resurfacing on the westbound lanes of I-70 from Edson to Goodland today, with the work expected to take about a week.

Eric Oelschlager, area engineer for the state Department of Transportation in Atwood, said the crews from Venture of Great Bend will be working daily, Monday through Friday.

He said the project will smooth the road and seal cracks with a 5/8-inch layer of asphalt. A specially modified oil will be sprayed over the road to bind the asphalt to the concrete pavement.

"This type of overlay promotes drainage, reduces hydroplaning and wet weather spray and improves the skid resistance of the road," he said.

The estimated cost is \$680,590, he said, and weather permitting, the project should be done by Monday.

Michael Terry, construction engineer in the Atwood office, said in March the asphalt overlay is to provide a new wearing surface and to help reduce spray from vehicles. He said the westbound lanes — the north pair — were rebuilt in 1999 and the eastbound lanes — the south pair — were rebuilt in 2000. He said it is possible the same overlay would be applied to the eastbound lanes in the future.

"As always, we ask the public to exercise caution in road work zones," said Kristen Brands, transportation department public affairs manager from Norton.

First layer finished



The first layer of asphalt went down on County Road 65 (West Eighth Street) Saturday morning, when a crew from Venture Paving of Great Bend reached K-27. Brad Geist (right) was keeping track of the loads of asphalt. The crew planned to turn around and start the second lift. Paving a five-mile section from K-27 to

County Road 14 is part of the city-county joint road project being paid for by a one-cent sales tax. Grading continues on the one-mile section of Road 16 that runs from old U.S. 24 to Road 65, which will be paved once Road 65 is done.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Commissioners asked to split health administration job

By Tom Betz

ntbetz@nwkansas.com

Paperwork for the county health department — much of it for federal grants and programs — has grown over the past few years, pushing the director to cry "enough."

Friday, she asked commissioners to consider splitting her duties to allow her to do more of the nursing work she enjoys.

Dorendo Harrel said she does not want to do the paperwork for bioterrorism grants and planning, and would like to see the commissioners hire someone to handle the administrative work.

"I do not want to do the bioterrorism any more," she said. "There is too much paperwork and not enough time to do the other work."

"I was thinking about options and would suggest dividing the job into two and I would

do the nursing and the other person could do the administration and the grants."

The commissioners told her to write up sort of a job description about what the administrative person would do, and to think about a salary range for the position. They asked her to bring it back to them by the meeting next Tuesday.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas asked if the administrator would be full time. Harrel said she thought it would be at least four days a week.

"It is so time consuming and frustrating," she said, "especially on the bioterrorism, where there is not enough money to pay for the regional person."

To help pay for a regional director, Harrel said, they are taking 30 percent of the money each county gets for the bioterrorism program.

"I am asking if you want to divide the job," she said, "because it worked well 20 years ago as a combined nursing and administration job, but (today) I do not have time to do all the administrative work."

"I would rather do the nursing part. That is where my background is, and I do not think the person would have to be a nurse."

Thomas asked if the administrator would work out of the health department office. Harrel said there would be plenty of room, as the staff has been cut over the past few years.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said a number of counties have been looking at cutting to a four-day week, and that Gove County has decided to do that.

"If I did not have all this paperwork to do, I could get it done in four days," Harrel said, adding that the other employees are already working a four-day week.

"It is just me," she said. "I cannot get it all done in four days with all the paperwork."

She said one of the things they had to cut out was doing the blood pressure clinics at the Goodland Senior Center and the Kanorado Senior Center because they had run out of people and time.

Harrel told commissioners she has hired a new person, and that office manager Sherry Ketter has decided to retire in August.

Rasure jokingly said he was sure Harrel had someone lined up to fill that spot. She said she wished she did, but the county would have to advertise.

She said the recent immunization clinic had gone well and they did 121 students and 2 adults. She said she has been told by the state to do a public one in November for the adults.

Public forums on at-large issue delayed

By Tom Betz

ntbetz@nwkansas.com

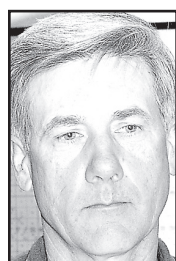
Public forums on at-large election of Sherman County commissioners set for June will be delayed until August after a request presented at the county meeting Friday by the Government Services Alliance Action Team.

The task force members said they felt the June dates were too early, and that people would be too busy. They suggested holding one forum in August during the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair, one in September and one in October.

"Whatever works is fine with me," said Commissioner Mitch Tiede.



Tiede



Thomas



Rasure

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he was concerned that people would have forgotten the issue by the time the forums come up. Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he felt the task force plan good.

The forums were suggested by the commissioners to comply with

ing away with the commissioner districts.

The bill was introduced in the House in 2007, and passed the house that February, but stalled in the Senate and the session ended with it still in committee.

In March, a question was raised

a request from state legislators who sidetracked a bill that would have allowed Sherman County voters to decide on a question of voting on county commissioners at large and do-

at a commissioners meeting about passage of the bill. The commissioners received an updated version and voted 2-1 to ask Sen. Ralph Ostermeyer (R-Grinnell) to get it passed in the Senate.

He was able to do that with a 40-0 vote in April, but the bill stalled again when the House asked for a conference committee rather than accepting the Senate's amended version.

After receiving conflicting signals from the commissioners, legislators held the bill. In the final days of the session, it was used to fix another election bill, leaving Sherman County citizens without any choice this year.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said the legislators had suggested public forums on the issue, but none was set up. Thomas, who had voted for the issue last year, has said he has changed his mind and does not feel there is any need to eliminate the commissioner districts.

Before the bill died, the commissioners had asked the Shine On Sherman County Government Services Alliance Task Force to consider holding public forums on the issue to educate the people in advance of a potential vote in November.

Exact details of the forums will be worked out by the task force in the next few weeks Rumpel said.