


weather report



92°
noon
Monday

Today
• Sunset, 8:08 p.m.

Saturday
• Sunrise, 5:39 a.m.
• Sunset, 8:07 p.m.

Midday Conditions
• Soil temperature 76 degrees
• Humidity 26 percent
• Sky mostly sunny
• Winds south 15-22 mph
• Barometer 30.00 inches and falling

• Record High today 105° (1934)
• Record Low today 52° (1994)

Last 24 Hours*
High Sunday 98°
Low Sunday 65°
Precipitation none
This month 2.52
Year to date 6.80
Below normal 5.88 inches

The Topside Forecast
Today: Partly sunny and hot with a high near 99, winds out of the south at 5 to 14 mph and a low around 67. Wednesday: Mostly sunny and hot with a high near 100, 20 percent chance of isolated thunderstorms after noon, winds out of the south at 5 to 15 mph and a low around 66.

Extended Forecast
Thursday: Mostly sunny and hot with a 20 percent chance of isolated thunderstorms after noon, a high near 98 and a low around 65.
Friday: Mostly sunny and hot.
(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

Demolition fee waived for homes

By Tom Betz

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Sherman County commissioners agreed Tuesday to waive fees for dumping demolition material from old house at the transfer station, hoping to help clean up the county and improve its looks.

Three representatives from the Shine On Sherman County Beautification Team — Travis Blake, minister at the First Baptist Church; Jessica Cole, steering committee chairman; and Debbie Martin, who is tearing down a couple of old houses — asked commissioners to waive the fees.

Blake said one way to clean up the town is to tear down dilapidated houses. He said

this was a countywide problem, where the person tearing down a house and hauling the stuff to the transfer station is getting charged for his effort.

“We are asking for a waiver for homeowners wanting to demolish a house and clean up the town,” Blake said.

Martin said she and her husband own two houses near where they live that are in such bad shape there is no fixing them up.

Cole said there are a lot of houses like that, and it would be good waive the fees if it encourages people to clean up their property.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he would not have a problem with the waiver if it is an individual demolishing the house.

“That would be a good deal,” he said, “but a contractor is getting paid and he will add the cost in his bid.”

Public Works Manager Curt Way, who is responsible for the transfer station and landfill, noted that the county has to pay the state \$1 a ton on the construction and demolition material taken in at the transfer station.

Martin said she does not have any idea how much debris there is in the two houses they are tearing down, but they hauled a truckload out last weekend and it weighed 1,800 pounds. She estimated the total cost at \$128.

“If it is an individual, I would rather just let them haul it,” Tiede said, “as long as it is not a for-hire job.”

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he felt if it was an individual that is fine, but if they have the money to pay for the project, that should not get a waiver. Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked why the county would want to discourage anyone from tearing down an old house.

“There are houses where people do not have the equipment to tear it down, and they will have to hire it done,” Rasure said. “We want to encourage people to take these down and clean them up.”

“I understand what you are saying about for hire, but the person paying for it is the person

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State delays Road 14 bids

By Tom Betz

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The state wants to delay taking bids on the County Road 14 paving project from August to September, and Tuesday, Sherman County commissioners checked the calendar to be sure they could schedule a meeting after the bids are opened on Sept. 17.

Curt Way, public works manager, said he got a call from Ed Thornton of the Kansas Department of Transportation saying they would like to move the bid date from Aug. 20 to Sept. 17. Way said Thornton told him he had talked about the change with engineer Darin Neufeld of Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure called Neufeld, and he said he was coming to the meeting. When he arrived, Neufeld said the state had been holding the plans for four months but hadn't looked at them.

“They looked back and said we did not have the plans,” he said, “then they looked and found they had the plans for four months. They agreed they have dropped the ball.”

“Moving the date is only a problem if the bid price and what the city and county have spent out of the bond money does not reach the 95 percent level.”

Way said he did not see it as a problem because the road would not be built before next spring.

Neufeld asked County Clerk Janet Rumpel if she had received all the bills on the county projects to determine what might be left. She said she thought a few bills were still out on the Road 65 and Road 16 projects.

Rumpel said under the Internal Revenue Service regulations, 95 percent of the total from bonds and interest has to be paid out by Sept. 22 to avoid losing any of the interest. She said the final 5 percent has to be spent before Sept. 22, 2009.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas was disappointed about that because he was thinking the county could save some money to help pay for the chip sealing of old U.S. 24 three to five years from now.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he thought the county had pre-paid the state for part of the Road 14 project. Rumpel said \$1.1 million was paid to the state to make sure the bond money had been spent down to the required level by the mid-March date.

Neufeld said there would not be a need for a special meeting if the project bid and bills paid out meet the 95 percent level.

“We expect the bid to be up a little bit over what we estimated at \$1.9 million,” he said. “Once we have that figure and an idea on the overall sales tax

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City Manager Wayne Hill put the lid on a test bottle of water from a faucet at The Goodland Star-News last week. He stopped by to test for nitrates, and the test showed 4.6 parts per million. He said he is testing places in town to show that the nitrates levels are safe.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

City manager testing water around town for nitrate levels

By Tom Betz

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City Manager Wayne Hill walked in the front door carrying a small case and a tall beaker and asked if he could test the water.

Hill said he is testing water all around the city, to try to show the state Department of Health and Environment the nitrate levels in the water delivered to homes and businesses are not high, and to reassure the citizens that the city water system is safe.

He took a sample from a tap and mixed it with a chemical to show the nitrate

level. after a few minutes, he slipped the bottle into a device that checked the water electronically and produced a reading of 4.6 parts per million of nitrates.

He said that was about what he was finding around town, with the average around 5 parts per million, compared to the federal standard for drinking water of 10.

The city has one well that's tested high, and the city has to send out notices even though the blended water is low he said. The letters scare people he said, and the well has been shut down.

“I know we will have to deal with the nitrates,” Hill said, “but I want to show

the state that our system is much lower than the 10-parts-per-million maximum level for nitrates.


“I think when we show what the level is blended, that may help with the process of dealing with the nitrate standard.”

He said the city is preparing an engineering study of treating nitrates at each well or creating a central facility where the water would be blended before testing to even out the levels.

Hill told city commissioners recently he thought the best solution was a central


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local markets

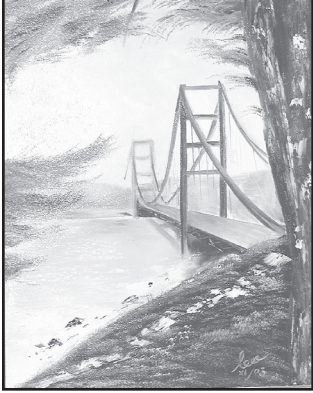


Noon
Wheat — \$7.41 bushel
Posted county price — \$7.52
Corn — \$5.36 bushel
Posted county price — \$5.52
Milo — \$4.91 bushel
Soybeans — \$13.30 bushel
Posted county price — \$13.82
Millett — \$7 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$26.90 cwt.
Confection — \$30/\$20 cwt.
Pinto beans — \$32 (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



Display up until Sunday

The Golden Gate Bridge is one of the paintings by Croatian artist Leonid Bjelanovic on display at the Carnegie Arts Center through Sunday. See story, photos on Page 3, and a related photo on Page 9.



State highway employees installed a snow gate on I-70 west of Goodland as part of a program to improve road safety during winter blizzards when the highway has to be closed down.

Snow gates installed on I-70 west lanes

It may be typical July weather now, but state crews installed a series of gates along I-70 from Russell to the Colorado line to help crews safely close the road when the blizzards of winter arrive.

The gates, which resemble those at railroad crossings, were installed on westbound lanes at exit ramps at Russell, Hays, WaKeeney, Oakley, Colby and Goodland. In past years, Department of Transportation crews have just put barricades across the Interstate.

In most situations, the department says, the road is closed farther east that safety requires, as motels fill up in Goodland

and east. A law enforcement officer will be stationed at the gates to allow local traffic to pass through the off-set gates, located on either lane, if weather and road conditions allow.

“This will allow us to close the highway quicker when blizzards are moving in,” said District Maintenance Engineer Jerry Moritz of the department's Norton office, “and, it will be safer for travelers and our workers.”

Travelers will be alerted by signs two to three miles in advance that the gates are down and the highway is closed.

The estimated cost of the project is \$126,500.

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