

weather report



49°
 noon
 Monday

Today

- Sunset, 5:59 p.m.
- Wednesday**
- Sunrise, 7:04 a.m.
- Sunset, 5:57 p.m.

Middy Conditions

- Soil temperature 52 degrees
- Humidity 71 percent
- Sky cloudy
- Winds northeast 7 mph
- Barometer 30.39 inches and falling
- Record High today 90° (1921)
- Record Low today 18° (1976)

Last 24 Hours*

- High Sunday 79°
- Low Sunday 44°
- Precipitation none
- This month 3.64
- Year to date 18.72
- Above normal .64 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers before noon, a high near 65, winds out of the south at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 34. Wednesday: Cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers, a high near 42, winds out of the northwest 25 to 35 mph and a low around 28.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow before noon, a high near 46 and a low around 29. Friday: Mostly sunny with a high near 57.

(National Weather Service)
 Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
 * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$5.03 bushel
- Posted county price — \$5.04
- Corn — \$3.72 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.58
- Milo — \$3.14 bushel
- Soybeans — \$7.95 bushel
- Posted county price — \$7.97
- Millet — \$7 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$16.50 cwt.
- Confection — \$30/\$20 cwt.
- Pinto beans — \$32 (new crop)
- (Markets by Scouler 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



Cowboys lose on road

Freshman Mac Purvis (in the middle) provided a block in Goodland's homecoming game Oct. 10, against Oberlin. The Cowboys had a tough night Friday against Scott City losing 28-0. See story, photo on Page 11.

County cuts taxes 3 percent

By Tom Betz

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The public hearing on the Sherman County budget for next year was held Tuesday, and no one appeared to talk in favor or to object.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he was not surprised no one was there as the budget figures show a drop of about 3 percent in the property tax level from this year's level.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the county assessed valuation increased this year by \$251,351, or about 3.9 percent to \$65,967,695.

Rumpel said the anticipated property tax

levy for next year is 53.620 mills, but that will change slightly with the \$200,000 drop in assessed valuation she received from the state in the last week.

The property tax levy for this year was 55.294 mills, and the budget for next year would drop that by 1.7 mills or about 3 percent.

The published budget comparison shows the county was frugal in their spending this year as the budget was for \$9,644,886, but estimated actual spending will be \$7,716,682.

The anticipated spending for next year is \$9,473,970 or a drop of about \$171,000 (1.8 percent).

The commissioners unanimously approved the budget as presented.

In other business the commissioners • Agreed to pay an advertising bill for the public forum on the countywide voting on county commissioner held by the Shine On Sherman County Governmental Affairs Committee at the fair. Helen Dobbs, office manager for the Economic Development Council and a member of the Shine On Sherman County steering committee, asked the commissioners if they would pay the bill since none of the action committee has any money and the commissioners had asked the

committee to do the public forum.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said he was hoping the committee was going to do more than that one public forum.

Dobbs said it was her understanding the committee was planning to hold a straw poll at the courthouse on election day, but did not have details of the plan.

• Dobbs invited the commissioners to the Economic Development Council's annual meeting to be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday at the Western State Bank. She said there will be

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Spooks, goblins invade downtown

Goodland's seventh annual Moonlight Madness celebration and costume contest will bring out spooks and goblins from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 28, for a night of spirited shopping, lots of candy and costume contests.

Several downtown stores will be open until 7 p.m., with specials for shopping, and there will be treats for the kids who stop by. The basement of El Dorado Western Wear, 1101 Main, will be the site of the annual costume contest.

The doors will open at 4:30 p.m., and the first round of judging will begin at 5 p.m.

There will be three age groups, with cash prizes for first, second and third in each. The 4-and-under group will be judged at 5 p.m., those 5 to 8 at 5:30 p.m., and kids 9 to 12 at 6 p.m.

The Goodland Kiwanis Club donated the prize money, and Wal-Mart provided money for candy for all those who participate.

The Word of Life Church plans to have special games and other fun in the old bank building at 1102 Main Ave., across the street from El Dorado.

Businesses participating in the event or handing out candy include Jacques's Hallmark, 1124 Main; Jeff's Junktiques, 1010 Main; the Almond Tree, 1024 Main; and *The Goodland Star-News*, 1205 Main.

Blizzard big one for Oct.

October and snow are not typically synonymous in Kansas, but Oct. 25 marks the anniversary of one of the worst blizzards in recent memory.

State Climatologist Mary Knapp says temperatures have been unusually chilly lately in the central High Plains, which has some people thinking about winter, but she says snow usually hits the western part of the state first.

"It varies across the state, with the western parts, at higher elevations, seeing the earliest events," Knapp said. "In fact, western Kansas saw snow as early as Sept. 20 in 1995. That storm produced totals of 2 to 4 inches."

While October 1995 and 1996 had early fall snow storms, 1997 is the year people are using as a benchmark, said Knapp, who is in charge of the Kansas Weather Data Library, based with Kansas State University Research and Extension

"On Oct. 25, 1997, snow accompanied by winds of 50 to 60 mph produced near-zero visibility and wind chills of 20 degrees below zero," she said. "By the end of the storm, snowfall totals ranged from 10 to 24 inches. Drifts ranging from 6 to 10 feet were common, with some drifts reaching 25 feet. There were even drifts of 1 to 2 feet found in the attics of houses."

Skate park getting workout



The Goodland Skate Park hasn't been dedicated, but with the arrival of the equipment and the finishing of the fencing the park has been getting quite a workout from kids of all ages. Saturday afternoon the park had about two dozen people skating and watching with some of the younger ones accompanied by a par-

ent and wearing the proper protective gear. When asked if the skate park was a cool place the kids said yes. The money for the park was raised by the Shine On Sherman County Youth Committee and many of those skateboarding had helped raise the money.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Planning starts for program burning

By Tom Betz

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This year's conservation reserve burning program was a disaster, and to try to get ahead of that the Sherman County commissioners heard Tuesday from farm program officials about early planning for next year.

Dennis Mote, Farm Service Agency manager and Fred Wedel, natural resource conservation service conservationist met with the commissioners to talk about the plans and what they expect for next year.

Wedel said a workshop is being planned in Sharon Springs on Wednesday, Nov. 5, to give farmers who have conservation reserve lands information about the best ways to burn what is required under the contract.

Mote said the workshop will be similar to what was held last year, but will be more specific for those with the lands that are under contract to be burned.

"It is that time again where we have contracts scheduled to burn," Mote said. "We burned about 6,000 acres and have about 7,500 acres planned for next year. Some will be put off because they do not have a

Burn workshops planned

Area producers can learn about using prescribed burning in a workshop to be held Wednesday, Nov. 5, at the Community Activity Building on the Wallace County fairgrounds in Sharon Springs.

Registration is at 9 a.m., with the meeting starting at 9:30 a.m.

Similar workshops will be held on Tuesday in Colby, in Bird City on Nov. 6, Tribune on Nov. 18 and Oakley on Nov. 20.

The workshop is designed to give producers a better understanding of what is involved with conducting a prescribed burn said Fred Wedel district conservation-

ist in Sherman County.

Workshop topics to be covered include: Conservation Reserve Program maintenance and management Practices; burn considerations: why and when to burn; burn notification and local regulations; producer panel; using a burn contractor; burn terminology and fire behavior: smoke management, eddy currents, fire guards, burning techniques; planning and conducting a burn; and burn equipment.

The program will include a panel of local producers who have

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like that.

"You really need to have a well established stand of grass before you burn."

Wedel said some of the contracts will have to burn especially if they are 10 to 15 year contracts.

Mote said the problem the farmers face is that under the 10 year contracts they cannot burn in the last three years of the contract.

"There are ways we can work with the producers," Mote said. "We do not have that many 10 year contracts as many of those did burn this year."

"Most of those did not have a problem," Thomas said,

Mote said that was true as they had better stands of grass.

He said they were getting ready to send out letters to those who will need to burn to begin getting their planning done.

Thomas asked what the time period for burning is going to be.

Wedel said it was from February to April.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked if the burning schedule was different in Kit Carson County than

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State may purchase creek basin water rights

By Andy Heintz

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Some northwest Kansas farmers may be able to sell water rights to the state under a program designed to stretch out the area's water supply and ensure that Kansas sends enough water downstream to Nebraska.

Landowners who are willing to retire their water rights may be able to sell them to the state Conservation Commission at a fixed rate price of \$2,000 per acre foot under the Water Rights Retirement Program, known as WTAP or "Water-TAP."

"People will not want to give up their water rights without an incentive," Steve Frost, state water conservation manager, said.

The commission began accepting applications Oct. 1. The state is offering to buy rights in the Prairie Dog Creek basin, which stretches from

Sherman County through Thomas and Decatur into Norton County.

The state also is targeting rights six "high-priority" units in the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District.

"It's a pilot program designed to establish a water-based incentive program that will help balance supply with demand," Frost said.

The state hopes to help restore aquifers and stream flows in areas that have seen reduced stream flow and water supply in recent years. A third area the commission is concentrating on is the Rattle Snake Creek Basin, which runs from near Bucklin to Sterling.

The Prairie Dog Basin was chosen because its stream flow affects Kansas efforts to comply with the Republican River Compact with Nebraska.

The commission has designated six areas of the High Plains Aquifer in Thomas, Cheyenne,

Sherman, and Sheridan counties for the program, two in Thomas County.

Payment landowners receive is based on the historic amount of water a farm has consumed, the irrigation area's proximity to a stream and the price the landowner wants, Frost said.

"The state wants to buy water rights at the most affordable price," he added.

Frost said low bids are not the only element that the commission would consider when it decides who gets grants. For example, he said, a person who wants to retire a well that is near a stream would be given preference over a person who wants to sell a well that is located far away from a stream, even if that person will accept less money.

For information, contact Frost at (785) 296-8964 or the Groundwater Management District in Colby at (785) 462-3915.

