

**weather report**



**53°**  
noon  
Monday

**Today**

- Sunset, 4:33 p.m.
- Wednesday**
- Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:34 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil temperature 31 degrees
- Humidity 35 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds east 8 mph
- Barometer 30.24 inches and falling
- Record High today 64° (2005)
- Record Low today -13° (1927)

**Last 24 Hours\***

- High Sunday 55°
- Low Sunday 19°
- Precipitation none
- This month 0.19
- Year to date 20.42
- Above normal 0.69 inches

**The Topside Forecast**

Today: Mostly sunny with a high near 50, winds breezy out of the north at 10 to 35 mph and a low around 16. Wednesday: Mostly sunny with a high near 44, winds breezy out of the south at 5 to 30 mph and a low around 15.

**Extended Forecast**

Thursday: Mostly sunny with a high near 45 and a low around 18. Friday: Mostly sunny with a high near 40 and a low around 18. Saturday: Mostly sunny with a high near 44 and a low around 16. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. \*Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local markets**



**Noon**

- Wheat — \$5.31 bushel
- Posted county price — \$5.15
- Corn — \$3.54 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.59
- Milo — \$2.85 bushel
- Soybeans — \$8.09 bushel
- Posted county price — \$8.54
- Millet — \$7 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$13.35 cwt.
- Confection — \$28/\$15 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



**Sports teams on holiday**

Cowboys sophomore Robert Cowan (left) went high for a rebound against the Scott City Beavers in the final game of this year last Monday at Max Jones Fieldhouse. See photos, story on Page 11.

## Hospital hammering out budget

By Sharon Corcoran

scorcoran@nwkansas.com

Officials at Goodland Regional Medical Center are still trying to hammer out next year's budget with about a week remaining before it goes into effect but reviewed the preliminary numbers of the operating budget with the hospital's board Monday.

"We won't be able to have an approved budget tonight," said Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht, "because administration has not been over the capital budget yet."

The hospital is anticipating a 12 percent increase in patient stays and plans a 5 percent increase in fees in some departments. Officials looked at the emergency room records from this year, Precht said, to see if there were any patients transferred who could have stayed in Goodland then figured what the impact would have been to the hospital's census if they had been kept here.

The hospital plans to budget \$19,627,000 gross patient revenue, up from the \$17,694,600 annualized for this year, and expects wages

and benefits to increase about \$600,000 to a total of \$6,146,000.

The increase in wages and benefits is planned because the hospital has filled some positions, Precht said, and is anticipating having a full-time pharmacist. About \$100,000 more is being budgeted for utilities, he said, and rent expense is budgeted for \$100,000 more because the hospital plans to rent an Eclipse 500, a light jet, for transporting specialists.

The increased revenue will include increases in charges in some departments, he said, including the operating room, physical therapy and occupational therapy.

The hospital budgeted 37 percent for provision for bad debt, the same as it had this year, even though this year's loss is anticipated to be 33 percent and last year's was 30 percent.

"We're anticipating losing the disproportionate share," Precht said, "and being reimbursed at cost (for patients on Medicaid, a state-funded health insurance)."

The hospital's budget for this year antici-

ated that loss as well, he said, adding that he preferred to plan conservatively rather than plan on the money being there and not getting it.

"We should hear something on the appeal next month," he said. "If we prevail, it will be a \$300,000 push."

Board member Doug Irvin questioned Precht about the budgeted revenue.

"What if we're stuck at \$17 million next year?" Irvin asked. "We're budgeting a \$2 million loss of cash flow."

Precht said the executive team went through every department and is confident in budgeting that much.

Irvin also asked about the numbers presented at board meetings throughout the year, saying those numbers indicate increases, while the budget numbers indicate financial decreases.

"Every month we get a report and compare it to the previous year, and the numbers are always up," he said, "but here the numbers are down."

Administrator Jay Jolly said the numbers

presented that were up were the patient count, adding that more patients doesn't always mean more money.

"If the intensity of care is less," he said, "there is less revenue."

Irvin asked about the capital budget, and Precht responded that it is not ready yet.

"But what about the list of needs for 2008, 2009 and 2010?" Irvin asked. "How much is on that?"

Precht said the list for 2009 includes about \$1 million in capital purchases with the airplane purchase removed.

"We took the plane off," he said. "We're assuming we're going to rent."

Board members wanted to know when they would see more numbers, and Precht responded that he would continue working on it.

The board will hold a special meeting at 5:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, to go over the budget for approval. The regular January meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26. Both will be in the large board room at the hospital.

## X-pressos grande finale



Members of the Goodland High School X-pressos finished their program with a grande finale at the Home for the Holidays event held on Dec. 20 at the Goodland Activity Center. X-pressos director Randy Berls said the group had one more

performance that evening at the Veterans of Foreign Wars before they were off for the holiday break. The singing and dancing group had a full schedule of programs, and will be presenting more in the upcoming months.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

## Elks grant helps Genesis shelves

By Pat Schiefen

pjschiefen@nwkansas.com

A special grant will give Genesis money to buy food to fill its shelves to give out to low-income families and seniors living on fixed incomes in the new year.

The Goodland Elks Lodge applied for a \$10,000 impact grant from the Elks National Foundation and Elks Lodge Secretary Zona Price said she found out in November the grant had been approved.

Genesis coordinator Linda Pfau said the group gave out 140 baskets for Christmas on Saturday, Dec. 20. She said they have given out five more since then.

Pfau said the group gives out 12 to 20 boxes a month.

They hope with the extra support from the Elks the group will be able to help feed more people and be able to help people with their rent, prescription drugs, clothing and household items from the Goodland Churches Thrift Store and some furniture.

When Genesis helps out with rent or drug costs, Pfau said, they seldom pay the whole amount.

Price said at the first of the month they would meet with the coordinators for Genesis to find out what non-perishable items were needed. The Elks will keep the grant in a checking account and plan to buy up to \$833 per month of food. Price said they will buy the food where they can get the best price.

Price said the Elks hope by helping stock the pantry's shelves Genesis can use its money to help people with rent and medicine.



Dr. Richard Whitmore and Shirley Gray were among volunteers who helped put food in the Christmas boxes for Genesis on Thursday, Dec. 18 at the First United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. The group gave away 140 boxes on Saturday, Dec. 20.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

The goal of the Elks is to help feed families and seniors and to have full food bank shelves. They hope no one has to go hungry.

Price said the grant money is not intended to replace the normal donations but as a supplement to help more people.

The application for the grant

was submitted in August she said. The application has to have figures showing the growing need in the community. Letters from Genesis, the Goodland School Board and others gave supporting documentation.

The Goodland Elks was one of 46 to receive a grant from the Elks

National Foundation, said Price. There were 152 applications.

Before Christmas, Pfau said, the shelves were empty but the community helped to make sure the Christmas boxes were filled.

To reach Genesis call (785) 890-2299.

## Offices to close Thursday

Government offices, businesses and banks will be closed Thursday for New Year's Day.

The Goodland Star-News office will close early on Wednesday and will be closed on Thursday.

People will receive their Star-News edition normally on Friday. The office will be open for regular hours on Friday.

City offices will be closed on Thursday, New Year's Day.

The Sherman County Courthouse will be closed on Thursday and be closed till Monday.

The post office and state and federal offices will be closed on Thursday. There will be no mail pickup or delivery on the holiday.

The First National Bank will close at 2 p.m. on Wednesday and be closed New Year's Day.

BankWest will be open regular hours on New Year's Eve and Friday, and be closed on Thursday.

Western State Bank will close on Thursday.

Peoples State Bank will close at 2:30 p.m., on Wednesday and be closed on Thursday, and open regular hours on Friday.

Goodland schools will reopen Monday.

The hospital business offices will be closed on Thursday.