

weather report

49°

noon

Thursday

Today

Sunset, 5:28 p.m.

Saturday

Sunrise, 6:33 a.m.

Sunset, 5:29 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 30 degrees

• Humidity 34 percent

• Sky mostly cloudy

• Winds southeast 10 mph

• Barometer 29.99 inches and falling

• Record High today 75° (1986)

• Record Low today -4° (1908)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 54°

Low Wednesday 19°

Precipitation none

This month 0.15

Year to date 0.33

Below normal 0.29 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of light snow after 11 a.m., a high near 33, winds out of the north at 10-15 mph, a low around 18 and a new snow accumulation of 1 to 2 inches possible.

Saturday: Cloudy with a 30 percent chance of snow, a high near 32, winds out of the east at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 18.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow, a high near 33 and a low around 16. Monday: Mostly sunny with a high near 39 and a low around 18.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3.92 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.11

Corn — \$3.03 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.36

Milo — \$2.78 bushel

Soybeans — \$8.43 bushel

Posted county price — \$8.78

Millet — \$5 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$14.60 cwt.


Confection — \$28/\$15 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$32 (new crop)

(Markets by Scoular Grain, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

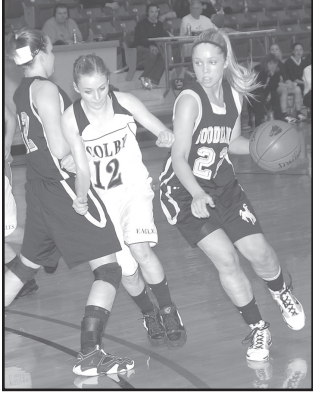
inside today

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Cowgirls lose to Eagles

Cowgirl Ashley Archer (12) set a pick to give Jade Herl (22) a chance to drive to the basket during the game Tuesday at the Colby Community Building. The Cowgirls lost 45-30. See photo, story on Page 9a.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 7 6

Winners honored at annual event

By Tom Betz
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A crowd of more than 160 farmers, families and kids gathered at the Veterans of Foreign Wars on Monday for the 66th Annual Sherman County Conservation District dinner and award program.

Lonnie Whitekter, chairman of the district board of supervisors, was the master of ceremonies and welcomed the audience.

The meal was furnished by the Conservation District, Bankwest, Western State Bank, Peoples State Bank and Farm Credit Services of Western Kansas. The meal was served by the ladies of the VFW.

Entertainment for the evening was presented by Amanda Coon and the Mangus family and friends. Danny Mangus introduced his daughter Dani plus Rick Jackson, Wanda Mangus, James Lightle and Larry Mangus who were from Burlington.

Coon sang “Heart of America,” and Danny Mangus said all the money the groups received that night was donated to the 4-H Council.

The group played a number of old western songs from the days of the Sons of the Pioneers like “Cool Water” and “Tumbling Tumbleweeds.”

Dani Mangus sang a solo of “She left the suds in the bucket and the clothes on the line.”

Coon

The Crooked Creek band from Burlington joined Danny (right) and Dani (third from left) Mangus to entertain at the Sherman County Conservation District annual dinner held on Monday at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall. Members of the Crooked Creek are (left to right) Rick Jackson, Wanda Mangus, Larry Mangus and lead guitarist James Lightle.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

The Burlington band is called “Crooked Creek” and will be playing for the Bryce Richards benefit on Sunday in Idalia, Colo., Mangus said.

A district award for Friends of Agriculture was presented to Steve Evert and Greg Nemechek for their efforts in farm safety and training area emergency medical personnel.

The Windbreak Award was presented to Robin and Carol Deeds by Steve West of Western State Bank, and the Bankers Award was presented to Melvin and Janet Nemechek by Troy Hilt of Western State Bank in St. Francis.

Courtney McBride was presented a State First Place award for her limerick and Jonah McClung was presented a State Honorable Men-

tion award for his poster. Both were winners at the state Conservation District Convention held in November.

Scott Jarrett was elected to the district board replacing Lynn Ihrig who was retiring after more than 20 years.

Sherman County Conservation District youth contest winners were presented plaques at the banquet by

District Manager Sandy Rodgers and Scott Jarrett, a member of the board of supervisors, for posters, limericks, essays and computer presentations about conservation.

Posters third and fourth grade: first, Blaine Sederstrom, second, Kit Boyington, third Ryan Lalicker and honorable mention, Ethan Wolf

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Frontier Ag answers county fuel questions

By Tom Betz
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Representatives from Frontier Ag met with the county commissioners Tuesday morning to reply to issues raised by a competitor at a previous meeting with the commissioners.

Buddy Williams, fuel man for Frontier Ag, said he wanted to talk to the commissioners as his company was not a the previous meeting.

At the meeting on Monday, Feb. 8, Dean Atteberry, fuel sales representative for 24/7, told the commissioners he had contacted Curt Way, public works manger, about bidding on the county fuel sales.

“I was told we needed to come to the com-

missioners,” he said.

Way was at the meeting Tuesday morning and said he knew some of the issues, and agreed he had told Atteberry he would have to talk to the commissioners.

Williams said some of the issues is that he has one pump out south for No. 1 diesel.

Commissioner Max Linin asked if there is usually a long wait to fill up as Atteberry said when he was at the previous meeting.

Williams said in an acute case when the temperature has fallen and several big trucks are trying to fill up it does slow it up.

Way said he did not know if the commissioners were familiar with how the pump price worked at Frontier Ag. He said the price for

No. 1 diesel on Feb. 10 was \$3.12.9 and the county price was \$2.88.6. He said the price for unleaded gas was \$2.53.9 and the county price was \$2.37.6.

“We do get the price discount,” Way said.

Williams said the discount is the federal fuel tax that is taken off. He said the federal tax is 18.3 cents on gas and 24.3 cents on diesel. He said everyone pays the state fuel tax, but the federal is taken off.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said that explains the discount.

Williams said some fuel places are not able to take the federal tax off and the customer has to apply for a refund from the federal and the state separately.

Way said with Frontier Af if there is any question about fuel it gets taken care of immediately. He said the county sends in quarterly for the state fuel tax refund and gets 23 cents a gallon back.

Thomas asked if the county vehicles have to use the clear fuel.

Way said the county is considered a highway department and has to use the clear fuel.

Williams said Frontier Ag has enhanced the fuel to help customers.

“We believe you will have a better experi-

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Dropping grassland assessed value shifts property tax burden

By Tom Betz
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An ongoing drop in valuation and a capped capitalization rate for grassland has caused a problem for Sherman County commissioners trying to keep the property tax level down, and affecting city and school budgets.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas shared an e-mail from Paul Steele a Thomas County Commissioner showing a 41.2 percent decrease in property tax valuation over the past six years for Sherman County. Thomas County has a similar drop of 37.2 percent.

The difference for Sherman County is \$6,697,389 down to \$9,559,170 last year from \$16,256,559 six years ago. For Thomas County the drop is \$6,341,766 down to \$10,692,018 from \$17,033,784 six years ago.

Thomas said the formula the state is using is out dated, and the county appraisers have been trying to get the formula changed.

Commissioner Cynthia Strand said the drop in ag valuation is putting the property tax burden on the homeowners and businesses. She said the valuation is going down on the rural land and the county has a lot of absentee landowners.

Terry Ballard, Sherman County assessor came to the meeting at the commissioner’s request to talk about the valuations.

Thomas asked if anything had been done on the state level to ad-

dress the problem.

Ballard said nothing has been done on the grassland values. He said he wrote a letter to the state representative and state senator a couple of years ago, but they did not respond.

He said the taxes are less than \$50 a year on a quarter section of grass, and the proportion of the tax burden that has been lost over the past five to six years has been picked up by the residential and business owners.

He said comparing the valuations of the counties in the northwest part of the state the total drop has been \$94.3 million and about 39 percent.

“For this year we will lose another \$800,000 in valuation because the land assessed value will drop again,” he said.

Strand asked what the drop in valuation has done to the 20 mills of property tax for school funding.


Ballard said it has dropped the value dramatically. He said with drop in assessed value each mill of property tax brings in less money, and the schools are hurt.

Thomas asked why the state doesn’t change the formula.

Ballard said the legislature does have control. In 2002 the legislature revised the cap rate so it could not be less than 11 percent or more than 12 percent. He said this was a relief for the farmers during the drought years.

See TAXES, Page 5a

Gutters for Handy House



The Ennis-Handy House was getting gutters installed this week by Ron Lucke, a contractor from Burlington. Curtis Hurd, a member of the Historical Society board said the gutters were being installed to reduce water damage, and cost about \$4,300 for the gutters. He said the house originally had gutters and these are similar in style to what had been on the house.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News