

weather
report

49°

noon
Monday

Today

Sunset, 5:41 p.m.

Wednesday

Sunrise, 6:16 a.m.

Sunset, 5:42 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 32 degrees

• Humidity 88 percent

• Sky mostly cloudy

• Winds light and variable

• Barometer 30.22 inches and steady

• Record High today 76° (1974)

• Record Low today -15° (1960)

Last 24 Hours*

High Sunday 49°

Low Sunday 30°

Precipitation 0.22

This month 0.1

Year to date 0.90

At normal

The Topside Forecast

Today: Sunny with a high near 51, winds out of the north at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 27.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 50, winds out of the south at 5 to 15 mph and a low around 28.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of snow and rain at night, a high near 47, a low around 28.

Friday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of rain and snow, a high near 46 and a low around 27.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

local
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$4 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.18

Corn — \$3.23 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.57

Milo — \$2.98 bushel

Soybeans — \$8.59 bushel

Posted county price — \$8.82

Millet — \$5 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$14.85 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

More local
news, views
from your
Goodland
Star-News

Cowboy
takes fourth

Cowboy Jay Cotter in his regional match against Jesse Barnes of Thomas More Prep at Hays that qualified him for state. He finished in fourth place. See photos on Page 8.

County to take over ambulance

By Tom Betz
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Patients taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center will not see a difference in the future, but the finances for the hospital would improve under a plan approved by the Sherman County Commissioners to take over the ambulance service at the end of the year.

Both sides agree more details have to be worked out, but figures presented by the hospital showed the hospital and ambulance service could benefit from a new operating model through the county, and agreed to work on developing the model by the end of the year.

Hospital Administrator Jay Jolly, financial officer Jim Precht and hospital board members Steve Riebel, Brenda McCants and Patty Eckhardt were at the commission meeting on Friday to review the ambulance financial costs and discuss what the hospital planned to do about a new ambulance.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said the commissioners had asked the hospital board and Jolly to come to the meeting to talk about the ambulance.

He said Precht had been to a commission meeting at the end of January saying the hospital had to go out that day and buy an ambulance. Thomas said the commissioners approved giving \$35,000 to the hospital to help buy the ambulance, but found out later the ambulance had not been purchased. He said when the commissioners found out the

ambulance was not purchased they decided to hold the check until the hospital administrator could explain what was going on and provide some financial information about the ambulance operation.

He said the county and hospital have an agreement in place for the operation of the ambulance that runs out in 18 months. He said the county has given \$63,000 a year to the Northwest Kansas Ambulance Service, and wondered what happens to that money when it goes to the hospital.

Jolly said the hospital board had delayed the ambulance purchase to look at the options. He said they got the second one fixed and back in operation, but one is not worth anything. He said it would cost \$12,000 to fix the third one, but then be worth about \$6,500.

He said the board had decided to keep the one from Kanorado because it has less miles, buy a new one and put the other one back in Kanorado. He said one option with the one that is not working is to donate it to the Northwest Tech college for a training vehicle they could fix and use.

He said the hospital was ready to issue a purchase order for the new ambulance that day at a cost of about \$125,000.

Thomas said with that explanation he saw no problem in releasing the check to the hospital and handed it over to Jolly.

Jolly handed each commissioner a copy of the 2010 budget for the

ambulance service, which is operated as a department of the hospital. He handed each of the commissioners a summary financial statement of operations for the ambulance service.

The 2010 budget for the ambulance service estimates a loss of \$83,000 after the \$63,000 from the county has been added in to the total.

The sheet showed the loss for the ambulance estimated for last year was \$48,000. Jolly said the sheet shows the figures for the past four years and the budget for this year. The ambulance service has shown a loss for three of the four years and is budgeted for a loss this year. The ambulance service made \$11,411 in 2008.

He said the figures from 2008 could change as they have been filed with Medicare, but not audited. The figures for last year are estimates as the figures have not been audited to be sent to Medicare for review.

Thomas asked about the jump from 2007 to 2008.

Jolly said there were more ambulance runs and transfers that year, and that it has continued to climb.

He said the hospital does not get paid for what they charge, and that the gross income figure is what they bill out, but the average deduction from the gross revenue for Medicare and contractual adjustments is about 32 percent. He said the write-offs have been increasing from the 25 percent, but for the figures in the chart the hospital used 25 percent.

The gross income for 2009 was \$405,546 (estimated) with deduction of \$101,387 for a net revenue of \$304,159.

The direct operating expenses including wages, fuel, supplies, repairs, training, meetings and miscellaneous expenses totaled \$156,360, leaving a gross operating profit of \$147,799.

Indirect operating expenses for overhead, which Jolly said are the ambulance service's share of the hospital operating costs were \$163,610, leaving a net operating loss of \$15,811.

The total cash flow loss from the operation for 2009 was \$49,463.

Jolly then turned to the bottom part of the sheet which included the non-operating income and reimbursement offsets.

He said this is where the county's tax support of \$67,000 for last year was added back in, but then there were Medicare non-allowable costs to subtract \$48,000 leaving a net support income of \$19,000. This added against the total loss left a net operating loss of \$30,463.

He said the indirect expenses are coming up almost as high as direct expenses, and said the hospital would not have to do as much or report as much offset if the ambulance service was not operated by the hospital.

Based on the budget for this year the offsets for non-allowable reimbursement would be \$83,000 Jolly said that would eat up all the county tax support plus \$20,000 more.

Thomas asked if the \$83,000 difference was because the ambulance was hospital based, and what would it be if it was county based.

Jolly said that is what the hospital would not get.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad asked if that would go to the ambulance service if it was county based.

Precht said the direct operating and indirect operating expenses would not be on the hospital general ledger and not be in the cost report. He said based on the figures he did for Jolly the hospital reimbursement would be \$40,000 higher.

Strnad said for last year the hospital would have received \$40,000 more if the ambulance was not part of the hospital.

Precht said that was correct, and he was showing a higher red figure for this year because the expenses are rising faster.

Strnad said when Bruce Gleason, director of the ambulance service, said he said the hospital was losing actual cash and the ambulance service is not eligible for grants for equipment.

Jolly said he was not sure of all that, but understood Gleason has looked at some grants and the hospital ownership affects that.

Strnad said it appears the money the county is giving to the ambulance service is being swallowed up.

Jolly said that was right.

See AMBULANCE, Page 5



Good day
for learning
to hunt

A group of young hunters along with a game warden and adults practice sweeping a field in a line on Saturday afternoon at the 2nd Annual Northwest Kansas Beginners Pheasant Hunt at the Kuhrt Ranch, north of Edson. The purpose of the practice was to emphasize the importance of knowing where the others in the group are so they are not in the line of fire. The group also talked about hunting regulations, licenses and stamps.

Photo by Pat Schiefen
The Goodland Star-News

Grocery store signs approved by council

By Tom Betz
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The Goodland city commissioners heard a proposal on Monday from a man from Denver to open a grocery store in the Ed Wolak building, and Friday the Sherman County Economic Development Council approved spending \$25,000 to help with the grocery store signs.

All members of the development council attended a special meeting at 11 a.m. on Friday to hear details of the grocery store proposal and the request for the \$25,000.

Board members Jerry Fairbanks, Larry Keirns and Walt Linthacum said they had met with Sam Mancini, managing partner of Savoy

Holdings, LTD of Denver on Tuesday, and he was to appear before the city commission on Monday to make a proposal about a long term rental of the Wolak building.

Fairbanks said Mancini said he would propose renting the building for \$1,000 a month for 10 years with the option for two five-year extensions.

He said another part of the proposal would be that at any time Mancini could buy the building for \$50,000.

He said Mancini estimated it would take \$1.2 million to rehab the building and get it ready to open by September.

He said Mancini had talked to

City Manager Doug Gerber and said he would take the building "as is" and make all the improvements to be able to open a grocery store. That would include air conditioning for the building, resurfacing the parking lot and all the flooring and fixtures for the inside.

He said Mancini had not asked for anything except for \$25,000 to help pay for the signage.

Keirns said Mancini owns eight other grocery stores, including the one in St. Francis, and has been looking at Goodland for more than six months. He said the study the council paid \$6,500 for in November was for Mancini, and feels he wants to make this a good store that

people would be proud to shop at for groceries, meat and produce.

He said at one point Mancini asked if the city could pay the property taxes for a few years, but was told that would not work. He was told about the neighborhood revitalization program that could help reduce the property taxes.

Keirns said Mancini had asked about the city or county helping with the signs. Keirns said it seemed to make sense to him that the council go ahead and spend the \$25,000 to help this business project.

Fairbanks said Mancini expects the store to hire about eight full time people and up to 30 part time. He said Mancini plans to be able

to deliver groceries as well as help with carryout when needed.

He said Mancini is on new ground because all of the other grocery stores were in operation when he bought them.

He said Mancini wants to do this one right, and wants it to be sort of a flagship store.

The council agreed they had the \$25,000 in the project development funds, and that this was a good investment to make voting unanimously to spend the money if Mancini is able to reach and agreement with the city commission on the rent of the building.

Benefit for former Goodland wrestler planned

A benefit soup supper and dance is being planned for Blayze Bahe, former Goodland Cowboy wrestler, starting at 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 6, at the Goodland Elks Lodge.

Blayze, 24, son of Randy and Kathy Bahe of Great Bend, was injured in a motorcycle accident on Nov. 18. He is recuperating at his parents home in Great Bend.

Blayze graduated from Goodland

High School in 2004, and was on his way home after work when the accident happened after dark near the Dallas Cowboy Stadium in Arlington, Texas. Construction was going on and he had hit a barrier which threw him in the ditch.

His grandmother, Sharon Deeds, said the sheriff had received a call there was a motorcycle at the scene so an officer picked up the motorcycle at 3 a.m. but didn't see a driver.

It was raining and Blayze laid in the ditch all night.

The next morning at 7 a.m., a construction worker found him and he was rushed to the hospital. He had a temperature of 80 degrees. He "coded" two times, Deeds said, but was brought back to life. He was in a coma for a couple weeks, then on kidney dialysis for another two weeks.

He spent a month in a Dallas

hospital, was transferred to a Great Bend hospital then released before Christmas. Nine days after entering the hospital, Blayze's parents took time to go to his apartment in Fort Worth and found his dog. Deeds said the dog was hungry and thirsty but OK. He is now living in Great Bend.

"It is a miracle that he is alive," Deeds said.

He has had several surgeries and

part of a leg has been amputated.

"He has a great outlook," Deeds said.

He is the grandson of Wilmer and Peg Bahe and Edwin and Sharon Deeds all of Goodland.

Besides the benefit soup supper and dance, there will be a bake sale and a silent auction. Scott King will be the disk jockey for the dance.