

weather
report

65°

noon
Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 7:27 p.m.
Saturday
• Sunrise, 6:05 a.m.
• Sunset, 7:28 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 55 degrees
• Humidity 58 percent
• Sky partly cloudy
• Winds light and variable
• Barometer 30.13 inches
and rising
• Record High today 87° (1964)
• Record Low today 16° (1951)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 69°
Low Wednesday 42°
Precipitation none
This month 1.3
Year to date 3.83
Above normal 1.20 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly sunny with a high near 60, winds out of the east at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 39. Saturday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers at night, a high near 58, winds out of the south at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 39.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers at night, a high near 63 and a low around 40. Monday: Mostly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers at night, a high near 68 and a low around 42.
(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 — \$3.86
Corn — \$3.07 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.24
Milo — \$2.83 bushel
Soybeans — \$8.79 bushel
Posted county price — \$8.81
Millet — \$5 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$15.45 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

Brutal winds raise scores

Cowboy golfer Tanner Jones did a chip and roll on hole No. 9. The ball rolled all the way to the pin and bounced off a few inches. Winds raised scores at the tournament on Tuesday. See photos, story on Page 12.

School district gets \$1.5 million

By Pat Schiefen
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Superintendent Shelly Angelos told the school board on Monday the district had qualified for a Qualified Zone Academy Bond, and the money can only be used to remodel existing schools.

Superintendent Angelos said the school qualified for \$1.5 million to be paid back over a 10 year period. To qualify a district had to have a certain percentage of students getting free and reduced lunches and be on improvement for meeting the goals of the federally mandated No Child Left Behind.

The bonds are interest free because the federal government pays the interest. The district will pay \$150,000 a year on the bond. The savings from no interest would be from

\$448,000 to \$550,000.

In the application a district has to list proposed projects that need to be done. Angelos said the projects she proposed were all for the high school and possibly getting it ready to move the junior high into it. Projects, she said, would be prioritized and as much work would be done as there was money.

Proposed projects for the high school include replacing windows, upgrading heating and installing air conditioning, classroom renovation, walk in freezer and refrigerator for cafeteria, open a line of sight for the office of any one entering the building, renovation of restrooms and locker rooms, install air conditioning, upgrade lights and sound for the auditorium and paving, curb and gutter for a parking lot at the Cobblestone property.

The school will not get the money until fall or the first of the year.

A school may start on any projects before that but must have enough money in capital outlay to cover.

To accept the money the board has to work with a bonding advisor, bonding lawyer, publish a resolution for two weeks in the newspaper, pursue the sale of the bonds, prioritize and develop a timeline for the projects.

The board gave Superintendent Angelos permission to let bids for the parking lot paving project.

Superintendent Angelos said the one project the district could start and finish this summer would be the parking lot at the Cobblestone property.

A priority item would be the windows

and heating and air conditioning at the high school. She said the heating and cooling would need to be done at the same time as the windows because some of the high school's air conditioning uses window units. That project, she thought, would take two summers to complete if they didn't want to work on the building with students. A conservative estimate for the windows she thought would be \$350,000, but she thought that might be a little low.

She said she did not feel they would need an architect for the window project but for some of the other projects they would.

Superintendent Angelos said she was going to contact window companies to get a better idea of what was available and a cost.

Painting doesn't raise taxes

By Tom Betz
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City commissioners met with the county commissioners and the county assessor on Monday seeking to dispel the perception that painting a house or cleaning up the yard will raise the property taxes.

County Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said the city people were concerned that if a house is painted and cleaned up the taxes will go up.

Commissioner Rick Billinger said the city wants people to make their homes look nice, and he has heard from people that if they do clean up their homes their property taxes will go up.

"We wanted to talk to the county commissioners and assessor to make sure a policy is in place that if people paint and clean up their house the taxes will not go up," he said.

"I have heard that many times over the years," said Terry Ballard, county assessor. "There are more things that could cause the taxes to go up. Just painting a house as part of regular maintenance will not raise the taxes. Most of the time what happens is the property tax levy fluctuates and that can create a tax increase.

"There are a number of things that can change the tax rate, but I have never raised the value of a house because it was painted."

"That is the word we want to get out," Billinger said, "so people know it is not because they have cleaned up the house, it is a lot of other things that can cause a change in value. It is not because it has been cleaned up."

Ballard said the market dictates the value of the home.

"As an appraiser we do not take the painting into consideration," he said. "The market goes up and the market comes down. For the past five years our market has been pretty balanced.

"Stating in the early 90s the price of houses was highly inflated through 2001. We could not keep up in the 90s with the inflationary trend. It was about 2000 or later before we finally got values in line. The same thing happens when the valuation starts going down.

"I don't know if we have seen the last of that as the market is pretty soft. We have seen a drop of about 25 percent of the number of houses sold in the past five years."

It is a buyers market on some types of houses, he said. A lot of that

Winds cause tower to fall, power outage

High winds Tuesday caused minor damage around town with fallen branches as the winds were gusting to near 60 mph and were steady out of the south at 40 to 47 mph for most of the day.

The fire department and electrical department were called to a smoking power pole that had broken (above) at 10th and Sherman. The fire department had to wait until the power was turned off to douse the smoldering pole. Power was out for most of the west side of town for more than an hour.

A 60-foot amateur radio tower belonging to Darel Graves (WA0GBN) blew over into a tree at 16th and Wyoming. The tree kept the tower from landing on nearby power lines. The tower was safely taken down Wednesday afternoon.

The National Weather Service reported a high gust of 58 mph with steady winds out of the south reaching 47 mph in the late afternoon.

There were reports of some fields blowing near the Thomas and Sherman County line during the day.

Near sunset the winds began to subside and the sky clouded as a long line of thunderstorms slid across the area bringing 1.05 inches to Goodland.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

County Census return rate lags behind state, national

By Tom Betz
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Sherman County's Census return rate reached 62 percent on Thursday, but lags behind the national rate which is up to 67 percent and the Kansas state average of 71 percent.

People are encouraged to mail in their U.S. Census forms today.

"Do your part to save the taxpayer money!" said Dr. Robert Groves, director of the U.S. Census Bureau. "For every 1 percent increase in the national participation rate by mail, the Census Bureau can save taxpayers \$85

million by not having to send census takers door to door. If every household in the United States completed and mailed back their census form, taxpayers could reduce the cost of the census by \$1.5 billion. Please mail your form back today."

Groves said today was chosen as a mail back target deadline "to have some strong assurance that if we all made that deadline, the Postal Service and the Census Bureau processing centers would have enough time to receive and process the forms, deleting them from the list of addresses we will visit starting

May 1. We will continue accepting mailed-back forms after that date, but with each passing day there is less chance of deleting them from our list of addresses not needing to have an employee knock on the door."

The latest return figures bring Sherman County within 3 percent of the 65 percent returned for the 2000 census, but the goal is to get the county closer to the 85 to 90 percent return rate.

The Kansas return rate is up to 71 percent. Other counties in northwest Kansas include Cheyenne 68 percent, Rawlins 57 percent,

Decatur 59 percent, Thomas 67 percent, Sheridan 67 percent, Wallace 62 percent, Logan 68 percent and the highest in the neighborhood Graham 76 percent.

Sherman county has a "Questionnaire assistance center" where questions associated with the 2010 Census can be answered and extra forms are available at the Goodland Public Library, 812 Broadway Ave. A contact person will be available from 3 to 5 p.m. today.

Any Kansan who did not get a Census Questionnaire may call (866) 872-6868 and request a 2010 Census Questionnaire.