

weather report

67°

noon

Thursday

Today

Sunset, 7:14 p.m.

Saturday

Sunrise, 6:18 a.m.

Sunset, 7:12 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 69 degrees

• Humidity 42 percent

• Sky sunny

• Winds north 25-40 mph

• Barometer 30.20 inches and rising

• Record High today 102° (1947)

• Record Low today 34° (1974)

Last 24 Hours\*

High Wednesday 79°

Low Wednesday 60°

Precipitation none

This month none

Year to date 17.27

Above normal 0.85 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Sunny with a high near 80, winds out of the west at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 48.

Saturday: Sunny with a high near 90, winds out of the south at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 57.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Sunny with a high near 96 and a low around 63.

Monday: Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of rain at night, a high near 89 and a low around 55.

Tuesday: Sunny with a high near 84 and a low around 56.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$5.96 bushel

Posted county price — \$5.66

Corn — \$3.81 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.77

Milo — \$3.66 bushel

Soybeans — \$9.11 bushel

Posted county price — \$9.56

Millet — \$5 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$16.15 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

Cowboys play tonight

Cowboy running back Kelly Pearson took a hand off and ran around right end during the scrimmage on Friday. The Cowboys open play at 6:30 p.m. tonight in Hugoton. See story, photo on Page 10.

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# County budget under the axe

**By Tom Betz**  
*nt.betz@nwkansas.com*

Two Sherman County commissioners met on Monday to handle county business, but with the third absent delayed the budget discussions until 8 a.m. today.

Monday Commissioner Max Linin and Commissioner Cynthia Strnad were present for the meeting and Commissioner Chuck Thomas was absent.

Strnad said the budget decisions on Friday may be tough, and the commissioners might have to go back and make further cuts on some of the “special interest” groups they had already revised earlier.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said a major part of the problem is the commissioners have used the carryovers from previous years to

hold the property tax levy down.

She said the carryover for the General Fund was at \$710,000 two years ago. It was down to \$535,460 at the beginning of this year and she is projecting a carryover of \$167,000 at the end of the year depending on what the commissioners decide.

She said the drop in carryover would be if the commissioners include the asphalt work on the alley behind the courthouse, estimated to be about \$24,000 and the replacement of the boiler in the courthouse that could be as high as \$450,000.

“All the carryovers are down except for road and bridge,” she said. “I have over two mills for bond and interest for next year. We did not have any as all the bonds were paid off. If you take out a bond in the spring to chip seal

County Road 65 we will have to have money for paying interest.”

Linin said he felt if the county could get through the next year they would have more realistic figures in the budgets.

Rumpel said the budgets should be a realistic guide to what the county expects to spend over the next year, and the hard decisions will have to be made on Friday.

Strnad said the commissioners may have to revisit some of the cuts they have previously announced, and need to make some serious cuts to keep the property taxes down.

Linin said one place to cut was not to buy a new spray truck and rig with an anticipated payment of \$23,600 for four years. He said he was not in favor of buying the truck, but felt they ought to budget about \$5,000 for a

small sprayer and nurse tank.

Strand said she agreed with Linin about the spray truck. She said the decisions on Friday will be tough as it appears the total property tax levy would have to increase by more than 14 mills.

“We keep cutting,” Linin said, “but I can’t understand how the budget seems to keep getting further out of balance.”

Rumpel said part of that was because of the drop in carryovers and the capital projects the commissioners have been looking at doing.

Jean Kosmatka, health department administrator, came in to talk about the budget for this year and for next year.

Rumpel said there might be a problem

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# Hospital moving forward on dialysis unit plans

**By Tom Betz**  
*nt.betz@nwkansas.com*

Hospital board members heard an update on the progress on creating a kidney dialysis unit at the hospital on Monday night.

Jay Jolly, hospital administrator, told the board he had a meeting about the unit with a group of local citizens to talk about the proposed design of the unit and other things that might be related.

He showed the board a recent drawing of the proposed unit to be located at the end of the C Hall where there is a rarely used sun room.

The unit would include four stations, a nurses station, a drug mixing station and water equipment room plus a handicap accessible restroom.

He said originally the hospital was projecting having two units, but now is projecting four patients that would mean possibly about eight a week.



Rarely used sun room on Hall C at Goodland Regional Medical Center could be location for a four-unit dialysis unit the hospital is

planning. The board will be looking at the budget for a Go or No go decision in September.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

At the meeting he had some family of people who need dialysis and they made some good comments, he said. They had some thoughts we had talked about and some things we had not thought of prior to the meeting.

The cost of the unit is something Jolly said he has not finished, and expects to bring that and the final decision to the board in September. He said with the four units and some structural changes that will need to be made to meet the code the capital outlay is going to be about \$500,000.

With the projection of more patients Jolly said the hospital could be getting closer to a break even operation. He said under the new reimbursement system that goes into place in January it would be

about \$200 per patient.

“This is a life or death service,” Jolly said. “If you need it having to go 100 miles or more is difficult. The closest services to us are McCook, Garden City or Hays.”

He said once the budget is ready in September he will ask the board for a “Go” or “No go” on the project.

The preliminary design of the unit was drawn by Health Facilities Group out of Wichita Jolly said.

He said they learned at a recent Critical Issues Summit in Wichita – attended by four board members and hospital staff – the Goodland hospital may not be affected by the health care reforms, but to keep a tax deferred number there are some things the regulators are looking at.

One thing he said is if the hospital is subsidizing care, and doing this is a positive.

“That is a decision that goes to the heart of our mission for community health care,” Jolly said.

Board Chairman Brenda McCants said the Health Foundation has stepped up and pledged money for the dialysis unit.

Dale Schields, foundation representative, said the group has pledged up to \$40,000 plus the proceeds of the Slice for Life, and that might be up to \$80,000 to \$100,000.

“There are other organizations that are supportive of rural health needs,” Jolly said.

Board member Harlan House asked if the chairs would face to the north.

Jolly said they would face west, and the patients would be able to look out the windows to the west and south.

“I hope it is sort of a nice unit,” Jolly said. “It will not be fancy.”

# Hospital prices increase by 10 percent this month

**By Tom Betz**  
*nt.betz@nwkansas.com*

Hospital prices went up 10 percent on Sept. 1, with approval from the hospital board on Monday.

Jim Precht, hospital financial officer, said the hospital pricing policy was being revised after receiving the pricing from Blue Cross and Blue Shield in July.

“Repricing will happen on Sept. 1,” he said. “The new policy will be 10 percent over the highest fee schedule being offered by any insurance.”

Board Chairman Brenda McCants asked for a motion to approve the price increase of 10 percent.

Board member Harlan House made the motion seconded by Board member Doug Irvin. The motion passed unanimously.

Precht said he has been asked to work with Jolly to give a presentation about the discussions with the Sherman County commissioners about taking over the ambulance service. He said the hospital receives \$60,000 from the county to operate the ambulance service, and it costs about \$48,000 in lost reimbursements.

Jolly said no action has been taken, and the Finance Committee has asked to meet with the county commissioners to discuss this further. So far a date for a meeting has not been set.

Precht said the finance committee had a brief discussion on the efforts to improve front end collection and goal setting. He said no action was taken. The discussion was about where it is appropriate to ask for and collect payment before the patient leaves. He said the idea was to start collecting some of that money especially at the Goodland Family Health Center.

“The Family Health Center has a large volume of small claims,” he said. “It is cost effective to ask for the money up front to save on postage and stuffing envelopes.”

He said the finance committee talked about how often to meet, but there was no real preference. He said he is waiting to hear from Patty Eckhardt, the committee chairman. The next meeting is planned for 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 25.

In other business the board:

- Approved purchase of three copiers and a pharmacy hood to protect the staff from toxic materials. The copiers cost \$7,893 from High Plains Office Supply for the larger one and \$7,500 for the two smaller ones from Topside Office Supply.
- The pharmacy hood was for \$44,350 from Aseptic Enclosures of St. Louis, Mo. He said they talked about this piece of equipment two or three years ago, but the hospital was in compliance at that time. The upgrade will put the hospital back in compliance. He said the cost includes the venting through the roof.
- With the purchases totaling \$59,733, Jolly said he was bringing it to the board because the total may cut into the 60 day cash on hand policy.
- Precht said as of Monday he thought the hospital was at 75 days, but a payroll had to come out and with the purchases it get close.

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# K-27 road work partly finished; final phase to begin next week

Contractors have finished the southern section of K-27 in Goodland and will move onto the final stage by the end of next week, reports the Eric Oelschlager of the Atwood Kansas Department of Transportation Construction Office.

The southern section that has been completed is from I-70 north to the Walmart entrance. The project was partially funded by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the city of Goodland.

The third portion of the project was submitted as a Geometric Improvement project by the city and approved by KDOT engineers.

Prime contractor Smoky Hill, of Salina, oversaw the \$982,281 southern portion of the project and replaced the deteriorating asphalt with new concrete driving lanes Oelschlager said. An asphalt wedge was placed along both shoulders.

Next week, he said, construction will start on the final section of K-27/U.S. 24 Business from the Walmart entrance north to the K-27/U.S. 24 intersection in a project funded by the city of Goodland and KDOT. Smoky Hill, L.L.C. will oversee the \$465,553 project.

Limited traffic control will be in place to guide motorists around the final section of construction. The final section of K-27 should be complete, weather permitting, by mid-November he said.

# Labor Day holiday closes many offices

Monday is Labor Day, the last holiday of summer. Government offices, banks and financial institutions, all schools, lawyer’s offices and many stores will be closed.

There will be no mail on Monday and the post office will be closed. The city library and museum will be closed.

The Goodland City Commission will meet at 5 p.m. on Tuesday instead of Monday. The Sherman County commissioners will not meet on Monday morning.

The Goodland Star-News office will be closed on Monday, and the Midweek issue will be printed on Tuesday and delivered in the mail on Wednesday, one day later than usual.

Many retail stores, including Walmart, Dollar General and Orscheln, will be open for business.