

weather
report

72°

noon
Tuesday

Today

Sunset, 7:07 p.m.

Wednesday

Sunrise, 6:22 a.m.

Sunset, 7:06 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 65 degrees

• Humidity 19 percent

• Sky clear and sunny

• Winds south 10-18 mph

• Barometer 30.23 inches and steady

• Record High today 102° (1971)

• Record Low today 39° (1956)

Last 24 Hours*

High Monday 75°

Low Monday 43°

Precipitation none

This month trace

Year to date 17.27

Above normal 0.6 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny with a high near 76, winds out of the south at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 53.

Wednesday: Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms at night, a high near 81, winds out of the south at 15 to 35 mph and a low around 61.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Partly sunny with patchy fog before noon, a high near 86, winds breezy out of the south at 15 to 30 mph and a low around 60.

Friday: Sunny with a high near 85 and a low around 53.

Saturday: Sunny with a high near 82 and a low around 57.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local
markets

Noon

Wheat — \$6.11 bushel

Posted county price — \$6.16

Corn — \$4 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.05

Milo — \$3.85 bushel

Soybeans — \$9.51 bushel

Posted county price — \$9.70

Millet — \$5 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$16.50 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

Running season opens

Goodland Cowgirl Ashleigh Borders crosses a time mark in the freshman and sophomore girls cross country race on Friday at Sugar Hills Golf Course. See story, photos on Pages 9 and 10.

County budget effort continues

By Tom Betz
nt.betz@nwkansas.com

Sherman County commissioners spent four hours Friday morning going over the county budgets, looking for ways to keep the budgets within reason and be able to handle several large projects for roads and building improvements.

The revisions will be tabulated and County Clerk Janet Rumpel was to come up with the new total Tuesday for the commissioners to review.

Depending on what the bottom line is the commissioners may hold a special meeting this week, but the plan is to finalize the budget to get it published and a public hearing will be held within 10 days after the budget is published.

Commissioners present Friday included Chuck Thomas, Max Linin and Cynthia Strnad.

A draft copy of the budget was being used

by the three commissioners, and Thomas said he had made pencil marks on his copy figuring things might change again.

Rumpel said the increase in general fund capital outlay is to cover the first phase of cost to do something with the courthouse boiler system.

She said as part of the budget, she has \$60,000 in the budget, with \$10,000 for the scholarship program for Northwest Tech, and \$50,000 for economic development.

Thomas asked about the election costs in the budget.

Rumpel said there will be city and school elections in the spring, and she is not sure what the expense is going to be on the voting machines. She said the cost for the Primary Election was \$9,770 for the machines, and expects the General Election to be more expensive because of the constitutional amendments from the state.

Thomas asked about the \$15,000 for Sol-

diers Memorial Park.

Rumpel said it was carryover from this year, and she did not have any property tax levy for the park.

Linin asked how much was spent on the park this year.

Rumpel said she was estimating it will be about \$12,500 by the end of the year.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby asked the commissioners if they were assuming they were taking over the ambulance service.

Rumpel said she put in \$80,000 if the county takes it over to cover the last four months of next year.

Strnad suggested reducing the hospital property tax levy by two mills and taking the two mills out of the health services sales tax.

“We do not want to take so much out to deplete this account,” she said.

Selby asked what is included in employee benefits.

Rumpel said it includes anything including

all county paid benefits including social security, workers compensation, pension benefits and any other related costs.

Strnad said the total is about \$1,348,000 in the total county budget.

The total estimated general fund budget is \$3,652,247, which is about \$101,119 over the budget for this year.

The total county budget estimated for next year is \$8,544,507, but is about \$700,000 below the \$9,257,067 for this year. The difference is the total property tax for this year was 55.968 mills, but to fund next year the estimated property tax levy will be 69.609 mills.

The commissioners decided to leave the special interest groups the same after they had made adjustments. Thomas said the groups need to know the county will be looking at making more cuts next year.

Strnad said she agreed and that everyone ought to feel the pinch.

Festival planned for Saturday

An evening of music and fellowship is planned for Saturday evening from 7 to 11 p.m. at Smoky Gardens – known by many as Soldiers Memorial Park – with music by the Pieces of Eight to showcase the work done over the summer.

“We have heard a lot of great stories about things that have gone on at Smoky Gardens over the years,” Trevor Linton said, “and wanted to showcase the park and the work Dick Emig and his volunteers have done this summer.”

Linton said the Smoky Gardens Festival is very open and he hopes people will come down and bring their own chairs and snacks as there will not be any food along with this. He said the program is to showcase the improvements made to the Smoky Gardens done this summer.

“We are hoping to bring people out for a relaxing evening of music and fellowship,” Linton said. “We have a few sponsors to help pay for the band, but do not have a lot of things planned other than having the music.”

He said the band will be set up on the north side of the pond and west of the caretakers house.

He said people are encouraged to camp at the park this weekend if they want to.

The park is located about seven miles south of town on County Road 17. To find the park drive south on K-27 to County Road 57. Turn west and drive two miles to County Road 17. The park is about two miles south on the east side of the road.

Lining the hills

Parents, friends and fellow cross country runners lined the hills at Sugar Hills Golf Club Friday afternoon to cheer on the runners in the Goodland Invitational meet. The cross country meet featured the Goodland Cowboys and Cowgirls and the Grant Junior High Mustangs in their opening meet. See photos and story on Pages 9 and 10.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Company suggests county eliminate boiler

By Tom Betz
nt.betz@nwkansas.com

A second presentation was made recently to the Sherman County commissioners about upgrading the heating, air conditioning and lighting of the county courthouse built in 1930, and a third company will present their plan later in September.

James E. Richmond of Energy Solutions Network of Nederland, Colo., and Leon Kelly, High Plains Heating and Air Conditioning of Goodland met with the commissioners in August to present results of their energy audit of the courthouse and recommendations for improvements.

Kelly said his company has set up a branch office in Goodland, and he has been talking to William McKnight, county building maintenance supervisor, about problems with the boiler. He said he had Richmond do a survey of the whole building.

Kelly said dealing with the concrete in the building is the biggest challenge, but feels it is a design issue that can be dealt with. He said the project can be broken up into smaller pieces to make it easier.

Commissioner Max Linin asked if the redesign was to get rid of the steam heating system currently being used.

Kelly said that was part of it, and the existing air conditioning system is not functioning well because of the way the existing system is designed.

Richmond said his preliminary findings showed the courthouse costs were reasonable

for electricity, but the gas cost is way too high.

He said the gas cost for the courthouse is higher than it should be especially with the low natural gas prices. His report said the high gas cost is due to the inefficiencies of the heating boiler and steam distribution system, as well as the lack of ventilation and overheating in winter which necessitates opening windows.

He said the boiler is so old he had to find a way to calibrate the efficiency of the unit. He said his figures show the existing boiler is about 39 percent efficient and that about 60 percent of the heat is being wasted.

“A new heating system would be in the 95 percent efficiency range,” he said.

Linin asked if the new system would have boilers.

Richmond said he would not recommend using boilers and his firm is recommending the installation of 19 high efficiency natural gas condensing furnaces with combustion efficiencies of about 95 percent. His recommendation would include one to three rooftop units to handle the heating and air conditioning of the various zones of the courthouse.

He said the furnaces would be specific for each space, and would have a separate furnace and air conditioner for each and they would have their own controls.

Part of the problem now is that the existing system is trying to handle both the main and second floor. He said splitting the duct work to separate the floors would help with the zoning.

He said they found a place to run the new ducts to make it work, but it would mean some holes need to be cut in the floor.

Linin asked what would be done with the existing boiler.

Kelly said his recommendation is to abandon the boiler and leave it in place because of the expense of dealing with the asbestos in trying to take it out.

Linin asked if the county would ever use the boiler again.

“I would not want to fire it up again,” said McKnight, “with the way it is leaking.”

Linin said the plan includes reopening the transoms.

Richmond said that would be done on the upper two floors, and they would use a grill to make it look nice, but the transoms need to be opened for air return.

He said the third recommendation is to upgrade the lighting in the courthouse. He said the efficiency of new lights would cut the electrical costing half, and was a fast pay back item.

The lighting is the cheapest part of the recommendations costing about \$29,000, and is estimated the cost would be paid back in about five years.

The total estimated cost of the equipment for the furnaces is \$254,000 and an additional \$63,700 for the air conditioning units.

Other costs including design and implementation would bring the total up to about \$433,000.

Richmond said the forced air furnaces

would have a payback in about 10.5 years. He said the air conditioning does not really have a pay back, but would be more efficient.

Linin asked if the county could put in the heating and not change the air conditioners.

Kelly said that would not work.

Richmond said he could make the price less expensive by rebidding with smaller air conditioner system.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad asked if the company has someone who might help the county look for grants to help fund this project.

Kelly said they do have someone who helps with grants. He said his company has worked with many in the grant world and have been successful at that with nonprofit groups.

He said he was not sure how easy it might be to attract a foundation grant, but they would try.

Kelly said the lighting would be through Legacy Electric in Goodland.

Linin said the commissioners would look the recommendations over and get back to Kelly.

“I am not sure what we are going to do,” he said.

Strnad said she felt the county would end up doing something even if has to be done in stages.

Richmond said it could be done in phases over the winter. He said he would recommend keeping the boiler running for another year while they get the air conditioning out and put the new system in.