

weather report

70°
noon
Thursday

Today

Sunset, 7:03 p.m.

Saturday

Sunrise, 6:25 a.m.

Sunset, 7:01 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 69 degrees

• Humidity 73 percent

• Sky cloudy

• Winds south 16 mph

• Barometer 29.85 inches and falling

• Record High today 100° (1936)

• Record Low today 34° (1907)

Last 24 Hours

High Wednesday 86°

Low Wednesday 58°

Precipitation trace

This month trace

Year to date 17.27

Above normal 0.52 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Sunny with a high near 85, winds out of the west at 10 to 15 mph switching to the north and a low around 47. Saturday: Sunny with a high near 82, winds out of the north at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 55.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Sunny with a high near 87 and a low around 56. Monday: Sunny with a high near 84 and a low around 53. Tuesday: Mostly sunny with a high near 82 and a low around 53.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$6.13 bushel

Posted county price — \$6.19

Corn — \$4.01 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.08

Milo — \$3.86 bushel

Soybeans — \$9.50 bushel

Posted county price — \$9.82

Millet — \$5 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$16.80 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

Cowgirls win matches

The Cowgirls varsity volleyball played their first set against Thomas More Prep-Marian of Hays on Tuesday at Max Jones Fieldhouse. Jennifer Rome served a ball at the game. See story, photos on Page 10.

City plans cleanup for October

By Tom Betz
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City employees will be spending the first week of October on a citywide cleanup effort City Manager Doug Gerber told the commissioners on Tuesday evening.

“We have talked about it at staff meetings,” he said. “We keep saying we need to try something. The plan is to take the entire week and clean up stuff people have left out.”

He said Brian James, fire chief and building inspector, is compiling a list with the help of city staff and will be sending letters to the homeowners suggesting they can help by putting things out to be picked up or by moving things the homeowner does not want to lose.

“We as a staff are excited about this,” Gerber said. “We know it is not a cure all, but think it will help. This is truly a major issue,

and as a city we need to keep working to clean things up.”

He said he was going to ask about getting some help from Northwest Tech and Sherman County. He said he was going to ask the county about eliminating fees and getting cooperation when they haul things out to the transfer station.

He said the city staff had cleaned up a house at 1016 Cherry Ave., and had run into a problem at the transfer station when they were told they needed to better separate the trash.

“This is a whole staff effort,” he said. “We feel it is like trying to deal with the elephant in the room, and this is like taking a small bite out of the elephant.”

The commissioners each said they were in support of the program.

City Mayor Josh Dechant said he was glad

the city staff was taking this on as a project.

Commissioner Rick Billinger said it was a great idea and he said he knows there is some risk in picking up things, but said it is better to push forward and clean up the town as much as possible.

In other business:

- Gerber said the front office staff is putting together a welcome packet for people signing up for utility service. He said they are working with businesses who might want to put something in the packet.
- The credit goes to Mary Volk and especially her staff Crystal VanVleet and Shauna Johnson
- Reported the city was to have a pre-construction meeting on the third phase of the K-27 project on Wednesday. Gerber said the state is hoping to get the project moving by the

end of the week. He said the plan is to do the west half first, and that will close the Walmart entrance while the work is done.

He said the project is expected to take about eight weeks with 40 working days allowed the contractor Smoky Hills. Gerber said the contractor was a bit ahead finishing the first two phases, and it will depend on the weather if the company is able to finish phase three earlier than allowed.

- Held a 20 minute closed door session with the commissioners and city manager for preliminary discussion of acquiring property. No action was taken after the meeting reopened.

The next meeting will be 5 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 20.

Chip seal project completed

Winds Wednesday did not slow down the contractor who has been working on the chip sealing of old U.S. 24 across Sherman County. The final few miles were completed Wednesday afternoon with the help of the Sherman County Road and Bridge workers who help with traffic control (above) with flagmen and a pilot pickup. The contractor had a speedy crew laying down the oil followed by the rock distributor and rolling machines to pack the rock.

Photos by Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

City endorses Neighborhood Revitalization

By Tom Betz
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City commissioners unanimously endorsed the continuation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program on Tuesday saying it was a vital economic development program and passing an ordinance to extend the program for another three years.

City Manager Doug Gerber said he has had experience with a similar Neighborhood Revitalization Program before coming to Goodland and feels it is a vital economic development program for the city and the county.

He told the commissioners he had heard the Sherman County commissioners, who passed a resolution in August extending the program, were considering rescinding their

action.

“It may look like a loss in the short term,” he said, “but it is a winner in the long term, and I will be meeting with the commissioners at 10 a.m. on Monday to discuss this.”

The county commissioners had talked about rescinding their resolution because they felt it was an expense to the county, and that if people can afford to build a house they ought to be able to pay the property taxes without a tax rebate program.

“I think it is a great program,” Commissioner Rick Billinger said, “and I used it for a building. It was a tipping point for many who were looking at building. I know that for a fact because it was a tipping point for me to build. The commissioners ought to look at they are getting an

increase in property tax they otherwise might not have gotten.”

Mayor Josh Dechant said he agreed it was a good program and feels it has been good for both the county and the city.

Commissioner John Garcia said he felt the program is a tool to help both local businesses and homeowners who are looking to invest in Sherman County. He said an example of the program was with the Holiday Inn Express.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program provides a sliding scale property tax rebate to businesses and homeowners who improve their property by a minimum of \$5,000 in assessed valuation with the rebate being given on the increased value. The business or homeowner pays the full property tax and the county

rebates 90 percent for the first three years. The sliding scale goes down 10 percent per year for years 4 through 10 with the county rebating 20 percent the 10th year and keeping 100 percent every year after.

The program has been in existence for six years and County Appraiser Terry Ballard said Thursday 143 people have applied with 119 projects completed as of January of this year. He said the total assessed valuation of those is \$1,649,384.

He said six of the projects were for homes with an assessed value of under \$25,000, and the program allows a property tax rebate of 95 percent for the first five years and 50 percent for five years on those projects.

Ballard said he has had 15 applications this year, and another nine

that are in progress.

A similar program is for commercial and industrial projects with the rebate starting at 90 percent for an investment of \$500,000 with a sliding scale similar to residential. For an investment of more than \$500,000 to \$3 million the tax rebate is 90 percent for the first six years and then dropping to 20 percent by the 10th year. For commercial or industrial investments of \$3 million or more the rebate is 90 percent for the first six years and 75 percent for the next four years.

The business or homeowner must keep the property taxes current to keep the rebate program in place for the whole 10 years. If the property taxes become delinquent the rebate is lost and the county will collect 100 percent of the taxes.

Building planned to enclose kiosk

By Tom Betz
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A brick building is planned to be built at the Goodland cemetery to house the information kiosk the city has agreed to purchase, and approved allowing Boy Scout Seth Stramel to do it as his Eagle Scout project.

Dick Hayden, cemetery board chairman, said the planned building would cost about \$3,000 with brick, and a group was trying to raise the money for the building. He said the plan is to put the building where the tree memorial is now and move the tree memorial.

Commissioner Rick Billinger asked how many bricks it would take and said he might know where some bricks could be found.

Hayden said the idea is to match the brick of the building to the ones on the gates. He said the building will be 8 foot by 16 foot, and plans are to have motion detector lighting inside that will come on when people enter the building.

Commissioner John Garcia asked how soon the project could start.

Hayden said as soon as the commissioners give their approval the project can get started.

Stramel said he is looking for people to help with the project and will keep track of all materials used and the expenses.

Mayor Josh Dechant asked if other Boy Scouts would be helping with the project.

Stramel said yes other scouts would be among those helping.

Hayden said Stramel had drawn the original design, and had the engineering firm revise it to make sure it is up to code.

See CITY, Page 5

Smoky Gardens Festival

7 to 11 p.m. on Saturday
Music by Pieces of Eight.
Bring your own chair for this free evening of music and fun.
Check out the improvements to Soldier Memorial Park.
(Bring your own food and drink)