

# City adopts changes in traffic, offense codes

**By Tom Betz**  
*nt.betz@nwkansas.com*  
Based on changes made in the standard traffic code and the public offense code, the city commission approved updates to both on Monday with an explanation from the city judge.

Judge Leann Taylor said the updates for the standard traffic ordinance were mostly minor wording changes.

She said the legislature added a definition of Lightweight Roadable Vehicle, which can be driven or flown. It is defined as a "Multipurpose motor vehicle that is allowed to be driven on public roadways and is required to be registered with and flown under the direction of the Federal Aviation Administration."

One change allows a driver of a motorcycle or bicycle to proceed through a stop light after stopping and "after a reasonable amount of time has passed and the light has

not changed to green."

She said the big changes were to the driving under influence section where it was reworded to make it clearer and to increase the fine for a first offense to \$750 and the second offense raised to \$1,250.

They changed how the number of offenses are being considered from any in a lifetime to only those on or after July 1, 2001.

Added a requirement for a monitoring device to be attached if the person is granted house arrest.

She said the seat belt fine has been increased from \$5 to \$10.

City Attorney Jerry Fairbanks said the legislature made the interlock device a requirement for the first offense on DUI. He said it was his understanding the interlock device is expensive and has to be paid for by the person who was convicted of DUI.

That ordinance was approved unani-

mously.

The second ordinance dealt with public offenses, and Judge Taylor said there were several changes. She said most will have little effect in the city court.

In a couple of cases the legislature combined some offenses into one section.

An example was combining assault and assault of a law enforcement officer. Another combined theft, theft of services and theft of motor fuel into one section.

Three subsections were added to the breach of privacy sections, but Judge Taylor said she has never had anyone charged under this section.

The additions listening to private conversations in a public place, installing listening devices or installing or using a device to intercept any telephone or wireless communication without the permission of the person in control of the facility.

Added subsections to law dealing with

unlawfully selling scrap metal to allow purchase of catalytic converters, wire, refrigeration condensing units, and forms of copper. Sets out methods of payment for purchase of scrap metal, and Judge Taylor said it requires more documentation and photos.

First offense fine is minimum fine \$200, Second offense within two years is minimum fine of \$500, and third offense in two years is \$1,000 fine.

Added subsections to law dealing with unlawfully buying scrap metal requiring buyer to obtain information about the seller and identification number from vehicle sold for scrap metal. Cannot purchase from a minor. Sets out certain metal items that cannot be bought without verification of authorization of seller to sell items. Dealer must hold items 30 days.

First offense fine is minimum \$200, Second offense within two years is minimum

fine of \$500, and third offense in two years is \$1,000 fine.

Another addition was that a person cannot remain at an unlawful assembly if directed to leave.

Added the word "knowingly" to the public nuisance section. Judge Taylor said that will make it harder to prove because the burden will be on the city to prove you knew it was going on.

Added a section to the harassment by telecommunications device to make or transmit any comment, request, suggestion, proposal, image or text with intent to abuse, threaten or harass any person at the receiving end.

The section added newer electronic devices to the list including telephones, cellular telephones, and any other electronic device which makes use of an electronic communication service.

The ordinance passed unanimously.

## County to begin mowing soon

**COUNTY, from Page 1**

about what was the best way to go.

Commissioner Max Linin said he did not feel the county was late and the middle of August is usually when they have done the second mowing in past years.

Strnad asked Vandiver if they were done with all the spraying.

Vandiver said they were about done, and he has had the county employees out mowing old U.S. 24 with the equipment the county has. He said back when the county did the mowing they did not start until after July 4, and did mow sometimes until Christmas.

Goodland Superintendent Bill Bierman was at the meeting to ask about the mowing of the roads from the school bus perspective.

"I am here to put in our two cents," he said, "and to make sure the bus routes will be covered.

"It sounds like you are going to get things going and I felt it was something the district wanted to be involved in."

Enfield thanked Bierman for coming and said the school bus and mail routes would be a priority for the mowing.

The commissioners opened a bid from Darrell Schrader for tractors and mowers.

The commissioners agreed to

purchase two John Deere heavy duty 150 hp tractors at \$17,500 each, two Land Pride rotary mowers heavy duty 15' bat-wing mowers at \$10,000 each and one New Holland 8' disc mower for \$4,000.

The commissioners voted to approve the purchase for a total of \$59,000.

Nobids were received on mowing the weeds.

Strnad made a suggestion to work with farmers who mow around their own place, and they might do more if the county had a way to know what they were doing and if they could be paid.

Vandiver said it might be a problem if the county hired them to mow.

Brock Abby, part time attorney in the district attorney office was at the meeting to listen, and Enfield asked him what his opinion would be about the county working with farmers to mow ditches.

Abby said he was not sure with the county being a government entity, and his questions was if it was going to be on the honor system.

The commissioners said that is an option they might look at in the future, but agreed to look at what they could do this year.

Vandiver said he was asking to use mowing money for his employees to work overtime on Saturday

and Sunday doing mowing. He said he should not have problems getting people to mow and are out mowing some now.

Linin said he was not sure they wanted to go full bore on the mowing because of some weed regrowth as wet as it has been. He said it would be good to use the disc mower to buzz around the county.

Vandiver said Schrader said if the county bought the disc mower he would be willing to run it.

Strnad said years ago one reason the county went to hire mowing done was the mowers and tractors were shot and there was not enough help.

She said she would be happy to have Schrader run the disc mower as he knows how it works and they would not have a learning curve for the county employees.

Enfield asked if the commissioners should look at the tractors and mowers before making a decision.

"The northeast part of the county has the worst amaranth," Strnad said. "We do not want to wait another week."

After the motion was made to purchase the equipment Strnad said they needed to start in the northeast.

"We are not going for pretty," she said. "We are going for utility and what is cost effective."

## Brewster superintendent ready for year

**By Kevin Bottrell**  
*kbottrell@nwkansas.com*

Janci Mills, the new superintendent and principal of the Brewster School District, is eager for the new school year.

Mills started work on July 1. The school has a lot of other new staff as well. Mills said so far she has enjoyed the mix of people, with older, experienced teachers who can impart the traditions of the Brewster schools and new teachers who bring in new ideas.

Enrollment was Wednesday, and Mills said there was a steady stream of students all day. She said enjoyed meeting the students and parents.

"There's a lot of pride in the community toward the school," she said.

Mills said this is her first experience with the full range of students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Brewster even operates a preschool.

"It's the full rainbow of kids," she said.

Mills spend 20 years as a principal in the Hays School District, first at Felten Middle School and most recently at Roosevelt Elementary School before taking the job in Brewster.

"I've been a Falcon and a Roadrunner," she said. "Now I'm a Titan and a Bulldog, so I'm no longer a bird."

Mills' husband Ed is president of Northwest Kansas Technical College. The couple live in Goodland, and for the past 20 years she has been commuting back and forth to Hays.

"We were always looking for an opportunity to work in the same space," she said.

Mills is originally from Topeka and attended Fort Hays State University. She said she was lucky enough to find a job in Hays right after school.

Mills said she hasn't had trouble moving from a large district to a small one.

"Kids are kids," she said. Like most Kansas districts,

Brewster is dealing with less money coming in from the state. The Legislature cut base state aid per student to \$3,780 this year, and Mills said every district is having to look for ways to cut. Whether it is not filling a vacant position or combining bus routes, she said, schools are looking at every line item in their budgets. Brewster has an advantage, she said, since it doesn't have to use utilities on Fridays.

"It's a challenge," she said, "but there's always things you can do."

Brewster is sticking with a four-day school week again this year. School lasts from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the longer day making up the lost time. Mills said the Friday off is useful for activities or staff training, and the students don't have to miss school when there are Friday athletic events.

Mills said the idea is catching on in northwest Kansas, with similar-size districts like Weskan and Cheylin also using four-day schedules.

## State moves 15 counties drought level from moderate to emergency status

Worsening drought conditions for much of Kansas have led Gov. Sam Brownback to update the Drought Declaration for Kansas counties and includes moving 15 counties from warning status up to emergency status.

"Continued dry and hot conditions have led to a Drought Emergency declaration for 12 additional counties," Governor Brownback said. "Below normal precipitation patterns continue in more than half of Kansas counties which are not only depleting available soil moisture, but have resulted in the decline of stream flow conditions."

The updated drought declaration moves two counties from watch status to warning and adds an additional 15 counties to watch status. This action was recommended by Tracy Streeter, Director of the Kansas Water Office and Chair of the Governor's Drought Response Team.

"Surface water conditions continue to decline which has triggered the state water office to work with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to issue a Memorandum of Understanding for emergency use of state fishing lake water under conditions of drought emergency declared by the Governor," Streeter said. "This will allow small communities and individuals within the emergency counties category to pump water from named state fishing lakes to provide some relief if they are in dire need of water."

Individuals and communities need to contact the state water office for a water supply request and they will in turn be referred to the appropriate wildlife and parks office to obtain the necessary permit to withdraw the water. The agreement limits the types of water use and a fee may be set for use of the state fishing lakes' water supply.

"We are glad to be able to offer this as an option to Kansans in desperate need for water," Secretary Robin Jennison of the department of wildlife, parks and tourism said. "The priority order established for this is domestic, municipal and then livestock uses, while protecting the lake's fish population."

The State Fishing Lakes available for withdrawals for Emergency Declared counties include Atchison, Barber, Brown, Bourbon, Butler, Chase, Clark, Crawford, Goodman, Jewell, Kingman, Leavenworth, Lyon, Pott#1, Pott#2, McPherson, Miami, Mined Lands (Pits), Neosho, Osage, Ottawa, Saline, Scott, Shawnee, Sheridan, Washington, Wilson, and Woodson Lakes.

This Executive Order shall remain in effect for those counties so identified until rescinded by Executive Order or superseded by a subsequent Executive Order revising the drought stage status of the affected counties. Effective immediately:

- Declare a Drought Emergency, Warning or Drought Watch for the counties identified below;

- Authorize and direct all agencies

under the jurisdiction of the Governor to implement the appropriate watch or warning level-drought response actions assigned in the Operations Plan of the Governor's Drought Response Team.

The Governor's Drought Response Team will continue to watch the situation closely and work to minimize the effects the drought has on Kansans.

For more detailed information about current conditions, see the Kansas Climate Summary and Drought Report on the Kansas Water Office website at: [www.kwo.org](http://www.kwo.org)

County Drought Stage Declarations:

Drought Emergency: Barber, Clark, Comanche, Harper, Kingman, Kiowa, Meade, Morton, Pratt, Reno, Seward, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens and Sumner.

Drought Warning: Barton, Butler, Cowley, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Gove, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Kearny, Lane, Logan, McPherson, Ness, Pawnee, Rice, Scott, Sedgwick, Trego, Wallace, Wichita Drought Watch: Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chase, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Coffey, Crawford, Decatur, Dickinson, Elk, Ellis, Ellsworth, Graham, Greenwood, Labette, Lincoln, Linn, Lyon, Marion, Montgomery, Neosho, Norton, Ottawa, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Saline, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, Wilson and Woodson.

## Kansas counties eligible for federal disaster aid

Sherman County is among the 25 counties that have been declared a federal disaster area for damaging straight-line winds, tornadoes and flooding from May 19 to June 4.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback received notice Tuesday that President Barack Obama issued a disaster declaration for the 25 counties making federal funding available to State and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities.

The damage was reported in Bar-

ton, Clay, Cloud, Hamilton, Jewell, Lincoln, Logan, Lyon, Marion, Mitchell, Morton, Osage, Osborne, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Republic, Riley, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Sherman, Smith, Stafford, Stanton, and Washington counties.

"This is very good news for the town of Reading and many other areas impacted in late May and early June by tornadoes and damaging storms," Gov. Brownback said. "These federal funds will greatly assist these communities in rebuilding their infrastructure."

The President's declaration

makes federal funding available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, named Bradley Harris as the Federal Coordinating Officer for Federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the State and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.



**News**

**SUBSCRIPTION SPECIAL**

**\$71**

**1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION**

*Normally \$81.00*

**VALID THROUGH SEPTEMBER 6, 2011!**

**The Goodland Star-News**

1205 Main Avenue, Goodland, KS 67735 • (785) 899-2338