

# City, fire board far apart on consolidation

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outside in several locations such as the county fairgrounds. Cloyd said ideally they would like to have the ambulance service and fire departments all under one roof some day.

Mayor John Garcia said he feels he and the city commissioners were elected to both save the city taxpayers money and forsee future expenses. He said he felt the third agreement was fair and protected the city's interests.

"I don't see significant savings, personally speaking," he said about the proposed resolution.

Cloyd asked if the city was backing off

from consolidation. Garcia said he would rather have an agreement.

Gerber said he respectfully disagrees about the financial issues, but asked if the commissioners would be more comfortable with a plan for the combined district to operate under the city structure. All the firefighters would answer to Fire Chief Brian James, who would answer to the city manager, who answers to the commission. The downside to that, he said, is the potential to bring in additional headaches and issues that inevitably show up when inducting a large number of new personnel.

Garcia said he would like to see an agreement with the city in control of the process. Commissioner Gary Farris said he didn't

see any real advantage at the moment to the city giving up control. Finley said there are bits and pieces of both proposals that could be combined.

"I think it's fair to say we don't know what we want either," he said.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she did not feel pressure to sign something right away. The plans presented are not the only options the city and county can take, she said, and she still wants to move forward.

Finley suggested each of the commissioners and the mayor bring their concerns to Gerber, who will put them together. Gerber said, speaking for himself, that the provision in the resolution that the city turn

over all excess fire levy funds to the fire board could be a dealbreaker. Finley asked Cloyd if he and the fire board are willing to sit down and talk about an agreement one more time. Cloyd said yes and invited the commissioners to the next board meeting, 7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 16, at the fire station. The commissioners agreed they would rather have Gerber go to the meeting to present their concerns.

James was called out during the discussion, but Assistant Fire Chief Justin Stasser spoke in favor of consolidation. He said he sees the city wanting to maintain control and save money and the county wanting to do the same thing. He suggested a four-member fire board, two city and two

county, with a three-vote majority required to pass anything.

Right now, Stasser said, there are some limitations to what firefighters can do. City firefighters may not have experience fighting grass fires in high wind, while rural firefighters may not have experience fighting structure fires. The biggest benefit to consolidation, he said, is cross training and allowing those firefighters to get experience fighting the different types of fires.

"There's a lot to be lost if we don't intermingle that," he said. "Unless we go out on calls with them, they can't get the experience."

# Police standoff, water plant make top 10 stories

**STORIES, from Page 1**

Kansas Highway Patrol and an Explosive Ordinance Disposal unit from Fort Riley.

The Goodland Walmart received a bomb threat in the early morning of Aug. 15. Police responded to the call and the store was ordered evacuated. Others responding included Sherman County Sheriff's Office, Kansas Highway Patrol, Goodland City Fire Department, Goodland EMS and Sherman County Emergency Management.

The fire department blocked the entrance as other law enforcement searched the store. Law enforcement officers determined the call was not a viable threat and no bomb was found.

A five-month drug investigation came to a close on Thursday, Sept. 8, with the arrest of five people involved in distributing illegal narcotics in Sherman County said in a release from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

"As a result of the investigation 15 individuals have been identified as distributing illegal narcotics, including cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana in Goodland and Sherman County," the news release said. "Formal charges are being filed with the Sherman County Attorney on these individuals to include distribution and possession of illegal drugs and firearms violations."

Those arrested on Sept. 9 included Juan Benitez, 26, James Barrera, 24, Eduardo Palma, 26, and Aaron Miramontes, 21, all of Goodland.

In August, local law enforcement began investigating a string of residential and vehicle burglaries occurring in the Goodland area. One of the burglaries was at Northwest Kansas Technical College where an ATM machine and numerous iPads were taken.

The stolen ATM was later found in Sherman County, outside the city limits. The ATM appeared to have been cut open using a welding torch. Shoe prints were located near the discarded ATM.

During a joint investigation between Goodland police, Sherman County Sheriff and Federal Bureau of Investigation, information was developed indicating some of the stolen items were possibly being kept at a Goodland residence. A search warrant was obtained and executed by Goodland police and Sheriff's deputies and several stolen items were located.

Christopher Castaneda, Crystal Bueno and Hector Sariana were at the residence and arrested after the search on charges of possession of stolen property.

At the same time, investigators determined more stolen property was in a dorm room at Northwest Tech. College officials conducted a room search and located several items. They informed the Goodland Police and Detective Showalter obtained a search warrant for the room and seized the items. Ricardo Valdez, Jr., resident of the dorm room, was arrested and charged with possession of stolen property.

Investigators were able to locate one of the iPads stolen from the college.

After further investigation and interviewing suspects, officers determined that Fernando and Eduardo Martinez, both Goodland residents, were possibly involved in the burglaries. It was determined both men had apparently left town, and had moved to Manhattan where they were attending Kansas State University. They were arrested on Sept. 28 in Manhattan.

Traffic and business in the 1200 block of Main was disrupted in the late afternoon of Oct. 4, and through the night as Goodland police with the assistance of the KBI handled a standoff situation with a man who apparently had a gun in an upstairs apartment on the corner of 13th and Main Ave.



A member of a U.S. Army unit from Fort Riley used a sensing canister to test for possible explosives at 537 W. 13th. The Army unit arrived about 9:30 p.m. on June 30, to help city police investigate a possible explosives incident. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Goodland police officers had attempted to serve a court order on the subject, Ronald Calvin Kernal, 47, earlier in the afternoon at his upstairs apartment when the subject brandished a handgun resulting in the barricade situation.

Goodland Police Sergeant Greg Krosky and officer Cody Hanson had accompanied owner, Charlene Cole to the apartment to do a welfare check and attempt to serve a court order. When the apartment door was opened Kernal was holding a gun, and Krosky backed out and called for backup.

Kyle Smith, KBI deputy director, said the organization tries to provide services the local law enforcement units may not have access to. He said the KBI brought a mobile unit from Great Bend to assist and provide a central command point.

The negotiator tried to talk Kernal out, but before sunrise Wednesday morning the KBI team shot tear gas through a second story window and entered the apartment. Kernal was arrested after a minor struggle. No officers were injured.

**3** The City of Goodland held a ribbon cutting and open house in mid-August at the new water treatment plant on Kansas Ave., celebrating completion of the \$6 million water improvement project.

In recent years the city was under scrutiny from the state Department of Health and Environment for increasing level of nitrate in some of the city wells. The wells had to be tested individually. The over all water was below the nitrate level of 10 parts per million, but several wells had been showing levels near or above the requirement.

City officials had begun the process of seeking a consultant in 2009 to help the city work on a solution to the nitrate problem.

As the city was selecting the consultant in 2010 the federal government was approving the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (President Obama's stimulus package).

The city selected Evans, Bierly Hutchison and Associates for the water project, and with the timing the city was able to receive about \$2 million in loan forgiveness money from the federal program to reduce the cost.

The remaining \$4 million was loaned to the city through the state. City officials determined they could save more than \$1 million in interest by using existing reserves to pay off the loan. That will be officially presented this year for commission action.

Construction of the water treatment plant has been by Miller

Construction of Goodland, and a number of other contractors were involved in laying water lines and a new main on 10th Street across town and building two lined evaporation ponds and two water storage tanks at the treatment plant.

A lot of the water project involved bringing the water from all city wells to the central point at the treatment plant and then pumping it out into the city system. The blending and ability to treat a portion of the water for nitrates allows the city to maintain better quality water with a lower concentration of nitrates.

**4** A car chase on I-70 started about eight miles from the Colorado state line in January — with the passenger in the vehicle shooting at state troopers — ended on a county road about two miles north of Brewster when a state trooper returned fire and hit the man driving.

Anthony Douglas Patrick, age 31, of Lancaster, Calif., plead guilty on July 5, to two counts of attempted second-degree homicide, and Sherman County District Judge Scott Showalter sentenced Patrick to a total prison term of 161 months for the two crimes.

A preliminary hearing was held in May in Sherman County District Court and after hearing testimony from six witnesses for the prosecution the Judge ruled the state had provided enough evidence to hold the two defendants over for trial for attempting to shoot two state troopers on I-70 in January.

The charges alleged that on Sunday, Jan. 16, Patrick was the driver in a parked vehicle at the east rest area on I-70 near Goodland. State trooper Perry Frey, had previously testified he noticed a Toyota Scion parked in the rear of the rest area with fogged windows. Frey said he ran the license plate, but it came back to a Dodge pickup and not the Toyota.

Frey said he approached the driver's side of the vehicle and asked the driver to roll down his window. Frey said the driver was a male who said his name was Cy Devlin when he rolled the window down about four inches.

Frey asked for driver's license and registration, but instead the driver started the Toyota and drove away.

During the ensuing chase Patrick's passenger, Piper Lacey Stout-Briese, shot at the state troopers. The troopers were not hit, but bullets struck two of the troopers' vehicles.

Trooper Frey was given permission to use deadly force and fired on the Toyota hitting Patrick in the back shoulder area ending the chase north

of Brewster.

Nicole Romine, deputy attorney general from the criminal litigation division, who now has her office in the Sherman County Courthouse, said a jury trial for Stout-Briese is scheduled for April.

Stout-Briese is represented by attorney Lawrence A. Taylor of Colby.

**5** Northwest Tech is the first two-year college in the country to get into the Apple iPad in a big way by issuing each student and faculty member one to use and the city heard Monday about some possible expansion in the coming year.

Northwest Tech began offering a Mobile Application and Entertainment Development program in August. The Kansas Board of Regents approved the state of the art two-year program after a lengthy review and presentations by Northwest Tech staff.

The impetus for the program came as Northwest Tech began handing every student and faculty member Apple iPads last year, and has been the first technical college in the country to go wireless. Over the year Ben Coumerilh, director of technology, and Dr. Ed Mills, college president, have been looking for ways to make Northwest Tech stand out as a unique educational opportunity.

The college has had great support from Apple and other computer companies from California who have encouraged the Northwest

Tech staff to find ways to expand the use of the iPads and are helping with the development of the mobile application program.

Apple is planning to do a documentary on Northwest Tech and the use of the iPads with a film crew expected to be in Goodland later in the year.

Dan Senstock, an account executive from Apple, and Steve Rychly, a regional manager from Apple, were presenters at the third annual Fall Rural School and Community Development Conference held in October.

The two men paired in a presentation both about Apple and the growth of the company and how technology through innovation can transform the education process.

Senstock said he was excited by what has gone on at Northwest Tech. He said it was exciting to watch the students that first day and felt they were beginning to find ways to re-define the use of mobile technology. An example of moving beyond the substitution level is using the iPad in the auto program to get feedback in the wheel alignment program.

Senstock said the Northwest Tech app development program is a great step forward, allowing people to learn how to create mobile applications and stay in a rural area and make a good living.

"You do not have to live in New York," he said.

The college hired Jeremy Skrdlant as the Mobile App & Entertainment Development instructor,

and the classes were full when the college opened in August.

**6** The April election had the largest turnout in recent record for the four open school board seats and three seats on the city commission.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said a total of 2,099 voters participated for a 56 percent turnout, the largest she has seen in many years. The average turnout over the past several April General Elections have averaged about 20 percent with the one in 2009 increasing to 37 percent.

The Goodland School Board has four new faces with voters giving the nod to Teresa Sieck with 1,114 votes, Gennifer House 978, Jessica Cole 920, and Diane Stiles 852, to win the four open seats. Incumbent Chuck Wilkens did not get re-elected with 747 votes, and Michael Brannick was the other candidate receiving 824 votes.

The school board members did not take office until July. Previously the school board had decided the top candidate who was not an incumbent would be appointed to fill the unexpired term of Andrew House, who had been killed in an accident in September 2010.

Based on the results Sieck would be appointed to fill that vacancy at the next board meeting.

Sieck said she was pleased to have been elected, and knows the school board is facing some tough decisions in the next few months

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