

**weather report**



**31°**

10:30 a.m.  
Monday

**Today**

- Sunset, 5:13 p.m.
- Wednesday**
- Sunrise, 6:47 a.m.
- Sunset, 5:15 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil temperature 34 degrees
- Humidity 69 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds west 5 mph
- Barometer 30.14 inches and falling
- Record High today 77° (2006)
- Record Low today -12° (1920)

**Last 24 Hours\***

- High Sunday 41°
- Low Sunday 13°
- Precipitation none
- This month .28
- Year to date .45
- Below Normal .08 inches

**The Topside Forecast**

Today: Cloudy then becoming mostly sunny with a high near 26, winds out of the north at 10 to 15 mph and a low around 9. Wednesday: Sunny with a high near 33, winds out of the southwest at 5 to 10 mph and a low around 16.

**Extended Forecast**

Thursday: Mostly sunny with a high near 40 and a low around 19. Friday: Sunny with a high near 38 and a low around 20. Saturday: Sunny with a high near 43 and a low around 25.  
(National Weather Service)  
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.  
\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local markets**



**10:30 a.m.**

- Wheat — \$6.74 bushel
  - Posted county price — \$6.66
  - Corn — \$6.21 bushel
  - Posted county price — \$6.30
  - Milo — \$5.93 bushel
  - Soybeans — \$11.07 bushel
  - Posted county price — \$11.49
  - Millet — \$11.50 hundredweight
  - Sunflowers
  - Oil current crop — \$25.50 cwt.
  - Confection — no bid
  - Pinto beans — \$28
- (Markets by Scoular Grain, Sun Opta, Frontier Ag and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

**inside today**



More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



**Mustangs face Holcomb**

The Grant Junior High School basketball teams played home games against Holcomb on Thursday. They will face Scott City this week.

See Page 8



A Sherman County Sheriff's deputy stood watch on old U.S. 24 heading west out of Goodland during Friday's snowstorm. The road was closed that afternoon, along with I-70, because of blowing snow and full motel rooms in Burlington. Photo by Kevin Bottrell/The Goodland Star-News

## Storm mostly misses Goodland



The snow was enough to allow local wildlife to have a drink (left) and to create long icicles on overhangs (above), most of which are already melted.

Photos by Tom Betz and Kevin Bottrell  
The Goodland Star-News

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkansascity.com

Although it didn't amount to near as much as predicted, signs of Friday's snowstorm are still visible around Sherman County.

The storm began by spilling rain across the plains Thursday. The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, an organization of community weather spotters, reported one to three tenths of an inch of rain. The rain turned to light snow Friday morning, which didn't begin sticking to lawns and roofs until late afternoon. The roads only became snowpacked after nightfall.

The Community Collaborative Network reported from one to two and a half inches in Sherman County Friday night. The snow had stopped by the morning, and much of it melted from roads and sidewalks Saturday.

In Colorado, however, the snow got worse farther west. Kit Carson and Yuma counties got as much as six inches, while parts of Denver got more than a foot. Some weather spotters in Jefferson County, part of the Denver Metro Area, registered more than two feet.

I-70 was closed from Denver to Burlington around 10 a.m. Once motel rooms had filled up in Burlington, the interstate was closed from Denver to Goodland around 3 p.m. It was reopened Saturday at 10 a.m. There were no serious accidents reported on I-70 in Sherman County over the weekend.

While the storm did hit Colorado's Front Range with up to two feet, it didn't turn out nearly as strong as predicted in northwest Kansas. During the week, the National Weather Service had predicted as much as a foot of snow for the area. Those predictions were later revised to anywhere from three to six inches.

Schools across the region made the decision to close Friday based off the prediction. Several sports activities scheduled for

See STORM, Page 5

## Crews begin work on local I-70 project

The first phase of a road construction project to repave a portion of I-70 spanning both Sherman and Thomas counties is now underway.

Contractors will begin working off the roadway by extending pipe structures and performing erosion control as necessary. Weather provided, concrete ditch liners and reinforced concrete box extensions may also be poured. Traffic will not be impacted during this phase of the work; but the shoulders may be closed adjacent to where the contractors are working during daylight hours.

The project begins at the junction of I-70 and K-253 — the Edson exit and extends east to approximately the Sherman/Thomas County line, approximately 8 miles long.

The scope of the work includes milling and then inlaying two inches of the existing mainline lanes of I-70, followed by a 1 1/2-inch lift over the entire roadway — including the shoulders. The ramps at Edson will also receive a two-inch mill and overlay of asphalt material. The roadway phase of the construction work will begin in the spring, and

will include daily lane closures of I-70.

The curve at the Sherman/Thomas County line will be reconstructed to improve elevation for the bridge clearance at that location. During that point in construction, I-70 traffic will be switched to single lane, two-directional traffic.

"Traffic will be placed head-to-head in other words," explains Area Engineer Eric Oelschlager of the Department of Transportation's Atwood Office. "We will first put traffic in the eastbound lanes, and then switch to the westbound lanes to complete that section of the work."

Guardrail will be replaced throughout the project, and the slopes will be improved. The bridge at County Road 36 (one mile west of the Sherman/Thomas County line) will be closed for a deck repair in conjunction with the I-70 work.

APAC-Kansas Inc., Hays Division, is the prime contractor in charge of the \$7 million dollar project.

The following sub-contractors

See PROJECT, Page 5

## Get applications started for state water programs

The application deadline for the Kansas Agricultural Water Enhancement Program program has been set for Feb. 24.

There are four such programs in Kansas, each with different program goals. The Groundwater Management District 4 program is setting aside irrigation water use for six years in lieu of five years of payments. The payment levels are different according to which additional practices each applicant chooses to adopt.

The District 4 program also encourages successful applicants to piggyback the federal program contract with a Kansas Water Transition Assistance Program (Water TAP) contract to permanently retire the irrigation water right. Both programs are only available in the 6, designated high priority areas.

The program has been allotted a \$1.825 million grant for this coming year. Wayne Bossert, District 4 manager, said in January that the grant is the third for the district under the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program, totaling \$5.7 million, but that's only a drop in the bucket, so to speak. Water in all six target areas is "overappropriated," meaning more water rights have been issued than the aquifer can support.

"That's probably going to buy seven, eight, nine water rights," he said. "We're using that to set aside water rights for six years, five years of payments."

Bossert said the federal money would go farther if it could be used to buy just the least-efficient part of a

farmer's water right. The service won't approve that, however. He said the federal agency requires "all-or-nothing" commitments, meaning all a farmer's irrigated acres must be changed over.

And with corn prices at historic highs, he said, farmers are less eager to give up irrigation water now. The thing is, he said, the change is coming now matter what, because the aquifer is being depleted.

"That's the dilemma," Bossert said. "It's going to happen sometime anyway."

He maintains that the change would be easier — on farmers and the economy here — if the district could just buy a little water from a lot of farms, allowing farmers to give up their least productive rights. He emphasized, though, that they are buying only "real" water rights, not paper rights that are seldom used.

"It's all real wet stuff," he said.

Of the six areas, Bossert said, only Sheridan County 6, has set targets for reducing water use. The others have proposed targets from the district, he said, but the farmers using water in the districts have been reluctant to set a goal. He said the district board may have to step in and do them itself.

The districts are Thomas County 5, southwest of Colby; Thomas County 4, a small area northwest of town; Sherman County 1 southwest of Goodland; Sherman County 2 east of Goodland; Cheyenne

See WATER, Page 5

