

weather report

33°

10:30 a.m.
Monday



Today

- Sunset, 5:38 p.m.
- Wednesday**
- Sunrise, 6:20 a.m.
- Sunset, 5:39 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 35 degrees
- Humidity 49 percent
- Sky mostly sunny
- Winds southeast 15-25 mph
- Barometer 30.31 inches and rising
- Record High today 81° (1006)
- Record Low today -16° (1960)

Last 24 Hours*

- High Sunday 49°
- Low Sunday 12°
- Precipitation none
- This month 0.42
- Year to date 0.5
- Below normal 0.32 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain after 11 a.m., a high near 55, winds breezy out of the west at 15 to 30 mph and a low around 25. Wednesday: Sunny with a high near 55, winds out of the northwest at 5 to 15 mph switching to the southwest and a low around 28.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Mostly sunny with a 20 percent chance of snow and rain at night, a high near 56 and a low around 29. Friday: Mostly sunny and breezy, a high near 43 and a low around 23.

(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

Second bomb threat found at school

The second bomb threat in four weeks was found Wednesday evening in a bathroom at Goodland High School.

In a Friday release, the Goodland Police Department said school personnel discovered the written message in a bathroom stall Wednesday. The message warned that everyone needed to evacuate the building by Friday because of a bomb. School personnel immediately notified the police.

The school was searched that night for

dangerous devices with K-9 units from the Highway Patrol but nothing was found.

The first threat was found Jan. 20 in a different bathroom stall. That threat, found early in the morning, necessitated an evacuation of students to the Northwest Tech campus.

“We realize that these threats are most likely pranks perpetrated by students,” said Goodland Police Chief Cliff Couch. “However, the police department and the school district are committed to the safety of the

students. As such, we have to respond to these incidents as if they are credible threats.

“The people who are leaving these messages need to realize that they are committing a crime and are placing themselves at risk of prosecution.”

Couch said leaving bomb threats falls under the state criminal threat statute, which makes it illegal to make threats of violence that cause evacuations of a building or interrupt the ongoing activities of a building. Messages

that cause evacuations of public buildings are considered aggravated criminal threats, and often involve stiffer punishments.

Police are requesting that parents discuss the seriousness of these threats with their children. The department is also asking that anyone with information about the bomb threats contact the department at 890-4570. Students with information can also contact a school administrator or Crimestoppers, the anonymous tip line, at 899-5665.

A new floor



The installer of the new gym floor from Parker, Colo., at the Goodland Activities Center was putting tape on the new floor to mark where lines would be painted Friday afternoon. The new floor is a sports court which is an interlocking high impact plastic. Administrator Sarah King said the new floor was warranted for 15 years. The board and volunteers helped do some of the installation which helped to keep the cost down. Money for the project was from the Bill Billenwilms Trust and a small grant from ADM. Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Postal Service to send mail to North Platte

By Steve Haynes

s.haynes@nwkans.com

Postal Service officials announced Friday that a plan to close the mail processing operation in Colby has been approved, but with a twist: rather than mail being hauled to Denver for sorting, it'll go to North Platte, Neb.

The closing is part of a nationwide plan to save the struggling agency up to \$2.1 billion a year as it fights to avoid insolvency in the face of a \$8 billion to \$10 billion annual deficit.

With Congress considering bills to help the service and a request for an advisory opinion on first-class service standards pending with the Postal Regulatory Commission, no date has been set for the changes.

In Colby, acting postmaster Joe Welshon said he had not seen anything about the decision, which was announced by regional officials in Denver.

“I haven't got anything official,” he said. “We'll just have to wait and see what happens here.”

At a public meeting on the proposal here in December, officials said the change would have little effect on operations that customers see, since most mail now it being taken to Salina to be sorted overnight. Savings are estimated at only about \$14,000 per year beyond those realized by consolidating work in Salina.

The service emphasized that mail delivery, counter operations and business mail service would continue as usual, no matter what happens with the mail-sorting “plant.”

Colby is one of seven plants in Kansas on the “hit list” for closure. Others are in Hays, Salina, Dodge City, Hutchinson, Liberal and Topeka. Mail sorting for most would be moved to Wichita, but Topeka's would go to Kansas City, Mo.,

Liberal's to Amarillo, Texas, and Colby's to Nebraska.

As part of the overall plan, the Postal Service hopes to change the standard for delivery of First Class mail from overnight to three days, depending on distance, to two to three days regardless of distance.

The current system is designed to get mail moved overnight within about 200 miles, said Brian Sperry, a spokesman for the service in Denver. After realignment of the network, he said, the service would plan to deliver mail within three days anywhere in the country. That means a letter to the person next door would go to North Platte for sorting the day after mailing and be delivered by the second or third day.

Sperry said all the changes are contingent on completion of the Rate Commission case, filed Dec. 5. While the commission's opinion will be advisory only, he said, the service is required by law to seek its advice.

“The Postal Service will make the final decision,” Sperry added.

The service had promised Congress it would hold off on any changes until May 15 to give legislators time to consider several bills to ease the agency's financial crisis. Sperry said the service went ahead with it's internal decision-making process because it needed time to get proper notice out to workers under their union contracts.

Why North Platte rather than Denver?

At the meeting here in December, citizens pointed out that the service couldn't depend on trucks getting through to Denver day and night, since the freeway can be close for one to three days at a time by winter storms, usually several times a year.

See MAIL, Page 5

Three wrestlers place at state

The Goodland Cowboys came away with two second place wrestlers and one sixth place wrestler in the 3-2-1A State Tournament on Thursday and Friday.

Laine Herl, 195 pounds, got second place to Colt Castlebury of Douglass. Herl got a penalty point in the first, but was taken down to lose the lead. He escaped in the second to tie the match at two, but was taken down again. Castlebury got a reversal to go up 6-2. Herl escaped again to make it 6-3, but was taken down a third time in the last few 30 seconds of the match to lose by an 8-3 decision.

Herl had a quick takedown in the first round, pinning Eric Hershberger of Stafford with 17 seconds left in the first period.

Herl got another big 17-0 win over Tristan Speer of Doniphan West and a 11-2 major decision over Josh McDowell of Smith Center to make it to the finals.

At 220 pounds, Riley Oharah took Austin Veach of Doniphan West to the mat early in the first period, but Veach got Oharah on his back and pinned him with 19 seconds left.

Oharah also got a quick takedown in the first round. He pinned Joey Capul of Garden Plain in 43 seconds.

In the second round, Oharah picked up a 5-0 win over Emmery Elias of Council Grove and beat Tanner Taylor of Burlington 5-1 to make it to the finals.

At 152, John Peden got sixth place. He won a tense match in his first round against Sean Ussrey of Lincoln. Both were warned for stalling in the first. Ussrey got a one-point escape in the first. Peden tied it up in the second. Ussrey took the lead again, but Peden got him in a headlock and got him on his back, tying the match at seven points each, sending them to overtime. Peden

got a takedown to win the match in the first overtime period.

In the second round, Peden was down 13-0 to Ky Biddle of Burden Central, when he got a headlock and nearly had Biddle on his back. Biddle got back to his feet

Peden's shoulder was hurt in that match, but he went on to wrestle in the second round of the consolidation bracket.

He faced Sam Watt of Caney Valley, and was down 2-1 until he escaped in third period to tie the match. Peden nearly had Watt in a headlock but he didn't have full control, so when Watt broke free he didn't get any points. Peden got a last-second takedown to win 4-2 and advance to the quarterfinals.

Despite his injury, Peden came out more aggressively against Matt Manka of Hoisington, taking a 5-1 lead in the second period. He led 10-1 going into the third, and got another takedown to go up 13-1. He went on to win a 16-1 major decision.

In the consolation semi-finals, Peden faced Dalton Snyder of Hoxie, who led 1-0 going into third period. Peden nearly had a takedown at the end of the third, but time ran out. Peden moved down to the fifth place match.

In the finals, Peden faced Kregg Clarke of Lyons. Clarke got an escape to lead 1-0 going into the second. Peden tried for his signature headlock, but Clarke rolled through and got two takedown points. Peden got a reversal early in the third, but Clarke answered with two points of his own. Trailing 5-3, Peden tried

See WRESTLERS, Page 5

City considers old diner, new building for visitors center

By Kevin Bottrell

kbottrell@nwkans.com

The city of Goodland is considering adding a visitor center in the hopes of capturing some of that Interstate 70 traffic.

Economic Development Director Michael Solomon told the city commission last week that about 2,800 cars pass by Goodland on I-70 each day. The state's visitor center near Kanorado gets about 125,000 visitors a year.

Solomon said the commission had asked in 2010 about the possibility of a visitors center and there are several ways the city could create one.

One option would be to buy a small gas station from Levant, move it to the city and remodel it into a visitors center. The station, which dates back to the 1940s, currently sits on Main and Fourth Streets in Levant. Solomon said the exterior has been well kept up and the owner, Tom Fraiser, would be interested in selling.



The old diner, just of K-27 in the south part of town, is one of several proposed options for a new Goodland visitors center. Photo by Kevin Bottrell/The Goodland Star-News

It would be expensive to move, however, because the building is made of block and is very heavy. It also has no bathroom, so outhouses would have to be built. Solomon gave a rough estimate of that option at \$365,500, which includes moving the building, cleanup, a new piece of land, utilities and building an outbuilding.

Option two would be to buy land and build a new building. Solomon said the advantage to that option is that the city could build the center

any way it wants to. He suggested a building between 1,500 and 2,000 square feet and that the building be aesthetically pleasing, but it doesn't need to be fancy. He gave a rough estimate that a new building would cost about \$345,000, a little cheaper than option one.

Option three would be to purchase the old diner on K-27. The advantage here, he said, would be an already built building with a good location and a good sign — 50 feet high — that the city could use.

The building is about 2,700 square feet.

The city would have to put in a lot of work to get it up to standard and the road leading to it is owned by a different person and would also have to be bought.

Solomon suggested that the city could lease space to someone to run a coffee shop in the main room, and then set up displays about Goodland.

This option would cost about \$331,500, Solomon said. He em-

phasized that his estimates were rough since it would be impossible to know exact costs for things like land and construction in advance.

Gerber asked the commissioners what they thought of the three options. Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she liked the idea of the diner, but asked if it wouldn't be better to put a visitors center close to the Van Gogh painting. Solomon said the traffic numbers don't support that option. About 8,100 cars pass through town on K-27, he said, compare to 945 that use Exit 19.

“We continue to struggle to get people there,” he said.

Commissioner Bill Finley said he also liked the diner option because of its location. Commissioner Chris Zimmerman said he would be in favor of the diner or a new building.

Mayor John Garcia asked Solomon to look into more specific costs of a new building versus renovating the diner and then come back to the commission with more information.

local markets

- 10:30 a.m.
Wheat — \$6.37 bushel
Posted county price — \$6.33
Corn — \$6.21 bushel
Posted county price — \$6.27
Milo — \$5.93 bushel
Soybeans — \$11.55 bushel
Posted county price — \$12
Millet — \$11.50 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$25.70 cwt.
Confection — no bid
Pinto beans — \$28 (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



Basketball teams lose

Both the Goodland High School boys and girls varsity teams lost to the Ulysses Tigers in makeup games on Friday at the Max Jones Fieldhouse.

See Page 8

