



Tamara Black and Greg Kroskey

# Goodland pair to marry in July

Danielle Black, Duncan Kroskey and Ethan Black announce the engagement of their parents, Greg Kroskey and Tamara Black. Greg Kroskey is a sergeant with the Goodland Police Department. He also has two stepsons, Zach of Ocala, Fla. and LeRoy, who attends Kansas State University.

Tamara Black is an employee of Western State Bank and is the daughter of Verlan and LaDonna Snyder of Goodland. The couple plan to marry on Saturday, July 28, 2012, at Calvary Gospel Church, 402 College, Goodland. After the wedding they will vacation in Costa Rica.

## matters of record

**Sherman County Bastille**  
The following people were booked into the Sherman County Bastille:  
**May 19** - Michael Moshert, 17, Goodland, was arrested by state trooper for possession of hallucinogenic drug and possession of drug paraphernalia.  
Gary Searle, 23, Goodland, was arrested by state trooper for possession of hallucinogenic drug and possession of drug paraphernalia.

**May 21** - David Villareal, 45, Sterling, Colo. was arrested by state trooper for no vehicle insurance, driving while suspender x2 and habitual violator.  
Austin Johnson, 18, Goodland, was arrested by city police for theft.  
Zackaery Luna, 21, Goodland, was arrested by sheriff deputy on a warrant arrest for another jurisdiction.

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# Winfield firm leader in robots

By Ron Wilson

**Director  
Huck Boyd National Institute  
Rural Development  
at Kansas State University**  
Boeing. General Motors. MIT. McDonnell Douglas. U.S. Air Force. Lockheed Martin. Raytheon. NBC SE. Microsoft. U.S. Army. Carnegie Mellon. Ford Motor Company. That's quite a client list. In fact, it reads like some of the leaders in technology worldwide. Today we'll meet a Kansas company whose innovative work in robotics is helping serve these major industries and more.

Brian Pettey is CEO and founder of RobotZone in Winfield. Brian spent his early years in the Leavenworth/Lansing area of Kansas before his family moved to Illinois. "I grew up playing with Legos, and I liked adding things to make them move," Brian said. He moved back to Kansas to attend Winfield's Southwestern College as had his parents.

One day in 1995, Brian got a call in his dorm room. It was from his old junior high school teacher in Illinois. His teacher said, "I remember you were building things like electric cars all the time back

in junior high. We are on a push to incorporate technology into the classroom, and I wonder if you would build a robot or something that would demonstrate technology for the school."

Brian took on the challenge to build a prototype of a robot for his old school. It went so well that neighboring teachers in Illinois wanted one also, and Brian could see it developing into a business. Then he got to thinking that, if teachers in Illinois would want these products, maybe teachers in Kansas would as well. He went to the library, got a list of school addresses and mailed out flyers. Sure enough, Kansas teachers were interested. That was the beginning of the business known as RobotZone, founded in a dorm room at Southwestern College.

After Brian did a number of robot demonstrations around the state, some teachers at Wellington suggested he go to the tech fair at Pittsburg, and so Brian did. He had an appointment to meet with two teachers at the tech fair, but as he went down the hall, people started asking him about the robot that he was carrying. They followed him to the classroom where he was to have the meeting. Instead of two teachers,

there were more than 60 in the room by the time he started his demonstration. In response to market demand, RobotZone began to grow.

Robotic systems for the education market was the first niche for the company, but demand grew into other sectors as well. Today, RobotZone focuses on designing and manufacturing various products for the medical, industrial, military and factory automation industries.

The company website is at www.Robotzone.com. The company's robots use lots of remote controlled actuators called "servos." These servos are essentially computer- or radio-controlled gear systems which control movement. Over time, the company added a retail division called ServoCity.com, for individuals who wanted to purchase these devices for their own use.

"This took off like crazy," Brian said. "Online sales quickly surpassed the education sales."

One application for these robotic controls is in pan and tilt camera systems. RobotZone has produced products for use by such clients as the BBC, National Geographic, Animal Planet, NBC Special Effects, and others in Hollywood. They've been used for everything

from movies to documentaries to TV commercials to the Tonight show.

These products have even gone overseas. Families in India, for example, are buying the robotic controlled cameras for filming their weddings.

How amazing to find this company in rural Kansas.

"Many companies are surprised to find we're not located on the coasts," Brian said. RobotZone has contracted out some of its manufacturing to a machine shop in Atlanta-Atlanta, Kansas, that is, population 252 people. Now, that's rural.

RobotZone completed a 30,000 square foot building in 2010. "The city of Winfield has been fantastic," Brian said. "We have absolutely the best employees who are passionate about their work."

From the BBC to the U.S. Army, RobotZone has an impressive client list. We commend Brian Pettey and all those involved with RobotZone and Servocity for making a difference with their innovation and creativity. How exciting to find robots making the journey from Kansas around the globe.

# Department puts money in fund

Nearly \$326,000 in insurance settlement money paid to the Kansas Insurance Department will be deposited into the state's general fund, Sandy Praeger, Commissioner of Insurance, announced today.

The settlement money comes from MetLife, Inc. and some of its subsidiaries as a result of a multi-state insurance examination. The examination by state regulators found concerns about MetLife's practices in notifying beneficiaries of death benefits in life insurance policies.



**sandy praeger**  
• insurance comm.

By Kansas statutory law, insurance settlement money is regularly returned to the state general fund.

"The multi-state settlement is the latest example of state insurance regulators working together to ensure consumer protections in life insurance," said Sandy Praeger.

Commissioner of Insurance.

The regulatory settlement totals \$40 million for all 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. The allocation was based on the company's percentage of life premiums and annuities for each state and territory.

The settlement included an agree-

ment with insurance regulators that MetLife would change its business practices to include using the Social Security Administration's Death Master File for locating beneficiaries in order to make more timely payments to them.

The insurance department, a fee-funded agency, contributed nearly \$143 million to the state general fund last year from premium fees and taxes paid by insurance companies. The department's annual operating budget also comes from insurance company fees and taxes.

# Customers paying for time as well as skill



**jamie morphew**  
• business tips

A woman in Paris asks Picasso to make a sketch for her. He does and tells her the cost is \$5,000. The woman is outraged at the price and exclaims, "But it only

took you a few minutes!" "No," he replies. "It took my life."

Your customers aren't just paying for your time. They're paying for your experience. They're paying for the skills you've developed. They're paying for your expertise.

Don't sell your time, sell your value.

This tip was brought to you by Western Kansas Business Consulting sponsored in part by Sherman County. For more information, contact #620-874-0771.

## Relish what's coming next month!

( Look for it right here June 5th. )

Best Summer  
Strawberry Cake

Lime-Cucumber Popsicles

Grilled Thai Steak Noodle Bowl

Summer Recipe Contest

PLUS

The New Relish Recipe Project  
- Share Your Recipes!



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