

weather report

1° at noon

Today

Sunset, 4:39 p.m.

Tomorrow

Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.

Sunset, 4:40 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 28 degrees

• Humidity 69 percent

• Sky cloudy - light snow

• Winds Northeast 8mph

• Barometer 30.38 inches and rising

• Record High 68° (1965)

• Record Low -13° (1974)

Last 24 Hours*

High 22°

Low -3°

Precipitation Trace

N.W. Kansas Forecast

Tonight: Partly cloudy, not as cool, low around 13, south winds 5-10 mph. Wednesday: Mostly cloudy, warmer, highs mid 40s, south winds 10-15 mph.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday night and Thursday: Partly cloudy, highs lower 50s, lows around 19. Thursday night: Mostly cloudy, lows around 20. Friday and Friday night: Partly cloudy, highs mid 50s, lows in lower 20s. Saturday: Mostly cloudy, highs in upper 40s, lows around 19.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3.74 bushel

New crop — \$3.46 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.81

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$2.42 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.31

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$2.26 bushel

Soybeans — \$7.35 bushel

Posted county price — \$7.39

Millet — \$5.50 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$11.35 cwt.

Posted county price — \$11.23

Confection — \$16/\$9 cwt.

NuSun — \$11.60

Pinto beans — Withdrawn

(Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News

Mustangs are champs

Darrick Ihrig looked for the open man during the Mustangs' 47-16 win over Colby Dec. 18 in the championship game of the Northwest Kansas League Tournament. See story and photo on Page 10.

Husband charged with murder

Murder charges were filed in Sherman County District Court late last Monday against Lanny Bevington, 33, in the shooting death of his wife Kerrie early last Sunday.

Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson said Bevington was charged with first-degree murder after an investigation by the KBI and sheriff deputies which an autopsy in Topeka last Monday.

Bevington is being held on \$1 million bond, and his first appearance in district court was Wednesday, when an attorney was appointed to represent him and the judge continued the bond.

Calvin Williams, a Colby lawyer, was appointed to represent Bevington. A preliminary hearing was scheduled for 9 a.m. on Thursday.

Bevington was brought over to the courthouse by sheriff's deputies and a jailer at 9:30 a.m.. He kept his head down on the way in and covered his face with papers on the way back to the Bastille to avoid being photographed. When he entered the courtroom, he was given paperwork to fill out about his financial situation to determine eligibility for a court-appointed attorney.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby was present to represent the people. Once Judge Tom Carroll from Atwood arrived, it took about eight minutes for the charges to be read and for Bevington to be read his rights.

Bevington could enter a plea at the hearing on Thursday, but the hearing can be waived.

The judge said Bevington is being charged with first-degree murder, which can result in a sentence of life in prison without parole, and a \$500,000 fine. The judge told Bevington he was appointing Williams based on the information he had provided, but that he could later be charged for costs based on the financial affidavit.

Bevington said he was working for Bowman Farming, run by David Bowman of Brewster.

The judge advised Bevington that if he plead no contest or guilty to the charges, he would only be able to appeal the sentence

Kerrie Bevington

Detention Officer Barb Disney led Lanny Bevington into the county courthouse Wednesday followed by Deputy Terry T. Smith. Bevington is charged with murder in the death of his wife, Kerrie, on Sunday, Dec. 29. Photo by Greg Stover/Goodland Star-News

imposed by the court.

Kerrie Bevington, who has worked for the Kit Carson County clerk's office for the past five years, was found sitting in a pickup at the Bevington home about 7 a.m. Sunday by her father, Tom Aschenbrenner, the Brewster fire chief.

The couple had attended a wedding dance in Colby Saturday night and left the party about 2:30 a.m., friends said.

In Lanny Bevington's initial statement to the sheriff's office on Sunday, he said he accidentally shot his wife while trying to remove a gun from the pickup she was sitting in.

Whitson said the KBI was called in when answers to some of the questions asked of

Lanny Bevington did not match the accidental shooting he first described.

Aschenbrenner went to the Bevington home after talking to Lanny on the phone, and when he arrived, he asked where Kerrie was. He was told she was in the pickup. He walked to the pickup and found her with an apparent shotgun wound to the head. He then called county dispatch to report the shooting.

Sherman County Sheriff's Deputy Burton Pianalto was the first officer to arrive at the scene.

A search warrant was issued on Sunday afternoon for the KBI to examine the scene. The time of death was estimated to be between 3 and 4 a.m. on Sunday after the autopsy in Topeka.

The couple's home is 3 1/2 miles south of Brewster on County Road 37 in Sherman County.

Previously Kerrie Bevington had been married to Mike Peterson of Burlington, Colo., and has two children, daughter Taylor Paige Peterson, 6, and son Michael Austin Peterson, 2, lived with their mother, but were with their father at the time.

She was born July 25, 1976, in Goodland, and graduated from Brewster High School in 1994.

She had lived north of Burlington until August, when she married Bevington and moved to the Brewster area.

Funeral services were held on Monday.

County reviews snow, drug, alcohol policy

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County commissioners discussed policies on closing the courthouse in bad weather and drug and alcohol abuse by employees at their final meeting of the year Wednesday.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby asked commissioners about updating the county policy covering employees who are cited for driving under the influence, and also asked about the policy for when the courthouse is closed because of bad weather.

Selby said the statewide county insurance consortium has sent an update for the policy on drunk driving and she wanted to know if the commissioners wanted it added to the county employee manual as it is.

The commissioners said it should be reviewed by a committee of supervisors including Curt Way, public works manager; Janet Rumpel, the county clerk; and Sheriff Doug Whitson.

They noted the update does not provide for any second chance for alcohol violations, while the current county policy has a provision for giving employees a second chance.

Whitson said the state has different rules for drivers who hold commercial licenses, and if they are arrested for drunk driving, they will lose it. Selby said the state is the one who decides when a person loses their license, not the county.

Currently if an employee is convicted and loses their license, they can be terminated. Selby said giving the employee a second chance would probably not work with the road and bridge department, where the employees who operate the heavy equipment are required to have a commercial license.

The commissioners asked Selby to work with Way, Rumpel and Whitson to review the policies.

Selby asked about the county's snow closing policy. She said when the county courthouse was closed during the blizzard conditions on

Dec. 15, employees were told they could go home but they would not be paid unless they took vacation time.

She said it seemed to her that was not equitable if the closure was an official action.

Rasure and Thomas said the policy was fair because, even with closing the courthouse, there are departments that have to work such as road and bridge, the sheriff and dispatch.

"I think you have to look at each department as unique," Selby said. "I know several other counties who have changed their policies on this issue. I don't think it is equitable to make them use a vacation day."

Tiede said he originally felt Selby was right, but after talking to other county people, he changed his mind and did not think the policy should be changed.

"We have had it both ways," Rumpel said. "We have been through this, and when the county paid for those hours, the question was raised about what happens to

those who have to work. Do they get extra pay?"

Rasure said he felt it was better not to pay for snow days, especially since there had been just the one in the last five or six years. Thomas and Tiede agreed.

"I will share the other county policies on this with you," Selby said.

The commissioners went into closed session with Selby and Whitson for 15 minutes to discuss the murder case pending in district court.

Selby presented a letter for the commissioners to sign which deals with who is financially responsible for the hospital. She said she had talked to Administrator Jay Jolly, and that the letter basically says that the county is not responsible because the hospital has its own board and is an independent operation.

The letter says that while the county holds an ownership interest, the nine member board has management control and exclusive control of the spending of all hospital money. Rasure signed the letter,

which will be given to Jolly.

Selby said this is part of the process the hospital is going through to become a critical care facility.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved a contract with Developmental Services for the year. The county provided \$40,000 to help Sherman County residents.

- Approved a copier maintenance agreement with Office Works of Colby to service the Savin copier in the clerk's office at a cost of \$560.

- Approved a motion to dissolve the sewer district at the Northern Sun plant in Caruso. The sewer lagoons are being turned over to ADM, which owns Northern Sun, and they have applied for a state permit to operate them.

- Approved appointment of Joan Walker, Linda Chaffin and Melanie Daise to the Good Samaritan advisory board. This leaves one position open because of the resignation of Pastor Bud Chester who retired and moved to Fairview.

Special Van Gogh/Goodland pins to go on sale soon

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The 80-foot easel with the 24x32 foot reproduction of a Van Gogh sunflower painting was erected in April 2001, but that is where the project seemed to stop.

Now, the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau has developed the first promotional item — a special color lapel pin — that will be available for sale in the next week or two.

The Van Gogh sunflower replica was painted by Canadian artist Cameron Cross as part of a project to highlight the importance of sunflowers in Sherman County and around the world.

Sunflowers USA, a local non-profit group, raised money for the painting and the 80-foot easel that stands facing I-70 on east of Cherry

Ave, and north of Business U.S. 24.

Donna Price, executive director of the visitors bureau, and Dale Neill, president of the board, displayed the first of the new pins in their office last Monday. They said they were working out details to be able to begin selling them this month.

The pins have a replica of the Van Gogh painting on the easel with the words Goodland, Kansas, on the bottom. There is a blue sky background and the pin is edged in gold. The outline seems to resemble a large cloud.

Price and Neill said they have been working with both the Sunflowers USA people and Cross to get permission to sell the pin and other Van Gogh products in the future.

"We felt like this needed to be done," Neill said. "We discussed it

at the last board meeting and we made an executive decision to go ahead with the pins."

Neill hopes businesses will want to sell the pins to help promote the painting and Goodland.

"As soon as we get a signed contract either with the Sunflowers USA group or Cross," he said, "we will be looking to sell these at a wholesale price to any local business who wants to sell

New Goodland/Van Gogh pin will be on sale soon.

them.

"The painting is here and we need to take advantage of it, especially

with the recent appearance on television."

Pete Whalen, president of Sunflowers USA, said Monday his group is working on a contract and hoped to have it completed today.

Artist Cross said the filming is done for a British Broadcasting Co. production, "The Private Life of a Masterpiece — Van Gogh."

"The producers told me it will take four months to edit," he said, "and it will debut internationally in April or May."

"I am currently the art consultant for a major school district in Winnipeg, so I divide my time between both jobs (Van Gogh Easel and Consulting).

"Things are progressing well with the easels, and I should be hearing back from other sites soon."