

weather  
report

33°  
noon Monday

Today  
• Sunset, 5:39 p.m.  
Wednesday  
• Sunrise, 6:17 a.m.  
• Sunset, 5:40 p.m.

Midday Conditions  
• Soil temperature 35 degrees  
• Humidity 78 percent  
• Sky mostly cloudy  
• Winds northwest 27-35 mph.  
• Barometer 29.84 inches  
and rising  
• Record High today 76° (1974)  
• Record Low today -15° (1960)

Last 24 Hours\*  
High Sunday 45°  
Low Sunday 28°  
Precipitation .67

The Topside Forecast  
Today: partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of rain and snow showers after midnight, high near 44, low near 28, winds southeast 7-10 mph. Wednesday: mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of rain and snow after noon, high around 42, low near 25.

Extended Forecast  
Thursday: mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers, high near 38, low around 22. Friday: partly cloudy, high around 42, low near 24. Saturday: partly cloudy, high around 54.  
(National Weather Service)  
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.  
\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local  
markets

Noon  
Wheat — \$3.48 bushel  
New Crop — \$3.46 bushel  
Posted county price — \$3.60  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Corn — \$2.82 bushel  
Posted county price — \$2.78  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Milo — \$2.68 bushel  
Soybeans — \$9.02 bushel  
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢  
Millet — \$6.50 hundredweight  
Sunflowers  
Oil current crop — \$12.75 cwt.  
NuSun — \$13.00 cwt.  
Confection — \$16/\$9 cwt.  
Pinto beans — Withdrawn  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



Herndon  
wins 1A title

Senior Curtis Brown (left) of Herndon tried to score over Jennings senior Adam Miller during the championship game of the boys Class 1A regional tournament Saturday. Herndon won 66-56. See story, photo on Page 11.

Hospital moves to refinance debt

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Hospital officials asked the Sherman County commissioners Friday to support their plan to improve the cash flow through a refinancing resolution worth up to \$2 million.

Administrator Jay Jolly and Jim Precht, chief financial officer of Goodland Regional Medical Center, told the commissioners the hospital board had passed the resolution a couple of weeks ago to refinance its buildings.

“We are here because the county is the owner of record,” Jolly said. “This is for up to \$2 million, and will be funded out of hospital revenues. There will not be any taxes raised to repay this.”

Precht was asked about the critical access status for the hospital. He said the preliminary work is done and after an inspection by Medicare, a new license certificate for the hospi-

tal should be issued in the next 60 days.

He said the refinancing should improve the monthly cash flow by about \$10,000 per month and the change to critical access also will be a help. He said the measure of payment from Medicare is different for critical access hospitals, and that it hinges on “reasonable costs” rather than the current “allowable costs.”

He said the hospital was to become the employer for the Rural Health Ventures clinic on Monday.

“We are working to bring the hospital back to a more profitable basis,” Precht said. “We are working several different angles.”

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked about the difference in licensing for the beds under the critical access program.

Jolly said the current license is for 49 beds, but the new program will be 25 beds.

Rasure asked Precht how much the hospital lost last year. Precht said they are awaiting the audited report, but estimated it a \$800,000.

“We have improved our outstanding bills,” Precht said. “We have more to do. There are a lot of possibilities, but won’t happen tomorrow. We will be better by the end of the year.”

Precht said the bonds for the refinancing are for 10 years, and will be handled privately.

Rasure asked what would happen in the event the hospital is unable to repay the bonds.

Jolly said ultimately it would be a county issue, but he feels this will help the hospital weather the tough times and get them back on track.

“I think you are on the right track,” Rasure said.

“I agree,” Commissioner Chuck Thomas

said, “and know it will not happen overnight.”

Precht said the resolution must be published for three weeks, and then the final draft will be approved. He said the \$2 million figure is the maximum for the bonds, but the final resolution will have to have the exact numbers when it is presented for final approval.

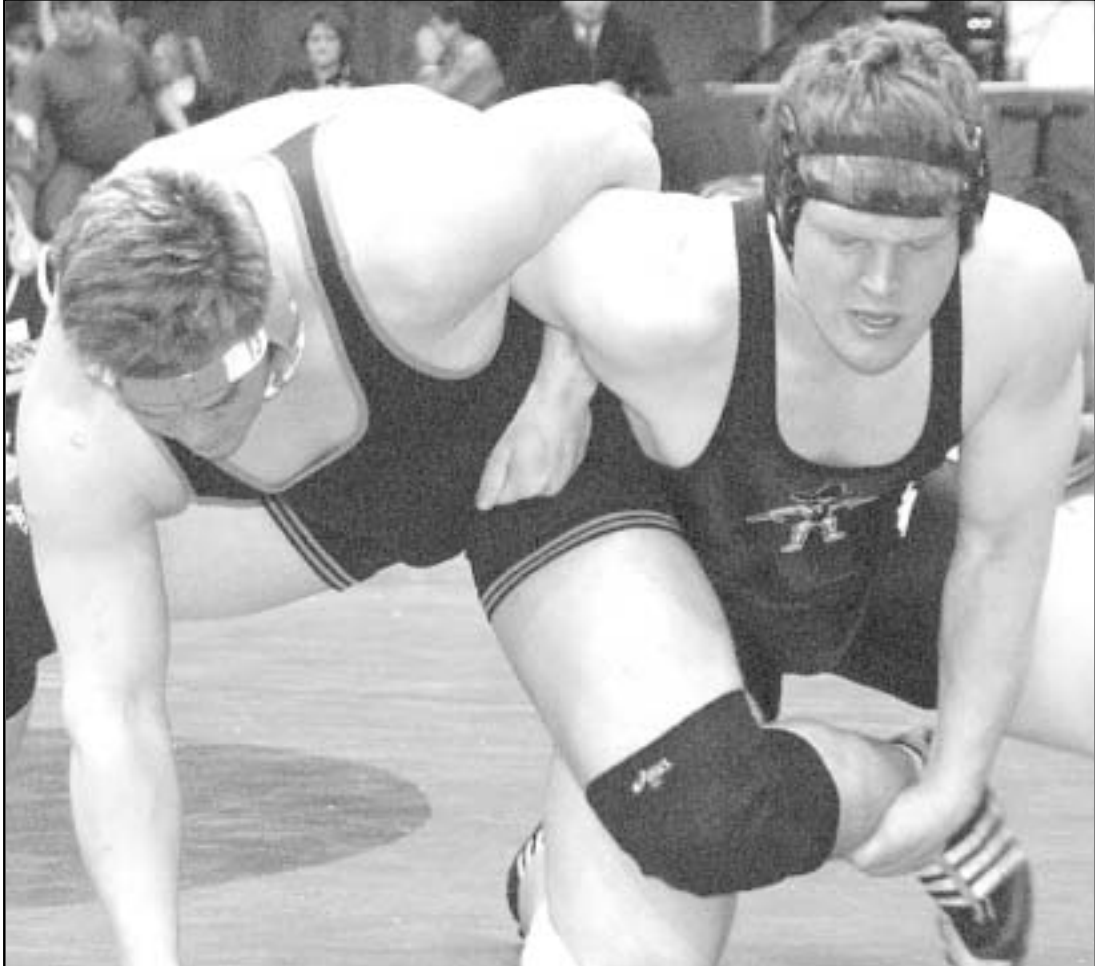
“I feel comfortable the hospital has a good plan,” Rasure said. “They have been working on this for some time, and this will give them some flexibility.”

Commissioner Mitch Tiede asked if the hospital could keep the commission informed, and Precht said he could provide a quarterly finance report.

Rasure made a motion to approve the refinancing resolution. It passed unanimously.

“We have a lot of work to do,” Jolly said, thanking the commissioners.

Three Cowboys bring home gold



Cowboy senior Jordan Bedore (right) struggled with Tony Lewis of Ulysses during the Class 4A heavyweight championship Saturday in Wichita. Bedore trailed Lewis 3-2 after two periods but came back to win 8-5 and take the gold. The Cowboys finished third in the tournament, and three finished in first place. See story and photos on Page 12. Photo by Dennis Saint/The Goodland Star-News

Loan program  
gets a reprieve

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County’s Micro Loan program has received a six-month extension from the state, county commissioners learned at their end-of-the-month meeting Friday.

Also at the meeting, commissioners approved applying for a grant to upgrade the county’s 911 emergency telephone equipment.

Randy Hrabe, executive director of the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission from Hill City, told the commissioners the state had granted a six-month extension for the micro loan program, which was due to end on March 31.

Hrabe was in Goodland to complete the processing of a micro loan for Sunflower Computers for \$15,000.

He said they would be submitting a request to the state for \$16,000. The additional \$1,000 is for the administrative costs.

Carolyn Applegate, county economic development director, reported that a third loan would be ready for the review committee this week, and that with the extension a few more may be interested.

County  
roundup

At their end-of-the-month meeting Friday, Sherman County commissioners:

- Agreed to back a \$2 million refinancing of the hospital’s long-term debt. Story above.
- Learned that the state has given the struggling Micro Loan program a six-month extension. Story on at left.
- Agreed to let a benefit tractor pull use the county fairgrounds on April 24-25. Story to come.

She said Reynaldo’s, which got the first micro loan, has been doing a good business. One of the brothers who own the restaurant and his interpreter were in to get information about the program because they are planning to open a location in Hutchinson.

Applegate reported that the Howard Johnson’s motel had been sold, with a closing on Friday. She said the new owner would be bringing management into town, and would be working to upgrade the hotel to national Howard Johnson’s standards.

“This is one of those projects which takes a local bank,” she said, “and Larry McCants and the First National Bank stepped up to make it happen.”

She handed the commissioners an updated listing of new businesses, and said she has been using these to show people outside of Sherman County the progress being made and new jobs being created.

“The listing is being shown to new businesses looking at Sherman County,” she said, “and we are sending it to some of the companies who may have considered relocating here in the past, but felt there was not enough economic activity for their needs.”

Earlier in the meeting, Mary Messamore, county emergency communications director, had come to talk to the commissioners about applying for a grant of up to \$100,000 to upgrade the 911 equipment from the Public Safety Foundation of America. She said the county might help assure the grant by pledging to match 15-20 percent of the total.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked how much money is in the 911 reserve fund. Messamore said there is \$78,000, but they need for a new message recorder at a cost of about \$55,000.

The commissioners approved the grant application, and Messamore said they may get some support from the Association of Public Safety Communication Officers International. She is a member of that group.

The commissioners did not have any appointments for today, and canceled the meeting. The next county commission meeting will be 8 a.m. on Tuesday, March 9, in the commission room of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway.

Blizzard’s winds close roads, schools

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

A winter storm inched its way across northwest Kansas on Sunday and Sunday night, closing roads and spawning wrecks, but leaving much-needed snow and rain behind.

The storm produced blizzard conditions across parts of the Tri-State region, mainly west of a line from Russell Springs to Trenton, Neb.

The National Weather Service office in Goodland reported 2.6 inches of snow by Sunday night.

Strong northwest winds whipped what snow there was across the plains. Peak gusts included Benkelman, Neb., 54 mph; Burlington, 52 mph; Cheyenne Wells, Colo., 46 mph; St. Francis, 53 mph; Colby, 54 mph; and Goodland, 52 mph.

To the east and north, Hill City reported 43 mph; Hoxie, 47 mph; McCook, Neb., 46 mph; and Oberlin, 41 mph; while Weskan had 48 mph.

A weather observer in Flagler, Colo., reported the highest wind at 66 mph.

Blowing snow reduced visibility to near zero at many locations. The blizzard caused the Colorado State Patrol to close I-70 in both directions from the state line to Limon. In Kansas, I-70 was closed westbound at Goodland and then later at Colby.

The Interstate reopened to westbound traffic at 12:40 a.m. Monday.

The city police reported one accident Sunday night with a truck stuck in a drift on Cattle Trail.

The Kansas Highway Patrol said there were no injury accidents during the storm, but several vehicles slid off the side of K-27 south of Goodland near the Wallace County



City street crews were out early Monday to plow and haul away snow the storm dropped on Sunday. In places there, were three-foot drifts whipped up by 40- and 50-mph winds. Goodland received .67 of an inch of moisture in the storm.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News

line, and two went off I-70 about four miles east of the city.

City, county and state road crews were out early Monday clearing the snow routes as the sun began to warm the ground.

The Goodland airport received .67 of an inch of precipitation on Sunday. The Weather office said this broke the precipitation record for Feb. 29. The old record was .17 of an inch set in 1980. Nearly an inch of rain was reported in Oberlin.

Northwest winds of 25 to 35 mph

with gusts to 45 mph were expected to continue through the afternoon Monday. Where snow had fallen, the weather service said blowing snow could reduce visibility below a mile.

Drivers of vans, campers, trailers and other high-profile vehicles were being warned to be alert to the danger of these winds.

Goodland schools were closed, and Colby delayed opening by two hours. Schools also were closed in Burlington and St. Francis.

The girls substate basketball game between Goodland and Hugoton was to be played at 5 p.m. on Monday at Max Jones Fieldhouse. The boys will travel to Colby tonight for their substate game with the Eagles at 6 p.m.

Mick McGuire of the weather office said the storm was to move out Monday afternoon, but the next storm is forecast for Tuesday night with a slight chance for moisture as the new storm may track further to the south.