

Emergency management becoming ‘StormReady’

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
 Sherman County’s emergency management office is working to get a “StormReady” designation, and asked the county commissioners to buy storm radios to put in public places.

Mary Messamore, head of the emergency management office, told the commissioners Wednesday morning that her assistant, Tim Renner, has been working on the details to get the county storm ready.

She said one of the requirements of the National Weather Service program is to have storm radios in as many public locations as possible.

She said Renner had come up with a list of at least 10 places that should have the radios.

These include the hospital, Good Samaritan Center, school district office, Goodland Senior Center, City Administration Building, courthouse, Wheat Ridge Acres and the city softball complex.

She had listed the post offices in Goodland, Kanorado and Edson, but Commissioner Kevin Rasure

said he felt the Postal Service should provide its own storm radios.

Messamore said it might be possible to put the storm radio for Kanorado at the city building or the Kanorado Senior Center.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede suggested adding the Goodland Activity Center to the list.

The goal of the program is to have everything possible to make the people aware of severe weather. The weather service established the “StormReady” program to help cities and counties be sure they have procedures in place to reduce the potential for disaster.

Among the requirements are a 24-hour communication point, which is the central dispatch office, and an emergency operations center, both in the basement of the city administration building.

A system for training and activation of storm spotters is another requirement.

Messamore said the major item remaining is the storm radios, which pick up emergency storm warnings broadcast by the Weather Service.

The best price Renner had found was at Fixsen Electronics at \$49.49 each. Messamore said the money for the radios would come out of the emergency management budget for public education.

The commissioners said they would approve the purchase, but ask her to check with the post offices first. They suggested she tell them about the price from Fixsen and that maybe they can be added to the total.

Messamore told the commissioners the new Mitigation 20/20 program software will not work on her computer because it requires Windows XP Professional to run.

She asked the commissioners for permission to buy three new computers at \$1,237 each from S&T Communications. These would come with flat panel displays, which will help with space in the dispatch center.

Messamore said three old computers would be moved to other tasks, replacing older computers. She said the cost would have to come out of the county computer capital outlay fund.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said

there is \$30,000 in the fund.

Commissioner Rasure made the motion to approve the purchase of the three computers. It passed unanimously.

Messamore asked the commissioners to approve a letter of support for a 911 upgrade grant she is filing. The upgrade will allow the dispatch center to pick up more geographic details from cell phone calls, and make it easier for the dispatcher to identify where the call is coming from.

The bid for the upgrade from SBC Corp. is \$121,534, she said. The grant would cover \$71,399, leaving the county to pay \$50,135.

Messamore said a big part of the cost is a five-year maintenance contract which costs \$28,000, but she said it is about \$6,500 a year if purchased separately, so it is cheaper to buy the five-year plan.

The letter from the county would agree to match the grant, but Messamore said there is no guarantee on getting the grant.

Rasure asked if the work would be something done quickly this year, or if part might be paid out of next year’s money.

She said it would probably take a few months before the county would know if they are going to get the grant, and it would be some time after before the work would be done.

Tiede made the motion to approve the letter contingent on getting the state grant. It passed unanimously.

Board says Chamber moving ahead

CHAMBER, from Page 1

board members from 18 to nine. Swager said that two seats will come up for election at the end of the year and nominations will be sought in October.

She said each board member who is not an officer will be the chair of a committee made up of people from the general membership, and that they were looking for people interested in serving on the committees. The committees include business promotion, government relations, agriculture development, beautification and membership.

Swager said two of the Chamber’s goals this year are to encourage individual membership and greater involvement of the general membership in Chamber activities.

As part of the Chamber’s new direction, membership plaques were handed out. The plaques, made by Urban Designs, 923 Main Ave., recognized the members’ “investment in the future of Goodland and Sherman County.”

Swager said that members, who paid their dues, who did not receive plaques or did not attend the meeting will receive theirs at the next Business After Hours on April 16 at the Chamber office. Each new member will have their plaque presented at the subsequent Business After Hours.

The meeting adjourned after a brief update by the Rev. Gene Tromble on the Pioneer Park project, now awaiting bids on a construction contract.

“I was very encouraged by the people at the meeting,” said Swager, “especially for the first one in a long time. Our goal is to get every chamber member to want to come, to anticipate the annual meeting.”

Warden said she felt positive about the meeting.

“I think we had an awesome turnout,” she said, “and I was approached by people that are looking forward to the Chamber moving forward. I just couldn’t have asked for a better turnout for our first meeting.”

The next board will be 7 a.m. Tuesday, April 13, at the Chamber’s office, 1002 Main Ave.

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