

# County needs new computer to keep up

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

Sherman County’s main computer is obsolete, commissioners were told at their meeting Wednesday morning, not fast enough or big enough to run the next generation of programs the county needs. A replacement will cost \$36,000. The computer handles all the data and printing for the county clerk, treasurer and assessor’s offices in the courthouse. Brent Gustin of Infinetec from Hays said the present IBM computer is about five years old, and he expects the operating system to be out of date later this year. He said IBM supports two versions of their operating system, the newest and the next most recent version. “IBM is now using version 5.2,” Gustin said, “and I expect them to release version 5.3 later this summer. “Your computer is running on version 5.1, and it will cost about \$7,600 to do a band-aid and upgrade the tape drive to allow that computer to run 5.2. I think that

## County roundup

At their meeting Wednesday, Sherman County commissioners:

- Heard a proposal for upgrading the county’s main IBM computer at an estimated cost of \$36,000. Story at left.
- Discussed the return of the

Kanorado ambulance and where it is to be housed. Story below.

- Received the seismographic report from a survey of county land out at Caruso, and heard that the exploration firm expects to find at least some gas. Story below.

would get you another year. “Our suggestion is to make the upgrade to a new IBM 800 and bring it on-line with the new 5.3 operating system. The estimated cost for this is \$36,000.” Crystal Wright, county computer manager, said the old computer is working fine, but that a new one would be faster and give them additional storage capability. Commissioner Chuck Thomas asked how many years the new computer would last. Gustin said it was hard to say, but that based on the county’s history, he would

expect it to be about five years. “Depends on when they would become obsolete,” Commissioner Kevin Rasure said. Thomas asked if the county could do a lease, and Gustin said there was an option for a lease-purchase over three years. Thomas County took that option, he said, and they financed \$30,000 at an interest rate of 3.89 percent. “You don’t have to do this today,” he added. “You can take some time to look this over and consider your options.

“There are some items you may be able to subtract, like the modem if it is good, which is \$525, and the power backup, which you replaced last year. This would save \$259. However, with the new, higher density tape drive, you will need to buy new backup tapes for \$125.” Rasure asked what it would take to install the new computer. Gustin said it takes about 20 hours. The proposal shows the cost of the installation at \$2,470, but this would be covered by the computer assistance program the county has now. “We come in on a Friday afternoon and work through the night to have it installed by Saturday,” Gustin said. “We then come back on Monday morning to make sure all the printers and programs are working.” The cost of the installation is part of a computer assistance program that the county buys. Wright said they usually buy a block of 40 hours at a time at \$95 per hour and have 2.75 hours left. Rasure asked what the hours are used for

and Wright said the time is used for both support if there are upgrades or problems, and for training of new employees. Gustin said if an employee attends a class at the office in Hays, it costs \$95 for the day, but training done here is charged at a \$95 hourly rate. “How much is the old computer worth?” Rasure asked. “It is worth a bundle,” Gustin said with a big smile. “I think I got a bid of \$250 from an outfit in Oklahoma for the Thomas County computer.” Gustin said if the county was considering the lease-purchase option, it would have to purchase a three-year maintenance contract for \$3,175. The commissioners thanked Gustin and said they would look the information over and consider the options. Later, Rasure said they have \$26,500 in the budget for computer equipment. The consensus was to have Wright get more information on the options, and look at the three-year financing.

# Exploration firm expects to find gas

Sherman County commissioners received the seismographic report from a survey of county land out at Caruso at the meeting Wednesday, and learned that the exploration firm expects to find at least some gas on the land. Hiram Lucius, land manager for Rosewood Resources of Dallas, and Geoff Ice, exploration manager, told commissioners what the firm had been doing, and gave them a map and computer disk with the information from the county land. Ice said the next step is to drill some wells in the target area. He said he is pleased with the data so far and believes they will find some gas. He said it is too early to tell what the commercial potential is for the area. Part of the land which includes sewer ponds for the sunflower plant was sold to Northern Sun Industries, but the county decided to keep the mineral rights. The county has

been leasing the land for farming, but is working to put it into Conservation Reserve Program. In other business, commissioners:

- Gave approval for the 4-H Junior Leaders to paint the inside of the 4-H building at the fairgrounds, agreeing that the county would buy the paint.
- Approved a donation of \$200 to Big Brothers-Big Sisters for the county team that is part of the Bowl for Kids Sake on Saturday.
- Reviewed a code of ethical conduct for the Kanorado bridge project. Amy Griffey of the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission said this was a requirement of the grant program and should have been done earlier. She said they could make suggestions and she would correct the document and send it back for them to sign at their next meeting.
- Approved two letters dealing

with rights of way for the Kanorado bridge project. Griffey said she was trying to get the process corrected for two small pieces of land that she thought were going to be temporary rights of way, but are actually permanent. She asked the commissioners to sign two letters to the landowners which will correct the problem, adding that the landowners are aware of the paperwork they will be receiving. Griffey asked if the county has any projects they want to consider for the upcoming grant cycle. She said they have until this summer to make a decision and get the paperwork in. The commissioners said they would look at this and mentioned the project to repave Caldwell Avenue out to the airport as a possibility. Approved a bid for \$729 to have Dean Graber spray the fairgrounds for weeds and stickers. Approved a bid from K & K Tree

& Lawn Service to aerate the grounds around the courthouse. There were two bids, \$210 from Grass Roots and \$200 from K & K. Heard Commissioner Kevin Rasure report on a meeting on bonds for refinancing the hospital. He said the hospital board wants to issue revenue bonds, which mean no tax money will be used to repay the bonds over 10 years. The money will come from the income of the hospital. Commissioner Mitch Tiede reported while the racing association is adding a new light to the track at the fairgrounds, Building Supervisor McKnight wants to upgrade the pubic address cable that does not have to cross the rodeo arena, but rather would come in behind the arena. He said the cable had been cut when the arena was prepared for the demolition derby’s and rodeos. The commissioners approved the new cable.

# Ambulance returning to Kanorado

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The Kanorado ambulance should be returned to its home fire house this week, Sherman County commissioners were told at their meeting on Wednesday. Susan Adams, Deb Fahey, Ruth Nichols and Bob Handle of Kanorado meet with the commissioners to discuss the ambulance and clear up some rumors they had heard. Fahey said they had heard there was a problem with housing the ambulance in the Kanorado fire house, and wanted to know if the commissioners knew anything about this. Commissioner Mitch Tiede said there was some talk at a fire board meeting about being able to use the

open bay without the ambulance. He said the fire board wants to buy a new fire truck for Kanorado, and may keep the old one because there is no trade-in value. Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he felt the ambulance should have priority in the fire house. The Kanorado ambulance — known as Med 3 — has been in Goodland for the past several weeks while the main ambulance — Med 1 — was being repaired from an accident several months ago. That ambulance went back into service last Monday, and the other ambulance — Med 5 — was taken into the body shop for some long delayed repairs. Bruce Gleason, head of the ambulance service, said he expects the ambulance to be repaired and back

in service by Monday, and that the Kanorado ambulance will then go home. Kanorado has had an ambulance for many years, but the one was an old-style until the county agreed to buy the box-style vehicle from Thomas County about six years ago. County Clerk Janet Rumpel had gone through the commissioner minutes to find out if there was any agreement with Kanorado about housing the ambulance. She found a reference to this which said the fire house had a bay which could be used to house the ambulance. Fahey, who is a member of the Kanorado City Council, said they were going to look at a backup plan for a new place for the ambulance. She said there is a vacant lot next to

the fire house, and if they are able to buy that, it might be possible to add a bay to the fire house. “We would like to have our own place for our supplies,” Fahey said. She and Adams are the two qualified emergency medical technicians who handle the Kanorado calls. “You need to keep people involved,” Rasure said. “It takes at least one emergency medical technician and a first responder to run the ambulance. You need to have qualified people.” “We are not trying to take your ambulance,” Tiede said “We don’t have room for it here.” The Kanorado citizens thanked the commissioners and said it was good to get things cleared up face to face.

## Bowling for fun



Belen Ledesma, playing for Goodland High School, bowled the first ball of Saturday’s annual Bowling for Kids fund raiser for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Goodland. Belen, a third-grader at Central Elementary, is the little sister of Patty Howard, a member of the Big Brother/Big Sister board. Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

## School got pickup’s best

It would be safe to say that the Goodland School District got its money’s worth out of a used pickup it bought in 1989 — but nothing lasts forever. Kenny Studer, district maintenance supervisor, told the school board last Monday that the truck had about had it. Studer said the 1986 half-ton Chevrolet pickup has major problems with its carburetor, fuel tanks, radiator and oil leaks. He said the repair estimate of \$1,800 is more than twice what the truck is worth. The truck was bought used from Finley Motors for \$8,600, and had a rebuilt engine installed in 2000. The pickup was used mostly for as a general purpose maintenance vehicle. The board agreed it would be too expensive to fix the truck and told Studer to buy a newer used pickup, using the old truck as a trade-in. Bids were received from Herl Chevrolet, Dan Brenner Ford and Finley Motors. The district went with the low bid from Finley and bought a 2000 Ford F-150 with a long box for \$10,600 — minus \$700 on the trade-in for the old Chevy.

### corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

# Kansans can file income taxes on line

Kansas taxpayers have a quick and easy way to take care of their state income taxes for 2003 through the state’s website, www.access-kansas.org. The Kansas Department of Revenue’s WebFile service is available to any taxpayer who filed a Kansas tax return last year. WebFile does not require any complicated downloads, the department says, and offers a built-in automatic calculator to help reduce filing errors. The online filing system is free to

those who qualify for a refund or who pay by electronic check. Taxpayers who overpaid their 2003 taxes and file online will receive their refunds within five to seven days, while refunds from paper returns take about two weeks. A refund status service is available at www.kdor.org/refundstatus/default.asp. Taxpayers owe money and pay by electronic check will not see the money withdrawn from their accounts until April 15. Payment can

be made by credit card, but a transaction fee will be charged and it will be processed immediately. WebFile is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The system does not require downloaded software. All taxpayers need to get

started is a computer with an Internet connection and either the assigned PINs from their mailed tax booklets or last year’s refund/balance due amounts. WebFile provides confirmation numbers and printable copies of filed returns.

## CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of the first-ever Fotogirl and S&T Children’s Photo Competition



Dawson Ensign 4 to 6 years

Thank you to all participants in this year’s contest.



Emmi Ensign Newborn to 12 mo.



Riley (Pett’e) Stewart 1 to 3 years

Prizes included: •\$100 Savings Bond •\$50 Cash •Framed 16X20

Goodland Music Boosters

present

Basketball Madness

Tuesday April 6

Max Jones Fieldhouse

13th and Arcade, Goodland, Kan.

Soup supper 5 p.m.

Chicken noodle or vegetable soup, brownie and drink

\$3 Adult - \$2 Student (K-HS) - Children Under 5 free

Game starts 7 p.m.

G.H.S. Faculty ‘Plus’ vs. Business Community

\$3 Adult - \$2 Student (K-HS) - Children Under 5 free

Advance discount tickets may be purchased at Bankwest, First National Bank, People’s State Bank and Western State Bank

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Experience “The Passion” on us Tuesday, April 9 Sherman Theatre, 1203 Main

Sponsored by these local churches:

Calvary Gospel Church

Church of the Nazarene

First Baptist Church

Goodland Bible Church

Goodland United Methodist Church

Kanorado United Methodist Church

Pleasant Home Church

Word of Life Church