

weather report

41°

noon Thursday



Today

• Sunset, 7:38 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 5:48 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:39 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 58 degrees
- Humidity 82 percent
- Sky cloudy
- Winds north 18 mph
- Barometer 29.99 inches and rising

• Record High today 96° (1992)

• Record Low today 22° (1950)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 85°

Low Wednesday 49°

Precipitation none

This month 2.73.??

Year to date 4.10

The Topside Forecast

Today: mostly cloudy with a 60 percent chance of rain before noon, high near 43, low near 32, winds north northeast 13-31 mph. Saturday: partly cloudy, high near 58, low around 35, winds north northwest 8-28 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: partly cloudy, high around 66, low around 40. Monday: mostly sunny, high near 77, low near 45. Tuesday: mostly sunny, high near 87.

(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$3.59 bushel

New crop — \$3.60 bushel

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$2.98 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.90

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$2.78 bushel

Soybeans — \$9.59 bushel

Posted county price — \$9.49

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Millet — \$6.50 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$11.80 cwt.

NuSun — \$12.05 cwt.

Confection — \$16/\$9 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$15

(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



War diary tells stories

Lloyd Sponholtz, a University of Kansas history professor, described events from the World War II era at the Handy House this month, using excerpts from his mother's diary, political cartoons and personal stories. See story on Page 3.

Ethanol tanker wreck closes I-70

The west lanes of I-70 were closed for five hours Wednesday evening between Ruleton and Kanorado by a tanker full of ethanol that wrecked east of the rest area.

The 2002 Peterbilt driven by Kevin J. Miller, 40, of Salina, was heading west at 4:35 p.m. when it went off the north side of the highway, pulled back onto the highway and flipped onto the passenger side. The truck slid into the north ditch and rolled over landing on the driver's side.

The first call said the tanker was leaking, and there was concern about what was in the tanker. Police and firemen were worried the leaking tanker might explode until it was determined the tanker was loaded with ethanol.

A few minutes later a trooper was told that a truck was coming from Greeley, Colo. to offload the ethanol.

The State Patrol closed the west lanes at Ruleton and shuffled traffic onto the old Hwy 24 and back to I-70 at Kanorado.

Goodland Fire and Rescue were called to help extricate the driver who was taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center with possible injury to his neck and right arm.

The Goodland hazmat team was called to help deal with the leak, and stood by until the truck was flipped back on it wheels and the ethanol was unloaded.

At 9 p.m. the west lanes of I-70 were reopened to traffic.



Goodland Fire and Rescue helped extricate the driver of the semi truck and tanker filled with ethanol Wednesday afternoon about 10 miles west of the city. The west lanes of I-70 were closed for five hours.

Photo by Anne Hamilton / The Goodland Star-News

School board cuts long-time gym teacher

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland School Board voted Monday to let a long-time gym teacher go in what it termed a "reduction in force."

Meeting at North Elementary School, the board voted 7-0 to rehire all of the district's teaching staff, as recommended by school principals, for the 2004-2005 with one exception.

The members voted unanimously not to renew the contract of Jamie Helmut, a high school physical education teacher, citing declining enrollment as the reason. A reduction-in-force resolution directed that Helmut receive written notice of the board's decision, by Saturday, May

1. This was hand delivered to her on Tuesday, said board secretary Pat Juhl.

The notice advised Helmut of her right to a hearing, which she must request in writing within 15 days in her request she must designate one member of the hearing committee.

Helmut, reached at home Wednesday, said she did not have anything to say now but might later. She has been with the district since Aug. 25, 1986 and worked at the Community Learning Center, on Main Avenue, this school year as well as teaching physical education.

When the reduction in force portion of Monday's meeting came up the board went into closed session.

When the board returned to open session Dick Short, board president, made the motion, seconded by Danny Whalen, to adopt the resolution affecting Helmut.

At a school board meeting earlier this year Selby said declining enrollment especially at the Community Learning Center might force a reduction in the staff working there.

The board did not discuss any other reductions in force. The district has had one non-tenured teacher Deandra Schields, who teaches music at the high school, resign effective at the end of the school year. A decision whether or not she will be replaced has not been made.

In other business, the board:

- Presented certificates to the 14 members of the high school Science Olympiad team who won the state competition at Wichita State University on April 13. Sponsor Dennis Friedrichs briefed the board on the team's achievements, including Goodland's first ever overall first-place finish.

- Presented certificates to the eight members of DECA who placed at their state competition March 6-9 in Overland Park. Seven of them qualified for the national competition today through Wednesday in Nashville, Tenn.

- Accepted the resignations of Eileen Krayca as the head cook at Grant Junior High, effective the end

of the school year; James Stewart as a bus driver effective April 23; and Barbara Whisler as an at-risk tutor at Grant effective May 14.

- Received from Selby a copy of a letter from the Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services of the Kansas Department of Education, outlining what can and cannot be purchased with capital outlay funds.

The meeting adjourned around 10:14 p.m. The next meeting will be Monday, May 10, at 4 p.m. at the district office, 1312 Main Ave. The start time was changed so that board members could attend a "Picnic in the Park" performance by the high school band at 5:30 p.m. at Gulick Park.

Mt. Sunflower safe as state's highest point

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Don't worry.

Mount Sunflower is still there.

Rumors have been circulating for weeks there were plans in Topeka to scrape away the top of the ridge and remove Mount Sunflower as the highest point in Kansas.

A 40-mile drive to the site Tuesday revealed that Mount Sunflower was the same as ever. Nothing had changed except that recent rains have made the hilltop a bit greener.

The rumors about something called the Western Mountain Removal Project apparently began with an elaborate hoax invented by Gordon Bassham of Garden City, news director of High Plains Public Radio. He put together a six-minute story on the project which ran, of all days, on April 1.

The hoax continued a tradition of April Fools programs at the station

For those who did not hear the story on the air, the High Plains Public Radio web site has posted the story at <www.hprr.org>. Click on the High Plains Features link.

Except for it's outlandish content, the story sounds serious enough:

"State lawmakers have been grappling with a number of controversial issues this year — school finance, concealed handguns and a proposal to ban gay marriages. But far and away the most controversial and under-reported issue for people in western Kansas has been a \$75-million government project to physically transform the topography of the High Plains.

"Just east of the Kansas and Colorado border in Wallace County, earth-moving equipment have been working overtime to radically change the landscape. At 4,039 feet above sea-level, Mount Sunflower used to be the highest point in all of Kansas. But thanks to something called the "Mount Sunflower Removal Project," the natural landmark isn't what it used to be. The story from High Plains Public



Radio's Gordon Bassham."

In the recorded story, Bassham interviews Lee Allison, state geologist and director of the Kansas Geological Survey.

Allison said the project was designed to "save Kansas's reputation for being the flattest state, and that as a geologist he was glad to see the mountain removed."

Bassham said another part of the effort was being pushed by state tourism officials. Scott D. Allegrucci, director of the Division of Travel and Tourism of the state Department of Commerce and Housing, said that removing the mountain "was a no brainer."

"Our research shows that people coming to Kansas don't want to find mountains," he said. "Another reason for removing it was it was blocking the view of the Rockies."

Bassham said local people were in favor of the removal. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said it was difficult to find the money for the mountain removal project.

"Since I have been looking under all kinds of rocks for whatever

money we can find in Kansas," the governor said, "I was delighted with the removal of Mount Sunflower.

"I can't wait to get to digging and see what's there.

"I also think that since the mountain had a way of blocking the view, it is going to be a benefit to western Kansas to now have a clear view of the Rockies. As everyone knows, eastern Colorado is significantly flatter than western Kansas, and with the mountain out of the way, we can have a great vista of the Rocky Mountains on a regular basis."

To recover the cost of the mountain removal, Allegrucci suggested selling rocks and boulders from the mountain and having them signed by Kansas celebrities such as Sen. Bob Dole and actors Kirstie Allie and Ed Asner.

Allison had another suggestion for the dirt removed from the mountain.

"I think the dirt can be used to fill up football stadiums in Nebraska and Oklahoma," he said. "I think

See SUNFLOWER, Page 3



The Goodland Star-News Editor Tom Betz, above left) checks the names in the Mt. Sunflower register Tuesday afternoon. The highest point in Kansas is on private land about 40 miles southeast of Goodland, and was the subject of a recent April Fool spoof by the High Plains Public Radio news department.

Photos by Greg Stover / The Goodland Star-News