

**weather  
report****72°**

noon Thursday

**Today**

- Sunset, 7:58 p.m.
- Saturday**
- Sunrise, 5:28 a.m.
- Sunset, 7:59 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

- Soil temperature 64 degrees
- Humidity 40 percent
- Sky mostly cloudy
- Winds northeast 13 mph
- Barometer 30.10 inches and steady

- Record High today 97° (1925)
- Record Low today 35° (1945)

**Last 24 Hours\***

- High Wednesday 89°
- Low Wednesday 58°
- Precipitation none
- This month 0.24
- Year to date 4.58

**The Topside Forecast**

Today: mostly sunny, high near 88, low near 54, winds west southwest 7-15 mph. Saturday: partly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, high around 84, low around 50, winds north 5-10 mph.

**Extended Forecast**

Sunday: partly cloudy, high near 82, low around 51. Monday: partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 p.m., high near 80, low 52. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. \*Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local  
markets****Noon**

- Wheat — \$3.47 bushel
- New crop — \$3.46 bushel
- Posted county price — \$3.48
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Corn — \$2.82 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.79
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Milo — \$2.54 bushel
- Soybeans — \$8.27 bushel
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Millet — \$6.75 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$10.90 cwt.
- NuSun — \$11.15 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

**Fifth grade music rocks**

The saxophone section of the fifth grade band, which held their "Blast from the Past" concert Tuesday, included Nichole Rutherford, Sheldon Lee, and Dillon Sjoerdsma. Photos and story on Page 11.

## Plant moving ahead, president says

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

The president of Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. defended his firm's progress in getting its Goodland plant up and running during a phone interview Thursday morning.

The firm first expected to be in projection in November, but now is shooting for a May or June startup. Herb Menold blamed a lack of investment from the Goodland area for part of the delay, saying the firm could only proceed as fast as it could get money.

The city is backing a \$200,000

state loan for the firm and remodeled a building for the plant. Officials have expressed concern about the slow pace, fearing the project might fall through.

Menold said he sent the city a letter last week about the status of the firm's Goodland plant and when he expects the production to begin. The letter was handed to the city commissioners at the end of Monday's meeting.

"I think the letter is pretty to the point," Menold said, "and the real issue is economics."

In the letter, Menold said, "I am

confirming to you that Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. is committed to manufacturing in your city. Even though we had to slow down the effort to manufacture products in Goodland, due totally to financial limitations, we will certainly begin producing in late May or early June.

"The biggest problem to date has been the commitment of any private investment, which I stated in the beginning that the project would require. The lack of this private investment to date has caused our company to be prudent with the resources and proceed as the internal

cash flow allows.

"The good news is that recently a significant investor has begun serious discussion with us and could be making the private commitment as I write this letter. This potential investor could also become a significant customer.

"Other good news is that the orders continue to grow as the overall U.S. economy continues to improve. The aerospace industry will remain strong for some time to come due to the world situation. The heavy military spending and the aging fleet of commercial aircraft

are causing the replacement market to grow. We believe this growth could continue eight to 10 years, and this fact makes the commitment to manufacture in Goodland viable.

"Lastly, I am very proud that when this project is completed, it will be under budget."

Menold said the process of setting up this plant has been more involved than most people realize.

"It take more time and money to set this up than is understood by the people in Goodland," he said. "I

**See PLANT, Page 3**

## City manager says loan on hold

By Greg Stover

*The Goodland Star-News*

City Manager Ron Pickman told the Sherman County Economic Development Council on Tuesday that progress on a state loan for Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. is on hold.

Pickman said Aircraft Seal and Gasket has to submit documentation to the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission that details expenditures in Goodland since the end of January, when a state grant was approved. The planning agency is administering the grant for the state. Once the documents are received, Pickman said, the contract can be signed and the money released.

The \$200,000 grant comes from the Kansas Department of Commerce. Once released the city will actually receive, after paying the planning agency for its services, over \$189,000 which then can be loaned to Aircraft Seal and Gasket. This particular grant is, in reality, a loan that will have to be repaid, except for the processing fee.

Pickman said getting the manufacturing process started is taking longer than expected. He said the firm has no employees at the Goodland plant, the equipment here is not what the firm said was coming and there are no parts for the equipment that did arrive. He said if the firm has not hired at least 15 employees with a year, then it will lose its lease.

He said the city's financial contribution to the project was to remodel the Ed Wolak Building, a former

grocery store, and allow the firm to use it rent free for two years. Pickman said the renovation had to be done regardless of who moved into the building.

Pickman said he talked with Herb Menold, president of Aircraft Seal and Gasket, by phone last week. Menold told him the company was trying to get reorganized and get back on schedule. In a letter from Menold to Pickman, dated May 14, the president said the firm "is committed to manufacturing in your city" and that it will "certainly begin producing in late May or early June."

Pickman said the project has turned into a "wait and see game." He said he wants this venture to work, but would like to see it have better organization.

Council member Randy Schoenthaler, vice president of Peoples State Bank, said he thought "the pieces were coming together" and that he was confident production will begin soon. Peoples State gave Aircraft Seal and Gasket a short-term loan to help the firm get by until the money from the state grant comes in.

Pickman also briefed the council about federal and state grants the city got for a new lighting system at Renner Field. He said the federal money will pay for about 95 percent of the lighting system for the taxiways and the main runway and the state grant will cover about 75 percent of the cost for the crosswind runway. Pickman said work is expected to begin next month.

## College graduation today at Max Jones

Nearly 200 students will graduate from the Northwest Kansas Technical College in ceremonies at 1:30 p.m. Friday in the Max Jones Fieldhouse.

College President Kenneth Clouse said 162 students will graduate from the college's 15 vocational programs, and another 33 will graduate with two-year associate degrees.

To earn associate degrees, Clouse said, students have to complete college general education requirements besides their vocational programs.

Reginald L. Robinson, president and chief executive officer of the Kansas Board of Regents, will speak. He served as chief of staff

to University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway and was a visiting professor of law at the university's law school from 1988-93.

He then spent five years in Washington, working for the U.S. Department of Justice in a variety of senior management posts, including special assistant to Attorney General Janet Reno. He was also the acting director of the Office for Victims of Crimes.

Robinson earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and his juris doctorate from the KU law school. He was a law clerk to Judge Deanell R. Tacha of the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

## *This is fun, don't bite me*



Mallory O'Brien held a chick Monday during Ag Day at West Elementary School. The first- and second-grade kids got to see animals including chickens, pigs, sheep, a horse, a goat and a calf in the livestock part of the program. Lynn Hoelting, (left) of Mueller Grain showed Blake Stasser and Hannah Sanderson handfuls of confection sunflowers, the ones people eat. He was one of the volunteers explaining the products grown in Sherman County, including wheat, milo, sunflowers, soybeans and corn. Principal Jerry Burkett said the day gave students a chance to see how the farming is done, with a display of farm equipment including tractors, combines and plows.

Photos by Tom Betz  
The Goodland Star-News

## City hires expert witnesses for water park mediation

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

Steever Water Park is about to open for the fourth year, and Monday the city commission took another step in trying to fix leaks around the kiddie pool and fountain which have plagued the facility for the first three.

Recreation Director Jason Hixson said Thursday the park has been

filled with water, and he is planning to open the water park on Saturday, May 29. He said information on hours and prices will be available next week.

City Manager Ron Pickman said Monday the city is pursuing the remedies open to it under agreements with the contractors. The city commission voted unanimously to hire expert witnesses to investigate the

problems and determine who should be responsible fixing them.

The leaks began showing up within a month after the water park opened in May 2001.

"We believe there is a broken water line under the youth pool," Pickman said. "We won't know exactly until we dig it out, and that is what started the problems."

He said a fountain east of the

youth pool quit working within a month after the park opened.

"We know the fountain doesn't work," the manager said, "and there is a crack in the youth pool which we believe is caused by a broken water line, but... neither of the contractors wants to take responsibility."

Sullivan and Palmer of Lenexa were the architects for the water park. Rhoads Construction of

Goodland had a \$826,870 contract for the building and Associated Pool Builders' contract for the pool was for \$1,274,200.

Pickman said the city has been unable to negotiate an agreement over who is at fault for the problems. The contracts require that any dispute go to a mediation process, he

**See STEEVER, Page 3**