

City joins in employee safety training alliance

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
 Goodland has agreed to join with 11 cities as the Northern Regional Training Group to hold monthly safety training sessions for city employees next year.

City Manager Ron Pickman told the city commission last Monday that the group is forming through the Kansas Municipal Utilities, and the training will be one day a month in each of the 12 cities. If a city employee misses a session in one city they can attend in one of the other members that month.

The estimated cost for the program is \$8,256 if all 12 agree, but that could go up to \$10,000 if one or more of the cities drops out. The cities involved are Goodland, Colby, Russell, Clay Center, Wamego, Larned, Holton, Hoisington, Herrington, Sabetha, Belleville, Oberlin and Washington.

Pickman said there is a similar group in southeast Kansas. He said he has talked to city officials from some of those cities and they have glowing reports on the safety training program.

Commissioner Dean Blume said he thought it was an excellent idea, and that it would be good for the city crews because

they would be getting training on the city equipment and it would be right here.

Pickman said the group is asking for a commitment to they can plan the training sessions which would begin with a 10-hour Occupational Health and Safety Administration safety course in October. The monthly programs would begin in January.

Blume asked what this might do to the city workmen's compensation insurance rates. Pickman said he had asked, but the insurance carrier said it might be June before they know if it will help lower the insurance rates.

He said Colby and Russell have already said they will participate, and several of the others were waiting for Goodland before committing.

"If one of the cities drops out, will they find another?" Blume asked.

"Yes," Pickman said. "Actually, there are two cities on a waiting list hoping one of the smaller cities drops out."

Mayor Rick Billinger asked if this would be specifically for utility employees. Pickman said it is open to all city employees.

"I think it should be the type of training that the employees buy into," Billinger said, "and that helps with overall safety."

Blume agreed and said it is better to have all the employees hear the same information so there is no question about how something is to be done safely.

In other business, the commission:

- Heard a report from Pickman that the city utility customers will see higher bills next month because the city had to purchase electricity at a higher cost while the Sunflower plant in Holcomb was down for repairs. He said the city might see this for an extended time because of outside electricity costs. He did report that the city's engine No. 8, has been repaired and is now operating properly. He said they are now looking at other things that need to be upgraded and repaired at the power plant.

- Approved purchase of a four-wheel drive pickup for the water department. There were bids from six dealers, but the commission agreed to purchase a Ford 150 from Dan Brenner Ford for \$18,750. Finley Motors bid \$19,165; Herl Chevrolet & Buick bid \$19,250; Burlington Ford-Lincoln-Mercury bid \$19,108; Vince's Chevrolet Olds and Cadillac bid \$19,500; and Yost Ford of St. Francis bid \$19,108.

- Approved donating \$100 to the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter's second annual "Puttin for Pets" golf tournament held

last weekend at Sugar Hills Golf Course. This is the same amount the city donated last year. Commissioner Chuck Lutters made the motion, saying it was a good trade off since the animal shelter helps the city with stray dogs.

- Approved appointment of Lou Spinney and Dale Ellison to three-year terms on the Shade Tree Commission. The tree board had recommend that the two men be reappointed.

- Pickman said that Bill Easton, who lives in Hebron, Neb., was asking the city to participate in a drainage ditch project on his property in the northeast part of the city, and expects the cost to be less than \$3,000. However, the ditch won't be built this year, Pickman said. A section of trees had to be removed along the eastern part of the field, and Easton wants to know if the city would help pay for that. Pickman said the trees have already been removed, and said he doubted if the city would help pay because they did not have any choice in how it was done. The commissioners agreed the city could not help pay for the trees, but wanted to be sure Easton knew the city would help with the ditch. The work solve a drainage problem along the northeast edge of the city, north of 1st Street and east of Caldwell.

- The commissioners all praised the city crew for the work on the sidewalk around Gulick Park, saying that it has really changed the place. They said it was good to see people already using the sidewalk for walking.

- Daniels said he had been approached by three citizens about the problem of motorized cycles and skateboards on Main Ave. He wanted to know if there was anything the police could do, and if these had any license requirements. Pickman said there are no requirements on these because they have engines which are smaller than the license requirement of the state.

"They skirt the law, so they do not have any regulations," Pickman said.

He said the only thing they can do is enforce the ordinance about not allowing these on sidewalks on Main.

- Pickman said the commissioner packets included the information he had gathered on the question of raising the quorum requirement under the Kansas Open Meetings law, and reminded the commissioners that the city offices will be closed on Monday for Memorial Day.

The next commission meeting will be 5 p.m. Monday, June 7, in the commission room of the City Administration Building.

Miles of cycles



Hundreds of motorcycle rode down I-70 Sunday as part of the 16th Run for the Wall on the way to the Rolling Thunder parade Sunday in Washington. Local veterans and motorcycle enthusiasts gathered on the Caldwell overpass to wave and cheer the riders. The Run for the Wall was organized by Vietnam Veterans who want those who are missing in action or were prisoners of war in Vietnam to be accounted for. To date about 1,800 remain missing.

Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star0News

Purchases defended

PURCHASES, from Page 1

Commissioner Kevin Rasure. "We need to let them know what you need and let them know who you are calling for.

"We are not saying buy local at any price, but we want to be fair and give them a chance where possible."

"I think we should be trusted to look at what is the best needs of our departments," said Mary Messamore, head of central dispatch and emergency management for the county. "We need to consider the needs of all the citizens for cost and services."

"Pay close attention to our local businesses," Tiede said, "but watch the prices, too."

"How do we know what they have?" asked Terry Ballard, county assessor. "We have companies from outside the county call us on a regular basis and soliciting business."

"We can't ignore that," said Rasure, "but we need to make an effort on our side. If they don't respond, that is their problem."

Bob McClure, Smoky Gardens supervisor, said while he did not do a lot of purchasing, but he did try to keep it local and rotate around.

"I think we need to look at what we spend annually," McClure said. "If we spend even a small percentage more of the money locally, that sparks competition and keeps the prices down."

"Some of the business people are on the ball soliciting business because they want it. Local people need to do a little more of that."

"When a bearing goes out, I don't call every place for a bid, but go get it. I spread it out where possible."

"I think there are times when we all just go get it," Tiede said.

"There are times that Sherman County does seem to play the higher price," McClure said.

"The greatest drain on Main Street is buying on-line and going out of town," said Applegate. "When we spend money out of the county, it does not help pay the taxes and the wages of the people here."

"We are the department heads, and we should be responsible for this," said Messamore. "We can't get some things here at all, and some businesses don't recognize us as government and give us a discount."

"I did what you asked and bought three computers locally, but they came with a one-year warranty where the Dells would have had three-year warranties."

"I wonder if we are making good choices for everybody?"

Tiede said that items under \$500

do not require anybody to talk to the commissioners, but that over \$500 there should be a bid and discussion with the commissioners.

Applegate commended Mary Ann Snethen and County Clerk Janet Rumpel for their efforts to handle the county's general purchasing where possible.

Kenny Griffith, rural fire chief, said he got "dinged" for an out-of-county purchase.

"I didn't know they sold fire equipment," he said. "If they (local business) let us know what they can supply and make it attractive enough, we will purchase from them."

"If it is not attractive enough, we will purchase out of town."

"Watch it closer," Tiede advised.

Messamore asked about the out-of-county purchase forms that were passed out. "What do we do with these," she said.

"I don't feel it is necessary," Tiede said. "I feel you are already doing a good job and this would just be more paperwork."

When the department heads left the meeting one asked what to do with the forms, and Tiede said to throw them away.

corrections

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Enterprise program plans two years

PROGRAM, from Page 1

ously approved continuing support of the program.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Discussed the upcoming replacement of a rail crossing at Caruso, noting that the Kyle Railroad wants to extend the concrete about 200 feet to the north, increasing the cost. The Mid States Port Authority, which owns the rails, had approved up to \$40,000 for the Caruso crossing. There is a question whether this is enough to cover the total cost with the extra concrete.

- Heard Rasure say he had talked to the City Manager Ron Pickman, who asked if the county would con-

sider allowing a sidewalk to be built along the north side of the courthouse. Rasure said the city would do the work if the county would pay the cost of the materials and move the sprinklers. Commissioner Mitch Tiede said it was a good idea. Thomas made the motion, saying it was good to collaborate with the city on this project. It passed unanimously.

- Approved installation of a second water meter at the courthouse to take the sprinkler system off the main meter. William McKnight, building maintenance supervisor, said it was a suggestion from the city building inspector because the new city sewer rates are determined by monthly water usage. Rasure

said it would save the county about \$40 a month when the sprinklers are being used. McKnight said the new water meter would cost \$750 installed. Tiede asked about the other county facilities like the fairgrounds. McKnight said while it would be easy to do this at the courthouse, it would be more difficult at the fairgrounds.

- Approved adding \$16,000 to the chip seal project on old U.S. 24 to cover two miles over by Kanorado. Tiede said this was within the budget.

- Approved the purchase of two steel walking-floor trailers from Wilkens Trucking at a cost of

\$50,675 each, to be used to haul trash from the transfer station to the landfill. Curt Way, public works manager, and Steve Goodman, road and bridge supervisor, recommended that they purchase the steel trailers rather than the aluminum ones because the steel will hold up better with the pressure from the trash. Tiede made the motion and it was seconded by Thomas. The vote was 2-0, as Rasure had left the meeting.

- Received lease proposals for the new fire truck for Kanorado, and Tiede said he would take them to the rural fire board meeting to get a recommendation.

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BENEFIT AUCTION

Saturday, June 5, 2004, 6:00 p.m.

Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) 9th & Main

\$30 Admission for non-tournament participants. Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served.

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For more information contact Brenda McCants at 890-6036

Ticket Locations:
 Goodland Regional Medical Center - 202 W. 2nd
 Mr. Jim's - 1112 Main, Goodland
 VFW - 9th & Main



Ice Cream Social

May 30, 2004, 2 p.m.

First Christian Church, Goodland, Kan.
 Goodland and the area community are all invited to say goodbye to the Rev. Loren Strait and his family.
 Everyone welcome. (Free will offering)

The Grain Bin Lounge at Hank's
 118 E. 17th

New hours

Open daily until 11 p.m.
 Food Served until 9 p.m.
 Two TV's
 Have peanuts - throw hulls on floor

