

weather report



72°

noon Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 6:31 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 6:44 a.m.

• Sunset, 6:30 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 61 degrees

• Humidity 49 percent

• Sky Partly Sunny

• Winds south 15 mph

• Barometer 29.78 inches

and falling

• Record High today 93° (1938)

• Record Low today 31° (1985)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 77°

Low Wednesday 53°

Precipitation —

This month 2.88

Year to date 16.83

Normal 17.46

The Topside Forecast

Today: mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers before 3 p.m., windy, winds north northwest 17-43 mph, low 35. Saturday: partly cloudy, high around 66, low around 42, winds south southwest 5-17 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: mostly sunny, high around 71, low around 42. Monday: mostly sunny, high around 76, low around 46.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

High school stays Class 4A

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

Goodland High will remain a Class 4A school this year for athletics and other activities, Superintendent Marvin Selby told the school board during his report Monday.

Many had feared that Goodland might drop a class when this year's classifications were released Monday morning by the Kansas High School Activities Association.

As it turned out, though, the school has a couple dozen students to spare.

Classifications are based on the number of sophomores, juniors and seniors enrolled on the state's official count day, Sept. 20.

The top 32 schools in the state are Class 6A and the next 32 in Class 5A. Class 4A comprises the next 64 schools, with the following 64 in Class 3A and the 64 after that in Class 2A. The 111 smaller schools make up Class 1A.

The student population range, for the upper three classes, in Class 4A ranged from 505 down to 216. Goodland's count was 235, and there are nine schools in Class 4A ranked below Goodland. Colby, Hugoton, Ulysses and Scott City high schools also remained in Class 4A.

Changes affecting members of the Northwest Kansas League include Oakley dropping from Class 3A to 2A and Rawlins County, formerly Atwood, moving from Class 1A back to 2A after the merger of Herndon and Atwood schools.

Classifications for football are done separately and last for two years. They will not change again until 2006.

Selby told the board this year's official enrollment for the district would be around 950 pending the count from the downtown school. On Wednesday, he said he got the count, which made the district's enrollment 954.2, down 27.6 from 981.8 last year.

Since many of the students at the downtown school attend part-time,

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Mail carrier George Van Vleet stopped on Main to refill his mail bag and drop off undeliverable mail. Mail storage boxes are scattered along his route to ensure that his hands and his bag always full. Photo by Kathryn Gurfinkel/The Goodland Star-News

Carrier brings mail, smiles

By Kathryn Gurfinkel

The Goodland Star-News

Love letters, bills, messages from Santa and special packages are all met by a "Hello George" as 11-year veteran mail carrier George Van Vleet tramps up and down Goodland's streets.

With a 35-pound bag of mail slung on one shoulder, the Goodland native ducks into almost every business on Main and cheerfully greets everyone he meets by name.

"I don't know anybody that's not a friend," he said. "It's always neat to see people."

That's the creed he takes with him throughout his day. Although the heavy bag weighs him down, he still makes time to chat and joke about today's mail:

"It's not from the IRS at least," he says to business owners.

Van Vleet says he tries to make the mail a pleasant experience for everyone.

"I hate to bring bad things," he said.

He once helped an elderly lady along his route who had fallen and needed help. He said she was waiting for him to come along to help her get up.

"She knew I'd be here around 11:30 or so," he recalled, "so she knew she'd be able to get up."

With between 13 and 15 miles to cover and 535 houses and businesses to visit, Van Vleet keeps up a quick pace.

"I've worn out many a pair of tennis shoes," he says.

The creed to deliver mail "through rain, snow, sleet or hail" hits home for Van Vleet. He's prepared for anything. For summer gear, he takes a bottle of water and dons his postman-issue shorts, short sleeved shirt and cap.

Even with a cap, his skin can't escape the sun,

as evidenced in his brown legs, arms, face and light blonde hair.

His dress code includes a post office belt, shoes and name tag.

He says he wears a heavy coat for winter and has waterproof gear for rainy days.

"I always have to be prepared," he said. "There's times that it's no fun."

Along with facing the weather daily, Van Vleet said the physical aspect of carrying mail can be difficult. He suffers from plantar fasciitis, an inflammation in the heel and foot. Although it has given him trouble in the past, he said his leg is feeling fine now. To help distribute the weight of the bag, he said, he has learned to switch it from arm to arm.

His day starts early, about 7:30 a.m., with a

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local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.91 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.08

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$1.91 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.77

Loan deficiency pmt. — 18¢

Milo — \$1.59 bushel

Soybeans — \$4.56 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.64

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0.04¢

Millet — \$4.75 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$10.45 cwt

NuSun — \$10.55

Loan deficiency pmt. — \$0.00

Confection — \$19/\$13 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$25 (new crop)

(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



Students attend clinic

Students attending a volleyball clinic for third through sixth-graders practiced basic skills Wednesday at the Goodland Activities Center. Photo on Page 9.

Patriotic car gets noticed



Red, white and blue soared to another level Saturday with the paint job on this 1977 Chevrolet Corvette at the Flatlander Fall Festival. The car was brought to town by Robert Cashon of Imperial, Neb. More Flatlander photos, story on Pages 6 and 7.

Photo by Kathryn Gurfinkel/The Goodland Star-News

Family struck again as two children killed in traffic accident

A Goodland family rocked by tragedy in a fatal car accident last June was struck in another fatal crash last Sunday.

Gene Becker of Goodland, who's mother Aline Becker, sister Mary Wyant and niece Christine Williams died in an accident on I-70 this summer, lost his brother's grandchildren, Collin Ray Becker, 10, and Kylie Jo Becker, 7, in a car accident near Ulysses on Sunday.

The Grant County Sheriff's Department reported that they boys were in a 2002 Ford 150 pickup, driven westbound on County Road 7, when it ran a sign at K-25. The pickup was hit by a 1995 Freightliner semi-trailer rig heading north on the highway.

Both vehicles went into the west ditch.

Everyone in the pickup was ejected except for the front-seat passenger, Erick Becker, 36, Johnson City, the father of the children.

None of the passengers in the pickup was wearing a seat belt, the sheriff's office reported, but the driver of the truck was, and he was not injured.

Grant County Emergency Medical Services took all four of the truck's passengers to the Bob Wilson Hospital in Ulysses, where the boys were pronounced dead.

The driver of the pickup, James Reinert, 33, Johnson City, and Mr. Becker were taken flown to St. Francis Hospital in Wichita.

Gene Becker's wife LaVaughn said as of Wednesday afternoon, his nephew was still in a coma at the Wichita hospital.

She said a funeral was held Thursday in Ulysses and family from Goodland, including Greg Williams, who lost his wife Christine in the wreck this summer; she and her husband, and their daughter Janet; and Charlie Wyant, all went to the funeral.

With the accidents striking their family twice in less than five months, Mrs. Becker said, the family is shocked.

"It's kind of unbelievable," she said.

"I guess just live each day as much as you can. Everybody needs to stay close to their family. Don't take it for granted."