

Thrift store expands

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland Churches Thrift Store has expanded and will soon add a furniture store that will offer luggage, fitness equipment and other large items.

Volunteers are helping to get the store ready for the transition. The store closed early last Thursday all day Friday so a crew knock a hole in the wall between the two storefronts to allow one cashier to handle business from both.

Thursday, the Rev. Gene Tromble, retired Methodist minister; Jo Simmons, the store manager; LaVaughn Becker, a volunteer; and Bobby Schnug, a Goodland High School marketing student who volunteers at the store, made a new doorway between the thrift store and what used to be Fitzgibbon's, a lawn mower dealer and repair shop.

Simmons said the front counter will be set up to allow her to go back and forth between the two areas but not to allow customers to.

They will have to go into the stores through separate entrances, Simmons said.

Before knocking the hole in the wall, Simmons, Becker and other volunteers, including Lorna Thorpe, Hilda de los Rios and Dorothy Akers, covered merchandise with sheets. After the demolition, they cleaned up and hauled out the debris.

Becker, Thorpe and Jean Windell helped with painting, Simmons said, and Tromble and other volunteers finished up details. One thing

that needed work was a musty smell in the basement of the new section. Deb Boyle got air purifier and dehumidifying chemical packs, Simmons said.

Simmons said she had hoped to open the addition the first week of November but has had to wait because there was too much going on to get it ready in time.

Now, she said, the furniture annex will have to wait until after the Kids Christmas Shoppe in December is over to open.

Among the things keeping the staff and volunteers busy has been scraping things together that can be used in the new section of the store.

Taking advantage of a salvage sale at the old Appletrail Motel, LaVaughn and Gene Becker, Jim Wedermeyer, Tromble, Brent Wood, Annette and Jerry Fairbanks, Jeff and Jill Deeds and Simmons hauled wood for future shelving, furniture and carpet to the shop Saturday, Oct. 30.

Robert Woodrow, carpentry instructor at the Northwest Kansas Technical College, and some of his students helped move the reservation desk from the Appletrail Motel to the thrift store, Simmons said. It wouldn't fit where it was needed, she said, so they also sawed it into two pieces, so it could be used in two areas of the store.

Before the new section is ready to open, Simmons said, the carpet already in the furniture annex needs to be cleaned, and then the used carpet from the motel needs to be laid and cleaned before stocking the

room. Students from the college will haul the carpet into the new section, she said.

Besides expanding into the other room, the thrift store has been adding shelves to the back to get merchandise more organized.

Cash donations for the shelving and expansion have come from the Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus, Methodist Men, Methodist Round-Up, Goodland Rotary Club, Wal-Mart and the Ministerial Alliance.

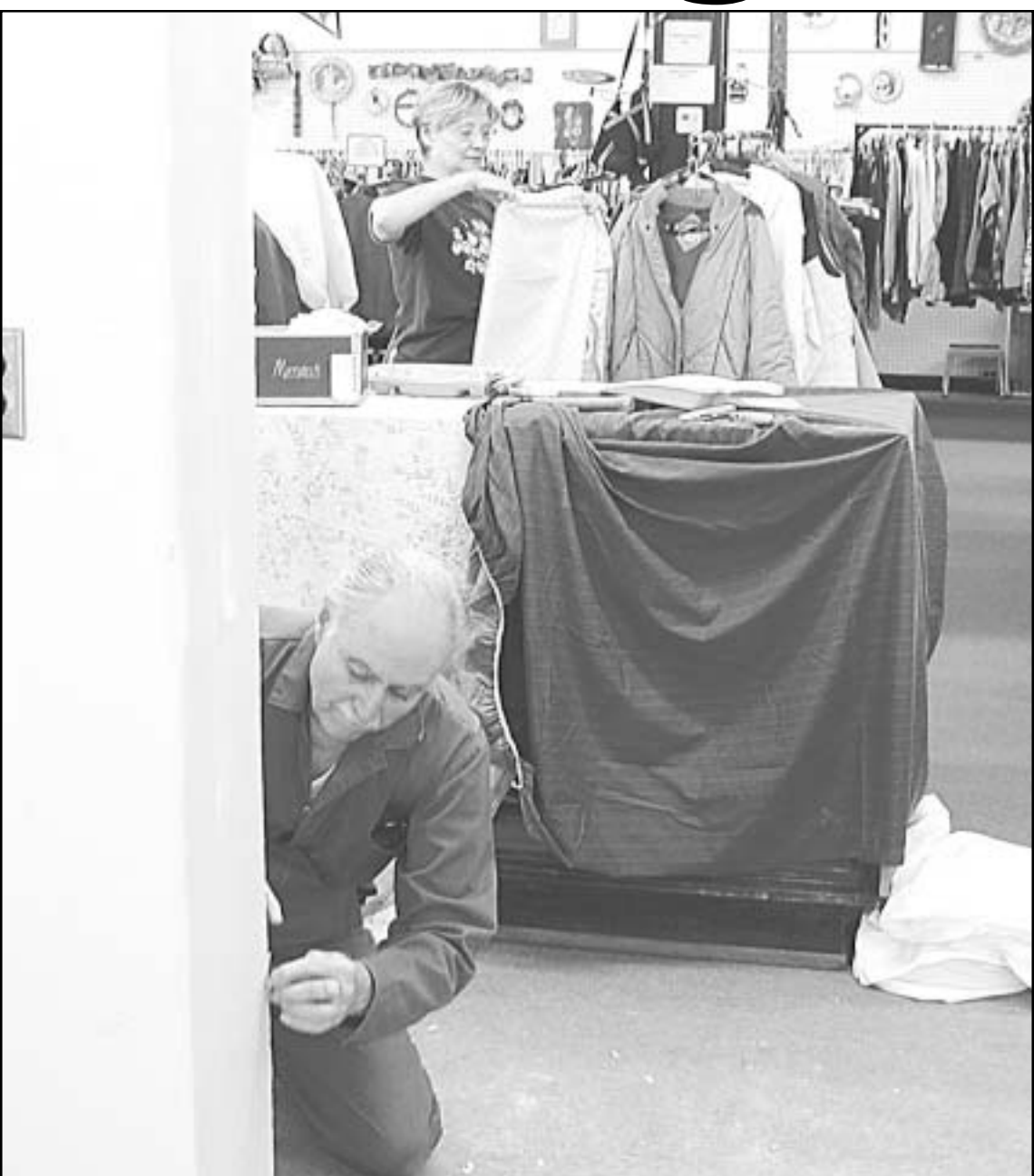
Other donations have included a glass display case from the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Altar Society, carpeting from Randall Fixsen, a shelving unit from B&B Electric, 12 gallons of paint from Shores Brothers and wood for a shelving unit from Gerald and Faye Paxton.

Simmons said she, de los Rios and Schnug moved things from the sorting room to an area in the back of the new section, which will now be used for that purpose.

A group from the Calvary Gospel Church stocked the Christmas room, Simmons said, organized things on the shelves in the back and moved things from the storage room.

Shelving units have been built for housewares, Simmons said, the 2005 window designs and the Christmas Room.

A fluorescent light was installed in the Christmas Room, she said, and a swinging door has been installed on the ramp door allowing easier access to the room above the thrift store.



Jo Simmons, manager of the Goodland Churches Thrift Store, folded sheets that had been used to cover merchandise during construction while the Rev. Gene Tromble patched walls along a new doorway.
Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

Store gets volunteer from high school marketing class

Help for the Goodland Churches Thrift Store comes from many sources, and there are times when it is a win-win deal.

Bobby Schnug, a Goodland High School student, volunteers at the store to get work experience for his marketing class.

Teacher Richard Schwasinger said senior marketing and business students can go on the job and earn three credits.

But with 21 students, he said, it is hard in difficult times to find enough paying jobs.

Schnug and another student are volunteering to get work experience, Schwasinger said; the others have paid jobs.

Schwasinger said he can teach the students marketing, but they get a better idea on the job.

Businesses have been good for the class, he said.

It has been hard to find jobs, he said, because some businesses can't hire students because of the limited hours they are available.

Some can get out of school during the day to work, Schwasinger said, if they have enough credits to graduate, but otherwise, they are only available evenings and weekends.

Not all businesses are open enough when the students are avail-

able to make it worth hiring them, he said.

Another barrier has been age; Wal-Mart will only hire those who are 18 or older.

They hired students in the program in the past, Schwasinger said, but none of the seniors in marketing this year is 18.

That has also been a problem for service stations, he said, who need someone 18 or older to sell ciga-

rettes.

He said students have been able to work in restaurants, hotels and specialty shops.

The thrift store is a good place to learn, Schwasinger said, but they aren't able to pay.

Schnug is getting community service and work experience, and he can take what he learns in class and apply it on the job.

The employers serve as instruc-

tors for the kids, he said, and the students learn to work with customers, managers and coworkers.

Not all schools have a vocational teacher who is certified to send students to jobs, Schwasinger said, adding that he has had success with the program.

Goodland is an exemplary program, he said, one of only two in the state to receive that designation.

Chamber working on balancing budget

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

A balanced budget is one of the goals the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce board is working on with the end of the year nearing.

At a meeting Tuesday, the board looked at next year's budget from January through December, with projected expenses based loosely on this year's.

Total expenses this year added up to \$35,000, and Chamber manager Courtney Warden thinks next year will be the same. She figured the budget numbers by basing them on the Chamber's current level of membership dues.

"It looks like it's a conservative approach," said Kenneth Clouse, a board member and president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

Warden said wages varied this year, she was paid less because she worked less than one full year and Justin Bentzinger was paid more because he worked more. Approval of the budget was tabled to allow

board members to look over the numbers.

Next year's budget also includes estimated expenses for the Fourth of July Freedom Fest next year. This year, the Chamber's food sales were rained out and earnings came in well under budget to pay for the fireworks display.

For last summer's celebration, the county donated \$350 and the city donated \$250. Chamber members feel it's unfair that they are expected to raise much of the money for the fireworks, and so they have gone to the county and the city to ask for larger contributions.

Tuesday, Chamber members attended the Sherman County commissioners' meeting to ask for a \$2,500 donation. Commissioners took the request under advisement and have put the issue on their agenda for Tuesday.

Despite a failed attempt to get more support from the city for fireworks earlier this year, the Chamber plans to go back after hearing that the city expects a jump in sales

tax collections.

In other business, the board:

- Looked at Agriculture Committee's plans for the Farm-City Banquet sometime in March or early April. The committee wants to make sure they honor the event's traditions while putting on a good show this year.

- Received a thank-you note from Steve West of Western State Bank. In the letter, West outlined the Chamber's work and thanked the group for being a positive influence in Goodland.

A donation for \$150 was enclosed.

- Agreed to move the Business After Hours from the Chamber office to Wheat Ridge Acres on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

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 believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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