

Congressman tours two sites

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

Congressman Jerry Moran checked out Goodland's National Weather Service office on a tour of the area last Wednesday, Dec. 15.

Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist for the office, said Moran, a Hays Republican, spent 35 minutes on his first tour of the Goodland office.

"He said it was long overdue," Floyd said. "He just wanted to know what we did here."

Scott Mentzer, meteorologist in charge, gave the congressman and Staff Director Tyler Wegmeyer a briefing on the office. Floyd said both visitors had a lot of questions.

"He was generally interested," he said, "in what was going on out here."

Floyd said Moran was up to date on drought conditions in northwestern Kansas. The congressman even recognized a map of the drought, Floyd said, and noted he had one in his Washington office.

"He seemed very up on issues like the drought," he said.

After the question-and-answer



Congressman Jerry Moran (center) and staff Director Tyler Wegmeyer (right) listened as Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Goodland, explained severe weather operations here.

Photo by Joy Hayden/National Weather Service

session, Floyd said, he took the visitors on a tour of the operations area. He said Moran's schedule was tight, but he got to spend 10 minutes showing him how forecasts are made in Goodland.

"I think we let him know the challenges we face," he said, "and that our No. 1 mission is severe weather."

Floyd said Moran asked meteorologists here how forecasting has been improved in the past 20 years.

Twenty years ago, he said, forecasting was fairly accurate for one to two days out, but today they can go to four or five days.

"Let him know," he said, "that the technology and understanding of the science are getting better."

The congressman sits on the House Committee on Agriculture, and Floyd said, he had a keen interest in the weather and economy of western Kansas.

"Overall, it was a very cordial and upbeat visit," Floyd said. "We were pleased he took time out his schedule to visit."

"In a state like ours," said a press release from the congressman's office, "with constantly changing weather, the work of these folks (at the weather service) helps to save lives."

While in town, Moran visited the Sigco Sun Products sunflower processing plant with Michael Bretz, crop production manager, who explained the sunflower processing operation.

He visited Western Plains Energy, an ethanol plant in Campus, east of Oakley, also.

Hospital expects quarter-million net

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland Regional Medical Center board approved a 2005 budget last Monday that projects a combined \$250,000 net income from the hospital and clinic.

The budget projects cash flow of \$1,137,600 from the hospital and clinic, said Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht, factoring in depreciation expense of \$887,400 for the hospital. The money will be used for payments on loans and leases, he said, new equipment and reducing accounts payable to Siemens Medical for installing the hospital's new computer system.

The budget reflects the hospital's change to a critical access facility, Precht said, and transitions in the medical staff. This year, he said, the staff was affected by the closing of practices of Drs. Robert McCullough and Duncan Davis and changes in Dr. David Pfoff's ophthalmology practice. Pfoff, who comes in from Denver and provides cataract surgery at the hospital, was absent from the clinic for about six months, due to a contract dispute with his employer.

The staffing budget takes into account past productivity and includes adding some positions, possibly cutting some and average raises of 3 percent, Precht said.

The budget estimates \$3,710,556 will have been spent on wages and salaries by the end of this year, while \$3,461,000 was budgeted. There is \$3,966,600 in next year's budget for wages.

Benefits and taxes are estimated to be \$924,180 for this year, and \$1,005,600 has been budgeted for next year.

The staffing budget was developed by analyzing historic productivity levels by department, Precht said, adding that productivity has improved since 2001, and each department is expected to maintain its current output.

New positions have been added, he said, in nutrition information/dietary, information systems and risk/case management. The hospital expects to add two to the medical/surgical staff. Dr. Vincent Narcisso, a surgeon, is

expected in the fall, and the hospital is recruiting another family physician. Reductions are expected in accounting, education and the clinic, he said.

The clinic is estimated to use \$1,081,810 of the \$1,118,300 budgeted for this year; \$1,305,000 is budgeted for next. The budget estimates the clinic will spend \$795,212 on wages and salaries this year; \$843,500 is budgeted for next year. The clinic expects to spend \$160,333 on benefits and taxes this year and has \$177,100 for next year.

While preparing the budget, Precht said, it became apparent that the hospital has fallen significantly behind in replacing aged equipment. Two problems, he said, are the surgical and obstetric departments.

A capital budget has been prepared, he said, attempting to spread the items over the next three years as cash becomes available. That includes items for several departments, including accounting, administration, anesthesiology, dietary, information systems, maintenance, nursing and obstetrics and surgery.

Among the purchases planned for next year are file cabinets and chairs for accounting, a \$12,000 copier for administration, an \$85,000 anesthesiology machine with a monitor, a \$13,000 surgical table and a \$65,000 surgical C-arm imaging machine.

In other business:

- The hospital is expecting a pharmacist, Sharon Wendell, to arrive in about a month.

- The board talked about the health fair scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 5, at the Goodland Activities Center. Blood work will be done Jan. 17-21. Hospital officials said they want more kids involved in the fair this year.

- The first organizational meeting for Rural Health Works will be at noon Tuesday, Jan. 18.

- The board talked about a project to get floor plan ideas from architects to improve traffic flow in the hospital. One firm looked over the facility the second week of December. Others are expected.

Tiny tractor delivery requires extra care



Dick Short, owner of Short and Son Inc., got a tiny delivery on a huge truck Wednesday. Ron Lucas, owner of Goodland Greenline, loaded up one of his trucks with two toy tractors that Short had ordered for Christmas. Lucas said they normally deliver full-sized tractors on the same type of flat-bed trailer they set up for the toys. He said they made the special delivery for

Short, an old friend, because he knew that, being in the truck business, Short would appreciate the gag. After delivering the toy tractors, Lucas (right) made Short (left) sign the same purchase order they use for big tractors. Short said the tractors will be gifts to his two grandsons, Jase Lambertew and John Hofer.

Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

Taking out the trash gets more expensive

Residential and commercial trash collection rates will go up in February, based on the contract with Sherman County, the city commission was told Monday.

Being forced to raise the rates angered some of the commissioners, especially Mayor Rick Billinger, who said he still thought the city should have kept control of the trash system.

City Manager Ron Pickman said the contract with the county says the Solid Waste Committee will review rates before Jan. 15 each year, and their recommendations will be forwarded to the county commission for approval. The contract says the city "shall" pass an ordinance changing the rates, he said.

"We are being screwed royally for what we are paying for trash," Billinger said. "That is why I wanted to keep the trash (collection), so we could control the rates. Now we don't have any control, and here they go raising the rates."

"You can quote me on that. Do you think you can get that right, Tom? You know your paper is very inaccurate."

The mayor asked trash contractor Chuck Redlin of In the Can why the rates were increasing, and Redlin said it was mostly because of the increase in fuel costs.

The report from the Solid Waste Committee were presented by Tom Betz, committee chairman, who said Redlin — who collects the city trash under the contract with the county — had asked for a 75-cent-per-month increase in residential rates and a \$1 a month per container

increase for commercial rates.

Betz said with the increase, the monthly residential rate, now \$13.25, would be \$14 a month, which includes the county tipping fee of \$3.25 per month. The commercial rate, now \$12, would go up to \$13 per month per container plus the tipping fee.

Besides recommending the raises, Betz said the solid waste committee was asking the city to look at a way to help clean up the alleys and to handle problems with overgrown trees that interfere with the trash trucks.

Pickman said he had talked to the city attorney about the alley clean-up, and said he suggested the solid waste committee and the city identify areas to be cleaned up and the city would send the homeowners a notice that the alley was to be cleaned up.

That would give them time to either clean their own area or object to having the area cleaned. He said this way, the city can use existing ordinances and give the homeowner an opportunity to object before the alley is cleaned.

On the question of the trees in the alley, Pickman said Redlin should provide addresses to the city building inspector. After he checks it out, the homeowner would be notified and given time to trim the tree or the city would do it and charge the ho-

meowner.

Pickman said he would have an ordinance drafted to raise the rates to be presented in January.

Betz said the committee had recommended to the commissioners, and they had approved, that the yard waste rates be raised by \$1 per month for both the large containers and rollouts.

Pickman said the yard waste rates are not covered in the city ordinance because it is considered a private contract between the trash collector

and the customer.

Betz said the county will continue to help with the pickup cost of the yard waste rollouts because keeping the lawn clippings out of the trash stream is a requirement of the state approved solid waste plan and saves space in the new landfill.

He said the county is looking at going ahead with the bailer project and hoping to include a cardboard recycling program as part of the project to reduce the amount of waste being buried in the landfill.



Lowered price to \$215,000 on this awesome listing in Rosewood Addition. Spanish style brick ranch 4 bedroom, 4 bath spacious home. 2,872 sq. ft. on main floor and 2,200 finished sq. ft. in basement with wet bar. Whirlpool bath, total new kitchen in 2003, cathedral ceilings in living room and kitchen, 2 fireplaces. All appliances included. 12x33' sunroom and nice backyard, sprinkler system in yard. Very nice home—one of a kind. Call for your private showing today and make it your home! Call 785-899-2683 and ask for Charlene Cole.



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corrections

A caption under a photo of the senior dinner in the Tuesday, Dec. 21, edition of *The Goodland Star-News* identified the person serving a drink as Heidi Keith. Her name is Mindi Keith, not Heidi. This was a reporting error.

☆☆☆☆☆
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.

student of the week



Name: Chelsea Ontiveroz
Parents: Ruth and Abel Ontiveroz
Grade: Junior
Age: 17
We've nominated this student because: Chelsea exhibits a quiet, reserved personality. At the same time she works aggressively on her assignments and class projects. She is reliable and very responsible. She is willing to work with and help her peers. Chelsea's willingness to work and her positive attitude make it easy for teachers to work with her. Her leadership shines within the Family and Consumer Science Department

and the FCCLA Chapter.

Student Comment: My most memorable moments at Goodland High School are the cross country trips home and when Speedy tried to run across Smokey and sunk into the mud to his knees.

Activities involved in at school: Girls Athletic Association, FCCLA, American Field Service and cross country.

My choice of movies, books, and games: My favorite movies are: Chronicles of Riddick, Pitch Black and Blade. My favorite music: anything but country. My favorite books: The Lord of the Rings, The Witches of Eileanan, The Shannara books. My favorite games: Zelda, Perfect Dark and Dark Alliance.

After I leave Goodland High School I intend to: go to college and get a degree in some field of science

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: I really don't know just yet.

Favorite Quote: "To gather Roses you must first brave the thorns" Kate Forsythe

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SEASON'S GREETINGS
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