

Pipeline boosts county economy

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8. Yellow tracked vehicles with long necks, looking like a line of praying mantises, lifted sections of pipe into position and prepared them for welding this fall as a new gas pipeline snaked across the county.

The 380-mile, 36-inch, \$340 million Cheyenne Plains gas pipeline made its way across the area this summer. Sherman County was part of the 134-mile mid section, which began north of Burlington and runs down to Scott City.

The pipeline, being built by Colorado Interstate Gas, a subsidiary of El Paso Corp., stretches from Ault, Colo., near Greeley, to Greensburg, where it will connect with major pipelines serving the Midwest. It will carry 570 million cubic feet of gas daily when completed.

U.S. Pipeline of Houston was the prime contractor for the project in this area. Lars Ecklund, project construction coordinator from Oneonta, Ala., said the job is the largest in the country, and the first to use 80,000-pound tensile strength pipe — known as X80. Ecklund said the Kyle Railroad brought all the pipe to Burlington and Goodland, with about half of the pipe being stacked at each location for Spread II. He said many of the workers stayed in Burlington, Goodland and surrounding towns.

Taxpayers got good news in October when the state notified Sherman County that the county's utility valuation had increased by \$1.75 million, meaning lower taxes for other property owners.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the state told her that the amount the state assesses for utilities in the county jumped from \$6,301,307 last year to \$8,048,377 for this year. She said the increase is mostly due to the completion of the S&T Telephone system, which is valued at \$2,018,000 in Sherman County, and the Cheyenne Plains gas pipeline, with the Sherman County section on the books at \$210,318.

"This means that the county property tax levy will drop about half a mill," Rumpel said. "The amount of money raised will remain the same, but it will take less taxes because of the increased valuation."

Rumpel told the Sherman County Economic Development Council annual meeting on Oct. 21 that sales tax collections have taken a jump over the past three months as well, and are ahead of collections for the past four years.

For the first eight months of the year, the county has received \$333,907 in sales tax money, she said, \$19,000 ahead of the \$314,129 received in 2001, an increase of over 6 percent.

She said with the average collection for the last four months of the year, the total could be over \$500,000 for this year. The highest previous total was \$476,426 in 2000.

District tries eBay to sell gym

9. At their meeting on June 14, the Goodland School Board voted unanimously to put the Edson gymnasium building up for sale on the Internet auction service eBay for three months.

The district thought it had sold the gym in October, but the bidder later dropped out, and it's back on the market.

An Arizona businessman faxed a bid to the district office on the last day the building was to be listed, offering \$50,000 for the building and the 2.3 acres it sits on with the stipulation that a new well be installed.

The school board held a special meeting on Oct. 1 to accept the bid. The building was going to be used for a natural sheep milk soap factory, but the deal fell through when the bidder could not convince his wife to move to Kansas.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said the district would have realized about \$40,000, even with the cost of the new well, if the deal had gone through.

The school district acquired ownership of the building as a result of the consolidation of the Goodland and Edson school districts. It has been used primarily for junior high sports.

At the Oct. 25 regular meeting the board voted again to list the building on eBay for another three months. Selby said the gymnasium has receiving hits since then but no new offers have come in.



Residents of Goodland could see railroad cars loaded with pipes along the tracks July 13 as the town saw the first loads for the Cheyenne Plains pipeline were delivered here. Large cranes and tractors kicked up dust and rocks as crews from the Pe Ben Industries out of Houston unloaded 30-inch pipe. The gas line will extend 350 miles from Wyoming to Greensburg, cutting a diagonal across Sherman County from near Kanorado to the southern border.

Photos by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland-Star News

City loses Greyhound bus stop

10. "Go Greyhound, and leave the driving to us" was a catchy slogan for the national bus line.

Goodland passengers can still leave the driving to them, but customers from this city and Burlington now have to go to Colby to catch a bus.

Last August, Greyhound eliminated stops in Goodland and about

260 other towns in the Midwest.

A spokesman for the firm's corporate offices in Dallas said the stops that cost them more money to operate than they made.

The BP 24/7 Store, 1980 Range Ave., serves as the bus station in Colby. Although tickets can be purchased either online or by telephone, passengers have to go to

Colby to board a bus.

There is hope, however, that smaller bus companies that sent representatives to the Tri-State Initiative for Economic Development meeting last July in Sterling, Colo., may be interested in serving locations Greyhound is withdrawing from.



Karlee Raile, a second grader at West Elementary, donned goggles and braved a pie in the face at the North Elementary School carnival February 24.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News



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