



Flames were coming out of the back door of the garage at Jesse and Doris Craft's home east of KLOE on Thursday evening, and spread into the kitchen. There were two vehicles in the garage, but the flames were mostly confined to the area in front of them. Investigators said the fire began in wiring in the southwest wall of the garage.
Photos by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News

Electrical fire started by short damages rural home

An apparent electrical short in the garage started a fire that spread into the kitchen of the home of Doris and Jesse Craft in southwest Goodland on Thursday evening.

Rural Fire Chief Kenny Griffith said Friday morning that the Crafts heard an explosion about 5:30 p.m. in the garage attached to the their house at 759 W. 31st, in the

Paxton subdivision south of I-70, and after a second one, they opened the door to find lots of smoke billowing out.

"They closed the door, called 911 and got out of the house," Griffith said. "When we arrived there were flames coming out of the back of the garage, and we knocked that down to get in the door.

"When the fire was out, it had spread into the kitchen and there was extensive smoke damage through the whole house."

A deputy state fire marshal, Melvin Dale of Garden City, inspected the scene Friday morning. Griffith said he determined that the fire had started in electrical wiring in the wall on the southwest side of the garage,

behind a freezer. The two vehicles in the garage had some melting damage, but did not burn, and Griffith said there was not as much heat in the front part of the garage. He said it was mostly confined to the back of the garage and into the kitchen.

The Crafts returned home Friday morning with daughter and son-in-law Ron and

Marsha Schilling to see what was damaged and what was salvageable and retrieve some personal belongings.

The Sherman County Rural Fire Department had four trucks on scene and 10 men. It took a few minutes to knock the fire down, the chief said, but it took longer to make sure all the fire was out.

Chamber looks back, forward to prosperous new year

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

A year of ups but mostly downs has plagued the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce, but with the approval of next year's budget, the group looks forward to a prosperous new year.

Tuesday, the Chamber board met and approved a revised version of next year's budget.

Although they encountered some setbacks this year, failing to raise enough money to pay for next summer's FreedomFest fireworks, Chamber Manager Courtney Warden said they only owe one more payment for last summer's festival.

"We've just been paying (fireworks provider Joe Diaz) off as we go," she said.

After collecting more dues, she said, they made the payment to Diaz, who grew up in Goodland and

is know for his fireworks displays in the Denver area, and board members agreed Tuesday to get the last check in the mail.

"I think we need to get him paid," said Chamber board President Donna Swager.

Fund raisers for Christmas were successful, too, with the Chamber selling 120 of the 200 Ennis-Handy House ornaments they ordered. Swager said it will be good to have some left over so collectors can still get one next year. Warden said the Handy House will keep the ornaments all year to sell to visitors.

The ornaments are planned to feature historical buildings in town but, Warden said, they have not yet decided what to place on next year's ornament.

She said the approval of the budget is good for the organization, which has not done regular budgets

in the past.

"I think we're in the right direction even having a budget," she said adding the Chamber had some numbers to compare for the first time this year because of the budget last year.

Before the vote on the new budget, board member Ken Clouse, president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College, asked if some of the concerns from last meeting had been incorporated into the new version.

Board members had been concerned about plans to move the Chamber office to a larger space across the hall, and decided their budget couldn't take the increase in rent.

The board also cut money in the budget for Flatlander Fall Festival expenses and the advertising fund. "(Advertising) is where I feel our

businesses benefit the most," Warden said.

Even with a cut in the advertising fund, she said she is positive about the budget and said they will adjust the numbers as the year goes on.

"I think I feel comfortable with the budget," she said.

Swager suggested becoming creative in adding to the advertising budget. She said the Chamber should start looking into corporate sponsors to help fund advertising for the summer festivals and incorporating more groups, such as the Sherman County Economic Development Council and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, into the planning.

The approved budget contains a line item for a new printer. Warden

said their current printer was a donation from the high school.

"It works every once in a while," she said.

"It has a lot of miles on it," said Darrick Leiker, a board member and owner operator of High Plains Office Supply.

The board decided to ask to borrow the printer from the now vacant Economic Development office. Warden said she could offer to have calls from the office forwarded to the Chamber in exchange for use of the printer.

Swager said the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Economic Development and the Chamber have been looking into sharing an office.

She said it would not only cut down on costs and ensure that someone would answer the phone, but it could foster a better working environment.

If the arrangement with economic development doesn't work out, Leiker said, he will loan the Chamber a printer until they buy a new one.

County employees to pay for food

Sherman County employees will have to dig in their own pockets for lunch money when out of town, at least if they are not gone overnight.

County commissioners decided Tuesday that, under new Internal Revenue Service rules, they should stop paying for meals when an employee is not gone overnight.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said there was a question being raised about the county reimbursing people for meals when the trip is not overnight. She told the commissioners that under the IRS regulations, such payments would have to be considered taxable and be run through payroll.

The commissioners decided it would be the best to simply say the county will not reimburse meals for trips where there is no overnight stay.

corrections

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student of the week



life is being with friends. After graduation I will remember all the good times with friends.

Activities involved in at school: Volleyball, track and Girls Athletic Association.

My choice of movies, books, and games: My favorite movie is Bourne Supremacy.

After I leave Goodland High School I intend to: go to college.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: working in a career of my choice.

Favorite Quote: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Student Comment: My favorite subject is Art. My favorite aspect of school

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