

**weather
report****67°**

noon Thursday

**Today**

• Sunset, 4:54 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 7:02 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:56 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 32 degrees
- Humidity 23 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds west northwest 14 mph
- Barometer 30.10 inches and steady

• Record High today 73° (1950)

• Record Low today -16° (1930)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 63°

Low Wednesday 29°

Precipitation none

This month .08

Year to date .08

Normal .55

The Topside Forecast

Today: partly cloudy, high around 60, low around 25, winds north northwest 9-30 mph. Saturday: partly cloudy, high around 30, low around 12, winds blustery north northwest 9-33 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: partly cloudy, high near 54, low around 26. Monday: mostly sunny, high near 59, low near 27. Tuesday: mostly sunny, high near 59, low around 26.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

Park project short by \$85,000

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

It has taken seven years for the plans for Pioneer Park to get to the bid stage, but Monday city commissioners learned construction may be set back again, as the bids came in about \$85,000 over budget.

The park site is on the west side of Cherry Ave. between Business U.S. 24 and 19th Street. The project was begun in 1998 as a drainage and flood control project, but a citizens group felt it should be an attractive entrance to the city, and proposed adding a lot of grass, trees, shrubs, sidewalks, a hike and bike trail, a gazebo and decorative lighting to beautify the area and gave it the name of Pioneer Park.

Darin Neufeld of Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, the engineer on the project, presented the bids and options to the commission. After about an hour of discussion, the commission decided to table the issue till the next meeting on Monday, Feb. 7.

There were two contractors bidding, with Miller Construction the lowest at \$465,404 and Rhoads Construction at \$615,930.

Neufeld said the bids did not include the design and engineering costs, which have to be added, with a maximum of \$75,500. That would bring the total project cost to \$538,904.

The problem is the city has only \$453,916 set aside, leaving a shortage of \$84,989.

Neufeld said he saw three options:

- Accept the bid from Miller and find the additional \$85,000 to complete the project as designed.

- Let the project die, and tell the state Department of Transportation the city was returning \$210,000 from a Transportation Enhancement grant.

- Narrow the project and then submit it for rebid. Neufeld said there are several items which could be eliminated or trimmed back to cut the cost of the project by about \$120,000.

Gene Tromble, a retired Methodist minister who has been the volunteer chairman of the

Pioneer Park committee, said he had to apologize that the project had not been accomplished two years ago. He told the commission that when he was working on the park project, he had received pledges for about \$53,000 for the park, and felt the city figures do not include that amount.

"I believe we can get much closer if these pledges can be brought in," Tromble said. "I want to be positive about this beautiful park, and feel that with a couple of weeks of time to work on it, we can raise about \$25,000 plus the pledges to make it possible to build the park as presented."

Tromble said Wednesday he had a few volunteers for a finance committee who would be making contacts.

"Under Kansas law, the city can only count on money actually in the hand to pay for this project," Tromble said. "Pledges can't be counted, and it is up to us to try to get that money into the city's hands."

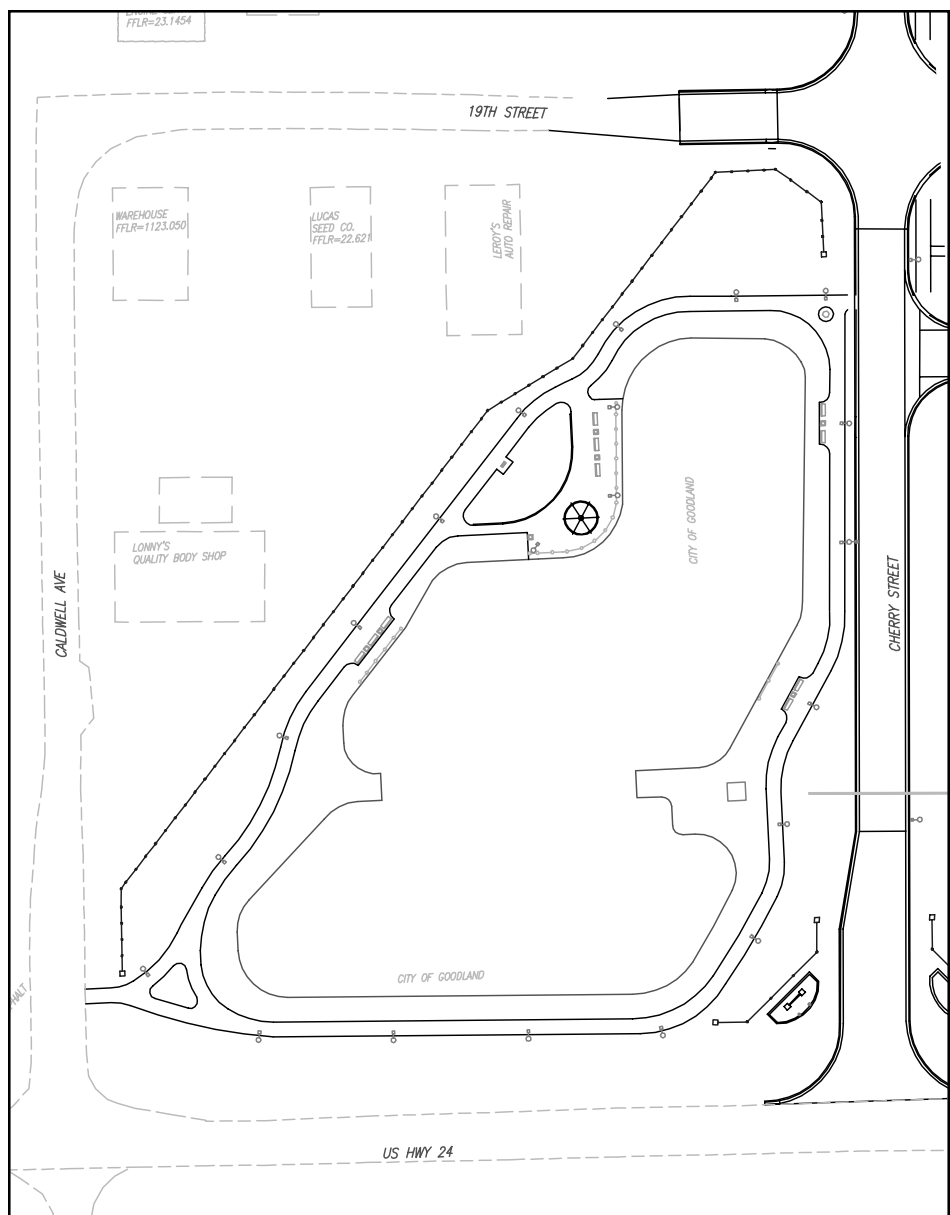
Commissioners looked over the bid tabulations Neufeld provided, and asked questions about line items. One that stood out was a drinking fountain that Neufeld had estimated would cost \$1,200 but the two bidders had turned in figures of \$5,800. Neufeld said he did not know if there was a mistake in the specifications or if the steel in the fountain had increased that much since the plans were drawn up.

Neufeld said both contractors expected to begin in March, and would be done by October.

Commissioner Dave Daniels asked about what would happen if the city accepted the Miller bid and found the extra money, then at the end found that the total cost was another \$100,000 higher.

Neufeld said the bid once awarded could only increase through change orders, and those had to be approved by the commission.

Mayor Rick Billinger said this was a lot of money to handle the drainage and flooding

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This is the design for Pioneer Park as it appeared in the engineering plans that the bidders had to work from. The design has been redrawn several times over the past six years, and if the city cannot find \$85,000, there will likely be more changes before the project can begin.

School approves sale of Edson gym, again

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

After years of trying, the Goodland School District may rid itself of the Edson gymnasium this summer.

At it's meeting Monday, the school board approved the sale of the building to Jeff Soper from California.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said Soper plans to use the building as a sort of permanent flea market. He said the Californian buys out auctioned-off merchandise abandoned in storage units and then sells the items online.

Selby said the buyer expects the building to be open to the public for sales as a flea market in the summer.

He is offering the asking price of \$50,000 for the gym. Selby said Soper would put \$10,000 in an escrow account to hold the gym and pay the balance June 1. The school would continue to use the building through the spring.

"It was used last Wednesday," Selby said. "It can be used the rest of the spring."

The gym is next to the old Edson school building and the school's old football field and bus barn on

roughly eight acres that belongs to Melvin Musil.

So far prospective buyers have been concerned about insuring the gym with the school building so close. Soper told Selby he'd pay \$25,000 for the land but said he is still interested in buying the gym without it.

After receiving a fax from Soper, Selby said, he spoke with Musil about selling the land and found he was reluctant to part with the football field and bus barn.

"He said he'd hate to lose that bus barn" Selby said. "It's where he

stores his cars."

He said Musil is afraid to sell the football field because he fears the buyer might ruin the view from his house to the highway.

Selby said after relating the information back to Soper, the buyer suggested leasing the bus barn back to Musil for \$1 a year for as long as he lives. Selby said Soper said he was willing to ask permission before placing anything on the football field.

The deed for the adjacent land, Selby said, was given to Musil, but he doesn't have an original copy and it was never recorded. He said Musil

is looking for the original and may need to file a quitclaim deed.

Selby told the board the extra land will be complicated to sell, and since Soper is interested in the gym even without it, they will go through with the sale.

"We'll do our part," Selby said, "(Soper) can deal with (Musil). It is really an albatross hanging around our necks."

Board members asked about a new well for the property and Selby said they had not discussed water.

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Deadline looms; few file for offices

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The election filing deadline is noon on Tuesday, but the city and county clerks say only a few people have filed as of Thursday.

Three positions are open on the Goodland School Board, three on the Goodland City Commission and three on the Kanorado Council, plus the job of mayor there.

Sherman County Clerk Janet Rumpel, who serves as the county election officer, said no one has filed for the school board seats, but she expects them to wait until the last day.

School board members up for re-election are Dick Short, Ron Schilling and Mike Campbell. Of those, only Short has said he plans to run. Campbell has said he thinks 12 years is long enough, and Schilling said last week he is not running.

Rumpel said Thursday her office has not received any new filing for Kanorado. Three candidates have filed from Kanorado. Bob Handle has filed for mayor and Deb Fahey and Linda Handle, Bob Handle's wife, for the council. Fahey, who is running for re-election, is an emergency medical technician on the Kanorado ambulance. Bob Handle is self-employed, and his wife works at

Wal-Mart.

City Clerk Mary Volk said Thursday Josh Dechant of Bankwest is the only one who has filed for the Goodland commission. She said applications have been taken out by Dave Walker, who works at the Kit Carson County Correctional Facility, Gary Farris of Farris Manufacturing and Conrad Pettijohn, who owns PJ's Home Improvement.

Commissioners Jim Mull and Dean Blume say they are not running, while John Garcia said he has not made up his mind yet.

Rumpel said she won't know if a primary election will be required until after the deadline. If needed, the primary would be Tuesday, March 1.

All voting in both will be done at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall in Goodland; under county policy, there will be no polling place in Kanorado.

To vote in April elections, voters must be registered by Monday, Feb. 14. Voters may register from 8 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. Monday-Friday at the courthouse, 813 Broadway, and from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday at the city clerk's office in the City Administration Building, 204 W. 11th.

Voters must be U.S. citizens age 18 or over by election day.

Aten's close careers after 54 years

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Though 10 winners walked away with prizes ranging from a 40-inch television to a four-slice toaster, joy was in short supply Saturday as shoppers gathered on Aten Department Store's final day.

Owners Wayne and Barbara Aten, who announced in November they planned to retire, had tears in their eyes as the time approached for closing the doors. Customers bid farewell to a shop that had been their favorite.

About 30 people gathered for the announcement of the top point earners in the "prize dollars" contest. Teacher Sarah Short took the top prize, a 40-inch television, with 67,159,000 points.

The second prize, a DVD recorder, went to Joyce Meyer; third prize, a 27-inch television went to Israel Nipps, who made regular trips from St. Francis to shop and participate in the competition; a boom box, prize No. 4, went to Kurt Hill; and prize No. 5, a home theater system, went to Debbie Overmiller.

Irma Chubback won sixth prize, a mixer; Sue Cude got a microwave, prize No. 7; Richard Rueb received prize No. 8, a fryer; and Judy Willems got No. 9, a 10-cup coffee maker. The lowest total to earn a prize was 16,964,000, which got Denise Meier a four-slice toaster.

Walt and Brenda McGuire, who have a contract with G.A. Wright of Denver, helped with the store's closing and were on hand to announce



Barbara and Wayne Aten and Brenda McGuire prepared to announce the winners in the "prize dollars" competition a little after noon Saturday.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

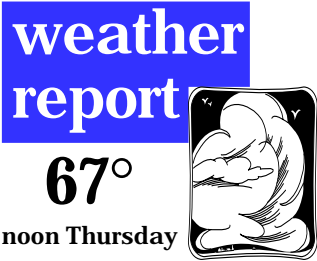
the prize winners and finish up a few details. The retail promotions firm helps stores with stock reductions, clearance sales, grand openings and business closings, they said, with the goal of attracting as many customers and making as many sales as possible.

The few racks with remaining clothes and the small pile of shoes looked a little forlorn in nearly empty building. Empty racks and shelves showed how much custom-

ers had already bought during the going-out-of-business sale and begged to be taken for use elsewhere.

The fixtures have mostly been sold, Wayne said, and just need to be picked up, adding that he would still be in the store for another week to tie up some loose ends.

After that, Wayne said, he and Barbara had plans to travel and then

See ATEN, Page 9a**local
markets****Noon**

Wheat — \$3.11 bushel

Posted county price — \$3.29

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$1.76 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.74

Loan deficiency pmt. — 21¢

Milo — \$1.44 bushel

Soybeans — \$4.57 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.81

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Millet — \$6 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$11.90 cwt.

NuSun — \$12 cwt.

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Confection — \$19/\$13 cwt.

Pinto beans — \$25

(Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun,

Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century

Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

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Cowboy poet entertains

Wheat Ridge Acres residents sat in on a reading by cowboy poet Ernie Ketzner of Bird City on Wednesday. After the performance, Ketzner visited with residents. Photos, story on Page 3.