

Declining population, streets, sewers top list of city issues

ISSUES, from Page 1

does a good job of doing his home-work most of the time, but I feel the commission needs to be running the city rather than the city manager.”

What can commissioners do?
The candidates were asked what they could do as a commissioner to move the city forward.

• “Have a commission that works together on the same goals,” Wood said. “Focus the commission on the same page and get people to help develop the goals and determine how we get there.”

“I have some ideas, but may not be what we end up with. There are ways to start.”

“An example is the success of my sister, who works for economic development in Ellsworth, of what she is doing with free land to attract

people to move to their city. The effort has drawn nationwide attention and has drawn at least five families to move to the city. The web site they developed has received many hits and over 80 follow-up contacts.”

• “As a city commissioner I would help achieve progress by helping to develop a detailed and prioritized list with a feasible time frame for our infrastructure issues,” Dechant said. “I will stress the need to support our local organizations that are trying to bring growth to Goodland. I will encourage the expansion of our grant research for these type of improvements, as well as additional funds from the state and federal levels.”

• “I can contribute to the successful future of our town,” Fairbanks said, “through my willingness to lis-

ten, my ability to make informed decisions and my position of being proactive rather than reactive.”

• “Help get our streets taken care of,” Farris said. “We have to keep our infrastructure up. Anything that would bring jobs to town we need to accommodate them in any way possible.”

• “I believe that two years as a commissioner has allowed me to understand how the mechanics of city government works and bring a vast and broad experience of business knowledge to the commission,” Garcia said “I believe the record of the commission over the past two years speaks for itself, and I believe we have accomplished a lot of things, including Pioneer Park that had laid dormant for four years. I think this will be a good boost for the community.”

“I want an opportunity to continue serving the people of Goodland and keep our city moving forward with a positive attitude, and I believe with all of us working together, and the Good Lord’s help, we can make Goodland a strong community.”

• “I feel the city needs to have a knowledgeable city manager,” Golden said. “The commission is a policy organ, and we need to be sure the manager is a quality person and that the city policies set by the commission are admirable goals.”

• “Get out of the mindset that there is a white knight coming to save us,” Walker said. “We will probably have a city-owned building empty, and three jobs are not going to save us.”

“I think there are many ideas out there that would work here. One

example is we heard recently that business fire alarm calls are being routed to California and then back here. Why couldn’t we have a terminus for fire alarms rather than sending them to California.

“We have an excess of space, and I think we could go to Topeka and tell them we would take care of many of the battered women. We can bring them here and put them in a secure housing and put them in classes as the college and put their kids in our schools. This is a win-win for us. There are many win-win ideas where we can make progress that promises a return. We need to find ways to keep our top kids from leaving for good.

“We need to woo people from Denver. Encourage retired people to move here from Denver where we don’t have the crime and the

housing is less expensive. ‘We can put the “good” back in Goodland,’ is my campaign motto.

• “I would gather information about the issues and make informed decisions,” Miller said. “I feel my experience as a business owner would help in making these decisions.”

Asked about the possible conflict of interest with his construction business, which sometimes bids on city work, Miller said, “I would assume I would not to be involved in any negotiations where I would be involved in business with the city. Hopefully the contract we are working on for Pioneer Park would be resolved before the election, and should be an ongoing contract.”

He said he would excuse himself from any discussion on that contract if elected.

Bones found in Sherman County reveal evidence of ancient people

DIG, from Page 1

Hemisphere,” said Mandel. “This could be the oldest site of human activity on the Great Plains.”

Carbon-14 dating completed last week shows the bones are between 12,200 and 12,300 years old,

Mandel said, which could mean humans lived on the Great Plains 1,300 years earlier than previously thought.

Mandel said if excavations this summer verify the finding of the stone tool, it would make the archaeological site among the oldest

in the Western Hemisphere.

“It would be one of the most important sites in North America,” he said.

Researchers initially found mammoth bone and stone-tool flint next to each other in soil dating back 11,000 years at the site. Below that,

they found mammoth and camel bone that were fractured in a way that appears to be caused by people who shattered bone with stone.

“Some scientists won’t be convinced that the older bones got here because of human hunters,” said Mandel, who is leading the team

that found the bones. “I’m not convinced, either. But I’m 75 percent convinced. There are few other ways the bones could be broken naturally the way they’re broken.”

Archaeologists and geologists are planning to dig in the site and others in the surrounding area in June, Mandel said. About 20-30 people will be at the site, he said, and there will be others surveying in Cheyenne County, Kan., and in sites across the Colorado border.

There will be a few more people

than at previous digs, he said, but they will be spread out over a larger area. Harlan House, a Sherman County farmer, had said there would be hundreds of people, Mandel said, and that kind of freaked the landowner out.

There may be hundreds, he said, but not all will be on her land.

The findings have gotten national attention from several news organizations, Mandel said, including *The Washington Post* and the Associated Press.

Carbon dating helps scientists determine age of bones found

How do scientists know how old the bones and artifacts they find are? How can the age of things thousands of years old be measured with no written record of what they are or when things were buried?

Carbon-14 dating measures the deterioration of radioactive carbon in the objects to determine how old they are. Carbon-14 has a measurable half life, said Dr. Rolfe Mandel, archaeological geologist at the Kansas Geological Survey.

“Webster’s New World College Dictionary” defines half life as “the constant time period required for

the disintegration of half of the atoms in a sample of some specific radioactive substance.”

Carbon dating is not theoretical, Mandel said, nor a ballpark figure. It is precise, with a standard deviation of 30-40 years.

The depth of burial can help, too, he said, when there are undisturbed layers of dirt and artifacts. Scientists find “horizons,” concentrations of material at a certain depth below the surface. Each layer, Mandel said, contains artifacts of a certain age.

Some artifacts found at the Sher-

man County site are from the Clovis period, Mandel said, around 11,500 years ago, and were found at four to five feet. The mammoth and camel remains were found at 6-8 feet, he said, and carbon-14 dating puts

them at 12,200 years old, pre-Clovis.

Clovis is the name for what are believed to be people of North America from 10,800 to 11,500 years ago.

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