

weather report

56°
 noon Monday

Today
 • Sunset, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday
 • Sunrise, 6:28 a.m.
 • Sunset, 5:31 p.m.

Midday Conditions
 • Soil temperature 41 degrees
 • Humidity 42 percent
 • Sky sunny
 • Winds west 9 mph
 • Barometer 29.99 inches and falling
 • Record High today 77° (1982)
 • Record Low today -2° (1939)

Last 24 Hours*
 High Sunday 59°
 Low Sunday 32°
 Precipitation .02
 This month .25
 Year to date .34
 Normal .68

The Topside Forecast
 Today: Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain and snow with an accumulation of less than a half inch, high around 34, low near 22, winds north northeast 14 mph. Wednesday: cloudy with 30 percent chance of snow, high near 35, low around 20, winds south southeast 9-11 mph.

Extended Forecast
 Thursday - Sunday: Partly to mostly cloudy, highs 39-43, lows 18-22.
 (National Weather Service)
 Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
 * Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon
 Wheat — \$3.02 bushel
 Posted county price — \$3.06
 Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 Corn — \$1.80 bushel
 Posted county price — \$7.53
 Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 Milo — \$1.52 bushel
 Soybeans — \$4.94 bushel
 Posted county price — \$5.07
 Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 Millet — \$6 hundredweight
 Sunflowers
 Oil current crop — \$10.25 cwt.
 NuSun — \$10.35 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.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



Cowboys win league

Freshman Jance McKee (right) scored a basket despite the defensive efforts of Hoxie's Jeff Cameron during the fourth period of Goodland's 79-75 overtime win over Hoxie on Friday in Max Jones Fieldhouse. Story, photo on Page 9a.

School solution evading officials

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

Almost 30 citizens, Farm Bureau members, health care workers and others gathered at Hank's cafe early Saturday for rolls, coffee and a chance to talk with state Sen. Ralph Ostmeier of Grinnell and Rep. Jim Morrison of Colby.

Ostmeier, who sits on the Senate Education Committee, said school finance is a priority for him.

"We have a tough job ahead of us," he said, adding that the committee has met 2 1/2 hours every day since the session opened, and still not come up with any solutions.

Ostmeier told the crowd that while he would like to see a three-year plan to change the school funding formula, he thinks the committee must find a way to meet the criteria set out by the Kansas Supreme Court to fund the current formula.

"We're not going to have time to fix the formula," he said, alluding to the April 12 deadline given by the courts, "so I think we need to fund the formula we have."

He said he wants to put more money into the base amount given to schools for each student and then work on the weighting, giving more money to schools based on number of students, later.

"Our small schools have to have more money in the base," he said.

Vocational education is on the chopping block, he said, but he will fight to keep it alive.

Ostmeier went on to talk about gambling. He said gaming hasn't worked to fund schools in other states and he doesn't think adding it will help here.

"I think people would be more willing to pay a sales tax than go gaming," he said.

Ostmeier, who also serves on the Agriculture Committee, said there is a movement to remove stickers off of the ethanol-blend gasoline pumps. He said the Farm Bureau is for it, so he supports the measure.

A vote is coming up, he said, on the death penalty, which he supports. Although he has been confronted with his pro-life stance on abortion and asked how the issue is different, Ostmeier said he thinks innocent life requires more protection than convicted criminals.

"I've always supported the death penalty," he said.

Morrison talked about his position as chairman on the House Committee on Health and Human Services and a member of the Health Care Stabilization Committee.

"There's a better solution," Morrison said the current health-care system. "If you lose your health, you're done."

This week, he said, he plans to hear testimony from a representative of Canada to discuss drug imports. He said drugs are cheaper in Canada only because of the country's socialized health care.

"Pfizer (a drug maker) does not sell drugs to Canada for less," he said, "Canada subsidizes the drugs, but Pfizer makes the same money."

Morrison said Canada has passed legislation making it illegal for a doctor there to prescribe medicine without seeing the patient.

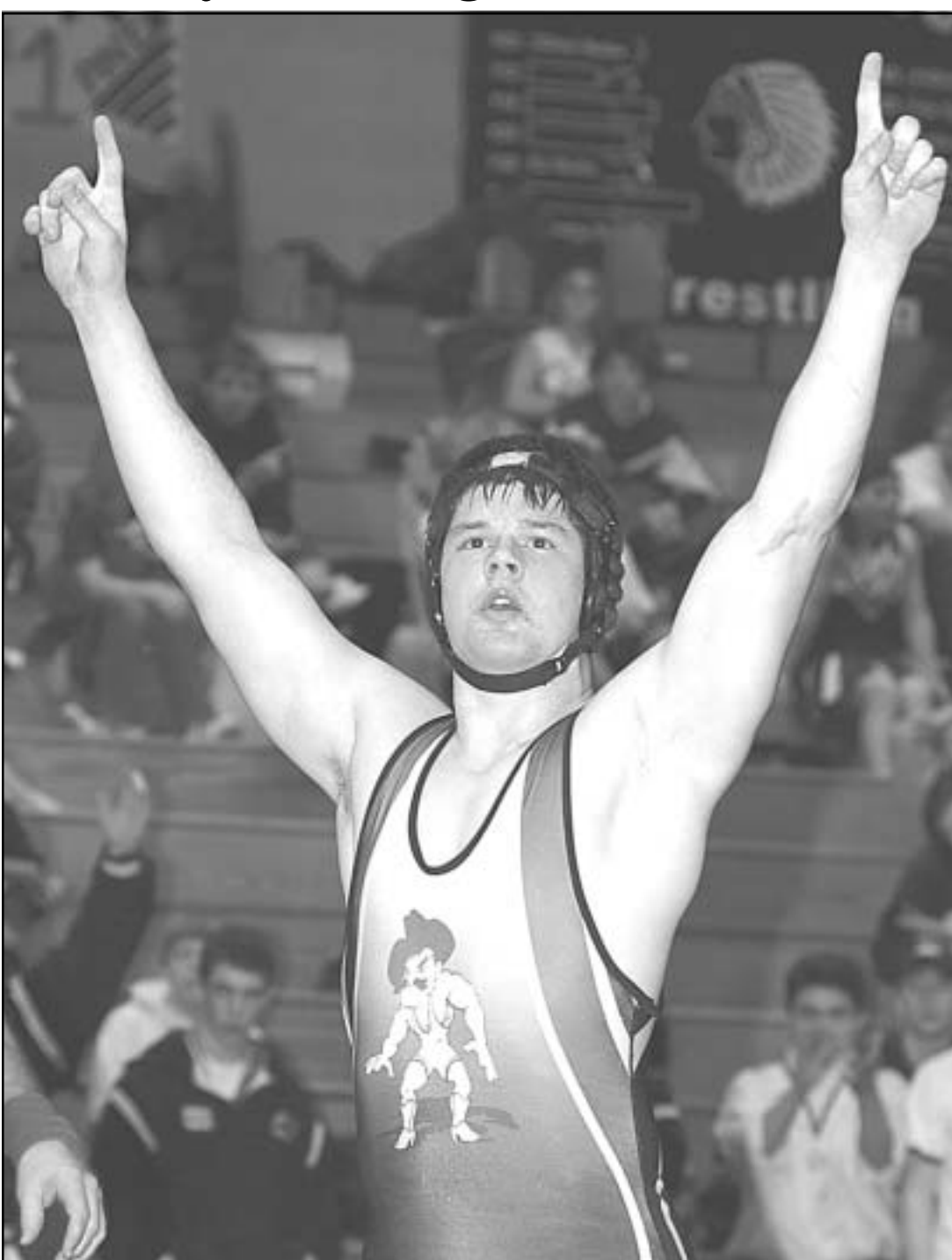
"If you don't go to Canada," he said, "you don't get the drugs."

He worries about government regulation of health care, too.

"The system is getting to a critical point," he said, "The cost of care is getting so high and people are

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Cowboys win regional title



Goodland senior Brandon Cowan raised his arms in victory after winning a 9-6 upset over Ryan Seger of Ulysses in the championship match at 189 pounds Saturday. The Class 4A regional wrestling tournament was held at the Colby Community Building. See story and more photos on Sports Page 10a.

Photo by Dennis Saint/The Goodland Star-News

Chamber updates members, hears challenge

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

Business people gathered at the annual Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce banquet Thursday night at the Northwest Kansas Technical College for food, entertainment and a Chamber update.

The banquet started at 6 p.m. with a hour, where guests were given name tags and encouraged to mingle while finding their seats.

In the background, the high school jazz band played.

Before dinner, the group stood up and chimed in for a flag salute.

After the salute, the invocation was provided by Father Norbert Dlabal, pastor of the Our Lady of

Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Goodland and Holy Ghost Church in Sharon Springs.

The room was set up with a head table at the front and tables of eight spread throughout the space. Each table had a lit red candle and was dotted a few Valentine's Day heart-shaped chocolate candies.



Siemens

Dinner was served buffet style, with business people lining up for heaping helpings of roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy and green beans or corn. Entertainment through dinner included the X-Pressos, the high school's show choir, with a four song selection.

After the music let up, Chamber President Donna Swager, manager

of Wheat Ridge Acres Retirement Community, took the microphone to start the annual meeting.

Although treasurer Brian Linin, Frontier Equity Exchange, was out of town, he sent his report, which was read by Swager.

Of the Chamber promotions over the past year, she read, the Christmas promotions, Flatlander Fall Festival and Freedom Fest lost money. The Chamber golf tournament was the only function to profit, earning the group \$225.94.

"Our intent this year is to really make these festivals self funding," Swager said. "We don't want to see any of the festivals die."

Next, Darrick Leiker, owner and operator of High Plains Office Supply and co-chair of the membership committee, reported on recruiting.

He said they have new folders packed with membership information and plan to fan out and enlist more businesses.

Ken Clouse, president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College and chair of the Beautification and Revitalization committee, said they plan a city-wide clean-up of Goodland in April this year. He praised the city for work on Pioneer Park and thanked them for helping plan the spring clean-up.

Clouse stressed the importance of adding nice signs to the entrances to Goodland.

"We need signage in this town," he said.

Debbie Reed of Hayden Inc., chairman of the agriculture committee, reported on plans for the Farm-City Banquet set for Tuesday, March

8, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall. She said they expect about 300 people to come out for the prime rib dinner.

Swager outlined changes to the Chamber by laws, establishing the position of secretary and eliminating those duties from the job of manager. Courtney Warden, Chamber manager, gave the board an update on events from the past year. Warden said she took over the job in March of 2004, when the Chamber had only 40 members. Over the year, she worked on festivals, promotions and increasing the membership to 115 by the end of the year.

Guest speaker Jeanette Siemens, manager of the Pratt Chamber of Commerce for 15 years, addressed

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District wants to cool schools

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

Students and teachers at North and West Elementary are looking forward to the Goodland School Board's efforts to cool their schools.

Sweltering summer school, hot springs and warm falls are forcing the board to look into installing air conditioning in the two buildings.

"Right now we're at the point where we can hardly use the buildings at all in June, July and August," said Superintendent Marvin Selby.

At a board meeting last Monday, Glen Strait, owner of Strait Associates Architects in Colby, presented an air conditioning feasibility study to the board. Strait said he worked with Selby to tour West Elementary to check out the pipes and heating units.

"It's a really good building," he said. "It really is well maintained."

Strait presented an option to use the school's current hot water heating system by adding a water chiller to create cool air. The second option would be to install roof air conditioning units on each group of two classrooms.

The heating system at West, which is identical to North, uses coils carrying hot water to warm the

air. A chiller would work on the same principal, Strait said, with the cool water chilling the air in the entire building.

Strait said the only drawback to the chiller system is the turnaround time. In spring or fall when the weather changes quickly, the system needs about a day to switch from heating to cooling. He said if the day gets hot and classrooms need air conditioning, but the nights remain cold, it may be a problem to warm the water back up.

"There is a lot of water in that loop," he said.

The rooftop units would be installed one for every two classrooms each with zone controls that would allow teachers in each room to use the system as needed.

Strait said for summer school, the roof units would let teachers cool one or two rooms while saving energy by not cooling the others.

Selby said the federal "No Child Left Behind Act" come into play more over the next few years, because summer school will be used more.

"We will have more and more students in summer school," he said.

Vents from the rooftop units would go down through the class-

room ceilings and distribute the air as needed.

The board would need to buy seven units, six for the 12 connected classrooms for each wing, or pods, and one for the preschool and vocal rooms. Strait said he recommends not cooling the indoor gym and cafeteria in this case, saying that with limited used, it wouldn't be cost effective.

He said one issue with both cooling systems is the lack of insulation in the building. He said the schools will need better insulation in the walls and ceilings to cut the cost of cooling. The windows, he said, are only single glazed.

"It has solid masonry, interior and exterior brick," he said, "but it's not a well insulated building."

The board agreed that the cost of gas and electricity was lower when the building was new, and agreed that the district might benefit on utility bills if they do insulate the building.

Board member Mike Campbell asked Strait if the chiller unit would require a dehumidifying element. Strait said with cool air, some dehumidifying happens naturally, but the

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Former Dighton clerk accused of embezzlement

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

A Brewster woman who used to be the Dighton city clerk has been charged in Lane County with stealing more than \$11,000 from a cemetery district and the city of Dighton.

Lane County District Court documents show that Linda Pettay faces charges of embezzlement from the Lane County Cemetery District and the city before resigning her position in the summer of 2003. Her husband, Kevin Pettay, is the Farm Bureau insurance agent for Sherman County.

The charges include 11 level 9 nonperson felonies, theft of \$500 to \$25,000, and 15 class A nonperson felonies, theft of less than \$500.

The alleged thefts took place from Feb. 2 through Aug. 29, 2003, with amounts taken at least three times each month.

Pettay is accused of taking \$2,274.47 from the city and \$9,219.89 from the cemetery

fund.

The missing money was discovered in August 2003 by Pettay's successor, Rachel Tiner, who now lives in Oklahoma.

Tiner told the Harris News Service she brought the missing money to the attention of auditors, the Dighton City Council and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. She said the council, cemetery board and mayor had no way of knowing the money was being taken.

Pettay was deputy city clerk for Dighton from Jan. 13, 1994, to April 28, 2000, and city clerk from April 28, 2000, through Aug. 31, 2003. She could not be reached for comment for this story.

In an interview last year, Kevin Pettay said he met his wife in 1996 while she was city clerk. He moved to Dighton in 1986 to work for the police department, where he served for the next eight years.

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