



The other half of this broken-out windshield helped save Rayscott Waller, Destin, Fla., when his truck rolled on I-70 Saturday. After breaking out the windshield, officers said, Waller slid 288 feet across both lanes of traffic on the westbound side of the road. Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

Truck driver surfs road on piece of windshield

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

A Florida truck driver went highway surfing on a piece of his windshield after rolling his truck Sunday on I-70 west of town. Rayscott Waller, 46, Destin, Fla., was taken to Goodland Regional Medical center for treatment, said Trooper Jason Duffey of the Kansas Highway Patrol. He said the truck rolled about 12:30 p.m. about 10 miles west of Goodland, on the curves near the rest stop. Duffey's report said the truck was westbound when it went off the road, Waller overcorrected and the vehicle turned on its side. It wound up facing east. Waller, reached at the Howard Johnson Hotel in Goodland, said Monday he is thankful to come out of the accident OK. "I feel very blessed," he said. "It was a pretty amazing accident." He said when he realized the truck was going to roll, he thought he needed to get out. Waller, who wasn't wearing a seat belt, said he was thrown into the passenger seat,

where he decided to punch out the truck's windshield. "I was just trying to get out of the truck," he said. The truck was at full speed, 70 miles per hour, he said, when the accident happened. He said truckers know the survival rate of a high speed rollover isn't very high, so he knew he had to act fast. "It's all going through your mind so quickly," he said. "I punched the window out. Miraculously, the windshield came out." Sherman County Undersheriff Roger Studer, the first officer on the scene, said Waller slid 288 feet across both lanes of traffic. "He's lucky," he said. Waller said he escaped the accident, his first, with nothing more than scrapes and bruises. He said the hospital put him through a magnetic resonance imaging machine, or MRI, just to be sure. "I'm bruised up," he said, "but no broken bones." Studer said the windshield didn't shatter, but popped out of the vehicle in two pieces. One came to rest

on the ground next to the truck and the other slid across the road carrying Waller. "I've never seen it before," the undersheriff said. He said Waller landed partly in the westbound passing lane and witnesses stopped to direct traffic around him. "I was cognizant the whole time," Waller said, adding that he held on to a pre-pass unit, a two-inch by four-inch electronic device attached to the windshield to identify a truck at weigh stations. "When I stopped, I thought, 'Did that really happen?'" Studer said when he arrived and saw Waller on the other side of the highway, he assumed he had crawled or walked there. The safety glass in the truck's windshield, he said, didn't break, and it protected Waller during his slide. The Tyson-owned rig was not Waller's normal truck, he said, but a loaner from the company out of Springdale, Ark. The load of frozen chicken headed for Denver was removed by MCB's Motor Co.

County upgrading 911 emergency calling system

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County is upgrading its 911 emergency calling system, and last Tuesday, commissioners approved an additional \$1,440 for a uninterrupted power source from SBC Corp. Mary Messamore, manager of county dispatch and emergency management, told the commissioners the first phase of the upgrade began with the arrival of the new equipment last week. However, the technicians told her the emergency power backup on the current system is not big enough to handle the new gear. She said they recommended a larger backup to help handle the in-

creased power needs at a cost of \$1,440 from SBC, which is handling the installation and provides the phone lines. The commissioners asked if there was enough money in the 911 equipment fund, and County Clerk Janet Rumpel said there was more than enough to cover the cost. The commissioners approved the purchase. Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked Messamore how much money the county was receiving from the new monthly tax on cellular phones that began in September. Messamore said it is bringing in about \$750 a month. She said Wallace County has asked if Sherman County could

handle wireless 911 calls for their county. The commissioners said they might consider that after the new system is up and running, but they preferred to take one step at a time. Rasure said he had heard some complaints that the 911 system was not always working, but Messamore said the system is working well and that the upgrade is to be able to better handle the cell phone calls. Rasure said anyone who thinks the 911 system has not answered their call should redial to be sure they have hit the right numbers. "We want to know if there are any failures in the system," Rasure said, "and we can check back in the

phone records to see what may have happened. We all depend on the system to work, and we know how important it is to those calling in." In other business, the commissioners: Approved reappointment of Marvin Duell to the rural fire board for a three-year term. They will try to contact Melvin Sieck to see if he is interested in serving another term. Had a report from the Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development that Greg Nemecek is willing to stay on as the county representative and that Fred Hall would be his alternate. The commissioners approved the appointments.

- Accepted the resignation of Marsha Schilling from the City/County Recreation board and appointed Terry Taylor to replace her.
- Heard Commissioner Mitch Tiede say he had been looking at the county salary resolution, and felt it needed to be updated.
- Commissioner Kevin Rasure noted that it was about three years old and did need some revisions. They will consider that at today's meeting, along with reviewing the salary recommendations from department heads.
- Discussed the need to have the Kanorado ambulance housed in the fire station. Commissioners agreed that for the present time, the ambulance should be housed in the fire

station, and that the commissioners, the rural fire board and the City of Kanorado should look for a long-term solution. Rasure said it would be important for Kanorado to be sure there are enough trained crew members to keep the ambulance there before the station is expanded. Approved bills for the first half of the month totaling \$82,312. Held a 15-minute closed session with County Clerk Janet Rumpel to discuss personnel. The commissioners will meet at 8 a.m. on Monday in the commission room on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway, to close the month out.

More rain means more weeds, more cost

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

Most everyone is glad the area has been getting more moisture, but more rain will mean more weeds along the county roads, and it looks like the cost of mowing those weeds is going up because fuel for the mowers is costing more. Contractor Darrell Schrader told the Sherman County commissioners last Tuesday that he wants to work with the county and handle the mowing for this year, but he said the cost of fuel is so high he is asking the county to help cover the increase. He said the cost of diesel fuel has risen 8-12 percent in the last three months, and he has been trying to work out a contract price for the summer. Sherman County has a contract with Schrader to mow the county roads at a cost of \$160,000, and Commissioner Rasure said he felt that was a fair price, but agreed the county might help with some of the fuel costs. Schrader said he had a firm contract with Frontier Equity last year, and hopes to work

out a similar contract this year. He said the fuel price is about 40 cents per gallon higher than last year. He used 23,000 gallons to do the mowing last year, and had a contract for 20,000 gallons. He said the extra moisture made it harder to mow some of the weeds, and that they had to go over some places more than the normal two mowings. Curt Way, public works manager, said the county's diesel cost has risen about \$16,000 over the past year, while the number of gallons used has fallen from 64,760 in 2003 to 63,186 last year. Way said the cost has risen from \$85,195 to \$101,616 last year. The commissioners said they felt Schrader did a good job of mowing, but that there were some times when it seemed the mowers were not getting a full day of work, and they had to take a few extra days to finish up in December. Schrader said he has six mowers and is hoping to replace two of the older ones this year. He said the weed amarath is really making him go through the blades. He said he uses a pallet of blades a month and there are 14 sets of blades

in a pallet. Way said he appreciates that Schrader tries to help keep the ditches cleaned out, especially when he finds tires. Schrader said beer bottles play havoc with the mowers, and he is finding more pallets in the ditches, which slow down the mowing. On the fuel cost, Schrader said he is willing to absorb some of the increase, but would ask the commissioners to consider paying part. Commissioner Mitch Tiede asked Schrader if he has a firm figure or an idea of how to determine the amount he is asking for. Schrader said he wanted to talk to the commissioners about the problem before he made a commitment for the fuel. The commissioners told Schrader they would discuss the matter and have Way contact him. They planned to put the mowing cost on the agenda for today's meeting. After Schrader left, the commissioners discussed the fuel cost with Way, and suggested they consider a fuel surcharge with a base figured on 20,000 gallons. Rasure asked that they discuss it before today's meeting.

City Commission to hear about wind

Renewable Energy Resources, a Tennessee company that is planning a 10-tower wind farm southwest of town, is asking the City Commission to consider a sales agreement and an option for some power. The firm is opening an office here, and plans to build several wind farms in Kansas and Colorado. The commission will meet at 5 p.m. tonight because the meeting was delayed by the President's Day holiday on Monday. In other business, the commission will: Consider authorizing the mayor to sign the annual operation and

maintenance assurance statement for Steever Park. The park land was purchased with a federal recreation grant years ago when the ballpark was built. The city has to assure the government that the land is still in use for outdoor recreation. Appoint one person to the Recreation Advisory Board. Approve payment to Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates for engineering work on the airport lighting project. The commission meets at 5 p.m. upstairs in the City Administration Building, 204 W. 11th. The city office close at 4 p.m., and the front door will be locked.

corrections

An article "Hundreds learn to stay healthy" on the front page of *The Goodland Star-News* on Tuesday, Feb. 8, reported incorrectly that the Sherman County Health Department was responsible for blood tests. Participants had their blood profiles done two weeks before the fair by staff and volunteers at the Goodland Regional Medical Center. Test results were reviewed with Drs. David Younger, Travis Daise and Mohamed Shafei in a screened-off area, not private rooms. A booth to check body fat percentages was set up by Sherman County Extension, not the health department. Diabetes testing was provided by the hospital. These were the reporter's errors. ★★★★★ The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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