

Dr. Mark Wahlmeier, Goodland's newest optometrist, tested out a slit lamp, a device used to help check the health of patients' eyes, on Courtney Knox. Wahlmeier took over Dr. Thomas White's practice earlier this month.  
Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

# Community gains replacement eye doctor

By Kathryn Burke  
The Goodland Star-News

A Colby eye doctor has moved in to replace an optometrist who was called back to active military service.

Dr. Mark Wahlmeier, a Norton native, is commuting from Colby on Mondays and Wednesdays to take up the slack left by Dr. Thomas White, who was called back into the U.S. Army.

Wahlmeier has been practicing optometry in Colby for five years with his partner, Dr. Jeff Morrison.

One of Dr. White's employee, Courtney Knox, stayed on after he left, Wahlmeier said, and has been a big help in making the transition smooth.

He said the computer system now is linked into the Colby office, so patients' information is easy to get.

The only problem he's encountered so far, he said, is the number of patients he sees in two days.

"We're booked out about one month," he said, adding that patients who need to be seen sooner

can call the Colby office.

Eventually, he said, he and his partner would like to hire an optometrist to work full time at the office here.

"We have time to look," he said, adding that he would like to continue to travel back and fourth even after someone is hired. "I always plan to come over here."

He said they would like to add more modern machines to test for glaucoma. He said they have hired a new receptionist, Courtney Haeffner.

Dr. Wahlmeier was born in Norton, the youngest of 14 children of Francis and Sally Wahlmeier. He went to school in there and graduated from high school in 1991.

He went on to college at Fort Hays State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in general science and played football all four years.

He went on to earn his Doctor of Optometry from the University of Missouri at St. Louis.

After school, he joined the prac-

tice in Colby, where he has been ever since.

Wahlmeier said he started wearing glasses in the fifth grade.

He became interested in the science in junior high, when he was fitted with contact lenses for the first time. From then on, he said, he's been into eyes and he loves his job.

It has been a pleasure to meet new patients in Goodland, he said: "It's been really nice coming over."

He lives in Colby with his wife, Amanda and children Paton, 2, and Kelyn, 4. His oldest son, Jordan, 11, lives in Norton.

Wahlmeier is a member of the Colby Rotary Club board and president of the parish council of Sacred Heart Catholic Church there.

The office here, Wahlmeier said, offers complete eye care, including cataract treatment and glaucoma treatment, contacts, glasses, sunglasses and specialty lenses.

"We try to provide the best vision care that we can," he said. "We want you to see as sharp as possible."

# Teen gets diversion agreement in accident case

By Kathryn Burke  
The Goodland Star-News

A Goodland teen facing charges of involuntary manslaughter and reckless driving in Sherman County District Court after a car accident last fall reached diversion agreement last week.

Under the agreement, Brett Bahe, 16, will be on probation for one year and pay \$180 in court fees.

Bahe, a wrestling star at Goodland High School, was behind the wheel of a speeding 1999 Dodge Durango around midnight on Saturday, Oct. 24, when he lost control and the truck rolled, the Sherman County Sheriff's Department reported.

The accident killed passenger Michael J. Klinge, son of Dennis and Peggy Klinge, and injured four other teens.

Klinge's parents backed the deal. "We were totally against him being charged with anything," said Peggy Klinge. "He's gone through enough.

"We miss Michael. It's something we

deal with ourselves every day. It's hard to think because of this someone else is going to suffer."

Klinge said she was glad Bahe and the others involved in the accident didn't have to relive the details in court.

Bahe, represented by attorney Jeff Mason, had entered a plea of not guilty in front of District Magistrate Judge Steve R. Unruh for the involuntary manslaughter charge, a level 5 person felony, and the misdemeanor reckless driving charge.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said the reckless driving charge was dismissed last Thursday and Bahe was given a diversion on the manslaughter charge.

Selby said the conditions of the probation are the usual, including, not violating any laws, remaining in school, not drinking alcohol or doing drugs and performing 25 hours of community service.

She said Bahe had taken the initiative to speak with kids his own age about the choices he made. She said he wants to work

with the sheriff's department to talk about his experiences.

"He wanted to contribute," she said, with a "don't go where I went" theme. "He is so positive about this and taking responsibility."

Charged as a juvenile, Selby said, Bahe was facing a maximum of 90 days in a detention center.

In October, former Sheriff Doug Whitson said the accident happened two-tenths of a mile east of County Road 23 on County Road 64, an old location of U.S. 24 running south of Edson between I-70 and what is now known as Old 24.

Whitson said the truck went out of control and rolled at least twice. Klinge was ejected from the vehicle along with Bahe and Ashley J. Christians, 14. None of the youths was wearing a seat belt.

Two other passengers, Alison E. Milke, 15, and Allen J. Normandin, 14, remained in the truck.

Christians, daughter of Julie Christians, was taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center and then flown to Children's Hospital in Denver.

Normandin, son of Neil and Roberta Normandin, was released from the hospital that night, while Milke, daughter of Danyale Nothdurft, was kept overnight.

Bahe, son of Randy and Kathy Bahe, was treated at Goodland Regional and then taken by ambulance to St. Anthony Central Hospital in Denver.

Everyone injured in the accident is healthy today and back in school. Mrs. Normandin said although physically fine, she thinks Allen will face the lingering affects of the accident for years.

"He has mental anguish to deal with," she said. "He lost his best friend. They were like twins; they were inseparable."

Mr. Bahe said Brett is dealing with the consequences of the accident, too.

"He's dealing with it, he's handing it the best he can," he said. "It was a tragic accident and we're all going day by day to make the best of it."

Bahe said the family has received a lot of support and the families of the kids involved in the accident. Her son got to take part in a tribute to Michael at a Kids Wrestling sub district tournament at Max Jones

Field House two weeks ago.

"It was a great honor for us to be involved in a tribute like that," she said. "It just really touched our hearts."

Whitson said at the time that the cause of the accident was under investigation, but there was no indication of alcohol involved. Selby confirmed that Bahe was driving sober.

Klinge, a freshman, was out for football. Milke and Christians are freshmen and both were on the volleyball team. Normandin is a freshman.

Bahe, a sophomore, is on the wrestling team and won the gold medal at 112 pounds in the state Class 4A wrestling tournament in Wichita. His father coaches the wrestling team and his brothers have been known as champion wrestlers.

Whitson said after the wreck that the speed of the car hadn't been fixed, but it appeared to have been high. Selby said the speed of the vehicle was never determined exactly, but it was deemed to be excessive.

"We hope the best for Brett," Klinge said, "and we want him to know we're beside him all the way."

# Economic development not talking about possible new business

By Kathryn Burke  
The Goodland Star-News

With rumors of a new business coming to town, people are already

## corrections

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 appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this.

speculating on what it will be, where it will go in and what it will do for our community.

The Sherman County Economic Development Council isn't letting on, either.

At a meeting Tuesday, March 15, members of the board alluded to a business looking to relocate to Goodland.

"Another new business is looking to come to our community," said John Garcia, board chairman and owner of Garcia's Home Furnishings.

"(They're) very interested in Goodland," said Steve West, president of Bankwest, board member and Industrial park committee chairman, adding that the Industrial Park is ideal for the business.

"What it currently offers would be fine," he said.

The committee may meet soon, he said, to discuss the business.

"There are some good things about to come to fruition," said Garcia.

The board may soon have a new executive director to go after even

more new businesses, after an executive session during the meeting.

Although they aren't releasing names, the board is in negotiations with the potential employee.

The new director will be filling the spot left vacant by Carolyn Applegate, who turned in her resignation in December.

With help from Kay Younger, office secretary hired in mid-January, the director may be entering a re-decorated office.

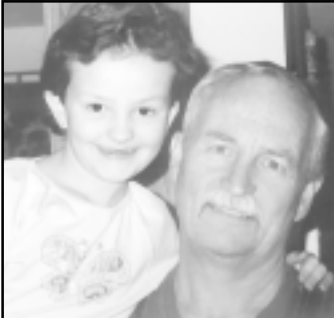
The board voted to allow Mrs. Younger license with the decor in

the office. She suggested adding work from local artists on consignment. There would be no cost to decorate the office, she said, and it could benefit the artists.

"That'd be kind of neat," said board member Don Newell, adding

that Younger has done a good job of taking care of the office. "I'd like to thank Kay."

Garcia agreed, saying it was good that the new director will have a strong person in the office to rely on.



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Considering foster parenting?

Consider The Farm, Inc.! The Farm, Inc. is sponsoring an information night for Goodland area residents interested in foster parenting. It will be held Wednesday, March 30, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. MST at the Murray Center of the Northwest Kansas Technical College. There will be door prizes and refreshments. If you are interested in foster parenting, we want to meet you! The Farm, Inc. is a non profit business serving Kansas foster children and families. Any questions call Vicki Beiser at 785-694-2892.

**The Sherman County Community Partners Coalition and the Regional Prevention Center would like to thank all parents who returned a Parent Survey.**

**Winners of Wal-Mart Gift Cards:**

**\$100 ~ Tonya Williams**

**\$50 ~ Steve Simon**

**\$25 ~ Roxann Kling**

**\$10 ~ John Dautel**

**\$10 ~ Jackie Buller**

**\$10 ~ Susan Engel**

*Children of these parents are winners too of \$50, \$25, \$10, \$5.*

**Information from the Parent Survey will be used to help us with our "It's OK to say No Way!" campaign to reduce underage drinking in our community. For information call 462-8152.**

The project was funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.



# Brent A. Wood for City Commission

- A written Economic Growth policy and plan
- City Departments that work with the people
- Start a "Welcome Home" program that will bring families to our city. See [www.kansasfreeland.com](http://www.kansasfreeland.com)
- Inform the Public on City Government Activities
- A Safe and Clean Community