



Goodland Transportation Supervisor Bob Harkins lifted the storage compartments of the new Cowboys and Cowgirls riding bus Thursday. Students will get to take their first ride in the vehicle for prom on Saturday.
Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

Board rides new bus

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

Even before any of the kids had a chance, Goodland School Board members and anyone attending the board meeting Monday got to take a spin in the high school's new activities bus.

Students will have to wait until Saturday.

The 1999 Van Hool bus was parked out in front of the district offices for everyone to check out during the meeting. The bus reads "USD 352 Goodland Cowboys" in large print above a smaller cursive "Home of the Cowboys and Cowgirls" printed on the sides of the bus. On either side of the writing are black and gold swirls, and the Goodland Cowboy logo is on the back. Above the logo are the words "Cowboys" and "Cowgirls" separated by a star and below it says "Goodland, Kansas."

Board member Ron Schilling said the bus will be a great billboard for advertising Goodland as it drives back and forth on the highway.

Bob Harkins, school transportation supervisor, lowered the front of the bus for everyone to climb aboard.

As passengers walk down the

middle, the bus has two rows of seats with brightly colored covers on each side, four per row along the bus. The back row seats four, and each set of two seats has an armrest in the middle that can be folded up for more room.

Overhead, books, bags and other carry on items can be stored in an open rack. Students can stretch out with extra leg room under each seat. The bus is lined with radiant heating to keep feet warm and circulate the warm air throughout. Large windows line both sides and a nearly floor-to-ceiling windshield covers the front of the vehicle.

The bus is equipped with three televisions, one in front and one above each row of seats about halfway down the length of the bus.

For long trips, students can use the rest room at the back of the bus.

Harkins drove the bus south on Main Avenue from the district office to 17th Street and headed east. He turned on 18th and headed east again, then took Arcade Ave. to 8th Street heading west towards Main. The group "cruised" Main and ended the tour back in front of the district office.

The district bought the bus from the ABC Bus Co. in Grand Prairie, Texas, for \$141,300. They had de-

cals made for the bus by Mike Boyson, a Bird City artist who owns the sign firm Hot Brush, for around \$2,500.

Harkins traveled to Texas to pick up the bus and attended a two-day training class to learn to maintain it. A representative will come to town once a year to check on the bus, he said.

Any repairs, Harkins said, could be handled through the Master's maintenance shop in Kearney, Neb., and the Central Detroit Diesel-Allison shop in Colby.

He said Van Hool buses have been in production since 1937 and he expects the bus to last at least 15 years.

The Van Hool has an independent air ride system, Harkins said, and it will get eight miles per gallon compared to the maximum of 6 1/2 miles per gallon in the old buses.

The bus is more powerful, too, he said, with 400 horsepower compared to 335 in the district's current bus, a 1981 Motorcoach.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said they plan to have the kids to ride on the new bus during prom on Saturday. He said it will shuttle the kids back and forth from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall to Max Jones Fieldhouse.

School fares better with new state finance plan

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

The new school finance plan could mean more than \$180,000 extra for the Goodland School District.

Superintendent Marvin Selby told board members that he had gotten a copy of the finance plan put out by the state Legislature.

"They've taken out low enrollment weighting as we know it," Selby said at a meeting Monday, March 28, adding the legislators put more money into the base.

"It raises the base from \$3,863 to \$4,107 (per student)," he said adding that the raise equals out to the exact same amount the district got this year for low enrollment weighting.

On top of the \$244 increase in the base, Selby said, the Legislature added another \$115 per student. Instead of adding in a certain amount

of money for each at-risk and bilingual student, the district gets to count them as a percentage of a whole student. For example if there are 10 bilingual students, they count as 10 and with an extra 0.10 percent weighting. The district can count that as another whole student for 11.

Selby said the formula gets more complicated because bilingual students only get weighting for the amount of time they spend with a certified bilingual teacher. If the student spends the entire day with the instructor, he said, you can count the entire 0.10, but if he spends only an hour, it only counts as one-sixth of the 0.10.

With the new plan, at-risk students, who used to count as 1.10 students, now count as 1.145. Bilingual students used to count as 1.20 and now are 1.395.

Certain categories for the money, like at risk or bilingual education,

he said, are to be used strictly within those categories. Selby said in this district, they already spend more on those programs than they receive, so they should have no trouble using allotted funds.

"It might free up money to spend elsewhere," he said.

As the plan stands, Selby said, Goodland could get anywhere from \$180,000 to \$200,000 more next year.

"It's much better than anything we've had recently," he said, adding that shrinking enrollment will keep the schools from seeing the full potential of the increases.

If the school could count the same number of students at the beginning of the new year as it did this fall, he said, they could have seen \$300,000. Even with the extra money, Selby said, it won't be enough to do everything the district wants to do. He said the district was

part of a study to determine how much it costs to educate students, and he came up with a figure of \$6,500 each.

To find the number, he looked at all of the programs the schools have had to drop over the past few years.

"That was going back and adding two counselors," he said, "one principal for each school and adding kindergarten teachers."

Selby said the new finance plan includes a provision to allow "rich" school districts, those with housing evaluations at 125 percent above the state average, to increase the local option budget. Those districts can go from 25 percent of their total budget, the current cap on the local option budget, to 28 percent the first year, 29 percent in the next year and 30 percent in the following year.

The justification given by the Legislature for raising the budget in those districts, he said, is that teachers have a higher cost of living in urban areas and need the extra money to live there.

In the plan, other districts also can raise their local option budget, but by less. In the first year, they are allowed to raise it from 25 percent of their total budget to 27 per-

Two in accident near Ellis

Two Goodland residents were taken to a Hays hospital Saturday after they were in an accident on I-70 near Ellis.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Francis S. Cook, 59, and Selma J. Cook, 61, were headed west at 4:47 p.m. Central Time on I-70 just west of the Trego-Ellis county line.

Francis Cook was driving his 2003 Pontiac Montana mini van, he said, when he suspects they blew a

tire which pulled the van into the median. He said he pulled back and went into the grass on the right side when the vehicle rolled.

When the accident was over, he said, the vehicle had gone several yards from the highway to a fence line. He said the back wheels were up on the fence and since the car was still in gear, it moved forward, dislodging the vehicle.

"We're very thankful for the way things turned out," he said.

They were both taken to Hays Medical Center, he said, and he was treated and released with minor injuries.

"I have a bad bruised shoulder," he said.

His wife, Selma, was flown from Hays to Wichita where they found her first vertebra in her neck was fractured.

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student of the week

Name: Melissa Swager
Parents: Harvey and Donna Swager
Grade: Junior
Age: 17
We've nominated this student because: Melissa is an excellent student role model in the classroom. She is attentive to every activity and always prepared for class. Melissa has a positive outlook about school and interacts well with all students.
Student Comment: Hanging out with my friends and participating in Goodland High School sports. I also

really enjoy my math and science classes. I will always remember the lawnmower incident....Thanks Tabor.

Activities involved in at school: Girls Athletic Association, National Honor Society, Class officer 2006 President, Les Chorales, basketball, volleyball, softball and Fort Hays State University Math Relays.

My choice of movies, books, and games: I like comedy movies like the classic movie "Tommy Boy." I enjoy playing cards and reading any type of books.

After I leave Goodland High School I intend to: Play softball at the college I attend and major in religious studies and education.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: working at a job I love and beginning to start a family.

Favorite Quote: "Don't let possible determine your dreams let your dreams determine the possible." Coach Diehl

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