

Goodland shares culture with California kids



Simon Wang, an exchange student from China, bonded with a kitten as members of the Goodland American Field Service showed exchange students from California around town. Wang presented a slide show report on his home to California guests and Goodland members. Photo by Elaine Felver

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

It was, like, different, you know? Eleven California students experienced life in Goodland during a four-day visit last week through American Field Service, the same group that handles foreign exchange students.

The students from Carlsbad High School said they got a chance to see a culture much different from their own.

The group attended classes at Goodland High School and visited Mueller Grain, Goodland Greenline, the High Plain Museum, T-Bone Feeders, the Antique Warehouse and several farms in the area. They even visited a buffalo ranch north of town owned by the Klemm family.

Simon Wang, a foreign exchange student who attends high school here, gave a presentation from his home in China. Wang offered everyone a sample of Chinese tea.

The students had a talent show, belting out Karaoke numbers for each other.

On their last night in Goodland, the students went to Doug and Jeanne Irvin's home, where they watched videos and played games.

The teen-agers sampled buffalo meat and sunflower seeds grown right here.

Bianca Hazel, a high school sophomore at Carlsbad, said the biggest difference between in the towns is the size.

"Your whole town is the size of my school," she said, adding there are about 300 students in the high school here compared to 3,000 in

Carlsbad.

Sarah Collins, a sophomore, said she liked the atmosphere in Goodland.

"I liked how friendly the place is," she said. "In California, you barely know your neighbors."

"I think it's good because you know everybody," agreed Crystal Small, also a sophomore.

Small said she had never been on a farm and enjoyed learning about rural areas.

"I've never seen a farm," she said. "I never saw people actually milk the cows."

She enjoyed watching Diane Gattshall show them how to make cinnamon rolls from scratch, too.

The exchange sent eight Goodland students to Carlsbad last month to see what life is like in California.

The students saw San Diego, Seaport Village, Carlsbad and even went to Disneyland.

Wang was among the group. "I really loved that city," he said. "It's a very clean city."

Andrea Grieve, a Goodland student, said the landscape in California was so different. She was surprised to find out that they don't get any snow in Carlsbad, which is along the coast almost halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego.

"I think they learned more coming here," she said, adding that even she learned new things about Goodland while showing the stu-



Hazel



Small



Collins

dents around.

Kali Rietcheck, another Goodland student, not only learned about the culture in California, but made a good friend in the process. Rietcheck and Ellen Armstrong of Carlsbad met through the program and hit it off.

"We've been e-mailing each other since we went out there," she said.

Rietcheck liked seeing a different part of the world, too.

"I had never been to the ocean before," she said.

The teachers agreed, both groups were well behaved and learned a lot from the program.

"We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Goodland and several want to return," said Carlsbad teacher Kim Wakefield. "The vast majority left with a very positive impression of life in a small town."

Elaine Felver, co-sponsor for the Field Service group, said the experience was good for the kids. She said by the end of the visit the students were all interacting pretty well.

"It was a successful exchange," she said.

I-70 travel center here not on closing list — yet

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The travel information center at the Kansas Speedway will close in June, but state tourism officials said there are no plans to close others, including one near Goodland.

Concerns about the future of the center on I-70 west of Goodland were raised last Tuesday at a Sherman County Economic Development Council meeting.

Donna Price, executive director of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the state has announced that the travel center in Kansas City would be

closed within two months.

Earlier, she said, the center was to close at the end of December.

The travel center west of town on I-70 is the property of the Kansas Department of Transportation, Price said, but the Department of Commerce's Division of Travel and Tourism pays the two full-time people who run it.

She encouraged people to call their state senator or representatives to support the program.

Information from the state Department of Commerce's newsletter *Travel Talk* said

the Speedway center is being closed so the state can find a more productive location in the Kansas City area.

The state says it is looking for a site with more traffic.

"There are no plans to close other travel information centers at this time," said the e-mail sent out by Leann Stephens, tourism communications coordinator. "The Department of Commerce believes these facilities play an important role in promoting our state and its attractions."

"The agency does continually assess its programs, and reserves the right to make

changes if a better way of doing business is identified."

The department said it is closing the Kansas City center because it was attracting a much lower number of visitors than others, between 20,000 to 30,000 a year, at a cost of \$97,000 per year.

The state says it is looking for a better location in the Kansas City area that will attract more visitors.

Development Council Chairman John Garcia said keeping the travel center open is important to the economy of Sherman County. He said he would send some let-

ters. Price said last year, 144,000 cars registered at the I-70 center.

She said one option would be for the Department of Transportation to take over the operations.

Another idea, she said, is having those who place information in the travel centers pay a fee. She said that is not popular.

Price said she has talked to Rep. Jim Morrison of Colby about the issue and he expects the money to be addressed before the Legislature closes this year's session.

Chance for boys, girls to learn about hunting, survival skills

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Do you know how to read a compass? How are your hunting skills? If your partner was injured, could you do first aid?

Two hunter safety instructors have organized a Youth Skills Day to help kids ages 9 to 15 learn basic skills for hunting and camping while having some fun.

Troy Mannis and Bob Juleson have been teaching hunter safety, and Mannis has helped with youth skills days in Colby and wanted to have one here.

"I like helping kids," Mannis said. "They had a lot of fun over there; I think they will here, too."

"I'm pretty excited. It's not every day you can take the kids out there and work with them."

The day is planned for 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, June 11, if they have 50 kids signed up. Forms can be picked up at Orscheln Farm Store and S&T Communications in Goodland, Tri-State Lumber in St. Francis and Hennick Lumber in

Sharon Springs.

The free event will be held at Bellamy Farms, 1615 County Road 51. Lunch is included. Activities include shotgun skills, muzzle loading, bow hunting (blood trailing), trapping, basic first aid, game calling and compass reading.

"I'm hoping to get a lot of girls involved," Mannis said. "They're a lot of fun."

The girls, he said, tend to be shy at first, but once they get started, they have as much fun or more than the boys.

He said he hopes to have 50 kids at the event, seven per station. They have 14 instructors and 14 leaders, he said, so that won't be too many kids. The leaders will take groups of kids to different stations, he said, and help keep an eye on them.

Parents can stay and watch if they want, Mannis said, but they won't be required to. The day is primarily for kids to have a good time and learn, he said.

The Buffalo Guys are supplying buffalo hot dogs, Mannis said, Kan-

sas Wildlife and Parks is supplying buffalo burgers and Goodland Coca Cola is supplying soda.

"We've had a pretty good response from businesses," Mannis said, "giving us money and merchandise."

Other sponsors include Bellamy Farms, Frito-Lay, Pheasants Forever, Bob's Wildlife Taxidermy, the Kansas State Trooper Association, the Sherman County attorney, Great American Outdoor Trails, Just Ponds and More, Dr. Kenneth Austin, Dan Brenner Ford, Orscheln's, S&T Communications, Frontier Equity Exchange, Rasure Lumber, Lonny's Quality Auto Body, Aquila, the Cheyenne County Wildlife Association, Sherman County, Unruh Family Chiropractic and Cowboy Loop.

Cost of schools' health insurance down

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

Superintendent Marvin Selby had good news for Goodland School District employees — the cost of their health insurance will go down next year.

At a board meeting Monday, April 11, Selby said Blue Cross-Blue Shield had told him the cost for insurance will drop between 1 and 3 percent after years of steady increases.

"I feel real good about having a decrease," he said. The district's dental plan, an option for employees, will go down, too, he said.

Pat Juhl, board clerk, said full-time district employees are offered two insurance plans.

The first plan is fully paid by the district, but has a \$500/\$1,000 deductible and requires coinsurance of 50 percent. That plan cost the district \$318 per month

for an individual last year.

The second plan is an upgraded option that employees pay into. It has a \$200/\$400 deductible and a 20 percent coinsurance. The plan cost \$418, of which the district paid \$318. The employee then paid the \$100 difference.

Juhl said the school only pays for individuals, so if an employee adds a spouse or children, the difference comes out of his pocket, too.

The new plan with a 1 percent decrease has taken the individual plan down to \$309 and the plan with better benefits down to \$414. The savings is \$8 each for the first plan and \$3.51 for the second plan.

The district will save about \$1,227 total on individual plans, she said. Since the amounts for the different plans did not go down proportionately, those getting the second plan will actually see an increase.

corrections

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