

Surgeon not coming in September; search resumes

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

The search for a surgeon is back on since hospitals in Colby and Goodland got word that Dr. Vincent Narciso is not coming in September.

Citizens Medical Center in Colby and Goodland Regional Medical Center had agreed to share the surgeon after he finishes a residency in Wichita. Both had contracts with him. Instead, he will be moving closer to his father, who lives in cen-

tral Kansas.

In a letter to Scott Focke, manager of Family Center for Health Care, the Colby hospital's clinic, Narciso said he and his wife Heidi regret that their plans have changed.

"We have made the difficult decision not to come to northwest Kansas," he said. "My family is going through an extremely difficult time after the recent death of my mother. Unfortunately, my father's health is declining, and I have cho-

sen to relocate closer to him."

The hospitals had been seeking a surgeon to fill in until September after Dr. Gregory Kim, an interim surgeon, decided in January to leave earlier than planned. No substitute had been found, and the hospitals had been preparing for Dr. Narciso's arrival in September.

It looked like it was going to be fine to wait, said Jay Jolly, administrator at the Goodland hospital, and get things ready. The hospital made

plans to buy equipment, he said, based on Dr. Narciso's recommendations of what is needed and will still do that. That is still valuable information that will help with recruitment, Jolly said, not a wasted effort.

The hospitals continue working together to find a surgeon, he said, and there are candidates they are looking at, though no one who stands out yet.

"We don't get excited," Jolly said, "until someone says they want to come out and visit."

The hospital isn't without surgical coverage, he said, since some of the specialists that come from Denver perform surgeries. Dr. David Younger is handling cesarean section deliveries.

And Jolly says he is confident the hospitals will find a surgeon.

"As we resume the search for a surgeon to serve this region," he said, "it is encouraging to know we offer a surgical practice opportunity that can attract top candidates, as evidenced by Dr. Narciso's original decision to locate here."

"Our area has a great deal to offer," said Janice McCart, chief executive officer at the Colby hospital. "The future of health care in northwest Kansas continues to be bright as the

number of available medical services and the addition of high-quality medical personnel increases."

Jolly said he is disappointed not to be working with Dr. Narciso, but he realizes it is a situation that is under no one's control.

"We certainly respect his decision and wish him the best in what promises to be a very successful career," Jolly said.

Focke said he is disappointed the surgeon won't be coming here, but said Dr. Narciso has agreed to help fill the position.

"I've come to know Dr. Narciso over the last year through our recruitment effort," Focke said. "He is a fine young man and excellent doctor."

Road repairs estimated at \$10 million

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cost initially, but save in the long term. We need to start the process."

"First we need to agree this is what we want to do," said County Commissioner Kevin Rasure, "and talk to the people about what we are planning."

"We have time and need to educate the people," said County Commissioner Chuck Thomas. "People are tired of bad roads."

"I think most people are going to be supportive," Billinger said.

"Especially if we give them the figures up front," said County Commissioner Mitch Tiede. "All we can do is invite the public to the meeting. We don't know how many will show up."

Pickman said the total cost of the city street projects is \$3,169,000. The streets are Caldwell from the

Eighth Street intersection north to the bridge near the city airport; Eighth Street from Cattletrail east to D'Lao Drive; and 17th Street from the railroad crossing to Main.

Repairing the 33 miles of County Road 64, known as old U.S. 24, would cost about \$5 million said Curt Way, public works manager. He said the cost would allow removing the top three inches of asphalt and then doing a three-inch overlay. The cost of removing the three inches would be \$395,000, and the overlay would cost \$135,000 per mile for a total of \$4,455,000.

The repair of old U.S. 24 is the top priority for the county commissioners, who said the repair of Eight Street west to County Road 14 and from that intersection south to old U.S. 24 would be an additional cost.

Revenues from a one-half percent

sales tax would be about \$560,000 a year, and Dechant said it would take 20 years to pay for the projects.

"That is too long," he said. "It wouldn't last that long. One percent would be 10 years, and that seems more reasonable."

Pickman said the bond interest rate would probably be around four percent, and the engineering cost would be 15 percent for design and inspections.

Rasure said the county would try to get grants if possible, but did not feel there would be a lot of help available.

Tiede said the county would try to put part of old U.S. 24 in the five-year plan, but was not sure how much would be available.

Both commissions agreed that the sales tax would sunset once the projects are paid off. That could take less time if the sales tax income

goes up over the next 10 years.

Pickman said when the main projects are completed the commissions could ask the people for a one-quarter percent sales tax for maintenance of the streets and roads. He said it would be better to have the money for repairs on an annual basis rather than waiting and having to hit the people with such a large cost.

To get the sales tax process moving Dechant said he would contact Representative Jim Morrison, who could carry the bill in next year's legislative session to get state permission to raise the county sales tax.

Once the agreement has been received from the legislature the sales tax question would be put on an election ballot for the public to approve. That election could be a special election early next spring, or possibly be combined with the primary election next August.

Storm chasers, tornado filmmaker, blow into town

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don't know anything on the spot, but just collect data to be analyzed later.

"We don't even know what we learned yet," he said.

In the past three years of working on projects, Wurman said, they have learned a lot about storms.

"We really have made major jumps in how we understand severe storms," he said.

Every morning, Cumbo said, the entire crew gets together for a weather briefing. He said they pick where the storm looks the best and head out on the road.

"Sometimes nothing happens," he said.

Wurman said the group sees a tornado about one in four times they go out.

"Our 'batting average' is about 25 percent," he said adding a .250 average is pretty good in baseball.

This traveling circus gets attention everywhere they go from interested onlookers. Cumbo said they stopped at a Dairy Queen one night and got surrounded by 50 people all firing questions.

Wurman said the Doppler trucks have been out on the road since 1995, and while they still attract attention, most law enforcement officers recognize the vehicles.

The storm chasers are based in Hays, Cumbo said, which is the center of the storm chase area. He said they could head north to Rapid City, S.D., and south to Lubbock, Texas. Because of gas prices, he said, they want to make travel as inexpensive as they can.

Tuesday morning they were

headed back northwest to intercept storms, Wurman said. Although the area was only in a moderate risk, he hoped they could intercept a storm.

"It's a slow season," Cumbo said adding they have only caught up with five tornadoes so far this season.

Wurman agreed, saying they had only caught five storms so far.

The Doppler on wheels is used for hurricane research and studied hurricanes Francis and Ivan last fall.

While in town, Millam said, the group visited the giant Van Gogh Sunflower painting, and Wurman said they ate dinner at Hank's Cafe.

"They were all really nice," Millam said. "They were a good group."

The National Science Foundation in collaboration with the National Center for Atmospheric Research and Pennsylvania State University

normally funds the research center.

The National Geographic documentary is expected to come out this fall.

Wurman said more and more people go out to chase storms for fun, but they need to be careful. Although he doesn't mind when people follow the Doppler trucks, he said they should stay pretty far back and understand the risks of storm chasing.

"Be careful," he said.

Memorial services Monday morning

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down about 4:30 p.m. on Monday. The full-size flags will be taken down in the afternoon and carried to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, 824 Main, where volunteers will help refold them for proper storage.

Most retail businesses will be closed on Monday for Memorial Day, and all government offices will be closed. *The Goodland Star-News* will be closed. The holiday will delay the Tuesday edition, which will be printed on Tuesday and delivered in the mail on Wednesday.

The history of Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, goes back over 130 years. Gen. John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in a general order on May 5, 1868, proclaimed May 30 as a day to honor the fallen soldiers, sailors and marines from both sides who fought in the Civil War.

The order called for the placing

of flowers or other decorations on the graves of those who died in the service.

After World War I, the day began to honor all Americans who died in the service of their country. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed Waterloo, N.Y., as the birthplace of Decoration Day, which the next year became Memorial Day.

The National Holiday Act of 1971 changed Memorial Day from May 30 to the last Monday in May as part of the program to create three-day weekends.

In January 1999, Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii introduced Senate Bill 189, which calls for restoration of Memorial Day back to May 30. That April, Rep. Jim Gibbons of Nevada introduced the bill to the House. The bill is still in committee.

In December 2000, the National Moment of Remembrance was established. Participation is voluntary and informal; people are asked to take a minute of silence at 3 p.m. wherever they are.

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