

## weather report

76°

noon Thursday



### Today

- Sunset, 8:15 p.m.
- Sunrise, 5:20 a.m.
- Sunset, 8:15 p.m.

### Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 71 degrees
- Humidity 44 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds southwest 5 mph.
- Barometer 29.96 inches and falling
- Record High today 102° (2002)
- Record Low today 41° (1945)

### Last 24 Hours\*

High Wednesday	89°
Low Wednesday	53°
Precipitation	trace
This month	2.07
Year to date	7.72
Normal	8.69

### The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 3 p.m., high near 87, low around 60, winds south southeast 10-29 mph. Saturday: Mostly sunny, high near 91, low around 62, winds south 11-28 mph.

### Extended Forecast

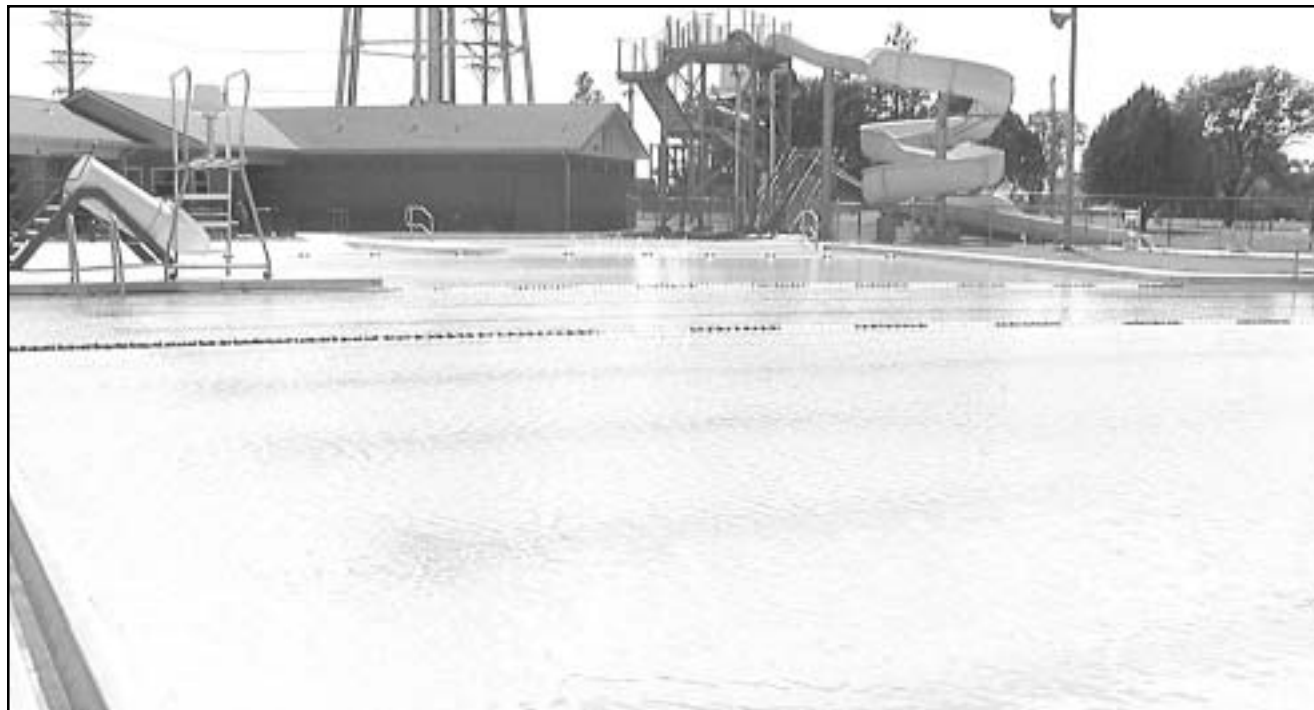
Sunday: Sunny, high around 93, low around 61. Monday: Sunny, high near 95, low near 60. Tuesday: Sunny, high near 95, low around 61.

(National Weather Service)

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\* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

# Pool, slides will open Saturday



Kids and adults will change the smooth surface of the pool at Steever Water Park (above) when it opens Saturday afternoon after a three-week delay. The main pool and slides will open at 1 p.m. and swim lessons will begin on Monday. Members of the City Commission and city staff (left) inspected the drain line repairs Tuesday, and agreed that with extra fences to keep kids away from the construction area, the pool could open by the weekend.

Photos by Tom Betz  
The Goodland Star-News

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Steever Water Park will open at 1 p.m. Saturday after a three-week delay, the City Commission decided at a special meeting Tuesday afternoon.

The splash pool and drain lines for the water park have been under repair for the past month, and soggy conditions have delayed the work.

City officials said fences will be in place by Saturday to keep young swimmers away from the construction areas. There will be signs posted saying that anyone found climbing on the fences or picking up dirt clods will be asked to leave.

"We are ready to go," said Jason Hickson, city recreation director. "Our lifeguards have been waiting patiently, but I know some were thinking about looking for other jobs if the city didn't open the pool soon."

The main pool area and the water slides will be open, Hickson said, from 1 to 5:30 p.m. daily. There will be night swim from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday and Sunday, and an adult swim from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from noon to 1 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Ticket prices will be the same as last year, with kids 5 and under free; kids 6-12 \$2; and adults \$3. Fridays will feature \$1 admission, Hickson said.

He said swim lessons session will begin Monday morning and there will be three two-week sessions.

Coupons are available for multiple use of the water park beginning at 25 coupons for \$20.

The special meeting began at 4 p.m. at the water park with four of the five commissioners present, along with the acting city manager, city staff, the city's engineering consultant, plus the city attorney and lawyers from First National Bank and Bankwest.

The commission held a 25-minute closed session including all of the people present except Hickson to discuss legal issues with the city attorney.

When the commission returned to open session, engineer Darin Neufeld, of Evan, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, showed the commissioners and lawyers where the fencing had been placed to keep kids out of the construction area, and where a fence would be placed

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## local markets

### Noon

- Wheat — \$2.95 bushel
- Posted county price — \$2.88
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Corn — \$1.99 bushel
- Posted county price — \$1.90
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 4¢
- Milo — \$1.62 bushel
- Soybeans — \$6.25 bushel
- Posted county price — \$6.46
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Millet — \$5 hundredweight
- Sunflowers
- Oil current crop — \$9.70 cwt.
- NuSun — \$10.70 cwt.
- Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
- Confection — Ask
- Pinto beans — \$25
- (Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun, Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century Bean. These may not be closing figures.)

# Citizens speak in support of road plan

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Plans to raise the sales tax 1 cent to pay to rebuild city and county roads drew mostly support at a public forum Wednesday evening at the high school auditorium.

About 40 taxpayers attended the joint meeting of city and county commissions to hear about the plan and ask questions.

Interim City Manager Tom Armour said he was pleased with the turnout for the first road-work forum.

"I know both sets of commissioners were pleased," Armour said. "When I get back from harvest we're going to start working on a public education effort. I have sketched out a partial plan for an education effort after comments at the meeting."

Each person was given a set of handouts, which showed the estimated cost of the roads being considered for repair, and a map showing the state traffic counts on the major county roads.

## Estimated cost of roads in joint plan

Here are the roads included in the city-county improvement plan, with preliminary cost estimates (including design and engineering):

### CITY STREETS

**Caldwell Ave.** — \$1.3 million. Replace the intersection at Eighth (\$222,585) with concrete; upgrade storm sewers north from Toelkes to the bridge (\$732,436); replace intersection at Armory Road with concrete; and in-place cold recycle from Toelkes to bridge with six inches

of new asphalt; Eighth to Toelkes (\$322,687) six inch mill and overlay.

**Eighth Street** — \$220,437 (from D'Lao Dr. to Cattletrail) replace with eight inches of asphalt and improve road base.

**Seventeenth Street** — \$1.7 million (from Cherry Ave. railroad crossing to Main) replace brick and asphalt with an eight-inch concrete

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Mayor Rick Billinger opened the meeting, saying the city and county plan a joint effort to improve the roads and streets that are the main entrances to the city and the main highway artery across the county.

County Commission Chairman Mitch Tiede said they wanted to hear from voters about the effort.

Billinger said the basic plan is to raise the sales tax 1 cent to pay for the combined road projects, which are estimated to cost over \$11 mil-

lion, and to pass a bond issue which would be paid back using the sales tax revenues over 10 to 12 years.

Josh Dechant, who was elected to the city commission this spring, said when he was running, one of his main objectives was improving the city's infrastructure. He said streets were one of the main areas he wanted to see improved.

"None of us want in increase in taxes," Dechant said. "Using the sales tax is the fairest way to pay for

the projects. With good roads, we can bring more expansion to the city and see an increase in sales taxes."

"We want you to share the information with your friends and get the information out there," said County Commissioner Kevin Rasure. "We all use these roads."

"It is not up to the eight commissioners, but rather the citizens of the county to decide if this is what should be done."

"The city has been discussing the

streets for over two years," said Commissioner Dave Daniels. "We have talked about doing a little at a time, but this will do all the main streets at once, and pay for it over time."

"This is your opportunity to ask questions," said City Commissioner Annette Fairbanks. "We are hoping to come away with a positive attitude, and this is a beginning of our joint efforts with the county."

"We need to fix our roads," John Golden, a farmer and former county and city commissioner, praised the plan.

"I want to thank your for having the forethought and courage to address our roads," Golden said. "You have made excellent choices, and these will be improvement to the total community."

Dave Walker of Goodland, a case-worker at the Kit Carson Correctional Center in Burlington and an unsuccessful candidate for city

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## inside today

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## Kids learn to dribble

Samantha Raymer helped guide future basketball players during a dribbling drill Thursday morning at Max Jones Fieldhouse on the final day of the Junior Cowboy and Cowgirl Basketball Camp. Photo on Page 10a.

# Auditor praises hospital turnaround

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

After hearing some good news about Goodland Regional Medical Center's finances, hospital board members joked that they should just cancel the rest of the meeting and quit while they were ahead.

But they stayed, and reports on money raised by the Slice of Life benefit auction and golf tournament brought more good news.

"Most hospitals feel they do well when they break even from operations," Roger Johnson, an accountant with Johnson, Wendling and Roe, the hospital's auditors, told the board Monday, June 6, at the board's May meeting.

The hospital had revenue in excess of expenses of \$693,549 last year, compared to a loss of \$1,180,795 in 2003. Johnson said it was one of the most impressive turnarounds in results in one year he has seen.

The hospital had \$227,644 in-

come from operations, he said, compared to a \$1.6 million operating loss from 2003. It was a nearly \$1.9 million turnaround, Johnson said.

Most hospitals feel they do well to break even from operations, he added.

Even with taking on the Rural Health Ventures clinic, now Goodland Family Health Center, which had a \$120,378 loss, the hospital came out ahead, he said.

The hospital had a lump sum of \$500,000 paid from Medicare during its first year as a critical access hospital, a status which increases its payments from government insurance programs. Johnson said it is expecting another \$600,000 this month or next.

The hospital refinanced \$1.5 million in long-term debt by selling industrial revenue bonds to area banks, which it will be pay-

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# School board worried about money

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

While students might like the idea of no school next year, Goodland School Board are worried that the state budget fight would put teachers and lower-paid staff members in a fix.

What started with a lawsuit challenging the state funding formula for schools has turned into a fight between the legislature and the Kansas Supreme Court.

Recently, the court ruled that the extra \$143 million allotted to the schools by the Legislature this year was not enough. The court is asking for another \$142 million to be put in state schools for next year.

"Right now," Selby said, "it's just like the schools against everyone else."

He said legislators are painting superintendents and teachers as greedy, taking money from the poor and elderly.

"I do not get anything positive," he said.

The board worried if the Legislature doesn't allot more money, the court may order schools to close.

"If they give us an order not to pay bills," Selby said, "our doors would shut."

Board member Marty Melia asked if they could pay salaries.

Selby said a freeze would stop them from paying any bills or salaries. He said they will have some money on Tuesday, July 5, but they may not be able to spend it.

"I'm sure it won't be a pleasant thing," Selby said, adding the nce.

Board member Mike Campbell asked if teachers and other staff might be willing to work without pay for the first few months of school. He said the staff could be paid later for the time worked.

"It'd be awful tough on non-certified staff and our teachers," Selby said, adding that a lot of people would have trouble paying bills with no wages coming in.

Board member Fritz Doke said the Legislature can't just close schools.

"Everybody's not going to home school," he said. "You can't just not educate kids. You've gotta do something."

Board member Dick Short agreed, saying the main focus should be students.

"They're making fun of the whole judicial system," he said, "and hurting kids."

Selby said in the days of segregation, the courts stepped in to rectify the situation the same way they are working now.

"Sometimes you have to do what's right," he said.

He said one report talks about the role of schools in the economics of a small town.

In Sherman County, he said, the school contributes to 6.4 percent of the wages and 3.1 percent of the total income.

On average, wages here are \$24,222 per year and teachers make an average of \$41,000 per year. Selby said statewide averages put teacher wages only a little bit higher at \$42,511 per year.

"We're just under average," said Campbell.

Selby said he isn't optimistic about a solution anytime soon.

"I'm of the opinion right now," Selby said, "I don't think they'll do anything. Then we'll really be in a mess."

He said in Arkansas right now, a special master has been appointed to work out school finance. He fears the situation might get that bad here, too.

"I think it's gonna get real ugly," Selby said.