

# The Welfare

## of Sherman County

By Kathryn Burke

*The Goodland Star-News*

The state's main social services agency pumped nearly twice as much money into Sherman County last year that it did into Thomas County.

The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Service paid out \$9,276,763 in Sherman compared to only \$5,056,285 in Thomas County, although the total population there (from the 2000 U.S. Census) is 1,420 more, 8,180 for Thomas County and 6,760 for Sherman.

While a lot of the difference stems from the number of disability clients

in Sherman County, state and federal figures reflect a distinct difference in the two: Thomas County's population is more educated, has more income and far fewer minorities than Sherman.

Sherman County has fewer people with high school diplomas, 86.6 percent versus 92.7 percent in Thomas, and college diplomas, 15 percent here, 25 percent in Thomas. Sherman has more people below the poverty level, 12.9 percent compared to 9.7 percent in Thomas. The Latino population in Sherman County is 8.4 percent, nearly one-twelfth of the population, versus just

1.8 percent in Thomas.

Social Services officials said they can't pinpoint exactly what contributed to the disparity in state payments. One big difference is in the amount spent on developmental disability services, which brings a lot of money to Sherman County.

Sherman County receives nearly \$2.4 million more than Thomas in that category, and the agency serves nearly five times the number of people in this program here.

Much of that money stays in Sherman County in the form of salaries and other spending by contractors.

Nine developmental disability clients receive \$223,920 in Thomas County while 50 receive \$2,552,315 in Sherman, more than 10 times more money for five times more people.

"That definitely would make a difference," said Verna Weber, assistant regional director for integrated services for the department.

The difference might be in the types of services, too. While some rehabilitation services are offered in Thomas County, Sherman County has residential living through the Golden West Community Services.

Merwin Jensen, financial direc-

tor with the center, said they serve 49 people from all over Kansas. He said the center has 11 rental houses in Goodland and a farm just north of town where residents live.

Each house, he said, has someone on duty 24 hours a day to care for the residents. Clients travel to the center each day for training and services. He said they learn skills, including how to build for some residents living on the farm. Others do art projects and activities in town.

The center employs 70 people, he said, and they have a \$1.9 million-

See WELFARE, Page 5a

## New plant toasted at opening celebration

By Kathryn Burke

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Glasses of sparkling red grape juice were held aloft as everyone from Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer to city commissioners and businessmen held a toast to the grand opening of the new antenna manufacturer in town Tuesday.

Adronics/Elrob Manufacturing Corp. moved into Goodland in May, but didn't officially cut the ribbon until a luncheon held Tuesday.

The plant employs 47 people who make car antennas and the coaxial cable used to attach them to car or truck radios.

Tuesday the doors were open and plant Co-Vice Presidents Troy Robinson and Karen Robinson Murphy invited the public inside.

The event started with a ceremonial ribbon cutting and then a toast to Adronics. Kathy Melia, president of the Goodland Ambassadors, welcomed the new business to town on behalf of the business community.

Murphy spoke and thanked everyone in town for their support.

"We have great employees," she said of Goodland's work force. "They're all doing a great job."

Sen. Ostmeyer said it's important to have new businesses in western Kansas.

"We have to have opportunities to make sure people don't leave Goodland," he said, "not just to draw them here."

He said the plant will help to make the town stronger.

"This building is no good to any-



Troy Robinson (left), co-president of Adronics/Elrob Manufacturing Corp., Kathy Melia (right), president of the Goodland Ambassadors, and Arlo Hansen, guest at the event, raised glasses Tuesday to toast the grand opening of the plant here.

Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

one empty," he said looking around at the interior of Adronics. "It needs to be used."

City Commissioner John Garcia said the success of Adronics is thanks to everyone in the community.

"It takes everyone working in conformity and unity for success," he said.

Garcia is the chairman of the Sherman County Economic Development Council and helped bring

the manufacturer to town. He thanked everyone who helped out and said this is just the beginning.

"You're only going to see better things happen in northwest Kansas," he said.

## Power purchase contract denied, later approved

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

City commissioners split 2-2 on approving a firm price purchase power contract with Goodland Energy Resources Monday with the mayor abstaining because of a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Josh Dechant made the motion to approve the 10-year contract and Commissioner Annette Fairbanks seconded it. Commissioner's Dave Daniels and John Garcia said they wanted extra time to review the contract, and the two voted against the motion.

Mayor Rick Billinger, with an apparent conflict of interest as a stockholder in the new power company, abstained from the vote.

Following the failure of the motion the commission agreed to hold a special meeting at 8 a.m. on Thursday to reconsider the power contract.

Ron Pickman, project manager for Goodland Energy Resources and former city manager, presented the purchase power agreement.



Justus

### Power plant contract approved

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

Goodland will purchase all the city's power from the new coal-fired plant when it goes on-line next year after the commission voted 4-0 to approve the electric purchase agreement at a special meeting Thursday morning.

Sixty hours after the motion failed on a 2-2 vote Monday, the commission reconsidered the contract and it passed unanimously with Mayor Rick Billinger abstaining because of a conflict of interest as a stockholder in the new company.

There were about 20 people in the audience, and there was a round of applause when the vote was taken and the contract approved.

After the contract was approved the commission went into six closed sessions covering two and a half hours to discuss the contract for a new city manager, and review the applicants.

Mayor Rick Billinger said he finalists for the city manager position should be known before the next

commission meeting on Monday, Aug. 1.

Rod Blake, power plant superintendent, told the commission he had been asked about the fuel adjustment clause, and showed each commissioner the clause in the Sunflower Electric contract that was the same wording as in the new contract with Goodland Energy Resources.

"We get four megawatts firm power from Sunflower," Blake said, "but they take the fuel adjustment on all the power we purchase, and Wednesday that meant we were paying \$134 per hour if we purchased from them."

"There is no way to protect the city from this under Sunflower's contract. They provide firm delivery, but not a firm price."

"Sunflower representatives said they were running everything they had and were having to purchase power from another source, which raised the price. We were generating in the low \$90s, but it was

See APPROVED, Page 9a

in May, and Sunflower has notified the city of their intent to end the contract at that time.

"The city does not want to be in an exclusive contract with Goodland Energy and have to buy power from Sunflower," Warren said.

He said he had recommended a change in the contract to give the city more flexibility.

Dechant asked if that was the only change.

"That is all I recommended," Warren said, "Changing to a 10 year contract and an option for 10 more."

Tom Armour, interim city manager, said he would be remiss if he did not suggest the city approach Sunflower about this contract and ask for their market rate.

"We ought to see if Sunflower wants to be a player," he said.

"This is a certified plant under the Federal Energy Commission," said Mark Justus of Renewable Energy, who is one of the people involved in the new power plant program.

"Under the regulations this is a cogeneration plant, and the city is required to buy our power. In that event the rate would be based on the avoided cost to the city and would be much higher than what we are

See DENIED, Page 9a

### weather report

101°

noon Thursday



Today

• Sunset, 8:09 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 5:39 a.m.

• Sunset, 8:08 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 84 degrees

• Humidity 16 percent

• Sky sunny

• Winds southeast 15 mph.

• Barometer 30.08 inches

and steady

• Record High today 105° (1934)

• Record Low today 52° (1994)

Last 24 Hours\*

High Wednesday 109° ties record

Low Wednesday 71° ties record

Precipitation .01

This month .47

Year to date 8.75

Normal 12.68

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny and hot, high near 106, low near 69, winds southeast 15 mph. Saturday: Mostly sunny and hot with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m., high around 107, low around 69, winds southwest 15-30 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly sunny and hot, high near 100, low around 67. Monday: Mostly sunny and hot with a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon, high near 97, low near 63. (National Weather Service) Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz. \* Readings compiled at midnight.

### local markets

Noon

Wheat — \$2.94 bushel

Posted county price — \$3

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$1.98 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.06

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$1.61 bushel

Soybeans — \$5.83 bushel

Posted county price — \$6.30

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 for Mueller Grain, Sigco Sun,

Frontier Equity Co-op and 21st Century

Bean. These may not be closing figures.)



### K-18 team wins two

Goodland first baseman Casey House stood ready in case pitcher Cameron Morris tried to pick off Oberlin's runner during the third inning of Monday's game at Memorial Field. Photo, story on Page 10a.