

weather report

68°

noon Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 7:56 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 5:51 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:55 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 83 degrees
- Humidity 67 percent
- Sky cloudy
- Winds north 21 mph.
- Barometer 30.39 inches and rising

- Record High today 107° (1934)
- Record Low today 47° (1974)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	102°
Low Wednesday	66°
Precipitation	none
This month	none
Year to date	9.75
Normal	14.18

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms at night, high near 79, low near 57, winds east northeast 6-14 mph. Saturday: Mostly sunny, high near 91, low around 62, winds south 9-13 mph.

Extended Forecast

Sunday: Mostly sunny, high around 92, low around 62. Monday: Mostly sunny, high near 94, low near 63. Tuesday: Mostly sunny, high around 96, low around 63.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400.MHz.

*Readings compile at midnight.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$2.98 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.01
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Corn — \$1.89 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$1.88
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 6¢
 - Milo — \$1.52 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$5.87 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$6.16
 - 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.)

inside today

More local news and views from your Goodland Star-News



Ethanol now big business

Julie Staley, a lab employee at the Western Plains Energy ethanol plant near Oakley, adds drops of dye to a sample of the milo and corn mash. The sample contains yeast and when the yeast eats the dye, Staley can identify and count the organisms. Story, photos Page 10a.

City picks Oklahoman

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

A contract was approved for Goodland's new city manager at the end of Monday's city commission meeting, and he will start work at the middle of the month.

K. Wayne Hill, 56, of Guymon, Okla., accepted a contract with Goodland for \$65,000 a year plus benefits. His first day of work is to be Monday, Aug. 15.

Except for the final vote, the selection process was carried on behind closed doors. The city commissioner never discussed any of the candidates in open session or introduced them to the public.

Hill will fill the vacancy created by the retirement in May of Ron Pickman, who is now head of Goodland Energy Resources, the firm building a new coal-fired power plant west of town.

Pickman was city manager for 11 years, coming to the city from Atchison first as police chief and then being promoted to be the city's third manager since the city charter was passed.

Hill was city manager in Guymon for 13 years, and had worked for the city since 1985. He said he was the director of water pollution control for two years before becoming the public works director in 1987. He was promoted to city manager in 1991. Hill said he decided in May

2004 to take a sabbatical from the city, and later decided he wanted to look at other opportunities.

"After over 10 years as the city manager, I found myself wondering if I was getting the satisfaction out of my job," Hill said in a phone interview Wednesday. "I felt I needed to look at something else, and I even thought about resigning. I took a sabbatical last year."

Hill describes himself as having a strong desire to succeed, dedication to excellence, a friendly and accommodating attitude, a positive attitude toward economic development, and skills in personnel, management and organization.

"I am looking forward to coming to Goodland," Hill said when he was introduced by Mayor Rick Billinger. "This is a challenge because it is different, and I am looking forward to meeting new faces and hearing new ideas. I am intrigued."

"I expect to get to know the people, and believe there are good things happening around the city. I will be open to working with Goodland Energy Resources and the other companies to encourage economic development."

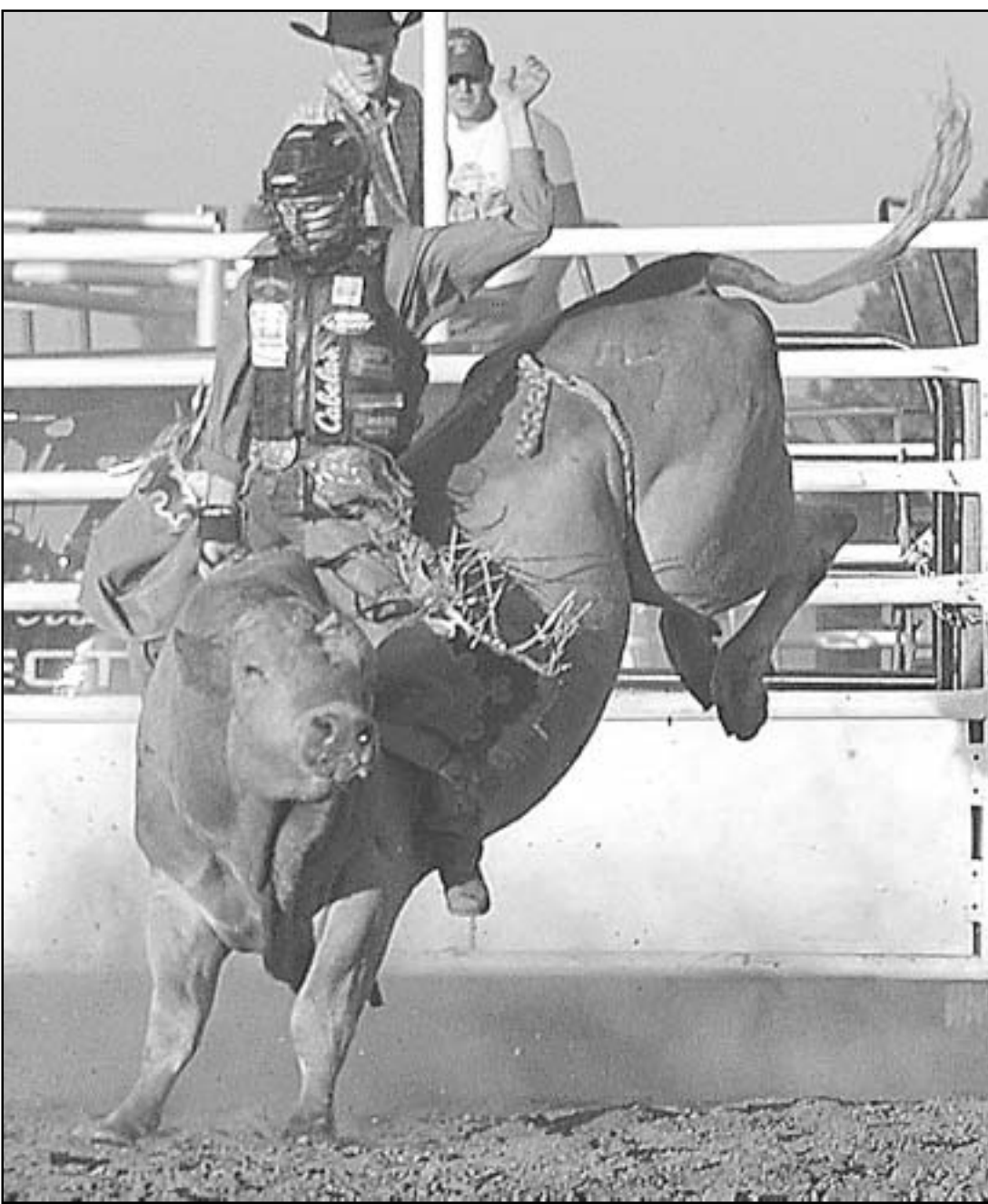
Hill said he took extra time to drive around Goodland when he



Wayne Hill

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Thrill of the ride ...



Fear Factor kicked up and twisted under Bowdy Peach of Morlan, Okla., in the "long round" of the Thunder on the Plains bull riding Tuesday. Peach rode Fear Factor for the required eight seconds and a 73 score. Story, photos on Page 12a.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Budget gets OK, no objections

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

There were no objections to the proposed budget Monday, and the City Commission unanimously adopted the \$12,196,800 estimate of expenditures for next year, including an 11 percent property tax hike.

Under it, Goodland families can expect to pay around \$22 a month more for taxes, water and electric service.

Property taxes for the city are estimated to increase by 5.7 mills to 56.520 mills, an increase of 11 percent over the this year at 50.811.

Taking a \$50,000 home as an example, City Clerk Mary Volk said the property taxes would increase \$32.83 a year, or about \$2.75 a month.

Estimates are the rate increases for water and electricity plus the increase in property taxes for the general fund will be about \$22 a month next year.

The commissioners agreed to raise the monthly water minimum to \$11.25, and agreed to move the \$95,000 pool payment to the general fund. The monthly minimum bill will rise from \$7.60 to \$11.25, a 48 percent increase.

Exactly how much the electric rate will increase had not been de-

City has new lawyer, prosecutor

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The City of Goodland has new lawyers, a duo to handle legal matters and city court cases, replacing the retiring Perry Warren.

Interim City Manager Tom Armour told the City Commission on Monday he had interviewed two

lawyers for the city attorney's job. Armour said he was appointing Attorney Jeff Mason and his firm of Vignery and Mason to handle the city legal affairs.

Mason will be the city attorney and his partner,

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termined, but the budget would allow the electric rates to go up by \$15.60 per month. The commission will hold a work session on the utility rates later this year to determine the exact amount of the increase per kilowatt hour.

Commissioner Josh Dechant had the only question during the budget hearing. He asked Commissioner John Garcia, who chairs the Sherman County Economic Development Council, if the agency was having any luck finding a new director.

"I have to ask about the economic development savings account," Dechant said. "The \$50,000 (the city gives each year to the council) is about two mills to the citizens, and there are some questions about the progress in finding another director."

Garcia said the money didn't go to a savings account, adding that the council is interviewing several people for the director position.

The council has been without a director since December, when Carolyn Applegate was forced out. The city and county have both contributed \$50,000 a year to the office.

Tom Armour, interim city manager, said he recommended adoption of the budget. He said he was impressed with the way Volk and the department heads had approached the budget process and worked things out.

Garcia made the motion to approve the budget, seconded by Commissioner Annette Fairbanks. Commissioner Dave Daniels joined Dechant in voting to approve.

When it was Mayor Rick

Billinger's turn to vote he hesitated, but then said "sure."

The commission approved an ordinance required by the state to explain the increase in property tax for next year. Volk said the ordinance was needed because of the transfer of the \$95,000 water park payment from the water fund to the general fund.

Under the law, the city could raise the taxes to produce an income of \$1,319,703 for the general fund without exceeding the state limit. Volk said the budget would raise the taxes to \$1,400,984, \$81,281 over the limit. The property tax would have produced \$1,263,248 this year, and the increase for next year is 10.9 percent.

The next commission meeting will be 5 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 15.

Moran to be here Monday

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran will meet with voters at the High Plains Museum in Goodland at 11:45 a.m. Monday as part of his annual "listening tour."

This is a change from the original date; the stop had been scheduled for Friday, Aug. 19. The trip is the northwestern leg of Moran's ninth annual tour of his 69 county 1st Congressional District.

Moran will spend about an hour at each stop, talking to citizens and listening to ideas about what the Congress should be doing.

He will be visiting Sherman, Thomas, Cheyenne and Rawlins counties on Monday. He will be in Bird City at 2:30 p.m. Central Time at the City Hall, 111 E. Fourth. He will head east to Atwood at 4 p.m. where he will stop at the Country Corner Bed and Breakfast on south K-25.

He will complete the tour in Colby at 5:30 p.m. Central Time as the Prairie Museum of Art and History, 1905 S. Franklin.

Red cylinder in grass prompts bomb alert at High Plains office

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Some things go boom. Some things already have. Dispatchers received a call about 8:20 a.m. Tuesday that there was a suspicious package on the front steps of High Plains Mental Health, 723 Main.

Police Chief Ray Smee said he had visions of a box setting on the steps. He figured he would have to call the bomb disposal unit from Fort Riley to come out and haul it off.

"I told dispatch I was on the scene when I was about a block away," the chief said. "I wasn't real sure I wanted to use the radio if it was a real bomb. That might have set it off."

"When I arrived, I looked on the steps, but didn't see anything. I looked around the sidewalk, but there was nothing. When I got to the door, I thought maybe it was on the back steps."

In his mind, Smee said, he was thinking about evacu-

ating the building and maybe the surrounding area.

"I was thinking I didn't need this to happen this week," he said. "There was enough going on already. 'I opened the door and asked where the package was.'"

"You walked right past it," an employee said. "It's in the grass."

As he looked down, he said, he saw a red cylinder with the words "danger" and "explosive" in large black letters. Then he spotted the word "fireworks."

"I looked in the end," he said, "and it had been exploded. It had been left on the front lawn."

Smee said he calmed the clinic staff. He said he told them they did the right thing in calling dispatch.

"The girls at High Plains were apologizing after they found out what it was," Smee said. "I said they did the right thing in calling dispatch. I would rather have that type of a report than have someone pick something up thinking it was harmless and getting injured."

Farmer says work easier, harder now

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." So begins Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities." But a Wallace County farmer says those words could apply to farming today.

Leonard Unruh has farmed in Wallace County for 43 years, starting in 1962. He says some things are easier for farmers today than when he started, and other things are harder.

Technology and farm programs make things easier, but drought and

the higher cost of equipment makes things harder.

Unruh's evaluation of farming as he prepares to retire is that family farming is profitable, and if he had it all to do again, he would.

"If I was 20 years old," he said, "I'd do it again. I wouldn't hesitate."

Unruh has farmed seven miles south of Wallace since 1962, but now it is time for him to retire. He is putting his land in the Conservation Reserve Program and will rent it to

Future of Farming section inside today.

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