

Citizens raise questions

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Residents of Goodland should be asking a lot more questions.

"This proposal has literally been rammed down our throats by the investors. I went on vacation for 10 days in early July. When I left, nothing public had been announced other than rumors something big was coming to Goodland. My wife and I were excited about the potential for growth. When we returned, the Goodland Energy Center plan was announced, the city had annexed land, the city signed a 10-year contract to buy power from the future plant and construction would begin soon. This has been touted as a 'win-win' situation for Goodland... new business, new jobs, new development. How could anything be better?"

Floyd said searching the Internet under "Gopher State Ethanol," he found stories about the St. Paul ethanol plant which the investors are planning to move to Goodland. "You can read the history of how this plant was shut down," Floyd said, "and how the *St Paul Pioneer Press* called it 'The Three-Mile Island of the Ethanol Industry.'"

"The investors say when the plant is here in Goodland they will have scrubbers and a thermal oxidizer to reduce emissions, and the ethanol plant will be clean and meet clean air standards.

All I am asking is we slow down and explore all the facts before proceeding."

He said there was a danger of fire with the plants, and the news stories on the Gopher State plant reported four fires in the years it operated.

"The investors say the coal-fired power plant will bring a huge savings to Goodland by locking in energy rates for years to come," Floyd said. "Yet no one mentions that the coal plant being brought to Goodland has been shut down since 1980, and when Morehead Minn., officials took another look at it in 1993 to see what needed to be done to possibly bring the plant back online, it was found to be cost ineffective.

This is the plant investors are bringing to Goodland, because it will be cheaper."

Floyd said coal plant emissions can cause health problems, including asthma, bronchitis and heart attacks.

Plant concerns couple

Denise Floyd, who lives near the sunflower plant west of town, joined her husband in asking questions about power and ethanol plants proposed for the Caruso area.

"I am concerned about the events of the past 27 days concerning the plans for the Energy Center west of town," she said at a City Commission meeting last Monday.

"Because this has been done in such haste and with such secrecy, I wonder if Goodland residents and businesses realize what this change will mean for Goodland.

"I want nothing but good things to happen to Goodland, including the potential for 60 to 100 additional jobs and power rate security. I'm not willing to sit back if those changes will also produce negative outcomes for Goodland."

She had a series of questions for the city commission to ponder:

"Does this energy plan fit it into Goodland's economic development vision? Will this center attract more; dirty, smelly, high-negative-impact plants? Will other economic development opportunities be turned away because of this plant's presence?"

"Now that the city has annexed the land for the plant, does that open up the city for lawsuits in the events of accidents, pollution, health concerns, decreased property values, nuisance factors?"

"Which local entity will oversee that the buildings are up to code? Which local entity will ensure pollution is at a minimum and all regulations are enforced? Does the city have funds to pay the city attorney to be trained in environmental law? If the plants are built, but then for whatever reason fail, will the city pay to have them dismantled or will they remain an eyesore? Will the city's fire department have to have additional training in fighting the types of fires that occur in these types of plants or have additional equipment?"

"Who is paying the costs for bringing the gray water from the city to the plant? Will this gray wa-

ter be returned to the city and will the city be responsible for filtering the water? Can existing city plant capacity handle this extra amount of water?"

"It's been said this will be energy efficient. The community has questions about the safety of this plant. When will this company invite the public to an open discussion? When will this company tell its closest neighbors what to expect as for as traffic, noise, pollution, dust, and smell and why hasn't that been done already? Believe me, we'd like to know what to expect to happen to our home values!"

"Will curbs, gutters, sidewalks, hydrants and sewers be put in by the city? Who will build the roads from Caruso to the front door of these plants? Will the plant use city water or the well water?"

"How many of the workers will be paid minimum wage? Will they be required to live in Goodland or Sherman County or will Goodland be supplying the economy of other locations such as Colby and Burlington?"

"Exactly how will farmers benefit from this? Will this corporation actually buy corn at a higher price? If not, how will this really benefit the farmers?"

"Will the city require an environmental impact statement be done before operations begin? Will it be requested before any zoning change is approved?"

"Things done in secret and done in haste leave a bad taste in my mouth. I wonder just what is the rush, why is it such a secret. If this is of great benefit it to Goodland, then what's good today will also be good 30 days from now. Not everyone who questions this project is against economic development... we all want to make sure this is the right thing for our community."

Fred Stasser and Barb Eisenbart were in the audience, but neither asked to speak.

Mayor Rick Billinger thanked the Floyds for their interest, and suggested they discuss the questions with Ron Pickman of the Goodland Energy Resources and Mark Justus of Renewable Energy Resources, who were at the meeting.

"It has been said Goodland is the fifth windiest city in the country," he said. "I am wondering what will happen to the coal dust associated with that huge pile of coal, which will be needed to keep the plant running. It will blow somewhere. I don't want it blowing on my property, and I don't think Sugar Hills Golf Course wants to have a fine black powder on their golf carts and greens.

"The plant is being advertised as a clean plant and environmentally friendly with a symbiotic relationship. Ladies and gentlemen, there is no such thing as a clean power plant.

If they are so much cleaner now, then why do all the local residents hate them so much in sharp contrast with the views of the investors?"

Floyd said he had contacted the Kansas Department of Health and Environment last Monday to ask about the plants.

"I spoke with staff members of the state Department of Health and Environment this (Monday) afternoon," Floyd said. "The man I talked to said to his knowledge there has been no application for a permit to construct a plant and that an air quality study on the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of the at-

mosphere must be completed before any construction begins. He said this could take up to six months. Yet we are told construction could begin in 30 to 45 days and the investors have met with all the government agencies to discuss permits and regulations.

"Let me close by urging Goodland to take a hard look at the Energy Center. This was the best-kept secret for quite some time! Now, things are happening way too fast. There is no need to rush to build this plant, so let's all slow down, ask questions and make sure this is the right thing for our community."

Plant officials explore water options

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the state health department should know about the plant as everything has been checked with them.

"We will be in Topeka on Thursday (Aug. 4)," he said, "to meet with the state health people and the Environmental Protection Agency about the air permit.

"We know what happened in Minnesota. We do not want to have those problems. We don't want coal dust either. We want it to be the best, environmentally safe neighbor.

"I want to thank the Floyds for bringing this up. They have given

the city and us a good checklist.

"Everything is being done to make sure we are above the EPA requirements."

Pickman did ask the commissioners to consider waiving building permits for the pipeline and power plant, or have the money transferred into an infrastructure development fund.

The mayor and commissioners said they would consider the request.

Rich Simon, head of the city water and sewer departments, said he had talked to Rod Geisler at the state health department in Topeka about using the grey water.

"We have unique system," he said.

"Our effluent is handled by evaporation and groundwater recharge. The permit is good until 2008.

"I am sure it will change then. We have an 80-80 system now, but will go to a 15-30 requirement then. There will have to be more treatment of the water. I am sure the present plant will not meet these requirements."

Simon said the water that is discharged through the groundwater recharge is considered state water and more permits will have to be filed to consider the effect on down-

stream flows.

"We cannot discharge unsafe water to the power plant," Simon said, "I think this will get several other state and federal areas involved."

Pickman said the pipeline would be buried a minimum of four feet, and they do not know if it will take one or two lift stations to get the water to the plant site.

"We will have all the permits in place when we bring the proposal back to the commission," he said.

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

Chicken races



A tiny participant carried a chicken around an obstacle course at the Howdy Rowdy Rodeo at the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair at the Sherman County Fairgrounds on Thursday night. Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

Crossword Puzzle

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CLUES ACROSS

- John and Haley
- Paragon
- Italian money
- Sediment
- Pouter
- Billboards
- Compass pt.
- Skin ailment
- Mets home
- Musical composition
- Region of the Earth
- Marriage site
- Legumes
- Lager
- Splatter
- Sneers
- Appropriate
- Ripen
- Spice
- Scarf
- Ethereal
- Put on
- Alder, for one
- Country
- Spirit
- Nervous system, abbr.
- Chancy
- Snoot
- Cheeky
- Cookie man
- Groans
- Frequently
- Shad
- Rocked
- Capital of Norway
- Forest god
- Boss and fabric
- Breed
- Oxen
- Bloody Mary essential
- Julia Roberts' achievement
- Chinese mountain range
- Limonite and zinc
- Large room
- Bottom
- Carte
- The "King"
- Litigated
- Portend
- Tether
- Redding, soul singer
- Net
- Expire

CLUES DOWN

- "Mia," musical

The crossword puzzle brought to you by:

The Goodland Star-News

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(785) 899-2338

New manager brings experience

MANAGER, from Page 1

in younger people with kids in school.

We knew there was going to be an increase in cultural diversity.

"There were a lot of things we did not foresee. We asked the people if they wanted this plant. We had a vote on a one-cent sale tax to give Seaboard \$8 million to come to Guymon.

"There were questions about using tax money to help a private company. The state Supreme Court approved it on basis of the greater good, and that it was possible to show the larger return from the increased population and businesses.

"The sale tax passed on an 82 percent vote within the city of Guymon. We had a local group look at going on a countywide basis, but decided it was more of a city issue since that was where the largest number of people lived. We let the people of Guymon vote on it, and some people in the county got upset that they did not get to vote on it. They said the plant might be in the city, but the pigs had to be raised somewhere. We figured that even if the county people had voted, the issue would have been approved."

A native of Guymon, Hill graduated from high school there in 1967.

He attended Panhandle State University in Goodwell from 1967-1971, finishing a degree in biology, then was a biology and chemistry teacher in Johnson, Kan., for six years.

"I got a grant to work toward my master's at Emporia State University," he said.

"They required a one-year residency to do your thesis. I had the hours, but I was just married and had my first daughter. Living in Johnson, I could not meet that requirement."

He left teaching to be a research director and manager for Calorific, a subsidiary of Thermonetics, north of Guymon.

He did research on the conversion of animal waste to energy for eight years.

"We proved it could be done," he said, but the best part was we proved you could feed the residue back to the cattle in a pellet form. Unfortunately, we had trouble getting feed yards to buy the pellets despite university studies that showed it was a good feed supplement."

He became a Guymon city employee in 1985.

He was the director of water pollution control for two years before becoming the public works director in 1987. He was promoted to be the

city manager in 1991

While city manager in Guymon, he said, he received grants for parks, airport improvements and water and wastewater improvements.

He helped the city develop a plan for land application of wastewater.

He said they grew corn for several years, but found it was better to grow alfalfa, which takes more water over a longer period and produces at least five cuttings.

"When I left, the city was growing dairy quality hay at \$110 a ton," he said. "I am licensed as a wastewater treatment operator and laboratory technician. I have investigated the paperwork to get the license approved in Kansas, and think that can be done quickly.

"It is going to be a big learning curve for me to learn the differences between what a city in Oklahoma can do and what there is in Kansas.

"Guymon built — with the help of the state — a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment system to handle the Seaboard plant waste. We use the gas to fire the boilers and recycle the water till it looks like drinking water. The biosolids are recycled into the mainstream rendering process. No human waste goes into that system. All

human waste goes into a separate system because of disease problems."

Hill will be facing some of the same situations in Goodland with the development of the power plant, ethanol plant and biodiesel plant west of the city and the need to upgrade the city's wastewater treatment system.

Before he retired, Pickman told the city commission clean water regulations being proposed that would force the city to build a water treatment plant and continue to upgrade its water lines.

About one-third of the older portion of the city has new water lines installed in 1999 under a grant and loan from the state, but much of the rest might need to be replaced.

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Thomas County Health Department
thomascvh@st-tel.net

350 S Range Avenue
Suite 2
Colby, Kansas 67701
785-460-4596

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