

# the Salaries of public employees in Sherman County

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Selby in health insurance contributions. Selby gets a contribution of \$33 to life insurance and the others receive \$50 each.

The next highest-paid public official in the county is Scott Mentzer, meteorologist in charge at the National Weather Service office, who makes \$98,926 per year.

Mentzer graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in meteorology and joined the National Weather Service, where he has spent the past 23 years, 10 of them here.

Grady Bonsall, technology manager at the Weather Service, takes home \$76,926 per year.

Jay Jolly, chief executive officer for Goodland Regional Medical Center, is next on the list, making \$90,002 per year for overseeing all hospital operations.

Jolly has worked in health care for 30 years and as a hospital administrator for 21. He holds a bachelor's and two master's degrees.

Among other supervisors at the hospital, Dale Schields, human resources director for the hospital, makes \$74,401; Jim Precht, chief financial officer, \$69,992; Debbie Hickman, director of patient care services, \$60,008; Sarah Linton, registered dietitian, \$35,006; Brenda McCants, patients relations director, \$31,200; Florida Cruz, surgical supervisor, \$42,120; Mary Tongish, late laboratory director, \$47,840; and Dianna Briney, administrative assistant, \$31,200 per year.

The hospital gives employees benefits, including an average of 11 percent of their salary contributed toward health plans, 2 percent to pension plans, half of 1 percent to disability insurance and one-fourth of 1 percent to life insurance.

The next-highest earner in the county is Mike Campbell, district director for the U.S. Farm Service Agency for an 18-county area, making \$84,039 per year after 30 years of service. Dennis Mote, county executive director, makes \$72,688 and Patricia Eckhart, farm loan manager, makes \$60,576.

K. Wayne Hill, the new city manager, was the next highest earner in the county making \$65,000 per year.

Hill is from Guymon, Okla., where he was the city manager for 13 years. He graduated from high school in Guymon in 1967 and went on to attend Panhandle State University in Goodwell from 1967-1971, finishing a degree in biology. He was a biology and chemistry teacher in Johnson, Kan., for six years.

Former city manager Ron Pickman was making \$71,353 when he retired last May.

In the city, Ray Smee, police chief, makes \$48,481; Chuck Lutters, former director of public works and utilities, \$48,000; Mary Volk, city clerk, makes \$47,861; Dean Jensen, fire chief, \$39,787; Steve Criswell, building official, \$37,148; and Linda Holton, director of the High Plains



Clouse



Selby



Campbell



Burr



Mentzer



Jolly

## Top six earners in county

- 1) Ken Clouse, president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College \$108,212 per year
- 2) Judge Jack Burr, district judge for Sherman County \$103,232 per year
- 3) Marvin Selby, Goodland School District superintendent \$100,000 per year
- 4) Scott Mentzer, meteorologist in charge at the National Weather Service \$98,926 per year
- 5) Jay Jolly, chief executive officer at Goodland Regional Medical Center \$90,002 per year
- 6) Mike Campbell, district director for the U.S. Farm Service Agency \$84,039 per year

## College president top wage earner

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

The president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College is top dog when compared with other public officials in north-west Kansas.

Ken Clouse is making \$15,920 more than Dr. Mikel Ary, president of the Colby Community College, \$108,212 to \$92,292. The Colby college has about 800 full-time students and the technical college here has 272.

Clouse, however, also is the chief financial officer for the technical college here while the community college hires Daniel Erbert at \$65,000 per year for that job.

Marvin Selby, superintendent of the Goodland School District, is making \$100,000 per year. That's \$15,847 more than Kirk Neilsen of the Colby School District at \$84,153, and \$24,500 more than Greg Mann of the Norton School District at \$75,500. Colby schools have the most students with 1,025 compared to Goodland's 948 and Norton's 669 in the 2004-2005 school year.

Selby's salary includes a base of \$75,000 per year and \$25,000 in annual contributions to an annuity.

Goodland's new city manager, K. Wayne Hill, will take home \$65,000 per year, \$6,353 less than former city manager Ron Pickman at \$71,353. Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong makes more at \$68,900, while Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson comes in at nearly the same amount, \$64,554.

Colby's Chief of Police Randy Jones is the highest paid of the three cities, making \$55,248 per year. That's \$6,767 more than Goodland's Chief Ray Smee at \$48,481, and

Museum, \$26,728.

Protecting citizens on the highway earns Goodland's Kansas Highway Patrol supervisor, 2nd Lt. Kevin Winston, the next highest salary at \$62,691 per year. He has been with the patrol for more than 26 years.

Dana Belshe, county extension agent, is paid \$57,070 in a cooperative agreement by Sherman County, the state and the federal government.

Bonnie Selby, county attorney, makes \$50,631, the next highest salary, and the highest for a county official.

Curt Way, public works director, makes \$50,264. He is hired by and reports to the county commissioners.

Also at the courthouse, Janet Rumpel, the elected county clerk, makes \$44,870 including her salary as election officer and drug and alcohol administrator; Shelby Miller, the elected county treasurer, makes \$31,344 per year with an additional \$5,025 for work as the motor vehicle administrator for a total of \$36,369; Carol Armstrong, the elected register of deeds, makes \$29,811; and

Sheriff Kevin Butts makes \$39,730.

Sherman county commissioners land near the bottom of the list, mostly because their jobs are part time. Commission Chairman Mitch Tiede makes \$14,450, vice chair Kevin Rasure \$13,790 per year and Commissioner Chuck Thomas \$12,730.

For the part-time job of county appraiser, which by law requires special training, Terry Ballard makes \$40,000 a year. He spends about a third of his time in Rawlins County, where he is paid \$30,000 per year.

Dorendo Harrel, director of the county health department and a registered nurse, is paid \$42,848 and Mary Messamore, head of central dispatch and the county emergency management supervisor, gets \$42,621.

In benefits on top of each employee's salary, the county and city give 4.01 percent based on salary towards the Kansas Public Employees Retirement fund, 7.65 percent towards Social Security, \$5.80 per month for life insurance and 45 cents per \$100 for short-term disability insurance.

For health insurance, the county pays \$224 per month for single coverage and \$497 for family coverage. The county has a partly self-funded program which pays for up to \$15,000 per contract per year in addition to the monthly premiums, which varies from employee to employee depending on use.

Goodland Postmaster Steven Schultz makes \$44,828 per year. He has spent 21 years in the Postal Service, starting as a part time clerk and carrier in Goodland. Postmaster duties include managing the office.

## County comparisons

	Sherman	Thomas	Norton
College President	\$108,212	\$92,292	
Superintendent	\$100,000	\$84,153	\$75,500
City Manager	\$65,000	\$68,900	\$64,554
Chief of Police	\$48,481	\$55,248	\$44,697
Hospital Director	\$90,002	**	\$83,250
Sheriff	\$39,730	\$45,344	\$50,000
Attorney	\$50,631	\$53,084	\$67,341
Appraiser	\$40,000	\$34,574	\$27,094
Treasurer	\$36,369	\$35,305	\$37,200
Register of Deeds	\$29,811	\$26,660	\$26,337
Clerk	\$44,870	\$33,280	\$40,000
Public Works	\$50,264	\$50,000	\$38,557

\*\* Citizens Medical Center in Colby is a private hospital and does not release any financial information.

\$10,551 more than Norton Chief Lynn Menagh at \$44,697.

Jay Jolly, chief executive officer for Goodland Regional Medical Center, makes \$90,002 per year. That's \$6,752 more than Richard Miller, Norton's hospital administrator, at \$83,250 per year.

Salaries from Citizens Medical Center were not available because, as a private hospital, it refuses to release any financial information.

Sherman County Sheriff Kevin Butts was the lowest paid in the area, at \$39,730 per year. Norton County Sheriff Troy Thomson makes \$38,000 per year plus \$12,000 for emergency preparedness. Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn makes \$45,344.

Karen Griffiths, Norton County attorney, makes the most of area county attorneys at \$67,341 per year. Bonnie Selby, veteran county attorney here, makes \$50,631, which is \$2,453 less than Andrea Wyrick, the new Thomas County attorney, who makes \$53,084 per year.

Terry Ballard, Sherman County appraiser, makes the most of the three counties at \$40,000 per year for part-time work. Norton County Appraiser Alan Hale is paid \$27,094, also part-time, and Thomas County Appraiser Mary Cech makes \$34,574 a year for full-time work.

County treasurers make out about the same, with Norton's Cynthia Linner bringing in

## How open are government payroll records in county?

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

When a public record is "open," anyone is supposed to be able to walk in and get what they ask for, but when it comes to salaries, some public officials are more tight lipped than "open" implies.

While working on a story comparing salaries of public employees in Sherman County, some offices gave out the information over the phone or within days of the request, while others strung mountains of red tape across their "open" files.

Most agencies asked for a formal written request under the Kansas Open Records Act or the federal Freedom of Information Act.

The Goodland Star-News asked for salary information from the Northwest Kansas Technical College, Sherman County, the City of Goodland, the Goodland School District, Goodland Regional Medical Center, the National Weather Service office here, the U.S. Farm Service Agency, the Kansas Highway Patrol and the U.S. Postal Service.

The newspaper asked for payroll information for managers, the person in charge of the organization or branch, and department heads, basically anyone in managerial positions.

Of the nine, the Northwest Kansas Technical College posed the



biggest problem in "opening" their records.

President Ken Clouse denied the newspaper's first request because of the wording used.

"Tom (Betz, the editor) was told he would need to provide greater clarification to fill his request," the letter said.

Clouse told reporters there were no "managers" at the college, just instructors.

On a second request, Clouse re-

plied with his salary, but provided only a range for the instructors.

He said the range varies for different reasons, and he didn't want the numbers made public. Clouse said that if the college was asked, all public institutions should be asked to provide salaries, too.

The college provided a complete list of instructors along with an organizational chart on the next request. On the third try, over a month later, the newspaper received the

information on all instructors. Although only three salaries were used in the story, under the open records law, the college was required to provide all the information.

Each agency was asked for information on benefits along with the salaries, so the reporter could calculate total compensation, but many cited a "privacy" exemption to withhold the amounts.

Only the city, county, hospital

and school district provided benefit information.

Kansas school districts are required by state law to provide salary information for administrators to the news media each fall. Superintendent Marvin Selby promptly gave the newspaper benefit and annuity information when asked.

To determine the salaries of Principals Jim Mull and Sharon Gregory, the Northwest Kansas Education Center provided the information over the phone and asked for a faxed open records request.

The city and county, which were included in a salary story last year, provided salary information shortly after it was requested. Both furnished an estimate of benefits for employees, too.

Dana Belshe, county extension agent, who is paid with state, county and federal money, gave his salary information over the phone based on the contract he signed last year.

The U.S. Postal Service gave out Goodland Postmaster Steven Schultz's year-to-date salary. Reporters had to call the human resources office in Omaha, where they learned that the figure was for six pay periods and the Postal Service pays 26 times a year.

The Kansas Highway Patrol promptly released the salary of Lt. Kevin Winston, but denied a request for benefits information.

Dale Schields, human resources director at the Goodland Regional Medical Center, told reporters he had to consult the hospital's lawyer before releasing salary information.

The hospital provided salaries along with an estimate of benefits, but almost a month after the request.

The U.S. Farm Service Agency was asked to provide salary information and the request was sent on to the state office. Although the office took about two months to return the request, the newspaper eventually got the salaries.

A request to the National Weather Service was sent on to the Central Region office in Kansas City, Mo. The office took over a month to return the information and then it did not include an estimate of benefits.

Salaries for district and magistrate judges are the same throughout the state, and officials at the Kansas Judicial Branch provided the information over the phone.

Citizens pay the taxes that make up the salaries of all of the people listed, and the law says they have a right to know.

State "sunshine" laws require the city, county and school boards to hold open meetings and allow citizens a look at what they spend their money on. Salaries are no different than any other information under law: when you foot the bill, you can find out what it's for.