

**weather  
report****72°**

noon Monday

**Today**

• Sunset, 6:26 p.m.

**Wednesday**

• Sunrise, 6:47 a.m.

• Sunset, 6:25 p.m.

**Midday Conditions**

• Soil temperature 70 degrees

• Humidity 32 percent

• Sky Sunny

• Winds WNW 9 mph

• Barometer 29.94 inches

and falling

• Record High today 92° (1963)

• Record Low today 24° (1953)

**Last 24 Hours\***

High Monday 91°

Low Monday 54°

Precipitation 0

This month 12.85

Year to date 17.03

**The Topside Forecast**

Today: Partly cloudy, chance of isolated thunderstorms, high 86, 30 percent chance of rain, west northwest winds shifting to the south at 10 to 20 mph. Tonight: Partly cloudy, low 46, winds shifting to the north at 20 to 30 mph, 30 percent chance of rain.

**Extended Forecast**

Wednesday: Windy with a mix of sun and clouds. High in the 60s and lows in the low 30s. Thursday: Sunshine, highs in the low 60s and lows in the low 30s. Friday: Sunny, highs in the upper 60s and lows in upper 30s.

(National Weather Service)

**local  
markets****Noon**

Wheat — \$3.39 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.98

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$1.83 bushel

Posted county price — \$1.53

Loan deficiency pmt. — 41¢

Milo — \$1.54 bushel

Soybeans — \$5.01 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.87

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0.00¢

Millet — \$6.25 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$9.60 cwt.

NuSun. — \$10.65

Confection — Call

Pinto beans — \$17 (new crop)

(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

**Oakley beats  
Goodland**

Senior running back Derek Fenner (dark jersey) bullied in from one yard out for Goodland's only touchdown during the Cowboys' homecoming game Friday against Oakley. Story, photos Page 12.

## Three guns gone at sheriff's office

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

An inventory of evidence and equipment at the Sherman County sheriff's office turned up some missing items, including three handguns, Sherman County commissioners heard Friday.

The guns will be reported stolen, and if they turn up, the sheriff said, the who and where may answer some of his questions.

Sheriff Kevin Butts and Undersheriff Roger Studer told Commissioners Mitch Tiede and Chuck Thomas that they had completed an inventory of all the sheriff's equip-

ment and the evidence vault. Butts said some items appeared to be missing, but he felt that most of them were things that had been replaced without being taken off the old inventory.

Butts said he had asked the former sheriff Doug Whitson about the items, and Whitson said he did not know.

"Some of these maybe have been missing for years," Butts said.

Commissioner Thomas asked about a missing pair of leg-irons, and Butts said he thought they had been gone for four or five years.

"They just weren't taken off the

list," Butts said.

Butts said he has been asking the district court for destruction orders, but that some of the items in evidence go back to when Jack Armstrong was sheriff.

Thomas asked what the sheriff does with confiscated weapons.

Butts said if they get the proper order from the district judge, they can use them in the department, destroy them or sell them to a registered gun dealer. He said if they get a destruction order, they take them and cut them up.

The missing handguns are a .22, a .308 and a .357. Butts said they

have looked everywhere for the weapons, but have not found any clues. He said he would enter all three into the National Crime Information Center computer as stolen. If they show up, it may be a way to determine whether they were taken illegally or there is a logical explanation.

Butts said he was planning to switch the department to digital cameras, and that the 35mm cameras the department has are not worth more than \$50 each. He asked for permission to donate the cameras to the photography class at Grant Junior High.

The commissioners said that

sounded like a good idea.

At the beginning of the meeting, Chairman Tiede opened a public hearing on the county budget for next year. There were no objections, and no one was present to make a statement.

After the hearing, Tiede made a motion to approve the budget and Thomas seconded. It passed unanimously with Commissioner Kevin Rasure absent.

The next commissioner meeting will be 8 a.m. next Tuesday. The commissioners meet on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway.

## Sex offender gets ten years

By Tom Betz

*The Goodland Star-News*

The judge said he faced few options Friday afternoon as he gave a Goodland man 10 years as a repeat sex offender, turning aside pleas to let the man find a better treatment plan than Kansas offers.

The case began more than two years ago when Kenneth Petracich, 51, was arrested for sexual misconduct involving a minor in April of 2003.

That's 29 months Petracich has been in the Sherman County Bastille. He underwent psychological testing as part of the pre-sentencing process before the hearing Friday in Sherman County District Court.

The case has been put on hold several times as the defense requested continuances for mental health evaluations for Petracich. The most recent delay in sentencing happened in July when one of the defense's witnesses could not be present for the court date.

Petracich had admitted taking indecent liberties with a 4-year-old in 2003, exposing himself and having the child touch him.

Judge Jack Burr heard statements from the parents, from a sexual addictions specialist, and from County Attorney Bonnie Selby and defense attorney Jeff Mason before sentencing Petracich to 120 months in the Department of Corrections, with credit for time served.

The parents asked the judge to impose the maximum sentence. The mother said the past two years and five months have been an emotional ordeal for the family.

She said the events have made her daughter not trust people, and she is worried about what will happen to her child as she grows up.

"I failed my daughter when I went to make lunch," she said. "Ken failed my daughter and stole her innocence."

"Judge, please do not fail my daughter. Send a strong message and do not depart downward from the sentencing recommendation."

The girl's father echoed his wife's sentiments.

"I am disgusted with what this

man did," he said. "Do not allow him to hurt another little girl. Please give him the stiffest sentence."

"He never apologized or showed remorse. This case has drug on for over two years and we are frustrated. We do not want this to happen to another child."

In Petracich's defense, Mason had filed an objection to part of the court records which showed two charges of sexual battery in previous cases in Scott County in 1990, for which Petracich had been sent to prison. Mason said the court documents were unclear as to whether there was one or two charges. If there was just once offense, he said, that would drop the sentence here from 120 months down to 55.

Selby argued that the Scott County District Court's certified records showed the plea agreement and judgment being for two counts of sexual battery, and that the Sherman County District Court should accept that.

After the parents made their statements, Mason called Jeff King, a sexual addictions specialist with the Prairie View Center in Newton who had spoken with Petracich twice.

King said he felt that Petracich needed a program of intense daily treatment. His recommendation was that Petracich complete a 30-60 days intense sexual treatment program and after the program that he be in community corrections for five years.

"He is too high a risk to be in the community," King said. "He needs intense daily treatment, and that is not available in Kansas."

"This is to give him the tools so he doesn't offend again, and make him less of a risk in the community."

King was asked by Mason about the treatment program in the Kansas prison system.

"I do not believe he will benefit from being in prison," King said. "He has been to prison and he could go there again. Treatment would be the best way to make him less of a threat. He will not get that in prison."

"He will always be a sex offender. He may be able to control his ac-

**See OFFENDER, Page 10**

Mark Starr (above) and Chelsea Gray were crowned king and queen during half-time at the Homecoming football game on Friday night. The two rode together (below) in the Homecoming parade on Thursday.

Photos by Tom Betz and Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

## Homecoming for high school

By Kathryn Burke

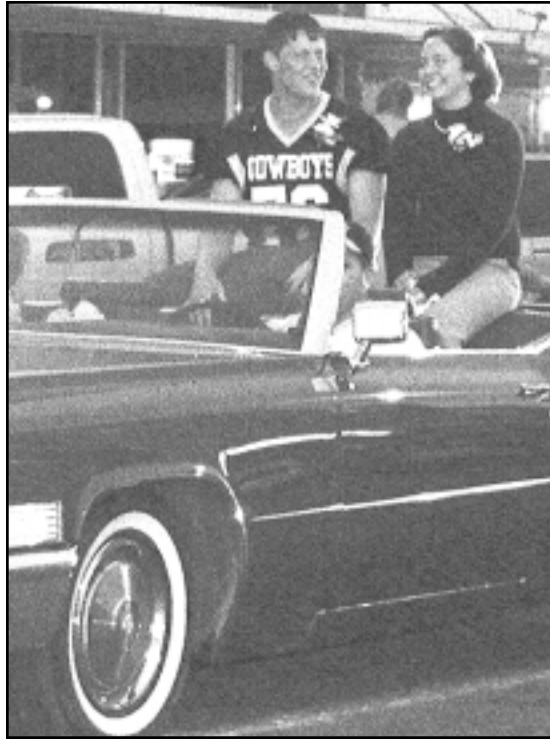
*The Goodland Star-News*

Goodland High School's 2005 Homecoming kicked off with a parade, pep rally and bonfire Thursday night. The game followed on Friday, and Mark Starr and Chelsea Gray were crowned Homecoming King and Queen at halftime.

Thursday's festivities started at 6:30 p.m. sharp when police cars led a line of homecoming parade marchers.

First the Veterans of Foreign Wars color guard brought the flag, followed by an American Legion unit that displayed flags from each state.

The high school band came in next to get toes tapping in the crowd that lined Main.

**See HOMECOMING, Page 9**

## Goodland Chamber turns over a new leaf

By Kathryn Burke

*The Goodland Star-News*

After years of operating in the red and always coming up short, the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce has a plan to turn over a new leaf.

Brian Linin, new president of the Chamber board, said they have shifted the focus of the Chamber to helping member businesses. No longer will the group organize festivals, fireworks or concerts.

The group announced recently that they are \$20,000 in debt and they have asked the Sherman County Economic Development Council, the city and county, and Chamber members to help bail them out.

Linin said it wasn't just one event that put the group in the red, but the Fourth of July Freedom Fest fireworks, concert and festival orga-

## Focus shifts from festivals to business

The new Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce board has set goals to help shift the group's focus from festivals to helping businesses.

President Brian Linin said they plan to start by talking to businesses and see what they need.

"We don't spend any time in businesses," he said of past Chamber operations.

Linin said he thinks the group should be an advocate for businesses, creating action plans that will represent and benefit everyone. He said sometimes competing businesses don't communicate, but may need similar things. The Chamber, he said, will work to uncover those common goals and work to make

nized by the Chamber this year tipped them over the edge.

"I think it's really important to note that it's really not one event that caused this," he said, adding that the

Goodland better.

"The No. 1 thing the Chamber does is represent businesses," Linin said, adding that a representative from the group should be in to visit, discuss and consult with each member business once a month.

He said the Chamber will provide business representation to government, individuals, other businesses and organizations, both within and outside of the community, he said.

Along with helping existing businesses, Linin said, they will work with the Goodland Ambassadors

**See FOCUS, Page 10**

cided they weren't comfortable working that way.

"We cannot operate this way anymore," he said.

A big part of the Chamber's new

plan, Linin said, is going back to what the group originally set out to do.

"We're supposed to promote businesses and commerce in Goodland," he said, adding that board members had been spending all of their time and resources on festivals. The Chamber had sponsored the Flatlander Fall Festival, Freedom Fest for the Fourth of July and the former Sunflower Festival.

"The future of those events depends on the willingness of our community to support them through organizing, funding and staffing," said a page of question-and-answer information worked up by the Chamber board.

Linin said the Flatlander Festival last weekend was put on by a newly formed committee. In past years, the

**See CHAMBER, Page 10**