

Hospital runs in black so far

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News
Goodland Regional Medical Center is in the black so far this year and is preparing a budget for next year in the hopes that the hospital will continue to improve its finances.

The hospital board's regular monthly meeting last Monday was canceled due to the snow storm and power outage. The finance committee met Tuesday, Nov. 22, to discuss the 2006 budget, and Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht plans present it to the board for approval at a rescheduled meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday.

As of the end of October, the hospital had a \$135,612 year-to-date net gain listed on its statement of revenue and expenses. The hospital had net losses in February, March, May, June and August, totaling \$213,282. Net gains in the other months totaled \$348,894.

The hospital posted a \$1,180,795 net loss in 2003 and an \$813,925 net gain in 2004.

The hospital recorded \$11,477,417 gross patient revenue for the first 10 months of this year and year-to-date county appropriations of \$325,000, \$32,500 per month.

Year-to-date expenses were \$3,146,396 for wages and salaries; \$804,105 employee benefits; \$902,527 professional fees; \$1,300,644 supplies; \$369,179 purchased services; \$110,204 lease expense; \$238,191 utilities; \$105,685 insurance; \$56,374 interest; \$651,800 depreciation; \$467,500 provision for bad debt; and \$181,183 other expense.

Total expenses were \$7,398,790, and total operating revenue for the 10 months was \$7,133,995. The hospital has a loss from operations, but the county appropriations along with \$28,340 in interest income and \$58,845 in other income put it

ahead.

The decline in patient days and deliveries from 2001 through 2005 appears to correlate with the population and school enrollment data in Kansas Rural Health Options reports, Precht said.

There has been an increase in outpatient visits during this time, he said, in diagnostic imaging, laboratory, respiratory therapy and intravenous therapies.

For next year's budget, Precht said, strategic planning will become a cornerstone. The hospital plans additional efforts to address medical staff development, technology opportunities, marketing strategies, compliance, quality outcomes benchmarking and functional facility design.

The 2006 budget indicates additional staff for installing new information system modules, consultant services, laboratory, surgeon, compliance, education and endowment effort, Precht said.

Reductions are anticipated in the dietary, housekeeping, maintenance and purchasing departments. Without giving details, Precht said the 2006 budget reflects significant changes in professional expense for certified registered nursing assistants, nurse practitioners for the emergency room and surgeon services.

The Goodland Family Health Center has a year-to-date net loss of \$63,447, he said. Gross patient revenue through October was \$1,191,001. Expenses were \$888,540 for wages and salaries; \$157,946 for employee benefits; \$38,103 for professional fees; \$23,578 for supplies; \$57 for purchased services; \$1,500 lease expense; \$1,913 utilities; \$29,000 insurance; \$18,300 provision for bad debt; and \$8,794 other.

The hospital took over the former Rural Health Ventures clinic March 1, 2004.

Kanorado man to be arraigned

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News
A Kanorado man will be arraigned on charges of rape and aggravated burglary after being bound over for trial at a preliminary hearing Wednesday afternoon.

Robert E. Handle, 55, a former candidate for mayor who listed himself as unemployed, was charged Nov. 1 with forced sexual intercourse with a woman, a level 1 person felony, and with breaking into the elderly woman's home in Goodland, with the intent to rape her, a level 5 person felony. Before the election last spring, Handle said he was an independent ice supplier.

Sherman County Sheriff's Deputy Jason Showalter said an elderly Goodland woman reported that Handle barged his way into her home and had unwanted sexual relations with her on Nov. 18.

Showalter testified the he interviewed the victim at her home a week later, on Nov. 25. He said obtained a warrant and arrested



Handle

Handle on Nov. 27. Handle was read his rights and interviewed.

The victim, in her 80s, testified that she knew Handle, and they had a relationship before.

The day in question, she said, she told him to stop and leave her alone.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby represented the state. Kevin Berens, a lawyer from St. Francis is Handle's counsel court-appointed counsel.

District Judge Jack Burr ruled there was sufficient evidence for the case to go to trial. Burr continued Handle's bond at \$50,000, \$10,000 in cash or property and the rest in a note. If the bond is met, he said, Handle's release would be supervised by court services. Under supervised bond, Handle would be ordered not to contact the victim in any way, he said.

The judge set an arraignment for 9 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Sherman County Courthouse. Handle posted bond after the hearing.

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court: Oct. 2 — Joseph R. Cram, \$159 for speeding.

Christopher E. Johnson, \$150 for speeding.

John F. Landa, \$132 for speeding.

Daniel J. Smith, \$120 for speeding.

corrections

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Kids gather food for Christmas boxes



More than 50 kids and 25 parents turned out in the snow Saturday morning to collect food for the annual Genesis food drive. Youths from the Sunflower, Glendale Livewires and Ruleton Eager Beavers 4-H clubs and Cub Scouts gathered sacks of food people left on porches and brought them to the United Methodist Church. Pat Jordan, who works with Genesis and the Salvation Army, said the list of names has grown this year to 160 fami-

lies. She said the collection on Saturday was good, but they need more food. Dave Brandt, owner of the Sherman Theatre, held a Genesis matinee Saturday and Sunday, and said it was the largest collection he has seen. He said the food will be under the tree in the lobby of the theater through this weekend and people can add to the supply at the free matinees at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Hospital opens annual fund drive

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News

If you want to help improve medical services in Goodland and get a tax deduction, the Northwest Kansas Area Medical Foundation is in the midst of its Caring Kind fund drive.

The foundation wants to continue adding equipment needed by Denver-based surgeons for elective surgery which can be scheduled, said Dale Schields, Director of Resource Development at the Goodland Regional Medical Center. Plans include new scopes and other equipment for general surgery cases at

Goodland Regional Medical Center.

This is the 20th year for the Caring Kind fund drive, Schields said. The drive has raised over \$160,000 for equipment, services and medical scholarships at the hospital.

Money raised by the 2004 Caring Kind drive and the Slice of Life golf benefit and auction this year helped buy a new anesthesia machine for \$82,000 and a new phacoemulsifier machine used in cataract surgery for \$27,500. A phacoemulsifier breaks up the cataract and a small suction removes it. The procedure is much safer than cutting

out the cataract, said Schields.

The phacoemulsifier, along with a new argon laser, has helped give the hospital one of the best eye-care programs in the Tri-State area, said Schields. The hospital and the foundation would like to keep adding equipment to vision care program, Schields said. The vision program treats people who have cataracts, retinal disorders and glaucoma.

The foundation has bought a polonoscope, a scope used to check the lower intestines, a defibrillator for the emergency room and the ambulance and a blanket warmer

for the emergency room. The foundation also gave money for the new computer system for the hospital, said Schields.

The foundation has two scholarships. The scholarships go to Whitney Carmichael, a nursing student at Colby Community College and Savannah Eisenbart, a medical assistant student at the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

"Gifts to the Caring Kind drive supports quality medical care through its purchases of medical equipment and support of future doctors and nurses," said Schields.

Goodland man goes to prison for 15 months

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press

A month after being given a second chance, a Goodland man who now admits he just can't stay away from drugs is going to prison.

Ronald R. Thompson, 44, told District Judge Glenn Schiffner of Wednesday he was sorry for the mess his life was in and wanted help getting free of drugs.

He asked for another chance, but he had told Schiffner the same thing Nov. 2.

Thompson is now for "star-be-cue" parties at his farm on County Road 67 northwest of Goodland. In August the parties were to view the approach of Mars on a television monitor, magnified by a 12-inch aperture, 600-800-



Thompson

power telescope.

Charged with possession of the narcotic drug codeine, Thompson was sentenced Aug. 3 under a state law which requires treatment before a drug user goes to prison.

Schiffner gave Thompson probation on a 15-month prison sentence, but he allegedly violated the terms of his probation when he tried to get another person's medication and get money from elderly Goodland residents to buy prescriptions.

Last month, Thompson's attorney, Colby lawyer Todd Stramel, said his client was "addicted to being addicted." Wednesday, he said Thompson was prepared to admit he had a problem.

Thompson's community correc-

tions officer, Dian Organ, last week filed an affidavit claiming that he had violated his probation "on many occasions" in November.

"I did mess up again," Thompson told Schiffner. "I have a step-daughter and wife who need me to succeed. I have the pressure of God, my wife and the court for asking for one more chance."

In November, Schiffner sentenced Thompson to a halfway house run by the Thomas County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council. On Wednesday, though, hearing about the defendant's lack of suc-

cess, Schiffner imposed the original 15-month prison sentence and ordered Thompson to prison.

Schiffner told Thompson he had a lot of empathy for this situation and felt the man "must have a real addition to narcotic drugs."

"About six weeks ago, I tried to make it clear to you it was your last chance at probation and I have a duty to you and to the public to make sure you succeed," Schiffner said. "I have no other alternative but to impose the original sentence with the Kansas Department of Corrections. I wish you the best."

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