

# Soldier's death leads story list

TOP 10, from Page 1

on I-70 on June 11, 2004, that took the lives of Christine Williams, her mother Mary Wyant and grandmother Aline Becker.

•Eighth was the evidence of early humans found during the Kansas Anthropological Training field school near Kanorado, covering

two weeks in June. The find has been dated back to 12,200 years ago. Artifacts gathered in June could push that back closer to 14,000 years, making it the oldest evidence of humans on the High Plains and possibly in all of North America.

•Ninth was the construction and completion of Pioneer Park, part of

the new entrance to the city on Cherry Ave. The project had been in the planning for over five years, and citizens helped raise \$17,000 to help get the project done.

•The development of a corn maze on the east side of the city was No. 10. The maze was open to the public from August to the end of October.

# Antenna company opens plant

5 Adronics/Elrob Manufacturing Corp. began production of coaxial cable and antennas for new car here on Monday, May 9, replacing a failed aircraft parts operation in the city-owned Ed Wolak Building.

The company says it builds antennas for General Motors, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Isuzu, Hummer and Harley Davidson. Headquarters is in Cedar Grove, N.J., with an automotive engineering office in Southfield, Mich.

The company, started in 1948 by Elsa and William Robinson is a third-generation family owned business. The firm moved manufacturing operations in 1990 to Hays, where they employ 265 people. They expected to hire 30 people to start with in Goodland.

The city commission approved a lease for the Wolak Building, 1006 Center. The lease for the city-owned building is similar to the one approved for Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. about 14 months before, said City Manager Ron Pickman.

It is for two years, with no extension without coming back to the commission, he said. It calls for Adronics to have a minimum of 15 employees during the two years, and the company will pay \$1 per year rent. The firm is to pay property taxes and maintain \$1 million casualty and liability insurance on the building.



Goodland Rotary Club members Larry Morgan, Clyde Lambert, Dick Liess, John Baker and Ron Lucas crowded into the Adronics/Elrob Manufacturing Corp. line, where they watched a worker spot weld a wire mesh to an antenna.

The manager said he had received a letter from Herb Menold, president of Aircraft Seal and Gasket, saying they would be out by the middle of April. The building was formerly the location for an IGA grocery store. It was damaged in a fire. The city bought and remodeled the building for \$500,000 starting in September 2003 as a site for Aircraft Seal and Gasket to lease.

The city sponsored a \$200,000

state economic development loan for Aircraft Seal and Gasket but was not responsible for repayment. The loan required one job to be created for every \$35,000 borrowed, six jobs for the total loan, within the first two years.

The city commission voted to end the lease with Aircraft Seal and Gasket on March 3 because it did not meet the requirements for job creation.

# Chamber reorganizes to pay off bills

6 The Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce, after running in the red for over three years, has reorganized. Brent Linin became president after Donna Swager resigned at the end of August. Toward the end of July, Linin said, the board discovered a shortfall of about \$20,000 in the chamber's budget. The chamber is making changes to get back on its feet. Board members have talked to creditors, Linin said, and some have agreed to charge their cost or only 10 percent more on some things.

The immediate measures were taken in August of terminating the office lease with Justin Bentzinger, eliminating the paid chamber director, moving in with the Sherman County Economic Development Council at 1208 Main and having volunteers cover the office.

The Chamber had been focusing its time and manpower mainly on festivals, concerts, Christmas and similar promotions, Linin said, and now businesses will be the priority.

A Tracy Lawrence concert during the Fourth of July Freedom Fest was not profitable, Linin said, but that was not what put the Chamber in the hole. The main budget is \$20,000 raised from dues, he said. Festivals usually break even.

The chamber is divorcing itself from the Flatlander Fall Festival and the Freedom Fest. Flatlanders was organized on its own with a committee representing various groups, but the future of the Freedom Fest was in doubt.

The Sherman County Economic Development Council on Tuesday, Oct. 25, agreed to give the chamber \$8,008 to help pay off old bills. The money had to pay for bills that had an economic development purpose, according to the county auditor.

By October, the chamber's shortfall had reached \$27,076 with addition of salaries; payroll taxes; High Plains Office Supply for supplies and copies; Mark Scheopner for web site hosting and advertising; Shad's Electric for concert wiring;

\$24 for trash; and \$159 for phone service.

On Tuesday, Nov. 2, the Sherman County commissioners gave their approval for Economic Development to give the Chamber \$8,000 to pay bills for advertising or entertainment. The council could give them money to pay bills as long as it had something to do with economic development, commissioners said.

"We have made a lot of changes," Linin told the Economic Development Council at their annual meeting on Nov. 15. "We have a new mission and a new vision."

"The new mission is to 'Dynamically represents the community of Goodland through continual improvement to promote growth, development and a positive business atmosphere.'

"We know it will not happen overnight, and the mission is written with the vision of what it will be in five to seven years.

# Woman sentenced for killing three

7 A car crash on I-70 on June 11, 2004, forever changed the lives of a family. Two children were suddenly without their mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

This summer, the family of Christine Williams, her mother Mary Wyant and grandmother Aline Becker finally saw their killer sentenced to seven years and two months in prison for three counts of felony involuntary manslaughter in the deadly crash.

Jennifer Adams, 29, a teacher in the Denver area, had been charged with second-degree murder but pleaded guilty to the lesser charge along with a charge of aggravated battery, driving under the influence of alcohol and transporting an open container.

Court records show Adams' blood alcohol tested more than three times the legal limit when her car struck a Ford Explorer from behind, knocking it out of control and killing the three Goodland women and injuring Williams' children,

Garrett, then 8, and Caylee, then 6. At a preliminary hearing in October 2004, testimony revealed Adams had been ticketed twice that day for speeding on I-70 west of WaKeeney and that her car was moving fast and nearly out of control just before the wreck.

Trooper Troy Smith of Goodland said Adams consented to a search of her car after the wreck. He found an opened bottle of Smirnoff Vodka in front of the passenger seat and an unopened bottle of beer in a cooler behind the driver's seat.

Trooper Joe Greene of Goodland administered a breath alcohol field test, which Adams failed. She was taken to the Sherman County Bastille, Greene said, where breath tests pegged her blood alcohol content at .265 percent, more than three times the legal limit of .08.

District Judge Jack Burr signed a motion in January ordering Adams to pay \$5,000 for the funeral expenses of Aline Becker. In June, just a year after the crash, Burr sentenced her to 43 months each for the

manslaughter charges, with the terms to run consecutively. That adds up to 129 months, but Kansas statutes prevent Adams from serving more than double the first sentence, 86 months.

Burr then sentenced her to 34 months for the battery charge and six months each for driving under the influence of alcohol and transporting an open container, to run concurrently with the others.

Williams, 35, was a Goodland High School biology teacher; Wyant, 55, the driver, was a teacher aide at West Elementary School; and Becker, 85, was a retired upholsterer and homemaker.

Eleven family members testified, asking Judge Burr to impose the maximum sentence. The judge rejected a motion by Adams' attorneys to depart from the recommended sentence and place her on probation. He said although she might be a "perfect" candidate for probation, the nature of the crime was "too egregious" for him to depart from the guidelines.

# Body found is missing man

4 Skeletal remains found the afternoon of March 30 northwest of Goodland were identified as those of Jimmy McClelland, 44, who had been missing for 16 months.

Sheriff Kevin Butts said a farmer found the bones while working a field, and called 911 about 3:30 p.m. The sheriff said he and Deputy Jason Showalter went to the scene.

"We could see there was a human skeleton in the field," Butts said. "We called in the KBI, and they called in Dr. Michael Finnegan, a K-State forensic anthropologist."

Dr. Finnegan arrived March 31, and went to the field with the sheriff and deputies to examine the remains and gather them for further examination.

Butts said his deputies staked out the scene and flagged all the evidence they could see. He said they worked most of the afternoon, and had a deputy guard the place overnight.

"The remains were identified as being Jimmy McClelland," Sheriff Butts said on April 12, "but the cause of death was unknown."

"Dr. Finnegan was not able to say with certainty what caused McClelland's death. Finnegan said there was a skull fracture, but it appeared to have happened after his death."

"Dr. Travis Daise, local deputy coroner, listed

the death as from natural causes, possibly by exposure."

Butts said the remains were at the top of a hill in a wheat stubble field west of Century Feeders, and did not appear to have been buried.

"I think it was northwest of where we searched over a year ago," Butts said. "I think we got within a half mile of the body."

Butts called McClelland's mother, Jan McClelland, and told her the remains had been found, but that he did not have positive identification.

"I told her we felt it might be Jimmy," Butts said, "and she told me that in her heart she feels it is him."

Butts said pieces of clothing found with the remains matched the description of what McClelland was wearing the night he went missing.

McClelland had been missing since the evening of Nov. 24, 2003, when sheriff's deputies were called to an argument at the home of Mark Peden, 6940 County Road 19, about 3 1/2 miles northwest of Goodland. On the phone, Marci Peden told dispatchers her husband was in an argument with a man holding a knife. She said her husband had a shotgun. Witnesses said McClelland, 5920 County Road 14, allegedly the man with a knife in the argument, ran from the scene. He had been missing since.

# Kanorado dig state's 'oldest site'

8 Around 100 volunteers came to town the for 10 days in June as participants in an archeological dig near Kanorado.

Artifacts from the site near I-70 have been dated back to 12,200 years ago, and artifacts gathered this year could push that back closer to 14,000 years when the evidence is sifted, making them the oldest evidence of humans on the High Plains and possibly in all of North America.

Every morning for the two weeks, volunteers boarded a school bus before 8 a.m. for the trip to the Kansas Anthropological Training Field school.

Dr. Steven Holen of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and Dr. Rolfe Mandel of the Kansas Geological Survey lead the excavation, with support from the University of Kansas and the state Historical Society.

"We can certainly say this is the oldest site in Kansas you worked

on," said Holen at a "resumé," or recap, session held on June 19. "We found enough evidence to say there is a Folsom component and a Clovis component at this site."

"We will take all the specimens back to Denver for analysis, and I will work with Dr. Mandel to put together a report which should be done by next spring."

Holen said the Kanorado site is the first Clovis man site in the state and the second Folsom site. Early native Americans, known as paleo-Indians, roamed the High Plains thousands of years ago, and some of the earliest were called Folsom for the fluted points they made about 10,000 years ago.

Clovis paleo-Indians were on the High Plains well before the Folsom, and evidence collected at Kanorado is pushing that date back towards 14,000 years ago. Points made by these tribes were before the invention of the bow and arrow.

Holen said about nine stone tools were found and many flakes, plus a

number of bones and bone fragments from camel, bison and mammoth.

He said finding the tools and flakes shows that people traveled through the High Plains following the mammoth and bison herds as they migrated with the seasons. The tribes would find water and places to camp along the streams and would hunt from these camps. The tools would be chipped out of larger stones carried by the tribes, and some of these tool-making chips or flakes are what archeologists were finding at Kanorado.

Vita Tucker, president of the state association, said 111 volunteers had registered and that 54 of those were first-time workers. She said it was encouraging to see the number of young people who participated for the first time.

From Goodland, Brad Geist, 14, and Tanner Oharrah, 14, were digging at one site and Syndee Thornburg, 11, was at another.

# Pioneer Park completed in November

9 A project that began in 1998 finally produced a park with grass, trees, a hike-bike path and a gazebo to welcome people to Goodland.

Pioneer Park, adorning the entrance at Cherry Ave. and Business U.S. 24, started as a drainage and flood control project, but a citizens group felt it should be an attractive entrance to the city. The group proposed adding grass, trees, shrubs, sidewalks, a hike and bike trail, a gazebo and decorative lighting to beautify the area and named it Pioneer Park.

Seven years of designing, planning, raising money and trying to decide which features are most important and what the city could afford came to an end in October, when the park was completed.

Miller Construction was the low bidder on the project, at \$465,404, but the city didn't have that much to spend. The City of Goodland came up with \$10,000 in its budget to add to the pot, and the Rev. Gene Tromble led a group that raised another \$17,897.

The commission voted to accept Miller's bid and have City Manager Ron Pickman negotiate to trim the project to within the city's means.

The city got a \$210,000 grant from the state and had to contribute at least \$90,000. Tromble, along with others, had been raising money for several years, and the city had \$453,916 set aside. Adding the \$75,000 maximum engineering costs brought the total for the project to \$538,904 before negotiating.

The Goodland Kiwanis Club bought a gazebo for \$5,000 over two years ago and donated it, along with \$5,000 to put it up.

"The ugliness of the old wye was a mucky mess," Tromble said in February. "It will be replaced by beautiful Pioneer Park and will honor the people who founded the city of Goodland on the treeless prairie."

"Pioneer Park will be a green tree-lined park with a 10-foot side concrete hike-and-bike trail around the perimeter. There will be benches located along the trail where people may sit and relax under the cool shade of the trees. A pavilion or roofed shelter with tables and benches will be enjoyed by families and groups, who will be delighted to have a nice picnic area."

# Corn maze draws people to county

10 Northwest Kansas was treated to a different kind of entertainment this year, and Goodland drew visitors from surrounding towns and states across the country, looking for a chance to get lost in a corn maze.

Three men working for The Maize, a company that "cuts" mazes into cornfields, took computer-generated plans and spray paint them on the field to mark the paths in June. As the corn grew, a picture of the Vincent Van Gogh sunflowers appeared, visible from the air.

The attraction, owned by Bryce and Jessica Cole, opened in August at Eighth and Eustis. The couple sold "passports" to help people get through the maze. The correct answer to questions would point you in the right direction.

The farm also featured a castle of hay bales for small children and a pumpkin patch with its produce for

sale, but the main attraction for the wee ones was a corn box — like a sand box, but with corn.

The maze drew groups with flashlights at night in October, and the haunted maze being a big hit. Fifty people turned out the weekend before Halloween for an outdoor movie at the maze.

Over 2,000 people trekked through the maze's paths, making the venture such a success the Coles are planning another for next year. They say they will be adding new features to make it even more fun.

"We had a good time," said Bryce Cole, "and we're gonna do it again."

He said they are planning to carve the Goodland Cowboys' logo next year because of the all-school reunion, but that could change. It won't be open at the time of the reunion in August, since they plan to open it after Labor Day to avoid the summer heat, but some alumni may come back for it.

This year's maze pulled some people off the Interstate, Cole said, including travelers from the East Coast and the West. People from Vermont, New Hampshire and California were among the maze visitors.

Besides Goodland, Cole said, the maze's best supporters were St. Francis and Burlington.

# Town mourns death of hero

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Fellow Kansas National Guardsmen pulled the casket from behind a row of chairs for the family and moved it to the front of the stage.

A slide show with pictures of Lutters from childhood to his high school wrestling days flashed on a screen behind the stage.

The final photo, one of him in Iraq waving and smiling, remained on the screen through the funeral.

The crowd stood again while Andra Townsend sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Guardsmen removed the American flag and folded it for the Catholic Mass.

Father Norbert Dlabal thanked the dignitaries for coming, including the Kansas adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting; Gov. Kathleen Sebelius; and others. He thanked the people for their support, too.

# Energy center brings power to economy

PLANTS, from Page 1

and ethanol plants, read a proclamation supporting the energy center development at a commission meeting on Nov. 7.

The proclamation said the city commission and staff support the center and encourage all citizens to do the same because the city "will

receive lower energy rates, realize overall increased revenues through the creation of quality jobs, increased population and economic gains for existing business."

The biodiesel plant has been contracted, he said, and should be in operation by July.

The coal-fired power plant is scheduled to be on line in Novem-

ber. An ethanol plant will be on line by late summer.

A public hearing conducted by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment will be held in Goodland at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 7, in the commission room at the City Administration Building, 204 W. 11th.

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