

**weather
report****41°****noon
Thursday****Today**

- Sunset, 4:30 p.m.
- **Friday**
- Sunrise, 7:07 a.m.
- Sunset, 4:39 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 42 degrees
- Humidity 39 percent
- Sky sunny
- Winds northwest at 24 mph
- Barometer 30.49 inches and steady
- Record High today 70° (2001)
- Record Low today -19° (1959)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	48°
Low Wednesday	24°
Precipitation	.04
This month	.04
Year to date	.04

The Topside Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, high around 63 with a low around 32. Northwest wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 66 and a low around 24. West winds at 10 to 15 mph. Sunday: Partly cloudy, with a high around 51 and low near 21. Monday: Partly cloudy with a high near 49.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

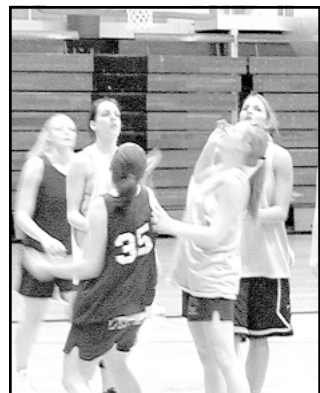
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local
markets****Noon**

Wheat — \$3.61 bushel
Posted county price — \$3.47
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Corn — \$1.90 bushel
Posted county price — \$1.86
Loan deficiency pmt. — 8¢
Milo — \$1.55 bushel
Soybeans — \$5.49 bushel
Posted county price — \$5.54
Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
Millet — \$5.75 hundredweight
Sunflowers
Oil current crop — \$6.75 cwt.
NuSun crop — \$7.75 cwt.
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

**Cowgirls
face Colby**

The Cowgirls basketball team did some five-on-five drills Monday. The team defeated Stanton County High, 58-22, on Tuesday but may face a tougher challenge tonight against Colby. See story, photo on Page 12.

Energy center site ready for plants

By Tom Betz*The Goodland Star-News*

The planning and pounding of stakes is about done at the site of the Goodland Energy Center west to town, and once environmental permits are approved, the real work will begin.

Ron Pickman, chief operating officer for the Goodland Energy Center, the firm that is responsible for developing the industrial park, said Wednesday the site preparation is continuing and the preliminary work is nearly done.

“Once the hearing is completed in February, we expect the permit to be in hand in 14 days,” Pickman said. “With the permit in hand, we can begin construction.”

Parts of a coal-fired power plant from Moorehead, Minn., continue to arrive, he said, and all should be here by the time they have the permit.

Mark Justus, managing partner of ReNewable Energy Resources, which is the company developing the wind farm project and Kanza, which is developing the biodiesel plant, and a stockholder in all the projects, said once construction begins on the power plant, it will take about a year to complete.

He said it will take a crew of about

Public hearing scheduled Feb. 8 for power-plant air quality permit

Construction of a coal-fired steam power plant north of Caruso will face a public hearing on the air quality permit at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the City Administration Building, 204 W. 11th.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment will be taking comments about the plant to be built by Goodland Energy Resources four miles west of Goodland. Public comments will be taken for 30 days, up until Monday, Feb. 6.

People wanting to speak at the public hearing should send a request to Christy Thurman at 1000 SW Jackson, Suite 310, Topeka, Kan., or faxed to (785) 291-3953 by noon on Tuesday, Feb. 7.

A copy of the proposed permit, application and supporting documents the state reviewed for the permit

are to be available at the city office here during normal business hours, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

City Manager Wayne Hill said Thursday that anyone wanting to look at the documents can ask and City Clerk Mary Volk will arrange a place for the person to read them.

Jerry Fairbanks, attorney for First National Bank, who is advising the companies involved in the Goodland Energy Center, said Wednesday he feels the state will determine the scope of the hearing.

Fairbanks said he thinks the state department is not interested in a lot of general comments, but is looking for specific questions about the details of the air quality permit.

210 to assemble the power plant, working three shifts around the clock.

While many of the construction workers will be skilled in specific areas, Justus said he expects about half to come from the surrounding area. He said boiler workers will be coming from overseas.

“There are a lot of people here

who travel for construction,” Justus said. “I was surprised at how many are here, and we may have as many as 100 from the local area.”

The original contract the city approved last summer called for the plant to be operational by September, and that was pushed back to November of this year.

The city’s contract with Sun-

flower Electric is due to run out in May, and there is a question about when the new coal power plant will be able to provide power to replace what the city is purchasing from Sunflower. City officials expect a hefty increase in the price from Sunflower, so any delay may cost customers money.

Pickman, the former city man-



Benjamin Ramirez holds his son, Guadalupe, the first baby born in 2006 at the Goodland Regional Medical Center. The

baby’s mother, Norma, holds a baby quilt given to them by the Prairie Piecemakers.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Family welcomes new baby as first of year

By Pat Schiefen*The Goodland Star-News*

The Goodland Regional Medical Center welcomed its first baby of 2006 at 9:53 p.m. New Year’s Day, a son born to Benjamin and Norma Ramirez, 1506 Syracuse.

Guadalupe Jesus Ramirez weighed 8 pounds, 13 ounces and was 22 inches long.

He has plenty of company at home: a brother and sisters, Maria, 7; Benjamin Jr., 4; Angela, 2; and Jane, 1.

Dr. Travis Daise did the delivery, said Dale

Schiels, Director of Resource Development at the hospital, assisted by nurses at the hospital.

The family received gifts from several Goodland merchants, all sponsors of the First Baby contest promoted by The Goodland Star-News.

Those started with a \$25 gift certificate from Jacque’s Hallmark and a “mommy-pampering manicure and pedicure” from Total Look.

First National Bank gave the baby a \$50 savings bond and the paper gave a subscription to

keep his family up to date on Sherman County news.

The Harvesters Restaurant at the Howard Johnson Hotel gave the family a \$20 gift certificate.

The hospital gave the baby a kit including formula, water, diapers, socks, a diaper bag and a baby blanket.

The Prairie Piecemakers made and gave the baby a tiny quilt.

“His father gave him his name,” said the new mother.

Recreation contract with activity center approved

By Tom Betz*The Goodland Star-News*

The Goodland Activity Center is ready to take over most city-county recreation programs after approval of a contract by the City Commission on Tuesday and the center board on Wednesday.

City Manager Wayne Hill praised Public Works Director Rich Simon for his efforts in putting the recreation contract together and carrying the proposal to the Sherman County commissioners on Friday.

The city will pay the center \$30,000 each year for two years to run the recreation programs.

The center will use city property, including the Centennial Park softball fields, Memorial Field for baseball, ball fields located north of West Elementary and the city tennis courts.

Simon said the center will run the concession stands at the Centennial complex and Memorial Field during the recreation programs.

The agency will take responsibility for all equipment the city has to run the adult volleyball, adult softball, youth tennis, youth basketball and youth softball (girls and co-ed) programs. The agreement said any new equipment needed would be

paid for by the center.

Hill said the agreement allows the center to use the city equipment — especially the Gator utility tractor — which the city will house and have priority use of. The city is donating a 1996 GMC pickup to the center to use in maintaining the fields and the other recreation activities.

Simon said the city will continue to maintain the grounds, fences and buildings at the ball fields, which includes mowing, controlling and spraying weeds, utilities and other minor maintenance.

The agreement said that any proposed changes to the buildings or

fences must be given to the city in writing.

Simon said the county commissioners had agreed to the recreation contract under a cooperative agreement the city and county signed in 2001.

He said the county felt the deal was a good fit, and the commissioners hope it improves the recreation program.

Mayor Pro Tem Dave Daniels signed the agreement since Mayor Rick Billinger was absent.

Later during the short meeting —

See CITY, Page 12

ager, said he has been talking with his successor, Wayne Hill, and has agreed to help the city out.

“Hill has asked us to restructure the contract to allow the city to negotiate a contract with Sunflower,” Pickman said. “It will allow us to meet the date of the contract and keep the city from having to purchase more power than they need.”

“We plan to deliver power to the city on June 1, 2007, which would allow the city to negotiate a one-year contract with Sunflower.”

Besides beginning construction of the power plant, Pickman said, work will begin on the rest of the industrial park, including sewer and water lines and streets, curb and gutter. He said the site layout has been completed and the work is ready to begin.

Pickman said construction of an ethanol plant is waiting on review and approval of the air permits through the state.

“I don’t expect the air permit to take as long as the power plant,” he said. “We will begin construction as soon as we have it in hand.”

Justus said all the equipment has been ordered for the biodiesel plant, which is coming from a Belgian

See PLANTS, Page 9

Wind turbines scheduled

By Tom Betz*The Goodland Star-News*

The windy days of the past week had people asking about the wind farm southwest of Goodland planned to produce power for the city. Backers say it’s been delayed, but not forgotten.

When it was proposed in February, the wind farm was to have been on line by September. Mark Justus, managing partner of ReNewable Energy Resources, said the firm has had trouble getting equipment, but he has a shipping date from the manufacturer in Denmark for the towers in the middle of this month.

He said the other components should arrive by the middle of February, and then it will depend on the weather as to when the foundations can be poured.

“It takes eight days to frame the foundations,” Justus said, “and it will take 45 days to cure before we can erect the towers.”

Once the foundations are completed, Justus said, it will only take a few days to get the towers up, and he expects to have them erected by April.

He said the foundations take 390 yards of concrete each.

There will be four towers, he said, and they are a little larger than the ones originally proposed last February. To complete the project, a mile of power line has to be built to connect to the city.

The four turbines will produce about 3 megawatts of power, equal to 1,300 horsepower, and about 8 million kilowatt hours per year. Justus said that’s about 13 percent of Goodland’s 56,000 to 60,000 megawatt hours used per year.

The city agreed to a contract that locks the price of the energy in at 4.112 cents per kilowatt hour for the first five years, or \$41 per megawatt hour, and .45 cents, \$45 per megawatt hour, for the next 15 years.

Justus said the generators are being shipped from Denmark. The Micon turbines are the same type of generator as the firm had planned. He said because of the growing interest in wind power it is not as easy to get equipment for smaller projects.

He said the wind farm should be providing power to the city before summer.

There is a lot of interest in the wind generation program, he said, but with the coal-fired steam power plant and the other plants at the proposed Goodland Energy Center, the wind program has not been his top priority. He says it is important as a piece of the whole project, however.