

weather report

49°



noon Monday

Today

- Sunset, 7:12 p.m.
- Wednesday**
- Sunrise, 6:27 a.m.
- Sunset, 7:13 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 45 degrees
- Humidity 58 percent
- Sky Partly Sunny
- Winds Calm
- Barometer 30.37 inches and falling
- Record High today 84° (1943)
- Record Low today 15° (1936)

Last 24 Hours*

- High Sunday 63°
- Low Monday 36°
- Precipitation —
- This month 1.99
- Year to date 2.57
- above normal .58 of an inch

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly cloudy, with a high near 75. Breezy with a south wind.
 Night: Partly cloudy, low near 43.

Extended Forecast

Wednesday: Partly cloudy, a high near 72 and a low around 41.
 Thursday: Partly cloudy and breezy, with a high of 82 and a low around 41. Friday: Partly cloudy with a high around 65 and a low near 35. Saturday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 66 with a low near 36. Sunday: Partly cloudy, with a high around 64.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

local markets

Noon

- Wheat — \$3.83 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.79
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Corn — \$2.01 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$2.02
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Milo — \$1.63 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$4.78 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.99
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢
 - Millet — \$5.50 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - Oil current crop — \$8.35 cwt.
 - NuSun crop — \$9.35
 - 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



Cowboys lose two

Coach Steve Jimenez took a time out to talk with his players during the second game of the Cowboys' home doubleheader Friday against Garden City. The Buffaloes swept Goodland 10-0 and 15-0. See story, photos on Page 12.

Wind turbines to land in Texas

By Pat Schiefen
 The Goodland Star-News

A group at Frontier Equity Exchange heard an update Saturday from Mark Justus and Ron Pickman on progress at the Goodland Energy Center and ReNewable Energy Resources.

Justus said he hoped that the turbines for a wind farms ReNewable plans south of town should be in Galveston, Texas. He said import regulations have changed with Homeland Security. The machinery has to be inspected in the country of origin, crated and shipped, inspected in the U.S. and shipped to its destination. Chuck Lutters, ReNewable vice president, was leaving Sunday to go to Germany and Estonia for training for a week, he said.

There's progress, too, at the energy center out by Caruso.

"We got the first hole dug for the coal power plant," Pickman said.

He said they had laid out the plats for the first 100 acres. The roads will be built with the idea of handling large trucks and how much room they need to turn for an easy flow of traffic.

There will be around 400 people working on construction, Pickman said.



Mark Justus, president of ReNewable Energy Resources, showed the plat drawing for the Goodland Energy Center to people at Frontier Equity Exchange on Saturday morning. He explained how it was designed and the width of the streets.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

The power plant is designed for cogeneration, where you use one source and end up with two types of energy, Justus said. The reason power plants are using coal, he said, is because the cost of coal has only risen 8 percent in 10 years. Coal power plants produce steam and electricity, he said, and an etha-

nol plant uses steam. If the plant has to generate the steam with natural gas, it would cost \$8 million a year.

By using the waste steam from the coal plant, the cost will be \$3 million, he said. The ethanol plant will produce would be 20 to 25 cents a gallon cheaper to make. They would make money at \$1.01 a gallon where ethanol made with natural gas needs to be at \$1.55 a gallon to break even.

The center will recycle all its water, Justus said. The power plant will need 450 gallons/minute of water and the ethanol plant will need 700 gallons/minute. With the way the energy center is set up, it will take 211 gallons/minute.

The ethanol plant will produce ethanol and corn syrup. Corn syrup is one of the main ingredients needed for biodiesel, he said. The biodiesel plant would produce biodiesel and glycerin. Glycerin is used in cosmetics. When the value of glycerin goes down as more biodiesel plants come online, he said, the power plant can burn the glycerin.

Justus said the three plants would create 70 new jobs. The state figures there will be 150 to 200 spin-off jobs.

Papers sent to start road sales tax in July

By Tom Betz
 The Goodland Star-News

Results of the sales tax election were finalized Friday, and Sherman County commissioners approved a resolution for the state to begin collecting the tax in July.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel faxed the papers to Carol Davison at the Kansas Department of Revenue in Topeka during the commission meeting to be sure the state would be able to begin collections in July.

The commissioners canvassed the votes from the election and counted the provisional ballots.

Rumpel said there were 33 provisional ballots, and the commissioners agreed to count 31 of those. One was tossed out because the person was not previously registered, and one of the envelopes was empty.

Rumpel said in the Kanorado and township section, one person signed for a ballot and then decided not to vote and returned their ballot. Another signed for a ballot, and apparently walked out without returning the ballot.

When the provisional ballots were counted, there were 25 yes and 6 no. That brought the election totals to 1,055 yes and 307 no. The added yes votes mean the issue passed with a 77 percent margin.

The commissioners talked to Kevin Cowan, bond counsel from Gilmore and Bell of Wichita, about the election results.

"What do we need to be doing?" Rasure asked.

Cowan said that depends on when the city or county expects to get construction going.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he thought the county would be getting some engineering work started, but did not expect construction until spring. Rasure said he thought the city might be ready with part of their projects this summer.

Cowan said he needs to know the time schedule because getting the bond process moving depends on how soon the money is needed.

"The process will take 45 to 60 days," Cowan said, "to have the bonds issued and have money in the bank."

See ROADS, Page 10



Sherman County's new rural fire truck arrived Saturday afternoon, and Fire Chief Kenny Griffith (center) checked out the engine with Roger Rife (left) of Hays Fire Equipment, which had the truck built to the county's specifications. Undersheriff Roger Studer stopped to see the truck. The newest volunteer fireman, Loren Sheldon, who works for Scheopner's Water Conditioning, stepped down from the

cab after turning on the emergency lights. The truck was purchased with an \$82,500 grant for a total cost of \$187,852. The county paid \$105,352, and there is a \$100-a-day delivery penalty deduction of \$4,200 that Hays Fire Equipment is contesting. Marvin Duell, farmer and chairman of the rural fire board, was at the county fire house to check out the rig.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Hospitals under pressure to publish prices

By Sharon Corcoran
 The Goodland Star-News

Should hospitals have to publish their prices, so patients will know what their services cost before they use them? Do hospitals really charge uninsured patients more than they charge insurance companies?

The threat of Congress passing a law to force "price transparency" for hospitals and a web site that claims to help patients avoid being fleeced by unreasonable hospital charges were among the topics at the Goodland Regional Medical Center board's finance committee meeting last Monday.

Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht had his laptop set up to show the screen on an overhead projector and went to the web site hospitalvictims.com to show board members the site and claims being made against hospitals.

"It's probably a marketing vehicle for insurance companies," Administrator Jay Jolly said, "but we can't be sure of what all their

agendas are." An article in the March 9 "Health Law Reporter," posted at healthcenter.bna.com says Allan Hubbard, director of President Bush's National Economic Council, told hospital executives that if hospitals did not adopt "price transparency" it would be imposed on them by law.

Hubbard lashed out at hospitals at the annual meeting of the Federation of American Hospitals, the article says, for failing to take the lead in disclosing their prices. He said that is "absolutely indefensible."

"There's a lot of talk, a lot of posturing out there," Precht said.

Hospitals try to cut their costs, Jolly said, and these groups want to cut what they pay to hospitals; it's quite an environment to operate in.

as compared to what you pay for the same service. The foundation claims hospitals charge "self-pay" customers far more than those with insurance.

A link on the site allows you to review hospitals in your state to see what they charge compared to their cost. By choosing a state on that link or going to the "state map" and clicking, you will get a list of hospitals in the state, in alphabetical order with a "cost to charge ratio."

If you click on the ratio for any hospital, it pulls up the foundation's evaluation of the ratios. The foundation says the ratio is based on financial information filed by the hospitals with the federal government, ranked against other U.S. hospitals.

Hospitals with a ratio outlined in red are called "red light," and the foundation says that means their ratios are below .25/1.00. It says patients should "exercise extreme caution" and "explore other options when possible." Ratios outlined in orange are ones are .25-

.50; those outlined in yellow between .50 and .75; and those outlined in green are .75 or more.

Area hospitals rank fairly high. Goodland Regional Medical Center is listed twice, with ratios of .70 and of .64, and Citizens Medical Center in Colby is listed as having ratios of .71 and of .68.

Kansas has three hospitals with "red" ratios: 49 with orange; 63 with yellow, including Colby and Goodland; and two with green, Harper District Hospital and Decatur County Hospital, which is listed in green with a .75 ratio and in yellow with .74.

If you click on the name of a hospital, the site takes you to a page comparing it to Johns Hopkins, a famous hospital in Baltimore. The foundation claims Goodland Regional Medical Center charges 144 percent times its costs, 1.2 times what Johns Hopkins charges.

They compare everybody to Johns

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