

Students line up to get booster shots

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News
The needles were drawn. All the crew needed were some arms to puncture.

So about 120 Goodland students who needed boosters and vaccinations were bussed to the Elks Lodge for a mass immunization drill Wednesday morning.

A mental health professional was on hand to alleviate students' fears of the needle — one girl even burst into tears — but most kids survived the experience with a little pain and a small bandage.

The students needed tetanus and diphtheria boosters and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccinations, while the Sherman County Health Department and key players in health care and law enforcement needed training on how to respond to an epidemic or a bioterrorism attack.

The Elks would be the site for any mass immunization for the public, said Dorrendo Harrel, health department administrator, so everyone needed to see how it would work for giving vaccines there.

"All the kids were due for the shots," said Crissy Conger, county dispatch director who was acting as the media contact at the clinic site. "We are getting some practice, and they are getting vaccines they need."

Tetanus boosters are needed every 10 years, Harrel said, and officials recommend that anyone needing a tetanus booster now get it with the pertussis vaccination, since there has been an upsurge of whooping cough cases.

Infants are more susceptible, she said, because they are not old enough to have gotten all their vac-



Carrie Peters (right), Goodland school nurse, and Gina Abernathy, her secretary, gave students from Grant Junior High the OK to get tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis shots Wednesday at a mass immu-

nization practice at the Elks Lodge. Tracy Winchester-Hillmer (in back), a therapist and branch manager at High Plains Mental Health, was there to talk to kids who got nervous about the shots.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

inations, but there has been whooping cough in all age groups across Kansas this year.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment reported 535 cases in the state so far for the year in mid-December, Harrel said; in 2004, there were just 217.

It's highly contagious, she said, when someone is diagnosed, members of their household and close contacts need to be given medica-

tion. If people get antibiotics early, she said, they will help the person, but given later, they just reduce the amount of time the victim is contagious. And it's not easy to diagnose the disease early. At first, Harrel said, it looks just like a cold.

Giving the vaccinations now helps protect older kids, she said, and ones with younger siblings won't take the disease home and give it to them. It protects the whole

community in the long run, she said.

Over 30 people, including the five-person staff from the health department, five from the sheriff's department and two from dispatch, along with 20 volunteers, kept things organized and learned what their roles would be in case of an epidemic or bioterrorism attack.

Two other health departments, from Scott and Lane counties, sent people to help and picked up tips for

having similar exercises at home.

If it were a real emergency, Harrel said, area health departments would need to help each other; they all have small staffs and couldn't vaccinate everyone in each county by themselves.

Tracy Winchester-Hillmer, a therapist and Goodland and Colby branch manager for High Plains Mental Health, was there to reassure kids who got nervous about

getting a shot.

Forms were mailed to parents, Conger said, that they had to fill out and return to the health department with payment for the shot. They filled out questionnaires to be sure all the kids could have the shots, she said, since with some health problems they can't.

The kids were questioned by Bruce Gleason, county director of emergency medical services, as they arrived, Conger said, to be sure medical problems hadn't come up since the questionnaire was filled out.

If they were sick, Harrel said, the vaccination was postponed.

In a real emergency, she said, Gleason would send anyone who is already sick to the hospital and just have healthy people get the immunizations at the Elks.

In a real emergency, Conger said, dispatch would be trying to get out as much information as possible. The media, especially radio, would be key, she said, and dispatch could also make regular broadcasts that people with police scanners would hear.

"A lot of people have scanners," she said, "so we can use that to our advantage."

Even though dispatch sometimes uses cell phones to keep certain information off of scanners (for an officer's safety, for example), she said, they also recognize that it's good that people listen. It's important to be informed about what's going on in your community, she said.

Plus, they would want to have as many people as possible available to take calls. In any situation the public is nervous about, she said, people would call.

Eighth and Caldwell will be first to be fixed

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News
The city will get first crack at money from the new road sales tax, with plans to replace the intersections on Caldwell at Eighth and Armory Road this summer.

Citizens approved the one-cent tax by a nearly 4-1 margin March 28, with the money to pay off bonds for a joint city-county road rebuilding program.

Sherman County Commissioner Kevin Rasure was at the City Commission meeting on April 3, to talk about the next steps in the program. He said the citizens had approved the efforts of the two commissions to work together.

Rasure said the county will begin design work on its projects, but doesn't anticipate having them ready to bid until fall.

He said the county commission-

ers had signed papers on March 31, to send to the state to have the sales tax begin on July 1. They talked to Kevin Cowan, bond counsel from Gilmore and Bell of Wichita, and he will send the city and county a draft of an agreement about how the sales tax money will be handled and the bills paid.

"We are looking at a financial advisor for the bonds," Rasure said. "Cowan said he thought that would be beneficial to the project and might reduce the interest rate."

"The plan is to issue the bonds as the project costs become more clear."

Rasure said he had talked with City Manager Wayne Hill and Darin Neufeld, engineer for Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, who is working with the city.

Neufeld said the city can have the plans for replacing the intersections

ready quickly. He said the plan to replace the intersections with concrete, and these can be done this year.

"This would provide the voters something to show that things are going to be done," the engineer said.

Neufeld said he does not know about the availability of an asphalt plant, but has asked Eric Oel-schlager of the state Department of Transportation in Atwood about the plans for the paving plant that is set up near the east Goodland exit to do the overlay work on I-70 and on Business U.S. 24.

Neufeld said it might be good to wait on the asphalt work until next year, when there is more asphalt work that needs to be done.

"The biggest bang for the taxpayers," Neufeld said, "will be if we are ready when the big paving plant is ready to do K-27 south of the city."

Commissioner Josh Dechant said it would be good to do the two intersections this year.

Mayor Rick Billinger said it would be good to check with the paving contractor who is here now to see if they would be able to do some of the milling and overlay on Caldwell between Eighth and Toelkes.

Neufeld said he will check with the asphalt firm, APAC of Hutchison who has the paving plant. He said the intersections can be done as a design-build and can be ready in the next 60-90 days.

Hill said the commission could agree to use Darin's firm to do these, but they still need to do a contract.

Neufeld said it makes sense to package all the asphalt together, but the concrete jobs could be separate.

"We can get the best price for all the asphalt jobs if they are packaged when the plant is here," he said. "We know what we have to do to the streets."

"I think it is good to do the two intersections," Billinger said, "and

see if we can do the section of Caldwell north along with the intersections."

Neufeld said there is a lot more latitude on concrete projects, but that it will take more design work to have 17th Street ready because of the underground lines and drainage.

City Commissioner Annette Fairbanks asked Rasure if he needed anything from the city that night?

Rasure said the decision is up to the city about what projects to do first.

Hill said it was his recommendation to do the two intersections and check on the paving plant for any other work.

Someone asked if the county has made a decision about the engineering of their projects. Rasure said no.

"Darin is our go guy," Dechant said. "Do we need a contract?"

Neufeld said he can bring a contract back for commission approval if they are ready to do the intersections.

Billinger asked Rasure when the bonds would be in place.

Rasure said the plan was not to issue the bonds until there is a need for the money.

Billinger asked if they could just use sales tax money for the intersections.

"Yes, you can do that," Rasure said. "You have about \$125,000 a month once the sales tax begins coming in."

Rasure said the county's portion is big enough to need the bonds.

Neufeld said County Road 14 might take longer to plan because the plans will have to be reviewed by the state. He said \$800,000 in grant money for that job from the state will be available after July 1.

Neufeld said a lack of money has delayed the project to widen Business U.S. 24 at Cherry, a joint state-project, which is not part of the sales tax plan.

The city commissioners agreed to get started on the intersections.

Rasure said when the county commissioners meet today, they will talk about the projects and may have some decisions.

Driver of semi rig charged with following too close in wreck

The driver of a semitrailer truck that hit a pickup near the east I-70 exit last Tuesday night has been charged with following too closely, a state trooper said Friday.

Trooper Brian Horney said he charged Ralph Daniel Isome, 43, of Midland, Ga., after reviewing the evidence and the accident scene. A 2001 Freightliner Isome was driving hit a 1998 Ford Ranger driven by Robert E. Notz, 77, former owner of Motel 7 in Goodland,

about 10:50 p.m.

Notz died later at a Denver hospital.

Horney said he did a second examination and took photos of the accident scene on Thursday, which is about a quarter-mile west of the I-70 entrance ramp. He said there were no brake marks from the Freightliner.

He said there was no evidence that Isome was driving over the 70 mph speed limit, but he said there

will be more investigation.

Horney said he has a statement from Isome that there was another semitrailer truck in the passing lane, but would like to talk to any other driver who might have seen what happened that night.

Notz, who lived in Goodland, was taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center by ambulance, then flown to St. Anthony Central Hospital in Denver, where he died at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Winds cause truck to roll over

High winds Friday caused a Synder, Colo., man to lose control of his 1992-model pickup, which went off the road and rolled about three miles east of the Colorado line on I-70.

Roger Wilson, 60, was headed west when the accident happened about 12:38 p.m. Trooper Brian Horney reported that Wilson was

taken to the Goodland Regional Medical Center, but he had been released by Monday.

Wilson was wearing a seat belt,

Horney said.

The National Weather Service said the wind Friday in Goodland was gusting up to 53 mph.

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