

**weather
report****57°**noon
Thursday**Today**

• Sunset, 7:29 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 6:00 a.m.

• Sunset, 7:30 p.m.

Midday Conditions

• Soil temperature 51 degrees

• Humidity 29 percent

• Sky sunny

• Winds northwest at 14 mph

• Barometer 30.02 inches

and falling

• Record High today 93° (1989)

• Record Low today 20° (1931)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday 64°

Low Thursday 31°

Precipitation —

This month .44

Year to date 3.02

above normal .15 of an inch

The Topside Forecast

Today: Sunny, high of 77 and low near 40. South wind 5 to 10 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Mostly sunny, high around 85, low near 44. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. Sunday: Partly cloudy, high near 80, low near 44. Monday: Partly cloudy, high near 62, low near 42. Tuesday: Partly cloudy, high around 62 and low near 39. Wednesday: Partly cloudy, high near 67.

(National Weather Service)

Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.

* Readings taken at 7 a.m.

**local
markets****Noon**

Wheat — \$4.07 bushel

Posted county price — \$4.10

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Corn — \$2.06 bushel

Posted county price — \$2.05

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Milo — \$1.71 bushel

Soybeans — \$4.88 bushel

Posted county price — \$5.07

Loan deficiency pmt. — 0¢

Millet — \$5.55 hundredweight

Sunflowers

Oil current crop — \$8.35 cwt.

NuSun crop — \$9.35

Confection — Call

Pinto beans — \$17 (new crop)

(Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigo 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**Goodland
loses two**

Junior Tyler Hillmer waited for a pitch from a Colby pitcher last week in Goodland during a double-header, which the Eagles swept. Dodge City swept the Cowboys Tuesday winning 9-2 and 18-3. See photo on Page 10a.

Audience supports local engineer

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

While county commissioners were saying Tuesday they worried about being fair to an engineering firm, which has been doing much of their work, the audience seemed to have a different idea of what was fair.

"I know they are both good firms," said Dean Topliff, retired farmer. "I am tired of sending money out of town."

The city is using Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, which has an office here headed by Darin Neufeld for its share of the joint road project. The county seems to be leaning toward Penco, a Plainville firm which has done several county projects.

The audience, stirred up by an e-mail from Neufeld's wife last week, was clearly in his corner.

"Would Darin have been given a chance if we were not already sitting here?" asked Koren Dechant, wife of city commissioner Josh Dechant.

County Commissioners Chuck Thomas and Mitch Tiede said they did not like the way the commissioner meeting on April 11 had gone.

"Why didn't the meeting go



John Golden, former commissioner, was one of the audience of about 30 people who attended and spoke at the Sherman County

Commissioner meeting on Tuesday to express their opinion and support for the local engineering firm to handle the county roads.

Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

well?" commission Chairman Kevin Rasure asked.

Thomas said it was because he did not know anything about Neufeld being there.

"I felt we were being pressured,"

he said.

Rasure asked if the whole plan had been to have it be a joint project.

"Yes, it is a joint project," Tiede said. "If we can save money we ought to do it."

"We want our tax money left here in town as much as possible," said Mike Briney of Bankwest. "We as green coats (Chamber Ambassadors) are here to support our local businesses. If we can get the same

thing here, why are we looking out of town?"

"Where were you last fall when we were looking to dig a new cell for

See AUDIENCE, Page 5a

Road design decision tabled to Tuesday



Sherman Commissioners Chuck Thomas, Mitch Tiede and Kevin Rasure listened to citizens at Tuesday's meeting.

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

People packed the Sherman County commissioner's meeting Tuesday to back a Goodland engineering firm in its bid to design county roads being rebuilt under a \$12 million joint project with the city.

Two firms, one from Plainville that has worked for the county in the past, and the firm doing the city's share of the project, made presentations.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure made a motion to hire Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates to do the engineering, but there was no second. Commissioners Mitch Tiede and Chuck Thomas decided to table the question until a special meeting set for 8 a.m. on Tuesday.

About 30 people filled the seats and stood around the walls of the commissioners' room to listen, ask

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Meeting planned Monday for bonds on hotel project

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

City commissioners plan to meet at 7:30 a.m. on Monday to hear a cost-benefit analysis for industrial revenue bonds and a tax break for a Holiday Inn Express hotel on the site of the old Apple Trail truck stop south of I-70.

The hotel is expected to cost \$5 million, Theron L. Froggatte, an investment banker from Wichita, told the commissioners at a special meeting on March 21. He told the commission he represented Prairiesky Capital, and the investors were ask-

ing the city to approve bonds to help get the project moving. Part of the request is a 100 percent tax abatement on the hotel, meaning that it would pay no property taxes until the bonds are paid off.

Froggatte said Mike Woofter of Colby has been asked to participate in the hotel program by Doug Irvin of Goodland and his brother, Mike, of Manhattan. He said Woofter has developed several projects in Colby, including the Holiday Inn Express there.

City Manager Wayne Hill told the commissioners Monday that Woofter was asking for a special meeting to

present the cost-benefit analysis on the industrial revenue bonds.

Froggatte told the commissioners in March the analysis is part of the procedure under state law.

"We gather information from the city, county and other agencies and prepare the cost-benefit analysis," he said. "We work with the state Department of Commerce and they have a formula that calculates the benefits the city would get for supporting the bonds."

Hill said the analysis should be back from the state this week. Froggatte told the commissioners

they would present the cost-benefit figures before a public hearing on the bond issue.

After the hearing, the city commission would be asked to accept the bond documents and approve the issue, Froggatte said.

Froggatte said the hotel partners are asking for 100 percent abatement of the property taxes on the project, meaning the hotel would pay no city, county or school property taxes for the 10-year life of the bonds.

"We always ask for 100 percent," he said. "We are doing lots of projects, and every one is different.

We can do something different than 100 percent, but that would be up to the investors and the city. Woofter is asking as a partner with the Irvins to find out what he can expect from the city to determine if he can come here and build this hotel."

Froggatte said there would be no expense to the city to issue the bonds, and the city would not be obligated to pay or guarantee them. The only cost would be the tax abatement, but that is money the city does not collect today. The hotel would begin paying taxes after the bonds were paid for.

County Development Council hires director

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News

The Sherman County Economic Development Council hired a Wallace County woman as its new director Tuesday night, filling a job that has been vacant for at least 16 months.

After the election of new officers in January, the hiring of a new director became a top priority.

Tiffani Kirk, who will start on May 1, said she already has found a place to live in Goodland. Kirk grew up in Burden, graduated from Belle Plain High School and attended Fort Hays State University. She is 26 and single.

"With you coming on board, we will have met the first goal of the year," said Steve West, a member of the development council and president of Western State Bank.

"Thank you," Kirk said to the council members after being hired. "I am looking forward to working with you."

Kirk's contract, for \$33,000 a year, will need to be ratified by the county commissioners when they meet next Friday, said Shelly Thompson, council chairman. When Carolyn Applegate, the previous director, left, she was making \$45,000.

Kirk will be the guest speaker today at noon at the Goodland Rotary meeting at the Northwest Kansas Technical College Student Union.

Kirk has been economic development director for Wallace County for 3 1/2 years. She said job in Sharon Springs was for three days a week and the budget for the office, including her salary, was \$24,000 from the city and county. She also got \$5,000 from a hotel tax for office expenses.

She will be representing Wallace County at the Kansas Sampler Festival in Garden City on Saturday and Sunday, May 6 and 7. The festival showcases Kansas products and attractions. Kirk said this will be the closest to this area the festival, which moves around the state, has been.

As director in Wallace County, Kirk said, she put together a new strategic plan for the county, including

See DIRECTOR, Page 5a

Tiffani Kirk, who was hired as the executive director talked Tuesday evening to Shelly Thompson, chairman of the Sherman County Economic Development Council. Kirk has been the economic development director for Wallace County for over three years.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News