

Cleaning up the highway



Randall Fixsen, Kathy Melia and Arlo Hansen helped pick up litter along K-27 Saturday morning as part of the Chamber Beautification Committee's Cleanup Month. About 15 people in two teams helped clean up litter along the highway from Eighth Street south to 31st Street. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Hotel project gets 90 percent tax break

HOTEL, from Page 1

projects going on in the county," Froggatte said, adding that the developers expect to spend about \$4.5 million and create 20 new jobs.

"The economic development pays for itself," Froggatte said. Billinger noted that today the property is not bringing in much, just the taxes on the land.

Froggatte said he is seeing more people using the industrial revenue bonds because of the increase in building costs. The city won't be liable for paying the bonds, he noted, but the procedure allows the developers to get a tax break.

City Commissioner Dave Daniels asked if Froggatte had to go to the county and school district for their approval.

Froggatte said they don't have to do that under state law, but will notify them and they can come to the public hearing.

"We are talking to the county and school to build a consensus," he added.

City Commissioner John Garcia asked Woofter if he had used indus-

trial revenue bonds in Colby. Woofter said he has not used them for his projects, but that the city is using them for Truck Town.

He said they had not planned to do this project with industrial revenue bonds, but when they went to bid, the costs came in so high they had to find another way to make it work.

"I don't have a vote," Hill said, "but being a progressive community, I think we need to take advantage of this. I have worked with industrial revenue bonds before and they were very good for the community. If we don't take advantage, other communities will."

Woofter said it will take seven to eight months to build the hotel.

Daniels asked two motel owners who were at the meeting, Lincoln Wilson, owner of Howard Johnson Hotel, and Bill Stoic, owner of Super Eight, for their comments.

Wilson said he was in favor of the hotel, but not in favor of the tax abatement.

"I am in favor of anything that creates new jobs and puts kids in our schools, he said. "The creating of

new jobs says you are bringing in more people, but you are not bringing in 20 new people. You are creating a job shortage. I will lose a few and others will lose a few. I want not just a new establishment, but bringing in new people.

"This Holiday Inn Express will help my business, but I am opposed to having my company bear the burden of the taxes. I am in favor of the project, but not in favor of having to pay for it."

Fairbanks asked if there was anything to show there would be 20 new people.

"There is no science in that," Froggatte said. "There is no way to show that all the people would be new. I have no idea where they would come from."

He did say the cost-benefit figures show that the new hotel should produce an additional eight jobs in the community from the spin off. He said the state formula shows that creating new jobs will create a need for additional jobs outside the hotel itself.

Daniels said the existing tax rebate program the city, county and

school district approved would offer a 90 percent reduction for the first six years and 75 percent for the final four years, which is an average of 84 percent over the 10 years.

"That is the problem," Froggatte said. "This was a \$3 million project last year. The cost of material has gone up that far."

Froggatte said there is a local bank looking to buy the bonds, and that will be part of the third meeting with the commission.

He said the next meeting will be a public hearing where the same information is presented to the public and their comments are taken.

Daniels said that is somewhat moot after the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the project with the 90 percent tax abatement.

Froggatte said he will have the public hearing ready for the second meeting in May, on Monday, May 15. The commission meets at 5 p.m. at the City Administration Building.

"It is economic development," Billinger said, "and if it was not Doug and Mike (Irvin) sitting here, I think we would have to look at it differently."

Sunflower Electric contract approved

POWER, from Page 1

brought up a sentence in Schedule A of the contract that he felt gave Sunflower unfair control over any reduction. Since the city plans to begin buying power from wind and steam plants being built here, it hopes to relegate Sunflower to a backup role next year.

The sentence said "Sunflower shall have the right to accept or reject requests for annual capacity nomination reductions."

Vice-Mayor Dave Daniels opened the special meeting at 7:30 a.m. — the mayor was a bit late in arriving — and asked Johnson to review the questions.

Johnson presented the commission with a two-page revised Schedule A with the wording changed.

He said the electric company agreed that Goodland is in a different situation from other city customers.

He said they took out the words "subject to approval by Sunflower" in one portion and took out the sentence that Billinger had questioned.

"We know that you will be reducing your power purchase once the new power plant comes on line," Johnson said. "We took out the words about Sunflower approving any reduction in power."

"However, you need to know that if you want to raise the amount of power you are purchasing from us subject to availability. We would still have to approve that request."

City Manager Wayne Hill said under the five-year agreement, the city would have to change the amount of power it draws by March 1.

"With Goodland Energy Resources in construction, we cannot go to zero this year," Hill said. "We have to be at four megawatts this year."

"Goodland Energy Resources is looking at a revision to give us some flexibility for next year when we make our decision next spring."

Johnson said the city's interconnect to Sunflower is important because it allows the city a backup source, and keeps it tied to the transmission grid.

Billinger said he appreciated the changes, because that was what he understood when Johnson had presented the agreement before.

Johnson said it is important to keep the transmission tie.

"Transmission is a delicate situation today," Johnson said. "If you lose the transmission approval you have to reapply and may face upgrade costs before you could get more power."

"This agreement would leave you in a grandfathered position on the system."

Hill said if the city did not approve the new agreement before May 31, when the current contract ends, Sunflower would not have any obligation to provide power.

Johnson said that was true, and if that happened the city would lose the transmission agreement, and would have to reapply.

"It is very important, I believe, for you to roll this contract over to protect the existing agreement," Johnson said.

Hill said the five-year contract gives the city an interconnect for backup power that is important even after the new coal-fired power plant comes on line.

Johnson said the interconnect will not cost the city anything, but that Sunflower will be listing the city power plant generation capacity as part of the total for all the system, and could call on the city to generate if necessary.

Commissioner Josh Dechant asked about the procedure of approving the temporary agreement and then the agreement.

Johnson said there is a separate temporary service agreement to keep the power coming in case it takes too long to get all the required approvals for the new agreement. He said the agreement has to be approved by the Sunflower board and the federal Rural Utilities Service. He said the Kansas Corporation Commission will review it, but that does not have to be done before it becomes effective.

Dechant made a motion to approve the temporary agreement and the five-year agreement with Sunflower Electric. Billinger seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Plans developed to celebrate 50th anniversary of Interstate system

I-70, from Page 1

leave Denver on the morning of June 21, stay in Abilene that night and continue to Kansas City on June 22 for events at the Kansas Speedway.

A car show and other activities are planned for Wednesday evening, June 21, in Abilene, some of them at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

The convoy commemorates one organized by Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1919 that is said to have inspired him to push the Inter-

state system when he became president.

Eisenhower helped to staff a coast-to-coast convoy of 81 military vehicles, says an article from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials on the Kansas Department of Transportation web site. The 62-day trip was plagued by heat, breakdowns, mud, river crossings and rough roads.

During the journey, Eisenhower formed the opinion that the United States desperately needed a better highway system, a conviction that

was reinforced during World War II, when he used Germany's autobahn system to move troops into Germany.

June 29 is the 50th anniversary of the day he signed a law authorizing the U.S. Interstate Highway System.

The original convoy didn't pass through Kansas, Price said, but this one will because of Eisenhower. The convoy will travel along I-80 to Cheyenne, Wyo., then one group will drop down to Denver for an event on Wednesday morning, June 21.

The first segment of Interstate highway completed in the United States was a stretch of what is now I-70 west of Topeka on Nov. 14, 1956. The 424-mile stretch of I-70 across Kansas was completed in 1970, then the longest continuous segment to be completed by any state.

It originally cost \$155.6 million to build 370 miles of I-70, not including the Kansas Turnpike portion. The state Department of Transportation says it has spent about \$625 million over the last decade to rebuild the same road.

At the turn of the 20th Century, paved roads were uncommon, the association said in the article — pavement might lead out from cities, even to state lines, but there was no guarantee they would meet other roads in adjacent states. And they weren't marked any better, so it was common for travelers to get lost or to get stuck on muddy roads.

Major Interstate routes have one or two-digit numbers. Routes running north and south have odd numbers, such as I-29. The lowest numbers are in the west, such as I-5 along the west coast.

East-west routes have even numbers, such as I-70. Their lowest numbers are on the south, such as I-10 along the southern border. Connector interstate routes are full or partial beltways around or in a city that connect two sections of a major route. They use a three-digit number beginning with an even number. The second two digits denote the major route, for instance I-470 in Topeka is a connector around the southern part of the city for I-70.

Spur routes, such as I-135 from Salina to Wichita, start with an odd number.

Ruleton man faces charges in Colby case

A Ruleton man has been charged in Thomas County District Court with beating a Colby man and breaking bones in his face.

Nicholas J. Gary, 19, was charged March 27 with aggravated battery of Brett Mariman, 22.

Detective Sgt. Gary Shull of the Colby Police said the incident allegedly happened at Mariman's home during a party March 25.

If convicted on the charge of aggravated battery and depending on a presentence evaluation.

Gary faces a prison term between three years, two months and 11 years, four months and a fine up to \$300,000.

Gary was also charged with one count each of criminal trespass and driving while his license was canceled, suspended or revoked.

Court records say Gary was told to leave Mariman's home in the 200 block of Webster about 2 a.m., but instead entered the house and struck the host.

The penalty on those charges could be up to six months in the county jail and a fine up to \$1,000 for each.

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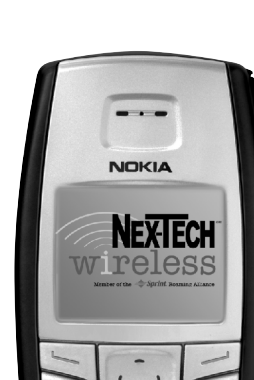
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