

# City crews will pick up limbs in streets only

**By Tom Betz**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
Winds ripped out trees and broke branches across the city Friday during a storm that included two tornadoes and straight line winds. City crews were out cleaning up the streets after the storm, but city commissioners feel there is a limit to what the city should do. City Manager Wayne Hill told the commissioners Monday the question about the city cleaning up limbs came up after the storm Friday. "I understand having the city crew pick up the tree branches that had blown into the street," Hill said. "What about the other ones that were put out into the street. Is it the city responsibility to clean these up?" "I think it is expected," said City Commissioner Josh Dechant. "I think it has been something the citizens have expected over the years." Commissioner Dave Daniels said he thought it went back to when the city had the trash service.

"I think the city crew has done a good job of cleaning up after a storm," Mayor Rick Billinger said. "I wanted to know," Hill said, "because the staff and I were talking about it. I saw some new ones out on the street on Monday. I know the city crew got the limbs cleaned up on Friday." Billinger said some of that might be from the retired people in the city. "It is not the retired people who are doing this," said Rich Simon, public works manager. "It is expected," Daniels said. "If it falls down in your backyard in the wind, drag it out to the front for the city to pick it up." Hill said he was asking for direction because the extra cleanup put a burden on the city crews who have other things to get done. Dechant said the other part of the equation is that picking up the limbs is part of trying to clean up the city. City Commissioner John Garcia said he thought there might be a question of liability if someone was



A large evergreen tree in the street at 15th and Cherry during the storm last Friday. Straight-line winds caused the tree damage ac-

cording to the weather bureau.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

injured on one of the limbs. "Are we going to do it or not?" Daniels said. "Where do we draw the line?" Simon said. "Can I start piling snow in their yard? It is the same thing." "I know it is a touchy situation,"

Billinger said. "My own idea is to have people call the professionals to come pick the limbs up. "If they are in the street I think we are going to have to pick them up, but suggest that if they are not out there don't drag them to the street."

"It comes back to the property owners responsibility," Daniels said. "I think it is a difficult thing. This is not a function of the city, but we have done it as a courtesy. "We will not be doing it in the future."

The commissioners agreed that after a storm the city crew would pick up limbs that have fallen in the street, but would not be responsible for those that are in people's yards. "It is a bit confusing when you see fresh chain saw cuts," Hill said.

# Courthouse people confused in tornado warning

Tornado warning sirens Friday afternoon sent people scurrying for cover, and there was confusion at the Sherman County courthouse about where people were to find shelter. Carol Armstrong, county registrar of deeds, and Iris Scheopner, county treasurer, asked the Sherman County commissioners Tuesday what the people in the courthouse should do in case of another tornado warning. County Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the county needs for Gary Rogers, regional emergency coordinator, to write a policy about tornado response and storm shelter locations. "Where are people to go?" Armstrong said. She said on Friday some offices

## Meeting will critique response

City and county officials had a meeting Thursday to talk about what went right and what could be done better in the event of another Friday afternoon with the heavy rain and tornadoes. There seems to be some confusion about the siren, said Crissy Congers, Sherman County dispatch director and assistant emergency management director. The usual tornado siren call is a three minute blast, a pause and another three minute blast. She said with the conditions Friday the siren was blown continuously. Another thing people need to realize is that there is no all clear siren. People will hear that on the radio.

People need to realize that when they take shelter they need a radio and flash light and possibly extra batteries, Conger said. Atornado watch says the National Weather Service is weather conditions where a tornado is possible and people need to be alert. A tornado warning is given where a tornado had been spotted or strongly indicated on Doppler radar. This is when people need to take shelter. Tornadoes typically move southwest to northeast but can move other directions as well. Conger said during Friday's storm extra Sheriff's Deputies were on duty.

be closed and the doors secured, and all the people from all three floors should seek shelter in the main hall of the courthouse. Asked about the basement William McKnight, building superintendent, said the basement was not a good place because of the electrical boxes and boiler located there. Rasure said the basement is not designed as a shelter, and there are stairs that are potentially dangerous. McKnight said the county cannot legally lock the door to the basement, but suggested a sign be put on the door saying it was not an emergency shelter. Rasure asked about the special weather radio that is in the county clerk's office. McKnight said it did not work,

but he has checked it with Randall Fixsen of Fixsen Electronics, and it should be working. McKnight said the radio had not been programmed when it was set up. Rasure said there should be a spare set of batteries for the weather radio, a battery operated radio and a flashlight that can be taken into the hallway in an emergency. At the end of the meeting McKnight reported he had a battery-operated radio and spare batteries in the clerk's office, and a flashlight was available. "What about people leaving the building?" Armstrong said. "We cannot stop them from leaving," Rasure said. "They have to check out if they leave."

# Tobacco money will be used to buy car seats for qualifying families

**By Sharon Corcoran**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
Money from Kansas' share of a tobacco lawsuit settlement will translate into car seats for newborn babies in four northwest Kansas counties, including Sherman.

The Kansas Children's Cabinet has given a \$60,000 grant to Smart Start Northwest Kansas in Colby for the seats. The money will be used to buy car seats for qualifying families, said Karen Merryman, professional de-

velopment coordinator at Smart Start, to provide installation and use information at the hospital before they take the baby home, to train and certify child safety restraint installers and to provide grants to help child care providers start a new business or make improvements. The money will also pay for a few child care providers to attend a conference in Orlando, Fla., she said, buy supplies and equipment for Kids Port, a child care facility in Colby that provides service at "non-traditional" hours, and for general budget purposes. Smart Start serves 11 counties, but only four have hospitals that deliver babies. The money for car seats will be used in those counties: Sherman, Thomas, Decatur and Gove. Maureen Ostmeyer, program director at Smart Start, said she had talked to a nurse who told her probably half of babies born in Sherman

County will qualify for the car seats because they will be born to single parents, uneducated or unemployed parents or be low-birth-weight babies. The money is especially a blessing to Smart Start, she said, because while most grants require the organization to put up matching funds, this one doesn't.

The Kansas Children's Cabinet was formed during the 1999 Legislative session to oversee expenditures from the Master Tobacco Settlement, the organization's website says. Ninety-five percent of Kansas' share of the settlement was dedicated to improving the health and well-being of young people.

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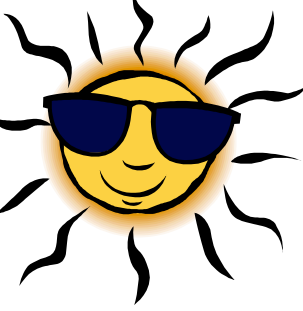
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