

Friday, June 30, 2006

Energy center has all air quality permits; construction underway on three plants



Allen Drown (in the ditch) of Culver, a worker for Stevens Contractors of Salina, checked the water line being installed on the west edge of the Goodland Energy Center. Steve Forrester of Chapman, continued digging the trench, and Gene Fuller (not shown) of Tribune, got the next section of pipe ready to be lowered.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Construction has begun on the Goodland Energy Center north of Caruso, and the state health department has approved air quality permits for the three plants.

The power complex was announced by a group of local investors a year ago, and ground breaking for the coal-fired power plant, ethanol plant and biodiesel plant was held in May.

With the pile driving rig for the support pilings for the coal-fired power plant in the background and the sun shining, Norman House, chairman of Goodland Energy Resources, and Ron Pickman, chief operating officer; Larry McCants, president of E Caruso, the partnership building an ethanol plant; and Doug Sederstrom, chairman of Kanza Energy building a biodiesel plant, all put shovels in the ground to mark the start of construction on May 9.

About 170 people, including many of the investors in the three partnerships, gathered for the ceremony.

House said the ceremony was a great way to show the progress of the project and to show that work is beginning on a process to make this area energy independent.

"It is said the first step is the hardest," he said, "and I hope that is true."

Goodland Energy Resources, building the coal-fired power plant, E Caruso, building the ethanol plant and Kanza Energy, building the biodiesel plant, has been working through the air quality permit process with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Ron Pickman, chief operating officer of Goodland Energy Resources said all the permits had been approved by June 20.

"We have all three air quality permits in hand," Pickman said. "That is one of the factors that determined when we could begin. I am glad we no longer have to play the waiting game."

"We believe the plants will be the cleanest and most efficient they can be."

It has taken nearly a year to get all the permits and work through the paperwork process.

"I think we are right on target," Pickman said on June 23. "We are not as far as some would hope we were."

"There is lots of detail that goes into this, and we want to do it right. It takes a lot of time and attention to regulations and engineering. We don't want to rush so there are no problems in the future."

There are three separate yet interrelated in-

dustries constructing facilities in the complex. When the plants are in operation, it is anticipated that 70-100 new jobs will be added to the employment base in Sherman County.

Goodland Energy Resources, LLC has begun construction of a coal-fired cogeneration power plant and will be providing wholesale electric power to the City of Goodland and steam to other entities within the Energy Center Complex.

E Caruso, LLC has received the air quality construction permit from the state Department of Health and Environment and has begun dirt work for the construction of a 20 million gallon ethanol production plant.

Kanza Energy, LLC recently received the air quality construction permit and is in the process of finalizing plans and specifications in order to begin construction of a biodiesel production facility.

Pickman said work has begun to install the sewer and water lines for the energy center, and electric power has been installed from Midwest Energy for the construction phase. A gas line from Aquila is being installed as well as S&T telephone lines to provide communications from the site.

A water line from a well to the west of the site is to be installed by Stephens of Salina, Pickman said.

"This will be on private easements," Pickman said. "The line will cross the county road near the corner of Road 65 and Road 14. The line will be bored under the county road."

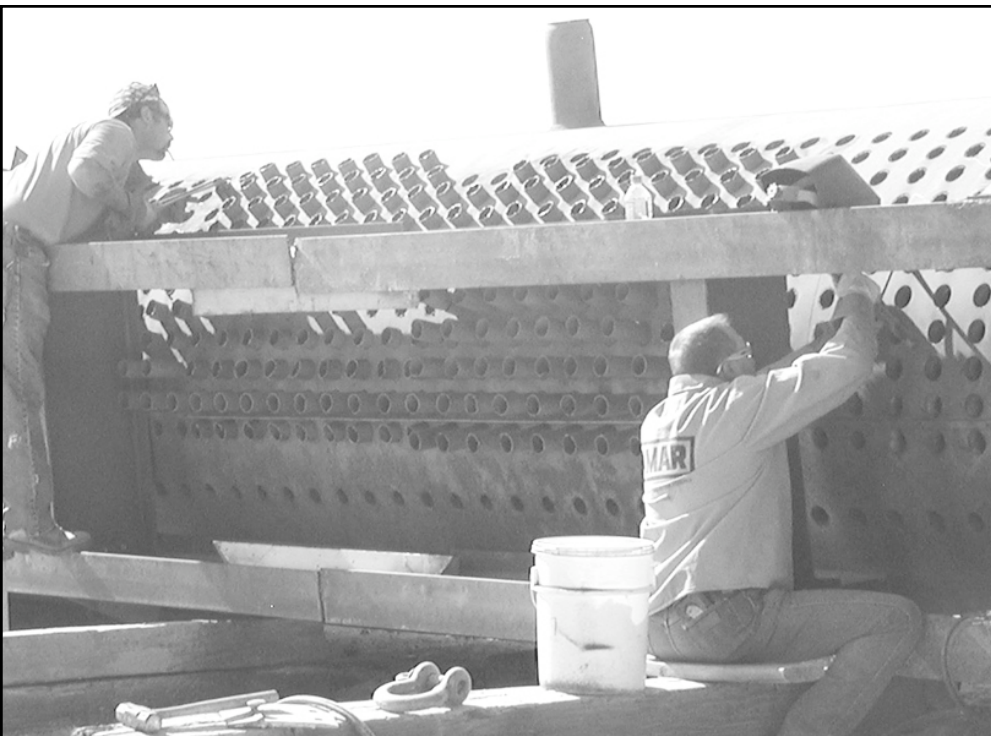
The formation of Goodland Energy Center, the owner of the Industrial Complex, has resulted in the creation of 12 full-time positions Pickman said. Another 10 jobs have been created by Renewable Energy Resources, the general engineer for the current planned industries.

More employment opportunities will develop Pickman said as construction of the plants proceeds, several will be temporary for construction, but other full-time jobs are anticipated as a result of ancillary services and businesses generated by the new plants.

Pickman said work has been done for the 88 support-pier system for the turbine and boiler building. He said work on the main building footers can begin once the 18-inch concrete piers 60-feet deep have cured.

He said the turbine is in Houston being examined, and the boiler parts are being reworked

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Paul McCarphy (left) of Missouri and David Givens of Del Norte, Colo., worked on a section of the boiler for the power plant. The two men used cutting torches and hammers to knock out the cut off ends of the old boiler tubes to get the boiler ready for the new tubes.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

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for reassembly. The boiler and turbine came from the power plant purchased from Moorhead, Minn., which was dismantled this spring and shipped to the new site.

Mark Justus, president of ReNewable Energy Resources, which is doing the engineering, said the center is a unique project and probably the best he has ever been involved in.

“We are leading the nation in developing energy technology,” Justus said at the ground breaking in May. “There is a lot of interest in the biodiesel plant. Our people bring over 30 years of worldwide experience to this project.”

The power plant will to sell electricity to the City of Goodland and possibly other power companies.

“We are a wholesaler,” Justus said. “We will not sell to retailers.”

He said the investors looked at both ethanol and biodiesel because both require the same amount of steam power.

The power plant alone would only be 25 to 27 percent efficient, Justus said. When the agriculture waste products are used, Justus said, the efficiency jumps to 56 to 58 percent.

The power plant will be mainly coal-fired, Justus said, but it will be able to burn up to 40 percent agricultural waste from the two other plants as well as the nearby ADM Northern Sun sunflower plant.

Pickman said parts of the ethanol plant that was bought from St. Paul, Minn., and shipped to Goodland are being reworked for reassembly with new parts that are being added to reduce the emissions from the plant.

Doug Sederstrom, chairman of Kanza Energy building the biodiesel plant, said Tuesday it was good to have the air quality construction permit in hand. He said parts for the plant have been ordered, and dirt work can begin for the foundation.

Delivering power to the city is a key, and Pickman said he is working with the city, Midwest Energy and Sunflower Electric to find the best way to handle the project.

“A power line has been approved to be built from the coal-fired power plant to the city power plant,” Pickman said. “We are looking at other options for delivery, and want to do it in an economic manner that will give everybody what they need.”

He said there is an existing line that might be an option. There is a Midwest Energy power line that leaves County Road 14 and runs west to County Road 8 where it ties into the Sunflower Electric transmission lines.

This line runs around the backside of Goodland, and Pickman said it might be a way to reduce cost for both the energy center and the city while providing better power for Midwest Energy and Sunflower Electric.

“If we are not able to do this we will build a power line to the city,” Pickman said. “We have talked briefly about it in the past with Midwest and Sunflower. Sunflower thinks it is worth more discussion.”

Estimated cost of a power line from the energy center to the city would be \$125,000 per mile Pickman said. It would be a 115,000 volt line, and the route would depend on terrain and available right of way.



Workers placed windows in the new home for American Communication and Overhead Door of Northwest Kansas on U.S. 24 next to Motor Town and the Buffalo Inn. The new facility will have two areas of 48-by-50-foot office and a 80-by-60-foot warehouse.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Building puts company together under one roof

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News

The new building for American Communications and Overhead Door of Northwest Kansas has the foundation, framing and some windows. The building is located on U.S. 24 next to Motor Town and the Buffalo Inn.

The building has been in the planning for a couple of years, said owner Randy Topliff. "We are trying to get consolidated in one location where we have room for vehicles and trailers to park."

American Communications offers Alltel cell phone services and equipment. Overhead Door installs garage doors for people and

Weathercraft Roofing replaces roofs on houses and businesses.

The new facility will have a 48-by-50-foot office area and an 80-by-60-foot warehouse. Alltel will have more room for displays and supplies. People will still be able to ship packages by United Parcel Service and FedEx. For more information, call 899-2426 or stop by at 813 Main.

Weathercraft will expand to have a full sheet metal shop and will roll steel panels for roofing here, Topliff said.

"We hope to employ six to 10 more people," he said.

Pro•gress advance toward perfection or to a higher or better state; improvement — *Webster's New World Dictionary*

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Development council hires director

By Kay Younger

Program coordinator

Sherman County Economic Development has experienced some changes this year. At the beginning of the year, we reluctantly said farewell to one board member, John Garcia, who served as board chairman for two years. We thank him for his endless devotion to the organization.

Chuck Wilkens, of Wilkens Truck and Tractor, who had been elected to complete the term for Larry Harper, was re-elected to a new term. The Economic Development Council elected Mike Cochran of Cochran Farm Supply to fill the other open position.

Members of the executive board are Shelly Thompson of Bankwest, chairman; Don Newell of S&T Communications, vice-chairman; Richard Breininger of Sunshine Computing, secretary; and Kim Bohme of Miller's Home Center, treasurer. Other members of the council include farmer and cattleman Harlan Dale House, Gary Slough of S&T Communications, Dwane Timm of First National Bank and Steve West of Western State Bank.

The first goal for this year's Economic Development Council was to hire a new director. By May 1st, that goal was accomplished. Tiffani McMinn, former economic development Director of Wallace County, has taken on this challenging position with zest and vitality. Kay Younger remains on staff serving as program coordinator.

A second goal is to develop a strategic plan for the community. Economic Development, Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce have come together to enlist the assistance of Terry Woodbury with Kansas Communities. The seed money for the project has been pledged and a steering committee comprised of leaders in business, education, health and human resources and government has been formed. The purpose of the program is to reach out to include several members in the community through networking to develop a communitywide strategic plan, not some plan determined by only a few.

The micro loan program is available to assist new or existing businesses in their development or expansion. Currently, the amount of money

available in the revolving loan fund is \$26,795.93. Information on how this loan may be obtained is available at the economic development office. Tiffani is available to assist anyone needing to develop a business plan.

The office continues working with Sheryl Davis of the Small Business Development Center in Hays. We are currently planning another marketing seminar on November 2nd. It will feature Curt Clinkenbeard, the author of the book "Hyper Grow Your Business." He approaches marketing from a totally different perspective. Clinkenbeard expects to enter the national lecture circuit with his program. Please mark this event on your calendar, as this will be a rare opportunity for all businesses!

The Tax Exemptions and Policy Incentives package has been completed. Dwane Timm did an excellent job of developing the abatement and rebate policies with the assistance of members of the Incentive Committee and the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The council believes an incentive package has a key role in recruiting businesses to our community.

Volunteers from Economic Development and the Chamber of Commerce have completed the BREES (Business Retention and Expansion Survey) questionnaires. This was done through the administration of Cary Catchpole with the Kansas Department of Commerce. A cross-section of businesses representative of the community were selected and interviewed by the volunteers, and the results processed by the state. Information provided by the businesses was kept confidential. Catchpole plans to come to Goodland in the near future to provide and explain the results of the survey.

The Artist Roundtable formed last summer through Economic Development, the Small Business Development Center and the Carnegie Arts Center had their first project in June. It was the Goodland Area Mile-Long Art Walk. Nine artists and nine businesses participated in the walk.

The project allows artists to display and sell their artwork while promoting business and exercise in the downtown area. Six of the artists generously donated items for the drawing of a door prize. An "Artie" was placed in busi-

nesses not participating in the art walk to allow an additional chance to win the door prize and to encourage people to visit all the businesses in the downtown area.

The musical performances of Joseph Eli, Jillian Parker, Janet Redlin, and Larry and Taylor McLemore on Saturdays helped make the Art Walk more enjoyable and were very much appreciated. We thank all the businesses, the Carnegie Arts Center and the Goodland Activity Center for their participation.

The Artist Roundtable encourages and assists the many area artists in marketing their products. The Goodland Grind and Gallery, owners Brian and Victoria Freeman, who is to open this summer, is an example of how the Roundtable can be of service in the promotion of art as a business.

Members of the Roundtable review all artwork of those who wish to display or sell at the gallery. The coffeehouse will feature a new artist each month, and provide musical performances and art demonstrations. The hope is that more new businesses affiliated with the arts will develop.

Businesses were sent letters about the development of a Sherman County promotional magazine. This is a joint project of Economic Development and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The magazine will feature articles about tourist attractions, Main Street member-

ship listings, aspects of living and doing business in Sherman County, and provide relocation and quality of life information. There will be 15,000 of the Sherman County Community Profile Magazines distributed. Anyone interested in the magazine may contact Tiffani at the economic development office, 785-890-3743 or Donna Price at the Convention and Visitors Bureau office, 785-890-3515.

First impressions are always important when trying to recruit new people and businesses community. Housing is an important consideration. Currently, there are many homes in the area that the city has labeled as "condemned". McMinn is working together with the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission to obtain grants for the demolition or rehabilitation of homes in the Goodland area.

A new Sherman County Economic Development website is being developed. The new domain name will be "gogoodlandks.com". The goal is to have a website that is business friendly and will provide easy access to information about our community.

On Saturday, Sherman County Economic Development will move the office to the Minner Building at 104 East 10th. The development council, along with the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce, will be joining the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau in the same building.

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