



Firemen fight fire in heat

Firemen Terry Baker (from left; left photo), Sam Zelfer and Don Leiker checked to see if a fire at the garage at Dr. David Schnee's home at 510 Arcade was out. With temperatures around 100 on Friday, it was a hot job. Rebecca Schnee was taken to the Goodland Regional Medical Center by ambulance for treatment of burns and released. Fire Chief Scott Gilmer (far right), with Stan Duell helping, used a saw to go through the garage door. Other firefighters who made the call included Kenny Studer, Neil Normandin, Troy Mannis and Ryan Weiss. Gilmer said the fire apparently started when Dr. Schnee tried to clean the gas tank for the lawn mower and a spark ignited fumes in the attached garage. Most of the damage was from smoke, he said.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Tornado response gets good marks during review

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News

The city and county were pleased with how last month's tornado was handled, but emergency workers discussed what could be improved during a review session at the Sherman County courthouse.

At the session June 22, Judy McKee was introduced as the part-time assistant to Gary Rogers, director of emergency management. She replaced Crissy Conger, director of central dispatch, in May because Conger has her hands full with communications during an emergency situation. McKee will handle the emergency management part for Rogers, who is based in St. Francis.

Conger said at least one of the 12 weather radios scattered throughout the town and county did not work. Conger and McKee said they would inspect them to make sure they work properly.

"All of the weather radios were

taken to the Weather Service and verified," she said.

Rogers said he monitored the severe weather from Cheyenne County.

Scott Gilmer, city fire chief, wondered if the "all clear" siren needed to be reinstated. It was eliminated 10 years ago because law enforcement and dispatch said the "all clear" signal just confused people.

LeAnn Taylor, municipal court judge, said the public needs to realize that the weather sirens are an outside warning. They may not be heard inside of buildings.

If the city loses power, dispatch cannot operate the sirens, said Conger.

Rogers said people need to take shelter where they are until an "all clear" is announced on the radio. David Floyd, warning coordinating meteorologist for the National Weather Service office here, said he thinks the public is getting all the information they need to be safe.

Curtis Duncan, announcer for KLOE/KKCI, and chairman of the Sherman County Red Cross, said the radio stations broadcast the all clear as soon as they get it.

Scott Mentzer, meteorologist in charge of the Goodland weather office, reviewed the procedure for severe weather or tornado warnings. Mentzer thought the flow of information went very well during the June weather. A call had come in from a storm spotter confirming a funnel cloud west of town on Eighth Street, he said.

A warning is activated on a report by a trained storm spotter, weather service or law enforcement officer, he said.

"We encourage the public to call us, and they have done a great job of reporting," Mentzer said.

Gilmer asked why there are no

designated shelters in town anymore. In the 1960s, he noted, shelters were designated for fallout or radioactive threats.

Rogers said that is safer for people to take shelter where they are rather than risk getting hurt traveling across town to get to a shelter.

An interior room of a strong structure or basement away for windows and doors can be used to for shelter, he said.

Business owners, agencies, churches, medical facilities and schools need to draw up their own storm procedures and make them available to employees, Rogers said.

Conger said many people have told her they do not have a tornado policy to follow.

William McKnight, county building and grounds supervisor,

said he worries about people at the fair grounds.

"There is no safe place on that property," he said.

Floyd said the weather service will alert dispatch and law enforcement to evacuate the public and shut down the carnival rides if a storm is approaching. Duncan said the radio station would keep people informed.

Rogers said he would like people to report storm damage for severe weather, tornado or straight wind. The damage may not be severe in one area but could add up across the county, so it's important that people report it to Emergency Management at 890-5188.

Rogers said he needs a specific description of roof damage for the state reporting. There is a big difference, he said, between losing

shingles and parts of roofs being gone. This is also true for flooding, a few inches of water in a basement versus a few feet.

During the storm, Hanks Café was asking the city to provide sand bags, but none was available.

The county does not have sand bags, said Rogers. It takes too much time to fill them, the city has no place to store them and they would probably rot between uses.

Ray Smee, Goodland police chief, said most of the flooding is caused by people driving around barriers and creating wakes in the water.

Smee said he was pleased that Duncan announced highway mile markers for the location of threatening weather so travelers would know where it was happening.

County commissioners name rural fire chief

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The Sherman County commissioners interviewed three candidates last week for Goodland rural fire chief, and chose interim chief Alan David for the job at their meeting Tuesday.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said all three were excellent applicants. It was a tough decision, Thomas said, because all three were qualified.

"Volunteer firemen are very passionate about fighting fires," Thomas said. "They spend a lot of time training and making sure the equipment is ready to handle a fire."

David, a paramedic for Eagle Med, was named interim chief after former fire chief Kenny Griffith resigned on June 21.

Thomas made a motion Tuesday to name David as the chief, and Commissioner Mitch Tiede seconded the appointment, saying he felt David was the best choice. Commissioner Kevin Rasure agreed, and the motion passed unanimously.

The appointments of rural fire chiefs for Goodland, Kanorado and Brewster are to be reviewed every December Tiede noted.

corrections

The obituary for Lela Walters on Page 2 of the July 14 issue of *The Goodland Star-News* omitted the fact that a son, Kenneth Martin of Stockton, Miss., died July 29, 2005, preceding her in death. This was due to incorrect information given to the newspaper.

□□□□
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