

**weather
report****65°**

noon

Thursday

Today

• Sunset, 4:27 p.m.

Saturday

• Sunrise, 6:40 a.m.

• Sunset, 4:27 p.m.

Midday Conditions

- Soil temperature 41 degrees
- Humidity 17 percent
- Sky partly cloudy
- Winds north at 12 mph
- Barometer 30.10 inches and rising
- Record High today 82° (1910)
- Record Low today -1° (1993)

Last 24 Hours*

High Wednesday	73°
Low Thursday	29°
Precipitation	—
This month	.01
Year to date	21.97
Above normal	2.8 inches

The Topside Forecast

Today: Partly cloudy, high near 52, low near 21. North wind 5 to 15 mph becoming south.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Mostly sunny, high near 56, low near 52. Sunday: Partly cloudy, high near 52, low around 25. Monday: Mostly sunny, high near 54, low around 24. Tuesday: Partly cloudy, high near 43.

(National Weather Service)
Get 24-hour weather info. at 162.400 MHz.
* Readings taken at 7 a.m.



Holiday blizzard stranded 1,000

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Thanksgiving was a beautiful day last year, with temperatures in the mid 60s, but that weekend, the weather turned up a blizzard that stranded over a thousand people in Goodland.

The blizzard began on Sunday, Nov. 28, and by Monday, the city was dealing with four inches of snow and winds up to 79 mph that shaped drifts four feet high.

There was a thin layer of ice underneath the snow, and travel was tough and dangerous. Police reported surprisingly few accidents, as wind chills made being out in the weather a have-to situation.

The wind slapped power lines together and took out switches and breakers, leaving parts of Goodland without power from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday.

The areas without power included the north, south and central loops, all fed by Sunflower Electric Power. The main loop from the power plant did not go down after the two hours on Sunday, Nov. 27.

Golden West Skills Center, the National Weather Service, the City Administration Building, sheriff's office, the armory and the hospital ran off of backup generators.

More than 1,000 travelers spent Sunday night and all of Monday in emergency shelters in the city. The



Athena and Adam Trujillo of Denver played games while sitting on their sleeping bags at the United Methodist Fellowship Hall

last year on Monday, Nov. 28, last year. They were among the 170-190 people who took shelter in the hall.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Goodland Activities Center, Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, Max Jones Fieldhouse and the National Guard Armory all housed people.

People occupied their time sleeping, reading or talking with each

other. The shelters allowed people to bring in their pets, including dogs, cats and a bird.

Volunteers rounded up blankets and fed the refugees. Help came from the fire department, Salvation

Army, and the Red Cross.

The stranded travelers were patient workers said. The town got a lot of positive feedback.

After the storm had passed city, county and volunteers gathered to

see what went right and what could be done better when the area is hit by another blizzard.

Crissy Conger, new Sherman

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Chief says city learned from big storm

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Police Chief Ray Smee said Monday he believes the city is better prepared to handle another emergency like the blizzard which struck last November.

"I think we did well with what we had," Smee said, "but I think the city is better prepared today."

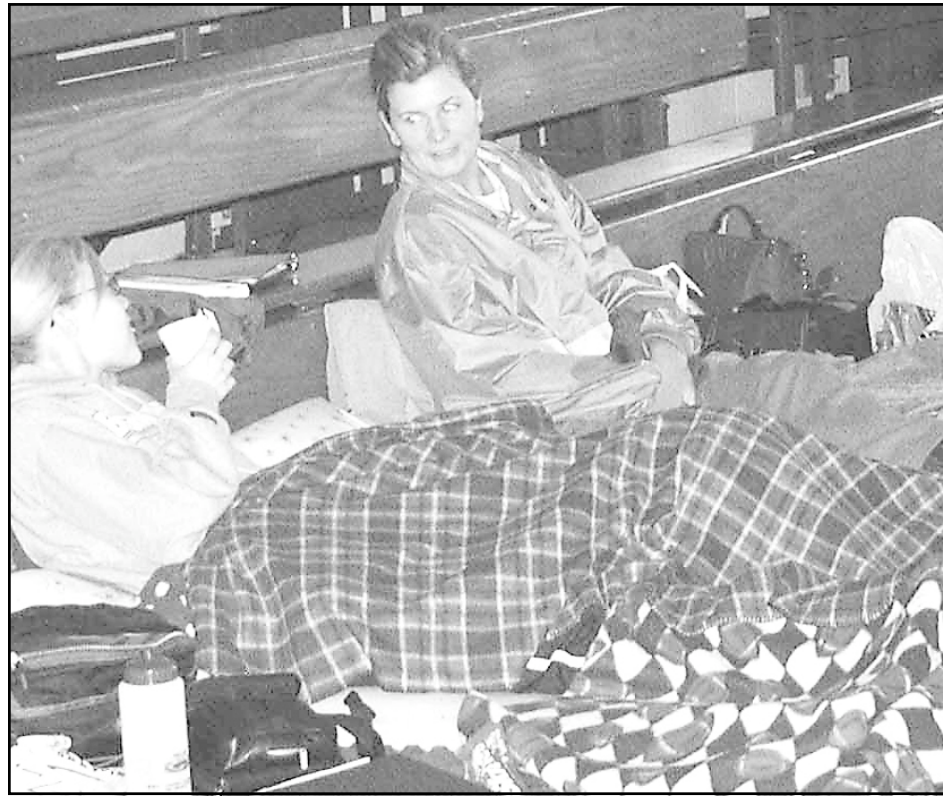
Smee said piles of blankets donated during that blizzard have been cleaned and stored where they will be handy, and the city has better plans to get people to a shelter if necessary.

He said the biggest change he would make is not to have businesses tell people stranded out by I-70 to drive to Eighth Street to get to a shelter. Last year, many unfamiliar with the area got stuck in drifts trying to get downtown.

"We would rather gather them at the Wal-Mart parking lot and bring them down Business U.S. 24 to Cherry and then up to Caldwell," Smee said. "That way we could take the people to the Max Jones, the Methodist Church or the National Guard Armory and avoid the problems we had of people getting stuck in the snow on Eighth.

"It worked pretty well, but we had more problems because of the loss of power."

Wind was the major cause of power outages in Goodland from Sunday afternoon until Monday night last year, city electrical crew-



Amber Knudsen (right), her sister-in-law (hidden under the blankets) and the sister-in-law's friend tried to stay warm last year on Monday, Nov. 28, while waiting for the roads to open so they could head home to Salt Lake City.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

men said, blowing lines together and shorting breakers.

"We had a lot of things going on," said Rod Blake, power plant superintendent, after the storm had passed. "The main problem was the wind slapping lines together and

taking out our switches and breakers."

Blake said the city lost its connection to the Sunflower Electric Power system about 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. It was down for about two hours while they tried to bring it back and

bring the city power plant on line.

"We got things back up," Blake said, "but we were losing so many feeder lines it opened another breaker with Sunflower and dropped our system.

"We never lost the whole city af-

ter the original outage, but we had problems with the north, south and central loops, which feed mainly from Sunflower."

The downtown area and Wal-

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Hospital ready for next storm

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

When a blizzard hit Goodland on Thanksgiving weekend last year, knocking out power and stranding travelers, the Goodland Regional Medical Center wasn't as ready for a disaster as administrators and staff would have liked.

Since then, the hospital has updated its emergency generator and added an "incident command center" for employees to check in for assignments during a disaster, said Dale Schields, director of human resources. The hospital also had updated its external disaster plan to allow taking in stranded travelers.

"The main thing we discovered," Schields said, "was that our generator wasn't prepared to run a long time."

The engine had been turned on and run a little from time to time to test it, he said, and it did run 24 hours straight during the blizzard. For a three-

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**local
markets****Noon**

- Wheat — \$4.53 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$4.71
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0c
 - Corn — \$3.58 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.31
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0c
 - Milo — \$3.23 bushel
 - Soybeans — \$5.89 bushel
 - Posted county price — \$3.31
 - Loan deficiency pmt. — 0c
 - Millet — \$7 hundredweight
 - Sunflowers
 - NuSun crop — \$12.65
 - Pinto beans — \$19 (new crop)
- (Markets by Mueller Grain, Sigco 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



Senior races to Spokane

Goodland Senior Kerek Mason ran at the Missouri Valley track and field championships Saturday at Rim Rock Farm near Lawrence. He qualified to run at the Junior Olympics on Dec. 9, in Spokane, Wash. See story, photo on Page 12.

Electric rates to increase in January

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Home electric bills in Goodland will go up by about \$6.20 a month in January on an average bill this year of \$68.99, based on recommendations approved by the City Commission on Monday.

The change will hike the monthly residential meter charge from \$2 to \$3.75, and raise the kilowatt-hour rate from 10.5 cents to 11.2 cents, a 6.6 percent increase.

The average residential customers use around 638 kilowatt hours per month, city officials said. Based on the average usage and the increase in the meter charge the new monthly bill would be \$75.20, an increase of 9 percent.

Commercial meter rates will go from \$15 to \$19.73 per month and the kilowatt-hour rate from 9.5 cents to 9.86 cents, about 9.6 percent.

Electric rates were raised in January by about \$12.76 a month for the average customer. The city in-

Change will cover all operating costs

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

A Wichita consultant advised the Goodland City Commission to broaden its fuel-cost recover charge on power bills to cover other costs of running the electric utility as they go up.

At a work session before the regular meeting Monday, John Hass, president of Ranson Financial Consultants of Wichita, recommended the fee to protect the city as costs rise. It would start at zero, since the new rates will cover current costs, he said.

"You have been doing some of this with the fuel

adjustment charge," Hass said, "but what we have done is include all the costs ... to cover everything."

He said because the city was covering its fuel costs, which are a majority of the operating costs, customers should not see a large jump in their monthly bills.

"The city did some of this in the rate change done last year that went into effect in January," he added.

Hass said Wednesday he did know how much of the operating cost had not been covered in the last

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increased the kilowatt-hour charge by 2 cents, from 8.5 to 10.5, almost 24 percent. There was no increase on the meter charge.

The commission held a work session before the regular meeting Monday with John Hass, president of Ranson Financial Consultants of Wichita, who helped prepare an

electric rate review. The study cost the city about \$4,000.

City Manager Wayne Hill said he was glad to see the recommendations were close to the figures he had worked up with City Clerk Mary Volk and light plant Superintendent Rod Blake.

Hass said he had been working on

the figures for about two months. He said many cities in northwest Kansas are going through the same process, and Goodland's was similar to a study he did for Norton about six months ago.

Hass spent about an hour going through the half-inch-thick set of charts and data he had gathered on

the history of the Goodland electric system and projections for the next five years.

In his recommendations, Hass included an "operating cost adjustment" to cover increases in fuel costs and the overall cost of operating the electric utility. It would replace the current fuel adjustment charge, but cover a wider range of costs.

The adjustment factor will start at zero, Hill said, but as costs increase, it would be added to monthly bills as the old fuel adjustment charge was if the costs exceed the base rate.

At one point, Mayor Rick Billinger asked if the city could transfer less money to the general fund to keep the power rates down. The consultant pointed out that they city would have to get that money from somewhere else.

"You could reduce the transfer and not have to raise your rates,"

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