

# Thanksgiving blizzard stranded a thousand here

BLIZZARD, from Page 1

County dispatch director and assistant emergency management director, chaired the meeting that week, asking each agency involved to assess what went right and what could have been done better.

Those gathered in the commission room at the courthouse agreed the storm had been unusual, and the community response had been great. The meeting drew representatives from at least 13 agencies and organizations involved in handling the shelters and emergency response.

Those attending included city police, power plant superintendent, city utility crews, Kansas National Guard, county dispatch, county sheriff, city public works, Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Methodist church, Goodland school district, KLOE/KKCI/KWGB radio, hospital, county emergency management, city fire department and Neighborhood Watch/Crime Stoppers.

In the year since the storm the city, county, hospital and emergency services have taken steps to make sure when the next blizzard hits, they will be better prepared to handle stranded travelers and take care of the citizens of the city and county.

Conger said they have made changes to the emergency plan, and now are reviewing one covering shelters. She said because the National

## Sheriff's department buys all-wheel drive truck to use in emergency

By Pat Schiefen  
The Goodland Star-News

The Sherman County Sheriff's Department has added an all-wheel-drive truck that could be used to transport people and material during a storm since the Thanksgiving blizzard last year. Sheriff Kevin Butts said he thought the army surplus truck could carry around 30 people. The county bought the truck from a dealer in Lamar, Colo., for around \$10,000, he said.

The truck has a winch on it, has six wheels and is all-wheel-drive, which means the truck should be able to get around in bad weather.

"It may sit more than it is used," said Gary Rogers, emer-

gency management coordinator for Sherman County, of the truck, "but if you ever need it once, it will pay for itself."

Sheriff Butts said he thought that everyone in all his department did a good job during the storm last year. They hauled a lot of people around, as the department has four-wheel-drive trucks.

The Sherman County Bastille has an emergency generator in case — as happened last year — the city should lose power. Sherman County commissioners have been talking about wiring part of the courthouse into the emergency generator to provide a minimum of power to offices there, too.



Guard Army on the northeast edge of town was snowed in by the blizzard, they'll probably use shelters more centrally located in the city.

She said arrangements are being worked on and those will be part of the update to be presented to the county Local Emergency Planning Committee on Thursday.

Conger said they didn't need to make a lot of changes at the dispatch center, but that the things being done by other departments will make the dispatchers' job easier in such an emergency.

She said having Judy McKee as an emergency management assistant has helped, and that McKee has been working on several projects, including getting volunteers trained for a community emergency response team.

Losing power during the storm was a major problem, but City Manager Wayne Hill thinks the city power plant is ready to rock and roll.

"We got an engine fixed and have replaced the water pumps that had not been replaced since 1968," Hill said. "I think right now we have the

capability and the capacity we can carry our Goodland loop if we lost the Sunflower Electric line.

"We have everything up to shape. We have to be ready if there is an ice storm or who knows what might happen.

"We have to be ready to generate if Sunflower calls and says they need us to run our generators."

Hill said he thought things ran pretty smoothly during the blizzard, with all the city people who helped take care of things.

"I spent two days in Sharon Springs trying to make my way back up here," the manager said, adding that he was in contact with the city offices and power plant while he waited for the roads to open.

## Electric rates going up next year

RATES, from Page 1

Hass said. "If you do, then the money has to be made up somewhere else."

The electric utility transfers about \$450,000 a year to support the city's general operating budget.

The city manager said the way electricity costs have been going up, the city needs to do something now, but shorting the general fund may not be a good answer.

"I think we need to keep our transfers in place," Hill said. "As Mary said, our December Sunflower bill is going to come out of reserves."

The city buys all of its power from Sunflower Electric Power Co., a cooperative owned by area rural electric co-ops under the new contract that began in June. Costs

have been higher since then, especially for moving power.

City Commissioner John Garcia asked why the December bill would have to come out of the reserves. Hill said there is not enough budget authority to pay it.

Billinger asked Blake how much would have to come from the reserves.

Blake said the October Sunflower bill was \$245,000 and September was \$211,000.

"Depending on the weather, we could be close to \$300,000," Blake said. "So far, we have about \$200,000 in the fund to pay Sunflower."

Blake said that Volk, who had to leave because of another meeting, had cut the transfers last quarter to help reduce the drain on the electric fund.

He said transportation costs,

which were part of the old Sunflower contract, have been separated, and are boosting the bill. Blake said the volatility of the energy market is making it hard to predict where the costs are going to be.

"I think we have to do the operating cost adjustment to cover ourselves," Billinger said. "We are not talking about a big rate increase. It is more than we need we can adjust it. We need to cover the operating cost."

"What do we need to do tonight?" City Commissioner Annette Fairbanks asked.

"If you take his recommendations, we will draft an ordinance and it would probably go into effect in January," Hill said.

Fairbanks made a motion to have the city staff draft the ordinance, and it passed unanimously.

STORM, from Page 1

Mart were without power from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday. Without power, many businesses did not open on Monday, and *The Goodland Star-News* was unable to run its presses. Sister papers the *Colby Free Press* and *The Norton Telegram*

were delayed as well.

Blake said the main loop from the power plant did not go down after the original outage on Sunday.

"If you were lucky to be on the old loop, the power stayed on because the power plant was generating," Blake said.

City Manager Wayne Hill said

with the engine repaired and upgrades of some of the switches at the power plant, the city would be able to handle more of the power if there is another blizzard. The diesel engine had gone down in August, and was not operational. It was repaired this year.

## Hospital power generator ready for next storm

HOSPITAL, from Page 1

hour stretch on Monday, though, the hospital had no power at all, he said. "You wouldn't believe how dark and cold it gets in a big building like this," Schields added.

The hospital used the generator during the summer to test it, he said, made some modifications and will continue to upgrade the system. However, he said, they may need a

new one sometime soon. This one is 34 years old, he said, installed when the hospital opened in 1972.

Schields said staff members realized early in the storm there weren't enough flashlights. Now every department has some, he said, and there's a cache of about two dozen emergency lanterns and spotlights.

Officials looked at the external disaster plan, he said, and modified it to allow taking in people who

aren't sick but need a place to keep warm.

The hospital has also added a command center for disasters, where staffers will check in and be assigned either to their own area or where they are most needed. If many nursing workers are not able to get in, he said, dietary department workers might be assigned to help in nursing and vice versa.

## Change will help cover all electric costs

COSTS, from Page 1

rate increase. He said he was not asked that specific question, but would estimate that the city was covering about 80 percent.

"What are the estimated impacts on the customers?" asked Mayor Rick Billinger.

Hass said in the worst case, a customer would see an increase of about \$14.27 on a monthly bill, which would include both the rate increase and the customer's share of the operating cost adjustment.

"If your electric bill averaged about \$68 per month in 2005, it would be about \$84 next year," Hass said.

That is about 23 percent. He said Wednesday he was not asked to look at the cost figures for 2006, and so he was not exactly sure what the average bill has been this year.

"If the cost changes because of an increase from Sunflower Electric, will this go up?" Billinger asked.

"The cost adjustment is for everything on the Sunflower bill," Volk replied.

Hass said the study set the base operating cost at \$109.79 per megawatt hour.

"The cost can go down to the cus-

tomers?" Billinger asked.

Volk said if the costs do go down, the customer would see a zero for the operating cost adjustment. She said the operating cost adjustment would only show up on the bills if the costs exceed the base cost.

Hill said Wednesday city customers have not seen any fuel cost adjustments on their monthly bills this year because the base figure was raised to \$70 last year. He said with the increases from the new Sunflower contract, the costs have been getting closer to where the bills might include a fuel-cost adjustment.

Hill said the change in the ordinance with the operational cost adjustment will help the city cover the costs beyond fuel.

City Commissioner Josh Dechant asked Hass if the electric meter charge was comparable with other cities.

"It is low compared to other cities," Hass replied.

City Commissioner Dave Daniels said he thought the city had raised the meter charge last year, but was reminded that the water meter rates were raised, not the electric.

"This is designed not to impact any specific portion of the people," Billinger said. "The meter increase from \$2 to \$3.75 is a pretty reason-

able charge to flip a switch and turn on lights in your home."

"This could go down when we get the Goodland Energy Center on line?" Daniels asked.

"Yes," Hass said. "We did not factor that in."

"I think this is reasonable," Dechant said.

"I want to know exactly how much this will go up so I can justify the increase," Billinger said. "You said we have not been collecting the operating cost adjustment. How much will this increase the bills?"

"I think it will go up about \$14 if you have not been collecting the operating costs," Hass said. "I want to be sure you understand this so you can tell the people who are asking you why we are raising rates. I don't want you to say it is because that guy from Wichita said we had to."

"You can decide not to change this, but the operating cost adjustment will be higher on the customer bills. You have to pay the bill, and the question is how you want to have paid."

"You can make a policy decision about how you want to handle this. You could leave the rates the same, but the bills are going to come from the cost adjustments and not from operating."

Showing through Nov. 30  
**THE SANTA CLAUSE 3: THE ESCAPE CLAUSE**  
G

Bring this ad to the theatre for \$1.00 off on a large popcorn & 2 med. EXP. 12/31/06

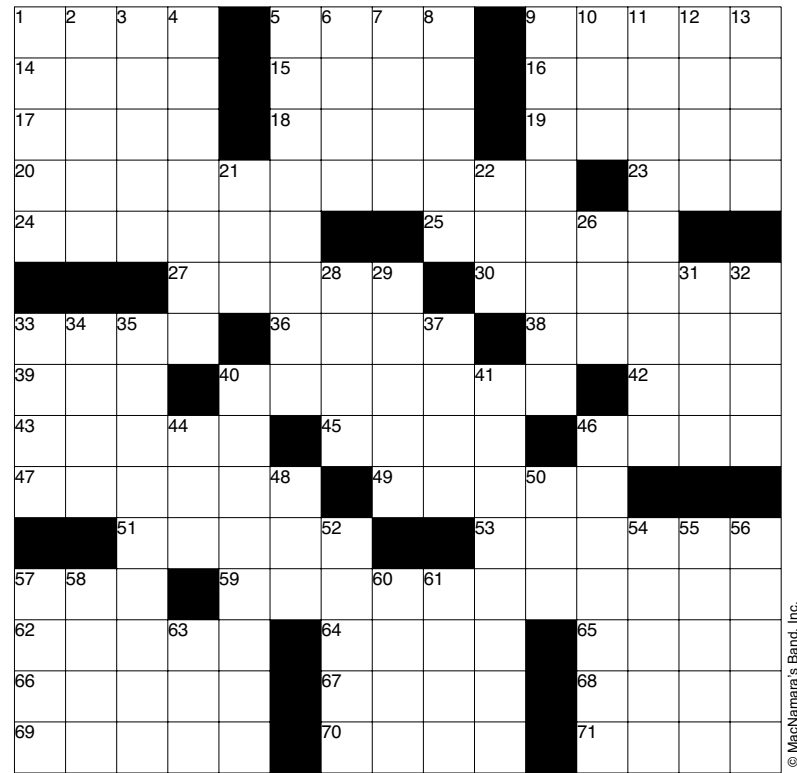
Nightly 7:00  
Sunday Matinee 1:30  
Movie Bucks Make Great Gifts!  
www.goodlandnet.com/movies  
**Sherman**  
1203 Main - Phone 899-6103

Free Movie! Saturday & Sunday 1:30  
Nov. 25 & 26  
Ice Age 2 (PG)  
Sponsored by: Bankwest, Bowman's Heating & Air Conditioning, Cochran Farm Supply, Topside Office Products, Wendy's, and The Sherman Theatre.

## Crossword Puzzle

### ACROSS

- A bit wet
- Legal costs
- Wharton's Ethan
- Nobelist Wiesel
- Part of Bush's "Axis of Evil"
- Ouse or Oise
- Oscar winner Sean
- Unit replaced by the euro
- Critic Roger
- 1957 Elvis hit
- Born, in bios
- Interrupt rudely
- After a bit
- Performer with a painted-on smile
- Musical ineptitude
- Marquis de
- Tennessee's state flower
- Stiller's mate
- Magnon man
- On the nose
- "Agnus"
- Unescorted
- Dickens's Little
- Printer's primary color
- Destructive bugs
- Where a slice or a hook may land
- Stands for a sculptor
- Travolta musical
- Road goo
- "The Addams Family" character
- "My Fair Lady" lady
- Fair feature
- Deli scale button
- Tore to the ground
- Hertz rival
- Journalist
- Sevareid



- "Goodnight" girl
- Bump into
- Break in relations

- Pre-prepared, as a meal
- "A\_\_pittance!"
- Art Deco master
- Up to, informally
- Jazz player
- Suffix with butyl
- Small songbird
- More pleasant
- Surface figure
- Parade spoiler
- Strike defier
- He sang of Alice
- Raffle reward, perhaps
- Fodder facility
- Convince by arm-twisting, maybe
- High-scoring baseball game

- Keanu's role in "Matrix" movies
- Alan Arthur
- China's Sun Yat-

- College sr.'s test
- "Beat it!"
- Pong maker
- Typeface embellishment
- Standing tall
- Actress Hatcher
- Banned apple spray
- Like a concert CD
- Carmela player
- Buddhism sect

The crossword puzzle brought to you by:

## SPORTS TELEVISION SCHEDULE

### Saturday

10 a.m. 4/6 ABC College Football Teams TBA  
22/28 ESPN College Football Teams TBA  
12 p.m. 3/9 NBC College Football Grambling State vs. Southern  
12:30 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Football Oklahoma at Oklahoma State  
1:30 p.m. 7/11 CBS College Football Georgia Tech at Georgia  
22/28 ESPN College Football Teams TBA  
2:15 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Football Boise State Broncos at Nevada Wolf Pack from Mackay Stadium  
4 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Football Arizona State at Arizona

5:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Football Division I Championship: First Round  
99/39 WGN NBA Basketball Chicago Bulls at New York Knicks from Madison Square Garden  
5:45 p.m. 22/28 ESPN College Football Wake Forest Demon Deacons at Maryland Terrapins from Byrd Stadium  
6 p.m. 4/6 ABC College Football Notre Dame at Southern California  
7:30 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Basketball Iowa at Arizona State  
9 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Florida Gators at Kansas Jayhawks from The Allen Fieldhouse  
11 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Great Alaska Shootout

Championship from Anchorage, Alaska  
**Sunday**  
11 a.m. 7/11 CBS NFL Football Teams TBA  
22/28 ESPN PBA Bowling Winter City Classic from Vernon Hills, IL  
2 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Basketball Wyoming at Colorado  
3:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Teams TBA from Site TBA  
6 p.m. 22/28 ESPN NBA Basketball Los Angeles Clippers at Denver Nuggets from Pepsi Center  
6:15 p.m. 3/9 NBC Sunday Night Football Eagles at Colts