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INSIDE

Can you guess
this week's
"Blast From
The Past"?

See page 3.

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County 4-H Day

Members of 4-H clubs from Jackson and Nemaha counties participated in the annual 4-H Club Day, held Saturday at Jackson Heights High School. In the photo above, Madeline Montgomery (left) packed a bag for a hike while younger brother Blade Montgomery (right) made suggestions on what to pack during a presentation. The Montgomery siblings are members of the Lucky Stars 4-H Club.

In the photo at right, Tristan Simpson-Worley, a member of the Ontario Busy Bees 4-H Club, showed an Americana chicken as part of his project talk on raising chickens. This will be Simpson-Worley's fourth year showing chickens, he said.

More photos from 4-H Club Day will be featured in Wednesday's Recorder.

Photos by Brian Sanders



COVID-19 risk low in Kansas

State officials report confirmed coronavirus case in Johnson Co.

By Brian Sanders

Following the report of a confirmed case of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Kansas on Saturday, local, state and national health officials continue to emphasize awareness and preparedness to combat the spread of the virus.

And while more than 560 cases of COVID-19 — including 22 deaths — have been reported more than 30 U.S. states as of this morning, national health officials expect that the number will rise, even though the vast majority of people who become infected with the coronavirus are expected to make a full recovery — in fact, it was reported this morning that eight who had been confirmed as having the virus have recovered.

"Currently, in Kansas, the overall risk of the virus is low, but that does not mean we can rest easy. We take this situation seriously. We can and will remain ready to respond swiftly and effectively, should the virus spread to Kansas," Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly said last Wednesday during an announcement that the Kansas Department of Health and Environment is

working on a preparedness plan for COVID-19.

Local health officials, including Holton Community Hospital CEO Carrie Saia and Jackson County Public Health Administrator Angie Reith, said they are following recommendations from KDHE, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for dealing with the disease.

Jackson County school administrators said they are also looking to KDHE and CDC recommendations if an outbreak of COVID-19 should occur in the county, although as Holton Superintendent Bob Davies noted in a letter to district parents, canceling classes has not been recommended as a preparatory action.

Instead, public health, government and school officials are strongly encouraging "good hygiene practices," particularly hand washing, as the best way to avoid contracting the virus, as there is not yet a vaccine available for it and more information about the virus is needed.

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Property valuations see 'steady increase'

County notices mailed out on Feb. 28

By Ali Holcomb

Property valuation notices have been mailed to Jackson County property owners, and a "steady increase" in overall values has been noted this year, according to Jackson County Appraiser Jason Claycamp.

The notices were mailed to county property owners on Friday, Feb. 28.

"Home sales appear to be very good right now," Claycamp said. "It's pretty strong right now."

The county's value in agricultural land increased by six percent, Claycamp said.

"Most of the counties in northeast Kansas saw a six to eight percent increase in ag values," he said.

Neighboring Brown County received a five percent increase in ag values, and Jefferson County increased by six percent.

Atchison and Pottawatomie counties saw a seven percent increase. Nemaha County experienced an eight percent increase in ag land and Shawnee County's ag values jumped by nine percent.

Between 2019 and 2020, more than half of the 105 counties in Kansas experienced a

five to 9.99 percent increase in ag values, it was reported.

"It's less than it has been," Claycamp said of the county's six percent increase.

Values for ag land, which includes cropland and grassland, are determined using an eight-year weighted average, according to state law.

"The middle years (of the eight years) have a bigger pull on the average than the first and eighth year," Claycamp said.

In seven counties, ag land values jumped between 10 to 19.99 percent, and in five counties (Clark, Barber, Comanche, Hodgeman and Ford), they increased by more than 20 percent, it was reported.

Each classification of property (residential, ag, commercial, etc.) is assessed at a different percentage rate. The rates are set by the state and cannot be adjusted by the county, it was reported.

Appraised residential property values are assessed at an 11.5 percent rate.

Agricultural use land is assessed at a 30 percent rate and agriculture use improvements are assessed at 25 percent.

Continued to Page 12

USDA approves hemp crops on reservation

By Ali Holcomb

Hemp may now be grown on Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation land following recent approval by the United States Department of Agriculture, it was reported.

With the OK, the PBP Nation now has the authority to administer a domestic hemp program under the oversight of the USDA Domestic Hemp Production Program.

The PBP Nation can now issue industrial hemp licenses to qualified growers who own land within the reservation boundaries, it was reported.

"We are one of just a few tribes that have been approved to grow industrial hemp," Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Chairman Joseph Rupnick said in a press release on the PBP Nation's website. "This is the

first step in a long process to diversify our farm program and enter a new industry with many benefits for our Nation and the land."

On Feb. 20, the USDA approved industrial hemp programs for the PBP, the Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma and the Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska. A total of 10 tribal plans for hemp production have been approved so far, it was reported.

Hemp is the same species of plant that marijuana comes from, but it's been specifically cultivated to produce a very small amount (under 0.3 percent, by law) of the psychoactive chemical THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) that gets people "high."

Continued to Page 12

Nemaha wind farm agreements approved

After 18 months of discussions and negotiations, the Nemaha County Commission recently finalized agreements for the construction of a wind farm in southern Nemaha County, it has been reported.

The Soldier Creek Wind Energy Center — a 300-megawatt, 120-turbine facility — will be built in the southern part of the county, which is located just north of Jackson County, and maintained by Florida-based NextEra Energy Resources.

During a special Feb. 25 meeting of the Nemaha County Commission, members of the three-person commission unanimously approved five agreements with NextEra related to construction, development and maintenance of the wind farm, the Courier-Tribune newspaper of Seneca reported.

NextEra has also sought contracts with landowners in Jackson and other area counties for

Continued to Page 12

Economic development group to meet Wednesday

Members of the Economic Development Jackson County Group, a volunteer group of area residents interested in economic development in the Holton and Jackson County area, will meet with Meadowlark Extension District Director and Agent David Key at 6:30 p.m. this Wednesday at Holton Elementary School, it was reported.

Topics for discussion at the meeting will include the function of a program development committee, the history and purpose of the group, an update on current community development projects and events in the Meadowlark district, programs or events that may be of interest in the district and other projects, ideas and needs.

The meeting, which is open to the public, had previously been scheduled for January but was postponed twice due to weather concerns, it was noted.



TUESDAY'S FORECAST

Mostly Sunny, High 56

Look for the complete forecast on Page 2.



GNBank of Holton made a \$5,000 donation to Friends of Banner Creek (FOBC) last Thursday for the construction of a multi-purpose shelter house on the north side of the reservoir. Shown from left to right in the photo above are Ken Glennon, Community Bank President; Barb Dillner, FOBC vice president; Beth Nelson, FOBC treasurer; and Lu Griffiths, Banner Creek Reservoir director.

Photo by Ali Holcomb



Rep. Garber reports on State Legislature

By Rep. Randy Garber R-Sabetha, 62nd District
The heavy burden of high property taxes is taking a toll on Kansans. But, there are solutions. Our local governments should address this crisis with a sense of urgency and stop the practice of backdoor tactics that raise property taxes without a vote.



It's time for transparency and accountability. Here are the top five things homeowners need to know about property taxes in Kansas.

- City and county property tax jumped 168 percent between 1997 and 2018. Property tax increased by 151 percent between 1997 and 2018, or more than three times the inflation rate of 50 percent.
- Property tax for local government (cities, counties, townships, etc.) totaled \$2.7 billion in 2018 or about 54 percent of all property tax.
- Local government also imposed the largest increase, averaging 168 percent.
- Public schools and community colleges account for about 45 percent of the total, taking in \$2.2 billion, and only one percent of property tax goes for the operation of state government.
- The Property Tax Honesty Gap. Some city and county officials say they're "holding the line" on property taxes, but vot-

ers are fully aware that property tax has been rapidly increasing because of valuation changes. For instance: Atchison County property taxes increased 179 percent from 1997 to 2018, but the mill levy only increased 28 percent, leaving a 152 percent honesty gap. Similarly, while Brown County decreased its mill levy by 17 percent, property taxes still went up 166 percent, which is a 183 percent honesty gap. Jackson County saw an increase of 230 percent while the mill levy went up 45 percent, which computes to a 185 percent honesty gap. Nemaha County's property tax increased 214 percent while the mill levy increased five percent, which is a 209 percent honesty gap.

Legislation to close the honesty gap, Senate Bill 294, which is being discussed in the Kansas Senate currently, is modeled after the Utah legislation that has successfully reduced property tax rates. It simply requires city and county elected officials to vote on the entire property tax increase. SB 294 doesn't limit spending and elected officials don't have to get public approval. They just have to vote on the entire tax increase they impose each year. Once a city or county gets new valuation totals each year, a "certified rate" is calculated to produce the same property tax revenue as the prior year based on the new valuations. Elected officials must notify taxpayers of their intent to increase the certified rate and hold a public meeting where people can comment. Then they have to vote to increase the certified rate, which means they are voting on the total tax increase. The effective tax rate in Utah declined by 7.5 percent between 2000 and 2018, but the effective tax rate in Kansas increased by more than 22 percent. Lobbyists for cities and counties oppose SB 294, but voters overwhelmingly support this idea. A December 2019 public opinion survey conducted by Survey USA on our behalf asked whether local elected officials should be required to vote on the total property tax increase. Seventy-five percent said "yes" and only 11 percent said "no." Support crosses all ideological and geographical lines. Seventy-three percent of self-described liberals and moderates and 80 percent of conservatives favor the change. Geographic support across the four regions (Western, Eastern, Wichita area, and Kansas City area) ranges from 72 percent to 78 percent. Kansas has the highest rural property tax in the nation. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's 2019 50-State Property Tax Comparison Study shows Kansas is very noncompetitive on effective property tax rates. The effective tax rate (ETR) is the property tax paid as a percentage of assessed valuation. Kansas' rural rankings, comparing the largest county seats in non-metropolitan areas with a population between 2,500 and 10,000, are among the worst in the nation. Iola represents Kansas and has:

- The #1 highest ETR on commercial property.
- The third highest ETR on industrial property.
- The 14th highest ETR on residential property valued at \$150,000.

Comparing the largest city in each state, Kansas has:

- the 11th highest ETR on commercial property.
- The 23rd highest ETR on industrial property.
- The 25th highest ETR on residential property valued at \$150,000.

Property tax is an especially large barrier to economic growth in rural areas. The 4.4 percent effective tax rate on commercial property in Kansas is more than double the rate in Missouri and Nebraska and more than four times the ETR in Oklahoma.

Kelly's LAVTR property tax relief plan doesn't work. Gov. Laura Kelly's tax council members propose resurrecting the Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction (LAVTR) program as their solution to high property taxes, saying "...local governments would once again have a strong tool to begin lowering local property taxes." But that program didn't work the last time, and it won't provide tax relief now. LAVTR was last funded in 2003. County property taxes increased by an average of 7.5 percent during LAVTR's last five years; without LAVTR, county property taxes "only" averaged a four percent annual increase over the five years ended in 2018. My contact information: randy.garber@house.ks.gov work: 785-296-7665 cell: 785-285-1238.

LETTER: Nemaha Co. wind farm

Dear editor,
Nearly 650 wind turbines in a 30-mile radius, plus the largest transmission line in the state with towers reaching 150 to 200 feet tall - taller than our water towers... That is what Nemaha County residents can look forward to in their future. The view from your vehicle, tractor or deck will change dramatically in the next two years as Nemaha County becomes industrialized. The new wind turbines will be 500 feet tall - that's 100 feet taller than the about 40 you see north of Bern and west of Ax-tell. The Soldier Creek project in the Goff-Corning-Centralia corridor was approved by Nemaha County Commissioners last week and will consist of 120 turbines. The Pony Express project is projected to be 800 MW, which equates to 320 turbines spanning northern Nemaha County and into northwestern Brown County. The Irish Creek wind project was recently announced west of Vermillion in Marshall County and will consist of about 120 turbines. Much land is leased outside of these areas, suggesting even more could be coming. Where will it end? Questions: How "green" is this energy when you consider waste disposal, all the impacts of hauling and infrastructure and the backup power needed when the wind isn't blowing? What will happen with the turbine blades and non-recyclable

components someday? Will the decommissioning agreements hold up and will the county be able to access the moneys if it comes to that? Will the impact on bats, which the wind industry acknowledges, have a negative consequence to farming? Will it impact other wildlife/animals, people or property values? Will our electricity prices rise due to infrastructure costs? Will the wind industry fall apart if the government subsidies go away? Will we as a society regret allowing "big wind" to green-wash and steamroll through rural America without first carefully considering the long-term consequences, as they collect billions of dollars of profits and taxpayer funding along the way? Is it too late to stop them? Nemaha County Commissioners have a moratorium in place until May to pause further wind negotiations. It will have been a year since that was executed with the intent to do comprehensive planning, which could lead to zoning regulations. However, confidence in our Nemaha County Commissioners is at an all-time low after the disappointing and inadequate terms of the agreements were released. And the wheels of a comprehensive plan have barely moved. Our elected officials have heard my so-called "minority" voice - but have they heard yours?
Cindy Brack Seneca

LETTER: Child's best interest should be state's top concern

Dear editor,
I listen, I read, I hear and I am in total wonderment as to what happens to the country in which I grew up. Actually as I evaluate the past 45 years, little things that didn't appear to be of much importance has had a great deal of impact on my/our lives today. I was young and raising a family, working hard and just naturally involved with family. So that every time the government created new regulations, policies and laws I thought that it really doesn't affect me so why should I be concerned. That is a common response if we are law-abiding hard working individuals. What is wrong with that thinking and we should distinguish between thinking and feelings is this: when a regulation, policy or laws are made because of feelings, i.e. caring and compassion, then there may be unintended consequences to this action. It is the feeling stuff that has us in trouble. As an example, when a child is removed from his/her home, federal and state law says that every effort must be to return that child to their home (caring and compassion). This home may have drug ad-

dicted, alcohol addicted parents or caretakers (you may devise your own scenario). This child will be in several foster homes, depending on age, even different schools along with attending court every so often. This process will continue for at the very least two years because the federal government has a regulation that is called "Family Preservation." The unintended consequences are that this child has been deprived of a childhood; the school must have special education teachers to address the lack of continuity of developing a set of values, ethics, choices and responsibilities. The judge goes home to dinner, the teacher goes home to dinner, the social worker goes home to dinner and the state agency closes at 5 p.m. Who is the loser? When government portends to help, the ones receiving the help are hurt the most. Unintended consequences. Is it at all possible that this state can develop programs that allow children, when possible, to have decisions made that are in the child's best interest?
Marje Cochren Holton

How to reach the powers that be

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SPORTS *Monday*



Royal Valley senior Komesh Spoonhunter is shown above at the free throw line during the Panthers' sub-state championship game against St. Marys on Saturday. Spoonhunter had three points during the game and 10 points during RV's game against Perry-Lecompton on Thursday.

Photo by Ali Holcomb

Lady Cats' winning season ends in 4A sub-state title game

By David Powls

Following a first quarter that saw the Lady Wildcats trailing by just one point, 11-10, at Nickerson Friday, the Lady Indians controlled the second quarter by outscoring Holton 12-3 and led 23-13 at halftime.

Nickerson went on to win the sub-state title game 53-34 and qualify for the 4A state tourney. Nickerson 6-2 freshman Ava Jones scored 10 of her team's 11 first-quarter points, along with four offensive rebounds, and finished with 23 total points. Jones made 11 of 16 field goals in the game and had 10 rebounds, seven on the offensive end.

First quarter scoring for Holton included a field goal and three-pointer by junior Saydee Tanking, a three-pointer by senior Danika Hickman and a field goal by sophomore Macy Patch. Patch and Hickman each had a rebound in the quarter also.

Holton went on a 6-2 run in the first quarter and early in the second quarter took the lead, 12-11, on a basket by Patch.

Holton's next scoring did not come until the 3:25 mark of the quarter when Holton 5-10 sophomore Taylor Moore made one of two free throws to extend the Lady Wildcats' lead to 13-11.

Nickerson's Jones closed out the quarter on a 12-1 run, with Jones scoring two field goals. Nickerson also made two, three-point baskets and another field goal in the quarter to lead 23-13 at the half.

Patch had a steal and two rebounds in the second quarter and Tanking also had a rebound. Nickerson was 10 for 20 shooting in the first half.

The Lady Wildcats came out shooting in the third quarter with Tanking making two quick three-point baskets to bring the score to 23-19.

Tanking made another three-pointer later in the quarter and Patch and senior Olivia Yingst also made field goals. Nickerson's lead after three quarters was 39-26.

Those players getting rebounds for Holton in the third quarter included Tanking (2), Yingst (2) and Patch (1).

In the fourth quarter, Tanking and Yingst both made three-point baskets and Moore also made a field goal. Patch and Hickman were credited with re-

bounds.

For Nickerson in the fourth quarter, 6-2 senior Morgan Stout blocked three shots and made a three-point basket. Jones added four more points and McClain and Madison Ontjes both scored two points.

"Congratulations to Nickerson on earning a trip to the 4A state basketball tournament," said HHS head coach Kurt Haussler afterwards. "I am very proud of our girls for the way that we competed against a very tall and athletic Nickerson team in a physical championship game. We did not lose this game, Nickerson beat us. They were the better team."

"Nickerson's Ava Jones was tremendous as the dominant force in the game, especially in the first half with her senior teammate, Morgan Stout, who is going to Wichita State University to play volleyball," coach Haussler said. "Stout was out of the game with three fouls and we did not have an answer for her. Much of the first half was tight until Nickerson made a late push and extended a two-point lead to 10 in four possessions. Their size, length and speed were difficult to attack in their matchup 2-3 zone. They cover so much space, close down gaps really well, stay connected to perimeter shooters, and have shot blockers near the rim that prevented us from being able to get much in the paint or free throw line."

Holton 10-3-13-8-34, Nickerson 11-12-16-14-53. Holton - Yingst 1-1-0-0-5, Hickman 0-1-0-0-3, Tanking 1-5-0-0-17, Patch 3-0-0-0-6, Moore 1-0-1-2-3. Totals 6-7-12-34.

Nickerson - McLean 1-0-0-0-2, M. Ontjes 1-2-0-0-8, K. Ontjes 1-2-1-2-7, Apfel 3-0-0-0-6, Stout 3-0-1-4-7, Jones 11-0-1-1-23. Totals 20-4-3-7-53.

Nickerson took fourth place at the Class 4A state tournament last season. Other 4A teams in the west winning sub-states over the weekend were Buhler, Clay Center and Chapman. (Holton defeated Chapman earlier this season.)

Coach Haussler said he was very proud of his team that finished 12-10 and as a sub-state runner-up.

Continued to Page 7



Royal Valley head coach Trent Oliva is shown above (center) during a third-quarter timeout Saturday during the Panthers' sub-state championship game against St. Marys. The Bears punched their ticket to the state tournament with a 44-43 win over RV. The Panthers were 21-2 this season. Photo by Ali Holcomb

Historic season for the RV boys ends with 1-point loss in sub-state title game

By Ali Holcomb

The St. Marys Bears won the Class 3A sub-state tournament hosted by Royal Valley in a narrow win over the Panthers 44-43 on Saturday.

After a 63-49 win over Perry on Thursday night, the Panthers, the number one seed in the tournament, faced St. Marys on Saturday at Hoyt. The Bears, who were the number three seed in the tournament, upset Rock Creek, the two seed, on Thursday 68-57.

"I told them in the locker room that the loss hurts because we care, but that they would look back in the long run and see the historic season we had," said RV coach Trent Oliva. "We wish we could have kept it going, but it wasn't in the cards. I'm so proud of everything we've done."

Despite the loss, the Panthers did have an historic season with a 21-2 record, the best in school history. RV went 13-1 in the Big Seven League and won the league title, another first for the district.

"We had a practice Saturday morning, and we told them we didn't need to do anything different than what we've done the previous games," Coach Oliva said. "We just need to be who we are, and do what we've done all season long."

It was a slow start for both teams in the first quarter as the Bears and Panthers took turns sharing the lead until St. Marys pulled ahead 11-8.

"It was close game, and both teams knew what was on the

line," Coach Oliva said. "Every shot was a big shot in that close of a game. They had a couple of balls bounce their way and that's what happens. We did a good job playing and answering their runs."

St. Marys had eight three-pointers during the game that kept the game close throughout. The Bears also scored a last second shot in the second quarter to tie the game 24-24 at the half.

"It was literally a one possession at a time game and getting the stop defensively," Oliva said. "Their defense was ready to go. They were able to make just enough plays to win it."

In the third frame, the Bears edged ahead slightly with 11 points over RV's 10 points. With less than two minutes left in the game, St. Marys led 42-40. Senior Komesh Spoonhunter made one free throw, and after a timeout, sophomore Nahcs Wahwassuck made a layup to give RV a 43-42 lead.

After a Panther foul with nine seconds remaining, St. Marys made two free throws to bring about the final score 44-43. Wahwassuck attempted one final shot for RV in the final seconds but was unsuccessful.

St. Marys was 6-9 at the charity stripe, and RV was 4-11 at the free throw line.

RV was led by sophomore Brady Klotz who had 12 points followed by Wahwassuck with 10 points. RV shot 18 for 37 (48 percent) during the game. The Panthers had 21 rebounds (13 defensive and eight offensive), six assists, six turnovers and

eight steals.

The Bears shot 14 for 35 (40 percent) and had 16 rebounds (8 defensive and 8 offensive). St. Marys had six assists, 12 turnovers and five steals.

RV: 8-16-10-9 - 43

St. Marys: 11-13-11-9 - 44

Individual statistics

RV: Klotz 6-0-0-0-12, Wahwassuck 5-0-0-4-10, Miller 3-0-1-2-7, Thomas 0-2-0-0-6, Canady 1-1-0-1-5, Spoonhunter 0-0-3-4-3. Totals 15-3-4-11-43.

St. Marys: Moylan 0-4-0-0-12, Ewing 2-1-2-2-9, Holz 2-1-0-1-7, C. Hurla 1-0-4-4-6, Criqui 2-0-0-2-4, J. Hurla 0-1-0-0-3, Murray 0-1-0-0-3. Totals 7-8-6-9-44.

In the Panthers' game Thursday night against Perry, which was the teams' third meeting of the season, the Panthers and Kaws went back and forth in the first quarter with Perry taking a 20-16 lead.

"They came out and kind of punched us in the mouth," Oliva said. "We were too reactionary, and they were able to get some easy shots off."

RV found its defensive rhythm in the second quarter and outscored the Kaws 16-9, with help from two big three-pointers by senior Komesh Spoonhunter. The Panthers led 32-29 at the half.

The score remained close in the third quarter with RV scoring 11 points and Perry scoring 8.

"We made some defensive adjustments, and the guys did a good job of responding to those

changes," he said. "We were able to go on a run in the fourth quarter to win the game."

The Panthers pulled away in the final eight minutes with 20 points to Perry's 12. RV was led by Wahwassuck was 23 points followed by junior Brevin Canady with 13 points and Spoonhunter with 10 points.

During the game, RV shot 25 of 47 (53 percent) from the field. The team had 17 rebounds (12 defensive and five offensive). They had six assists, seven turnovers and five steals.

Perry shot 44 percent from the field during the game. They had 13 rebounds (10 defensive and three offensive), six assists, six turnovers and two steals.

RV: 16-16-11-20 - 63

Perry: 20-9-8-12 - 49

Individual statistics

RV: Wahwassuck 8-1-4-5-23, Canady 4-1-2-2-13, Spoonhunter 1-2-2-2-10, Thomas 4-0-0-0-8, Klotz 3-0-1-1-7, Wamego 1-0-0-0-2. Totals 21-4-9-10-63.

Perry: Stone 5-1-2-4-15, Robb 1-4-0-0-14, Farmer 6-0-0-1-12, Williams 1-0-3-4-5, Welch 1-0-1-4-3. Totals 14-5-6-13-49.

"It was a fantastic year, and it's still settling in," Oliva said. "It was a great run. The guys really bought into the program and believed in something bigger than themselves. They didn't care who got the credit as long as the team had success. When you get athletes that do that, great things can happen. We'd liked to be playing in Hutch this week, but it is what it is."

Wildcats give Andale all it can handle

4A boys sub-state

By David Powls

The No. 15 seeded boys basketball team in the Class 4A west group of teams, Holton, gave the No. 2 seeded, Andale, team all it wanted last Wednesday night in the opening round of the sub-state competition.

The final score was 50-46 but with 2:25 left to play in the game, the visiting Wildcats trailed by just two points, 41-39, after a three-point basket by senior Trey Wright.

The game was close throughout the entire contest. Midway through the second quarter, the Wildcats led the taller Indian team 20-12.

Andale led 24-22 at halftime, and two three-point baskets by Holton junior Blake Mulroy midway through the third quarter kept the Wildcats in the game and trailing by just two points, 30-28.

With 1:33 left in the third quarter, Holton freshman Matthew Lierz made a three-point basket to put the Wildcats ahead 31-30.

From there, the lead went back and forth with Andale scoring on a layup at the end of the quarter at the buzzer to re-take a 34-33 lead.

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Jackson Heights senior Kylie Dohl, shown above at right in the No. 3 jersey, attempted to wrestle the ball away from a Valley Heights player during Saturday's Class 2A sub-state championship game at Horton. The Lady Cobras lost to the Mustangs, finishing their great season, 20-3.

Photo by Brian Sanders

Stray dogs topic at Delia meeting

By Melody Matyak
Delia City Clerk

The March 2, 2020 meeting of the Delia City Council was called to order at 7 p.m. Present were Mayor Don Trimble and council members Evelyn Shiber, Zacary McCullough, Molly Robb and John Nitsch; council member Denise Meltz was absent. Also present were City Treasurer Nikki Dohrman, City Clerk Melody Matyak, City Attorney Scott Hess, Christie Hitch with Tri-County Waste and Nathan Bergman with Bartlett and West.

Matyak read the Feb. 3 city council meeting minutes. McCullough's motion to accept the minutes with a correction was seconded by Nitsch and approved.

Dohrman went over the city bills. Robb's motion to pay the current bills was seconded by Nitsch and approved.

Joyce Abernathy addressed the council regarding dogs running loose in Delia. This is an ongoing issue. There is currently a city ordinance that all dogs must be licensed and registered with the city.

Scott Hess discussed with the council some of their options in dealing with stray

or unrestrained dogs. The council asked that a note be included with customers' water bills regarding tagging and registering dogs that are at least six months old with the city.

Christie Hitch, owner of Tri-County Waste, addressed the council on past and future rate increases. The council went into executive session with Hess for 10 minutes. Hitch said she would provide additional information for the council to review, and the issue was tabled until next month.

Bergman met with the council to discuss domestic water pipes, water flow options and doing some fact-finding. Chris Gordon provided maps and will work with Bergman. The issue was tabled until next month.

John Nitsch left the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Robb brought up having a city wide clean-up and the possibility of the city renting a large dump container. The cost would be prohibitive. Chance Stum suggested that the city let customers know that they can take most items to the Jackson County Landfill at 10778 166th Rd, Mayetta.

Also discussed was the

area around the lagoon, which Stum recently cleaned up. Someone has been illegally dumping items over the fence. McCullough said he would get "No Dumping Allowed" signs posted.

Robb brought up an issue about a piece of equipment for sale and whether the city might need it. Council members said did not feel they could use the equipment, and no motion was made.

Stum asked the council if the city would buy two loads of rock for the alley behind his house. He will haul and put the rock down if the city will pay for the rock. McCullough's motion to pay for the rock was seconded by Robb and approved.

The council discussed pot holes in the city, especially those near the Catholic church. Stum will work on them.

Shiber mentioned an issue with her water meter and the sidewalk. Stum and Trimble will work on fixing the issues.

Robb's motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. was seconded by Shiber and approved. The next regular city council meeting will be held at 7 p.m. April 6. The meeting is open to the public.

Looking ahead to the grazing season

By David G. Hallauer
Meadowlark Extension
District Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

According to KSU Range Scientist Dr. Keith Harmon, the old "take half and leave half" rule of grazing management "is probably the most common and most important rule of thumb for rangeland managers to follow." What does it really mean, though?

Years of grazing studies have shown that animal performance and vegetative production are both at near optimal levels when grazing removes approximately 50 percent of the growing season's top growth.

This is also the level of removal that can be sustained over long periods of time without causing detrimental animal or forage production issues. At this level, the animal is using 25 percent, with the other 25 percent disappearing as a consequence of trampling, weathering, etc.

What about the other 50 per-

cent? That's the half that helps the stand remain sustainable. The remaining leaves are used for photosynthesis, resulting in new leaf material, increased root growth, and storage of carbohydrates for the dormant season so grasses kicked off the next growing season. Leave less than 50 percent, and you may well sacrifice the ability of the plant to fully "recover" as needed for long term sustainability of the stand.

Don't think you can make the enterprise cash flow without making money? Research also shows that overgrazed pastures tend to produce lower net returns than pastures that are stocked at a moderate rate using the take half and leave half concept. It might seem like you are gaining some value from increased stocking rates on the front end, but the result is often a reduction in quality and quantity over time that isn't sustainable.

We're not to turn out yet. Now is a great time to take one last look at stocking rates and even "emergency" grazing management plans so adjustments can be made that results in long term forage stand health as opposed short term.

Leaching Houseplants

Have you ever thought about

the water your houseplants are growing in? It might not be as great for them as you think.

Consider this: we like houseplants to grow well so we add fertilizer. Fertilizers are salts that build up in soil over time. That build-up can harm plant roots, leading to scorched leaves and unhealthy plants.

It tends to be worst in houseplants because they are grown in containers without that prevent roots from exploring additional soil area while holding fertilizers in that same limited area. Add in slower growth as a result of low light conditions in winter, and you can see real problems.

The solution to excessive houseplant salts is leaching. Leaching is the process of adding enough water to wash out excess salts. Simply take plants outside or put them in a bathtub or sink and then (slowly - so you don't overflow the rim of the pot) add the amount of water that would equal twice the volume of the pot. This will help push salts through the soil medium.

If salt has formed a crust on the soil surface soil, remove it. Just don't take more than one-quarter of an inch of the underlying media. It might be a good time to consider repotting as well.

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Immanuel Lutheran Church

By Esther L. Ideker

The second midweek Lenten service was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4. A fellowship supper was served at 6 p.m. by Stacy Amon.

The Service of Light opened with the Versicles, Phos Hilaron, Thanksgiving for Light and Psalmody. Psalm 6 was read responsively. The sermon hymn was "I Bind Unto Myself Today."

Continuing the theme of the Penitential Psalms, Pastor Van Velzer's sermon was based on Psalm 6. Pastor Van Velzer shared the writings of Martin Luther throughout the sermon.

One of the things that makes Luther's theology unique is the way the he refuses to compromise the sovereignty of God - particularly in the face of trials and afflictions. Luther's "theology of the cross" - God works through suffering and pain to bring us to faith and trust in Him. No one is able to understand the way of God by contemplative thought or academic study.

Just as God did His greatest work through the suffering and even death of His Son, so He brings all under the cross that He may bring us to Christ and the life He gives us. It is in the actual experience of suffering and dying that God works to bring us to faith in Christ.

Luther writes, "This is by far the noblest thought which the saints have in their crosses and by which they are also sustained. The saints retain a good will toward God in their suffering and distress."

The psalmist has learned that we cannot obtain God's grace and mercy by doing what is in us - but only by accepting what is done to us, even by God Himself. Only when we are completely humbled and brought to nothing by God's alien work do we see how completely turned in on ourselves and confident in ourselves we really are. Only as we are stripped of all hope in ourselves will we turn to Christ as our only hope.

In the Lenten prayer, pardon was asked for all our sins and unrighteousness, and to enliven our hearts by the Holy Spirit; we pray that God

brings His scattered sheep to the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd; for all in authority that they may serve God in all holiness and righteousness; for those suffering damage in the Nashville tornado and the coronavirus situation; and for all who are in any trouble or sorrow.

The congregation joined in The Lord's Prayer. Following the collect for peace, the Benedicamus and the benediction, the service closed.

The second Sunday in Lent worship service on March 8 opened with the first two verses of "O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days." Psalm 121 was spoken responsively.

Elder Rich Heitzman read the Old Testament lesson from Genesis 12:1-9 and the Epistle lesson from Romans 4:1-8, 13-17. Pastor Michael Van Velzer read the holy gospel for the day from John 3:1-17. The sermon hymn was the third verse of the opening hymn.

The setting for Pastor Van Velzer's sermon from the gospel reading is the Passover Feast in Jerusalem. One of the many who saw the signs that He was doing was a man named Nicodemus. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with Him."

We wonder, what was Nicodemus' interest in Jesus? What did he want to learn and why? The fact that he came to Jesus by night probably means that he didn't want anyone else to see him associating with Him.

John gives us a bit of background on Nicodemus - He was a Pharisee - a keeper of the law. The Pharisees tried to live according to the law as interpreted by the scribes in all its meticulous detail. Nicodemus is hoping that Jesus will either confirm or deny that He is a prophet.

Jesus tells him that he can neither see nor enter the Kingdom of God unless He is born again by water and the Spirit. Jesus explains that the rebirth that is He is talking about is not physical but spiritual. Jesus is talking about a kingdom that comes down from above. There is one more time that

we hear Nicodemus' name used when he and Joseph of Arimathea get permission from Pilate to take Jesus' body off the cross and bury it. As all of Jesus' disciples go into hiding for fear of the ruling council, Nicodemus, a member of the ruling council, comes out of hiding and publicly makes a bold confession that this Jesus is indeed the King.

Even before the miracle of Easter, what is clear is that Nicodemus has been born again. His eyes were opened and he saw the Kingdom of God and entered into it. The congregation professed The Apostles' Creed.

In the prayers of the church, petitions were for equipping us with the Spirit that we may be bold in witness and faithful in mission; blessings were asked upon all pastors for the proclamation and service; bless those who teach and those who learn; help preserve our liberty and to use its gift wisely in the pursuit of justice and welfare of all people; sustain all who are ill and comfort them; and confirm in us faith that we may have confidence in God's grace and trust Him to provide all things needed for body and life and for everlasting life.

The congregation joined in The Lord's Prayer. Following the offering, the offertory and benediction, the service closed with the fourth verse of the opening hymn.

Serving Sunday were Rich Heitzman, elder; Joyce Peterson, organist; and Teri Manuel and Samantha Mellies, altar committee.

The third mid-week Lenten service will be held at 7 p.m. on March 11 with a fellowship supper hosted by Gary and Marilyn Watkins at 6 p.m.

Immanuel Ladies will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, March 13, at the church. Lavon Keehn will lead the Bible study from the Lutheran Women's Quarterly and share a festival of the church year. The mission project is malaria nets for Lutheran World Relief.

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Travis and Kelsee Mumma are now residing at the funeral home in Valley Falls. Travis is training with our staff in Holton while finishing his schooling to become a Funeral Director/Embalmer. The Mercer family has been diligent in finding the right fit to replace Jim and Carol Braum in their retirement, and we feel that we have found this with Travis and Kelsee.



Freda Smith continues to assist at the funeral home. She is available in the office most Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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