



The Wakefield Times

Lighting the way



Issue No. 3 An online publication by The Clay Center and Clay County Dispatch serving Wakefield, Kansas Friday, August 14, 2026



Former Wakefield Police Chief resigns from CCPD after on duty under the influence

The Dispatch received a tip from an inside source that CCPD officer Michael "Shon" Holte is no longer employed by CCPD after being under the influence of alcohol while on duty.

According to our information, two CCSO deputies, Mark Wirben and Cody Barber smelled alcohol on Holte as he showed up late. Sheriff Alan Benninga confirmed "that one of my deputies detected the odor of an alcoholic beverage on Mr. Holte's breath while at the Law Enforcement Center. Chief (Bill) Robinson was notified of the situation." Robinson then conducted a non-standard preliminary breath test.

Holte has not yet been charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, even though he obviously drove his patrol car to the law enforcement center, and there's video of him driving his patrol car as he enters the law enforcement center parking lot, according to our source.

The law enforcement center and Robinson confirmed that Holte has not been charged. Benninga stated that Holte had not been charged because "the proof of burden for DUI had not been met." It is also a misdemeanor for anyone to be in possession of a firearm while under the influence.

Robinson did not determine whether he was

over the legal limit because he did not use the state-required preliminary breath test at the LEC for DUI, according to our source. Rather, he used one officers use in the field that would show the presence of alcohol but does not record that he was over the limit.

Holte was previously chief of police for the City of Wakefield. According to Mayor Leza Chriss-overgis, his employment ended on May 20, 2025. He was employed there for almost three years, beginning work as chief of police in August of 2022.

"There are a number of reasons his employment with us ended," Chrissovergis said. "He is not eligible for rehire."

Holte served as an officer for the Washburn University Police from 2020 to 2022, was employed by the Prairie Band Potawatomie Police Department for seven years and was a deputy and canine handler for the Jackson County, Kan., Sheriff's office from 2011 to 2013. He received certification as a law enforcement officer from the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center in 2001.

Robinson said Holte resigned from the department following the incident.

The Dispatch has notified the KBI of the situation.



Michael "Shon" Holte (Photo from 2022)

Wakefield City Council agrees to buy police vest

Despite not getting a grant that would have covered the cost, the Wakefield City Council decided to purchase a police vest for its police department at last week's council meeting.

The council agreed to spend up to \$1,350 on the gear. They had before them a quote of \$1,340.88 from Godfrey's of Junction City, but were waiting on another company that had not yet entered a quote. The council authorized staff to go with the quote if it came back lower.

Mayor Leza Chrissovergis said the council should buy the vest to make sure their law enforcement officer has the protection they need to do the job.

In other matters:

- The council amended an agreement with the Kansas Water Office so payments would be distributed monthly rather than quarterly.

- The council approved a sewer lining project in the amount of \$56,900.

- The council approved a service

contract with OTC, with the first semi-annual payment of \$1,550. The annual fee is twice that, but the council anticipates amending the agreement after new parts to a pump station come in.

- The council authorized cereal malt beverage licences for the WHS trap shoot team during their upcoming fish fry and for the Wakefield Birthday Bash. The council also agreed to donate \$250 to the trap team and to split the cost of spraying with the Birthday Bash Committee, which they have done in the past.

- The council approved the standard traffic ordinance and the uniform public offense code. They also agreed 3-1 to add a stop sign at Third and Birch for east bound traffic and to discuss other locations for stop signs at their next workshop.

- At the end of the meeting the council interviewed Raquel Cinco for the vacant seat on the council, agreed to appoint her to fill the position and swore her in before adjourning the meeting



Wakefield City Clerk Julie Murphy (left) swears in Raquel Cinco as a new member of the Wakefield City Council representing the fourth district at the council's last meeting on Aug. 3. (Ryan D. Wilson/Wakefield Times)

Contact us at (785) 632-2127 • 950 Court St., Clay Center, KS 67432

News: newseditordispatch@gmail.com • Advertising: dispatchadrep@gmail.com • Circulation: dispatchcirculation@gmail.com

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

ICYMI

• Are you confused about what Yondr pouches are and how they will be purchased and used in USD 379 schools? A video posted on Wakefield School's Facebook page will help answer your questions! Still have questions? Email mattweller@usd379.org.

• A reminder that free sports physicals for all high school and junior high students and school entry physicals for kindergarten and pre-school are available at Clay Center Family Physicians until Sept. 30. Call (785) 632-2181.

• The Wakefield Public Library has a Toniebox system now for children to check out. This is a screen-free audio player that can be borrowed for one week. Patron must be in good standing to borrow and a Liability Waiver Form must be on file to check out. We allow up to three Tonies for check out. Come to the library to get your name on the list.

• The WFW Post No. 7774 will hold a dedication of the Kansas POW/MIA Bridge at 11:45 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, following the Birthday Bash Parade. Any riders wanting to ride in parade, display your POW/MIA or USA flags come join parade on your way to dedication ceremony.

Lighting the way

The Wakefield Times

Meet our staff:

Ryan D. Wilson.....Publisher
dispatch.union.publisher@gmail.com
Lydia Kautz.....Associate Editor
dailyunion.editor@gmail.com
Rusty Connally.....ad rep.
 and circulation manager.
jcadrep@gmail.com
junioncirculation@gmail.com
Trich York.....Ad/business director
dispatchadrep@gmail.com
Kay Johnson.....Social Editor
junionssocial@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook as
 "The Wakefield Times"

Around Town

► Back-to-school events start with "A Back-To-School Bash" at Wakefield School on Friday, Aug 14, from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Students are invited to meet their teachers and the new principal, set up their lockers, explore their classrooms and receive their class schedules. Parents and guardians are also invited to meet staff and sign up for exciting opportunities with the Wakefield PTO, Booster Club and PRIDE of Wakefield.

Bounce houses, ice cream, goodie bags, yard games and karaoke are also part of the event.

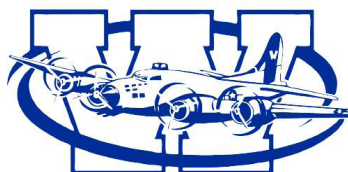
► The Wakefield Booster Club is offering a 25% discount on Wakefield School gear and accessories. See their Facebook page for more information.

► Culpepper & Merriweather Circus will come to Wakefield on Wednesday, Sept. 9 at Clay County Park with show times at 5 and 7:30 p.m. Pre-sale tickets are available now at the city building, the bank and the library for \$14 for adults, \$8 for children ages 2-12 and seniors 65 and older.

► The Wakefield Stage Committee has received nearly \$20,000 in donations! Help them reach their goal of \$150,000 to put a permanent stage in the city park for many more community events to come. They are hopeful to reach enough money to put in a FEMA approved storm shelter for Clay County Park, that provides additional stage equipment storage at the back of the stage. To donate, mail a check to "Wakefield Stage Project" c/o Farmers & Merchants State Bank, 711 Elm St., PO Box 26, Wakefield, KS, 67487

Museum Notes

► The Wakefield Museum has announced that funds raised from Gather for Good campaign will be used to replace old wooden ramp St. John & George Episcopal Church with a concrete ramp. A deteriorating cellar door will be replaced by a metal door, and the trees and bushes will be trimmed. The church has been reserved for a service and a wedding this fall. Work should be completed in time for those events. Please see recent posts on the Wakefield Kansas Alumni page for information about this historical church. The Gather for Good event is Sept. 17.



BOMBERS CALENDAR

MONDAY, AUGUST 17

First day of fall sport practices

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18

First day of school

NOON — Early dismissal

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

6 p.m. — WHS Volleyball at Tescott

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

4:30 p.m. — WJHS Volleyball at Goessel

6 p.m. — WJHS Football at Goessel

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

7 p.m. — WHS Football at Herington

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Labor Day, No School

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

4:30 p.m. — WJHS Volleyball at Solomon

6 p.m. — WHS Volleyball at Rural Vista

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

4:30 p.m. — WJHS Volleyball vs. Peabody (H)

6 p.m. — WJHS Football vs Peabody (H)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

7 p.m. — WHS Football at Burlingame

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

8 a.m. — WHS Volleyball at Solomon

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

4 p.m. — WJHS Volleyball at Centre

6 p.m. — USD 379 school board, Stuart Administrative Center

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

6 p.m. — WHS Volleyball vs. Goessel/Peabody (H)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

4:30 p.m. — WJHS Volleyball at Santa Galva

6 p.m. — WJHS Football at Santa Galva

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

7 p.m. — WHS Football at vs. Solomon (H)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

6 p.m. — WHS Volleyball at Elyria Christian



► Signup for the Birthday Bash 10K or 1-mile Fun Run through a link on the Birthday Bash Facebook Page. Half of all proceeds will go to benefit Wakefield School.

► Registrations for the Birthday Bash Car Show will take place 9 a.m. to noon on Aug. 28 at the City Park, with awards to follow at 2:30 p.m. For more information, contact Chris Visser at (785) 461-4554. If you'd like your vehicle to be in the parade, contact Betsy at ablbeau3@gmail.com.

► The Wakefield Birthday Bash is currently looking for vendors and parade entries for it 157th annual Birthday Bash set for Aug. 28 to Aug. 29. You can sign up through links on the event's Facebook Page.

► A kiddie tractor pedal pull will be held during the Wakefield Birthday Bash on Aug. 29 at 6:30 p.m.

► The Wakefield Birthday Bash committee has announced the following will be performing as music for this year's bash:

- Lip sync contest, 6:30 p.m., Aug. 28
- Fort Riley First Infantry Division Band, 11 a.m. Aug. 29
- Randy Baldwin Band, 12:30-2:30 p.m. Aug. 29 on the main stage
- The Soul Preachers 3-5 p.m., Aug. 29, on the main stage
- Paul Sierra Ban, 6-8 p.m. Aug. 29, on the main stage
- 'Under cover' 9 p.m. to midnight, Aug. 29 on the old basketball court at center field

Sign up for The Wakefield Times

Free e-mail subscription at
union-dispatch.com/shop/oils/products/the-wakefield-ks-times or go on Facebook.

Republicans' pick for governor improve chances we'll elect a Democrat

By Ryan D. Wilson
Union Publisher

Leave it to Kansas Republicans to pick the biggest loser they could find as their candidate for governor.

And I don't say he's a loser because of who endorsed him — even though an endorsement by Donald doesn't exactly inspire confidence. That endorsement may have gotten him through the primary, but in the general election, it's a liability. With Trump's approval rating at an all time low — as low as Nixon's approval rating was right before he resigned — that endorsement may be the reason many would have voted for him might now choose to vote against him.

The reason I think Masterson is such a loser is because despite two decades in the Kansas Legislature and rising to the president of the Kansas Senate, he has accomplished nothing.

I don't blame Republicans for falling for this flim-flam man. He puts on a good show, after all, and his lies are pretty convincing.

He claims to be such a good businessman, but filed for bankruptcy in 2011 after his construction business went under. That alone should have been the end of his political career as he entered the state Legislature in 2005, but somehow it wasn't. Instead he keeps getting elected, and in 2021 be-

comes Senate president, a position he has held in every legislative session since.

As Senate President, he claimed to "championed a \$2 billion tax cut for Kansas families," until you look closer and realize those cuts were accomplished by making the state's income more like a flat tax with only two tax brackets instead of three (or five, before Gov. Brownback's disastrous experiment, which he also supported).

Let's not forget this is the same guy who's collecting a \$217,350 annual salary from Wichita State. We have to pay higher taxes, but he gets a big paycheck for doing nothing.

Ty has also claimed to "have been at the forefront of the fight against the woke agenda, by banning DEI in our higher education system, men from competing in women's sports, and transgender surgeries for minors." Ok he's got us there — chasing these bogeymen instead of actually doing something is the Republican Party's favorite ploy.

But ask why he hasn't accomplished property tax relief, and he'll shift the blame to the current Democrat governor. Really? With a Republican supermajority behind him in both the Kansas House and the Kansas Senate — which could have overridden anything Gov. Kelly vetoed — he and the Legislature still weren't able to give us even a little bit of property tax relief? Republicans in the Legislature were chomping at the bit in the last

session to do that.

The cherry on top, is what his running mate Jeff Klemp claimed to be Masterson's biggest accomplishment when he visited Clay Center a month ago — putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot that would have changed how justices and judges are selected, which Kansas voters rejected almost 2 to 1.

I can't think of a better metaphor than that for what Masterson would be like as governor. We'd get a bunch of empty promises and a whole lot of nothing.

But where Republicans picked a guy because their idol told them he's their man, Democrats picked someone who wasn't part of the establishment, who wasn't expected to win. They overwhelmingly backed Cindy Holscher over the more moderate candidate, Ethan Corson, because Holscher was quick to take popular stances on the issues. That included legalizing recreational marijuana, calling for a pause on data centers and real tax relief by unraveling former Gov. Brownback's bad tax policies, which shifted the tax burden from the wealthy to working Kansans.

These are ideas we all can get behind, not just Democrats. So to my Republican neighbors, thank you for voting for Masterson in the Primary. That pick will almost certainly guarantee the next governor of Kansas will be another Democrat.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Federal employees need to learn to live within their means too

EDITOR:

While I was listening to the national news a ways back, they had a story on about how federal employees were not getting paid because of a partial shut down of the federal government by the Congress of the United States. That is a news story about the Federal Congress not passing parts of the federal budget. The story was about how a man was having such a hard time feeding his family because he was not getting paid. This brought to my mind the fact that government jobs, especially federal government jobs, are well paid jobs and if one lives within their means they have no problems with the paying of their bills because it is steady work and a steady stream of income. At least that is what I found over the 41+ years that I drew a paycheck from the Federal Government, first as a soldier and then as a postal employee.

Then it came to me that when a person goes to work for the federal government that person can expect that from time to time there will be a little waiting for paychecks in times of budget planning by the federal government. I found that to be true very early on in my years in the United States Army when MPC (military payment script) never got to the finance center serving my unit overseas in time to pay us soldiers on payday. Because of

this we all had to wait a few days to get our pay. Because of that I was always careful to not overspend and I kept a little money just in case it ever happened again and it did two or three more times.

I also have always paid attention to see if during the times that there is a government shut down if any United States government employees actually lose their money or just have the payday postponed for a period of time. It turns out that in each case that there has been a government (partial) shut down most of the employees affected just end up being paid late, sometimes a few weeks late. They just have unscheduled paid vacations during the shut down and they get paid for their unscheduled vacation at the end of the unscheduled vacation.

I cannot say much about this as I am a longtime federal employee. And the only times I had to wait to be paid were those few times as a Specialist Fourth Class (SP4) while in the United States Army overseas.

But this does not mean that you can just spend money on just everything you want at any time. But it does mean that budgeting is much easier if you live within your means and set a little aside each payday for incidental expenses, such as getting paid late. I found out that by doing this I would have much less drama if payday came a week or longer late.

Gerald L. Gerloff, Junction City

Don't shoot the messenger

To the Editor,

As property owners across Clay County receive their valuation notices each year, many ask the same question: Why are my property taxes increasing? Unfortunately, much of the public discussion has blurred the line between property valuations and the decisions that actually determine our tax bills.

Many people believe the county appraiser sets property taxes. That is simply not true. Under Kansas law, the County Appraiser's responsibility is to determine the fair market value of property based on market sales. The office follows state guidelines and does not create tax policy, set tax rates, or decide how much revenue local governments collect.

Property values have risen because homes have been selling for higher prices due to limited inventory, increased demand, inflation, and rising construction costs. Kansas law requires county appraisers to recognize those market conditions.

However, property values

are only one part of the equation. The other is the mill levy, which is set by elected officials. The City of Clay Center is currently proposing a 5-mill increase. If approved, that decision will further increase property taxes.

According to a report published by the *Clay Center Dispatch*, Mayor Jimmy Thatcher stated that the county appraiser was responsible for the increase in taxes. That leaves out an important fact: while the Appraiser determines market value as required by law, elected officials determine how much tax is collected by setting budgets and mill levies.

Taxpayers deserve honest and complete information, not partial explanations. The county appraiser and local governing bodies have separate legal responsibilities, and both should be clearly explained so citizens can make informed decisions and hold the appropriate officials accountable.

Alex Murchison
Clay Center, Kan.

K-State experiment farm field day set for Aug. 18

K-State Research & Extension will be hosting the North Central Kansas Experiment Farm Fall Field Day on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 5:30 p.m. at the experiment fields 3 miles east of Courtland or 2.5 miles west of Scandia on US-36. Come and see all the agricultural research being conducted here in the north-central Kansas area.

Topics of discussion will include:

- Nitrogen Fertilizer Options to Improve Nitrogen Use Efficiency in Corn & Sorghum
- AMS Rates and AMS Alternatives for Glufosinate Applications
- Learning the Best Management Practices in Irrigated Soybeans

Presenters will include Dr. Dorivar Ruiz Diaz, Extension Soil Fertility Specialist; Dr. Sarah Ganske, Extension Weed Management Specialist; and K-State Agronomy Graduate Student Katie Janzen.

No registration is required, and supper will be provided. For more information, contact Luke Byers, River Valley Extension District agriculture and natural resources program manager, at (717) 491-5259 or by email at lsbyers@ksu.edu.

Canning class planned Sept. 11 in Belleville

Whether you are an experienced pro or have never canned anything before, please consider joining us for a water bath canning class on Friday, Sept. 11 in Belleville.

The class will discuss current best practices and where to find tested, safe canning recipes. It will then jump into the hands-on portion of the class. The class will can three items: a fruit jam, a salsa, and a pickled veggie.

This class will take place at the United Methodist Church at 2013 M St., Belleville, and will run 9 a.m. to noon. The participant fee for this class is \$10, that can be paid by check or exact cash on the day of.

Space is limited, participants are asked to register in advance with the Concordia Extension Office at (785) 243-8185 or the Belleville Extension Office at (785) 527-5084.

Questions can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, nutrition, food safety and health agent, at (785) 243-8185 or kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu

CLAY COUNTY COMMISSION

Commission opens bridge bids, reviews paving, parking lot, chip-sealing projects

On July 27, Clay County Commissioners opened bids on the Broughton Bridge project and reviewed Kiowa Road, chip sealing and the Fairground parking lot projects.

Brady Hedstrom, and Kyler Starbuck, BG Consultants; Duane Jackson, Ebert Construction; and Interim Highway Administrator Jeff Germann attended the bid opening for the Broughton Bridge replacement. Hedstrom provided commissioners with the engineer's opinion of probable construction cost in the amount of \$1,282,456.

After reviewing a \$1,003,338.69 bid by Ebert Construction Co. Inc., \$1,372,955.94 by Reece Construction Co. Inc. and \$1,191,498.70 by L & M Contractor, Inc., commissioners asked Hedstrom review the bids make a recommendation next week.

Hedstrom also discussed the Wietham project, the paving of Kiowa Road, with commissioners and Bob Wietham. Hedstrom presented commissioners with a proposal from Terracon for geotechnical engineering services on proposed road improvements in the amount of \$9,500, which commissioners agreed to sign and to pay for it out of the Economic Development Fund.

Terracon will perform four borings that will be 5 feet deep for laboratory testing to find out what kind of soil is in these locations. From there they will decide what road materials will work best to build the road base and will determine how much asphalt will need to be laid.

The Highway Department received a letter from Schilling Construction Co. on the expressed concerns with the surface on the asphalt work that was done in 2025. Schilling was out to look at the roads and determined that there is apparently some degradation caused by foreign material (mud) in one of the aggregates. When the mud breaks down, it leaves a small hole in the surface. Shilling will be happy to patch the areas that are in question.

The Highway Department has approximately 1.75 miles of chip sealing left to do for the 2026 year on Valleyview Road south of Wakefield. It will depend on the weather as to when they will finish the project.

Also according to the unofficial minutes of July 27 Clay County Commission meeting taken by County Clerk Kayla Wang:

– Commissioners David Thurlow, Eric Carlson and Jerry Mayo were

present at a regular meeting beginning at 8 a.m. The minutes were approved as printed.

– Commissioners agreed to donate \$700 out of the Alcohol Fund to the Wakefield Birthday Bash.

– Commissioners agreed to place a stop sign on 19th Road on the east side of Old Flat Mile for westbound traffic. A resolution will be drafted for this placement of the sign.

– Interim Highway Administrator Jeff Germann reported that he has been searching for a used excavator and has found a couple of used ones that have low hours and are the size that they need but he has additional questions to ask about each of them. Germann also reported that they will need to extend the rock road on Redwood Road, taking it from dirt to rock north of Broughton Road. He said they currently have two dump trucks in the shop to be worked on and received permission for an employee to use one hour of vacation before his one-year anniversary.

– Commissioners went into executive session under the non-elected personnel exemption for 15 minutes beginning at 9:05 a.m. with Germann, office manager Melissa Goff and the county clerk to discuss job duties. Regular session reconvened at 9:20 a.m. with no action taken.

– EMS Director Alec Trembath reported in the week prior the department worked 32 emergency runs, bring the total for 2026 to 597. The Clay County Fair went really well with only one documented run related to the heat. Last week they held the AED training in Green and had 10 individuals attend. Morganville AED training will be on Wednesday of this week. Trembath stated that he is researching some different training materials for the department to use at the station. The current material has been used for several years and it needs to be updated.

– Escaped Tax 2025 Add. 42 and 43 in the amount of \$278.14 were reviewed and approved.

– Emergency Manager Jim Bogart reported that he had met with Sheriff Benninga to look at the enclosed trailers for the housing of the side-by-side that was recently purchased by the Sheriff's Department. Bogart stated that he would allow Sheriff Benninga to use one of the smaller trailers and he would keep the blue trailer to be used by the Emergency Management. The Community Flood Plain was held July 28 and

AED training was held at the Morganville Community Building on July 29.

– County Health Director Dana Rickley reported that she attended the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) Conference last week. They explained different concerns and procedures for the mixing of drugs and several new drugs that we need to be aware of. Rickley stated that her quarterly reports are coming due and she will be presenting them to the Advisory Board. For the month of October there will be no labs drawn for they will be short staffed and unable to provide the service for this month. Rickley also stated that they have received two applications for the vacant nurse position and will hold one interview this week.

– Sheriff Alan Benninga reported that a deputy vehicle has been taken to Glavan Ford for repairs. The installation of the new shower pans project has been delayed.

– Clay Center Street Superintendent Ken Shivers and Councilman Daton Hess discussed with commissioners the placement of a stop sign at Old Flat Mile and 19th Road to stop traffic going south and would need to turn at the dead end. Shivers stated that the traffic needs to be slowed down in this area with the new building's activities. They also asked about moving the current speed limit sign. Commissioners stated that they would give the city permission to move the sign to where they would like it to be placed.

– Commissioners approved the placement of a stop sign at 19th and Old Flat Mile Road for southbound traffic coming off of Old Flat Mile before turning at the end of the road.

– County Appraiser Danny Mesalles reported the Appraiser's Office is continuing to do the maintenance work on parcels in the northern parts of the county and Clay Center.

– Commissioners agreed to hire Brady Hedstrom with BG Consultants to assist with the grant application on the Wietham project.

– Commissioners adjourned at 11:45 a.m. and reconvened at 1 p.m. to open bids.

– Commissioners received two bids for the trimming of trees and the removal of a dead one on the Courthouse Square and approved the low bid of \$3,200 by B & B Tree Service

– Commissioners adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Clay County enters into agreement with Clifton to provide EMS service

Last week, Clay County Commissioners heard that Clay County has been busy and approved a few things for the department, including a new agreement between Clay County and Clifton EMS services.

EMS Director Alec Trembath informed Commissioners of AED training that took place in Morganville with 10 people in attendance, both kids and adults. There is an app associated with the AED's called Pulse Point that is for any registered AED letting people know locations in the area where a unit is available. Most communities after it's registered are protected by limited liability and good Samaritan act. Bailey Cameron, EMT, is the county's AED coordinator. Trembath updated Commissioners on current run numbers and deposits for the department.

Trembath said they are currently looking into updating the department's virtual training. The department is currently doing trial runs for two different programs. The Prodigy program, which costs \$70 per person and roughly \$1,890 per year, and \$6 more person than the current system, can be used to create your own training which the department could use for basic orientation, create live classes and better incorporate quarterly meetings as well as upload their own protocols. The program Foam Frat option, which cost \$119 per person and \$3,000 per year has a lot of the same material but more advanced information. It is visually appealing, resembling Netflix.

Trembath presented a contractual agreement between the City of Clifton/Clifton City Ambulance and Clay County EMS. The contract went in detail about lease of equipment and building, staff, community response teams and insurance of Ambulances. The trained driver's position is an 8-hour class which will cover ambulance operations and basic BLS training without CDL requirement. After reviewing the contract commissioners agreed to accept the contractual agreement between the City of Clifton and Clay County EMS. Lastly Trembath reported a makeup class for renewing CPR certifications was to take place later today.

Also according to the unofficial minutes of the Aug. 3 Clay County Commission meeting taken by Deputy County Clerk Sierra Urban:

– Commissioners David Thurlow, Eric Carlson and Jerry Mayo were present at a regular meeting beginning at 8 a.m. The minutes were approved as printed. Payroll in the amount of \$142,818.80 was reviewed and approved. Account Payables in the amount of \$749,416.33 were reviewed and approved. Jury pay in the amount of \$664.60 was reviewed and approved.

– Commissioners reviewed a bid from Ebert Construction Co. for the Broughton Bridge Replacement and agreed to accepted. A notice of award letter accepting the bid and contract price was signed by Commissioners. A couple of bills were reviewed and signed.

– Commissioners reviewed and passed Resolution 2026-9 for a traffic control sign to be located on 19th Road immediately East of Old Flat Mile for the traffic coming from the east and is westbound. and Resolution 2026-10 for a traffic control sign to be placed at the location on Old Flat Mile immediately north of the intersection with 19th Road, for the traffic that is south bound

before turning at the end of the road.

– Hospital CEO Austin Gillard provided an update and reported that the two new general surgeons had started and are both DaVinci trained. Dr. Paul is transitioning into retirement. Gillard reported that next Monday will be a very busy day. Dr. Walters starts as well as Dr. Hein who is an emergency medicine physician. Sen. Marshall visited on Aug. 10 as well and the hospital was visited by Sen. Moran. Gillard updated commissioners on the status of the grant for the DaVinci robot. Hopefully it will be approved soon so they can proceed with purchasing the equipment. When purchased the hospital will have an interactive demo and presentation with the robot in September. Commissioner Thurlow asked Gillard about the mental health portion of the hospital. Gillard said that it is steady, and a TMS unit will be implemented in a few months. Commissioners asked if the parking lot had been completed and Gillard responded with no, they are still working with KDOT to ensure everything is where it needs to be.

– Interim Highway Administrator Jeff Germann presented a letter from a concerned taxpayer regarding rock ends road signs. Commissioners asked for gravel ends signs to be placed at the west end of 20th Road. Commissioner Carlson addressed a road with high wind rows around Indian and Sixth roads to be looked at. Germann reported that all driveway entrances in Wakefield up to Broughton have been fixed. The wiring for the garage doors is complete, bad spots south of Morganville were fixed, and signs for the housing development were placed for the EMS routes. Germann gave a quote for road spray. A total of 9,500 ft of spray is estimated at a 20-foot wide spray is 10,500 gal. of product \$1.37 per gallon and \$1.52 a ft. with an estimated total cost of \$14,500. Germann stated that this would work for 19th and Kiowa roads, however it wouldn't be enough for Limestone Road. Options on how to spray and mix the chemicals were discussed. Commissioners asked that Germann finish up chip sealing first before deciding.

– Germann gave a brief overview of why Jimmie Nichols joined him for the meeting. Both had different views on a piece of equipment and its overall road worthy status. Late Friday they both came to a consensus that it was best to go ahead and fix a truck that has an ABS light. Nichols asked commissioners how he should proceed in situations like this. He doesn't feel like sending out a truck that has ABS lights is safe but in the past department heads have just said put the truck together and run it. To avoid communication errors and to avoid receiving disciplinary action on his part, Nichols asked commissioners who is responsible and how to proceed in situations in the future. After much discussion, Commissioners instructed Nichols to inform Germann whether equipment is road-worthy or not. Then Germann could make the decision to proceed with repairs or to bring it to commissioners. Nichols was instructed to note everything in his repair documentation.

– Emergency Manager Jim Bogart presented commissioners with a bid from TBS for programming of the 800mhz radios. The bid averages about \$50.00 per radio totaling \$2,550.00 for all 800mhz radios. Bogart will be in Lincoln County for a North Central Meeting and presented an

event approval for attendance at the KEMA meeting for four days. Commissioners approved Bogart to attend the KEMA meeting. Bogart reported the bus exercise meeting with the school went and another event will be held Aug. 13.

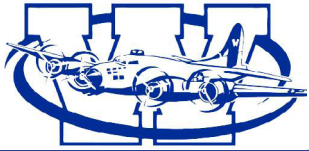
– County Treasurer Christine Swaim gave an update and presented bids for new computers in her office. She said that not all the computers would need to be touch screen and that her office may end up doing both touch screen and no touch screen options as well. She asked to purchase the laptops by splitting the bill between the tech fund, motor vehicle and general equipment reserve in thirds. After reviewing multiple options Commissioners agreed to allow up to \$9,225 for five laptops and docks from Central Office and Supply to be split between the three funds equally. Swaim then presented commissioners with a summary of interest income earned report year to date. A tax sale update was given and as of Aug. 3 five properties remain. The auction date is to be sometime in October.

– Sheriff Alan Benninga reported that there was a drain clogged in the facility, and central mechanical had a family emergency and will have to reschedule work for the new shower pans. The patrol vehicle that is out can't be assessed in the shop until Aug. 4, and another vehicle had a battery die and low voltage indicators. That vehicle was quickly repaired and is functional again. Benninga stated that he still hasn't heard anything back on bids for another vehicle. Commissioners instructed him to reach out to other companies to receive bids and report back.

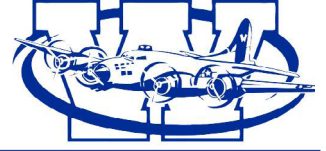
– Landfill Director Rhonda Carroll reported that everyone is doing two hours of trash pick up in the early morning hours of the day before it gets warm. She is having two trucks haul dirt and phase zero is to be mowed this week. The department has used the rake to pick up trash and the rest they are hoping to get with the crawler. She stated that tracks need replaced on the skid steer and Bruna Implement estimated \$4,500 but didn't have a physical quote yet. Commissioners instructed Carroll to look at the two cement inspection holes both look damaged, particularly the one to the south looks like it has been knocked over.

– Jimmie Nichols, mechanic foreman, and Janice Nichols, spouse, discussed DOT safety regulations and standards for the county. Nichols started his discussion by presenting photos of a cage that is still not removed and dangerous. The item needs to be cut up and removed. Photos of jack stands and other safety concerns were presented. Nichols informed commissioners about crimp connectors and demonstrated how they are used in the shop and should be used in an emergency only. Predominately wires should be soldered to be done correctly and safely. Nichols continues to inform commissioners about DOT mandates for lights and weight limits on loads. The lights are just as important as the mechanics of a vehicle. It's important to not overload a truck to maintain multiple different functions of the vehicle and lights so that vehicles are road worthy. Nichols said that this line of work is an art form and the standards of work on equipment need to improve. Nichols said that he just wants to do the job right and work together, communication is important.

– Commissioners adjourned at 11:58 a.m.



BOMBER NEWS



New principal heads Wakefield School in 2026-27 school year

Welcome,

With our students beginning the 2026-2027 school year next week, they will encounter a few new faces. One of those faces will belong to our new principal, Mr. Robert Leis (pronounced "lease").

Mr. Leis was an Abilene High School graduate, but began his teaching career in Butler County in the Circle School District. He had stops in Eureka and Renwick, and then completed the "circle" by coming back to the Circle School District where he was serving as the principal of Benton Elementary School prior to coming to Wakefield. He has a wealth of experience, teaching in both special education and regular education classrooms in Pre K through 12th grades, and also serving as a building principal.

The personable new principal has received a warm reception from the students he has met, and is anxious to become a positive force in the school. We wish the best for Mr. Leis, and welcome him and his wife, Tammy, to our community.

-- Jim Leatherman, Wakefield Alumni Association



Principal Robert Leis

WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - White Rock High School
Bachelor's - MidAmerica Nazarene University and Sterling College

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

This is Tanna's 35th year in education. She has also taught at Glasco High School, Salina Central High School, Windom Elementary (near McPherson), and Sunset Elementary in Salina.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Tanna is married to Glenn and has 5 children, 14 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. They enjoy spending summers in Colorado, where they take their side-by-sides and ride trails.



TANNA MILLER
SPECIAL EDUCATION

WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - Clay Center Community High School
Bachelor's - Washburn University (earning his degree in December)

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

This will be Keegan's first teaching job. He will technically be listed as a sub for the first semester as he finishes his degree. He will also be the assistant baseball coach at CCCHS.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Keegan played baseball at Neosho County and Washburn. He is engaged to Chloe, who also attended Neosho County and Washburn and was a cheerleader. She will be student teaching under Randi Weller at Lincoln this fall. Together, they have a 1-month-old girl, Sadie. Keegan's mom, Traci, teaches FACS at CCCMS.



KEEGAN MCDONALD
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - Clay Center Community High School
Bachelor's - Fort Hays State University

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

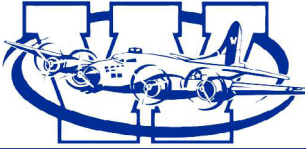
This will be Samantha's 18th year in education. She taught 1st and 2nd grade in Glasco for 5 years and has also been a substitute teacher. She is no stranger to Wakefield, as she was a teacher's aide there from 2009-12, and a long-term substitute science teacher last year.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

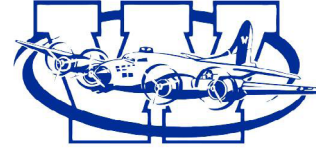
Samantha's husband, Alec, is the Clay County EMS director. They have been married for 15 years and have 3 children. Evan works at Wardcraft, Harmony will be in 8th grade at CCCMS, and Lyrik will be in 4th grade at Garfield.



SAMANTHA TREMBATH
2ND & 3RD GRADE



BOMBER NEWS



new teachers, staff!

WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - Royal Valley High School
Bachelor's - Washburn University
Master's - Baker University

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Andrew has been teaching for 10 years. He has taught at Royal Valley Middle School and Mission Valley High School. Most recently, he has taught business education at Rock Hills Schools.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Andrew is originally from Topeka. He is engaged to CeeAnn, who is an office manager at Glavan Ford.

ANDREW GOWER
AUDIO & VIDEO/TECHNOLOGY



WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - Clay Center Community High School
Bachelor's - Fort Hays State University

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Although this is Shaylee's first teaching job, she is no stranger to education or to USD 379. She was a para for 7 years at CCCMS and for 1 year at CCCHS before accepting the 4th grade position at Wakefield.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Shaylee and her husband, Wade, live in Clay Center. He is attending Fort Hays Tech to become a diesel technician. Together they have an almost 3-year-old son, Tristen, who will be attending Pre-K at Lincoln Elementary this fall. Outside of the classroom, Shaylee's favorite hobby is reading.

SHAYLEE SIMNITT
4TH GRADE



WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - Little Miami High School, Morrow, Ohio
Bachelor's - Ohio University
Master's - Kansas State University

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

This will be Becky's 4th year of teaching. She started teaching middle school science at McArthur Middle School in Lawton, OK. She has also taught 5th grade at USD 475 - Junction City.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Becky and her husband, Wyatt, live in Wakefield and just celebrated their 7-year anniversary. Wyatt served 10 years in the military and now works in the water treatment division at NBAF in Manhattan. Although they are both originally from Ohio, they loved their time in Kansas and decided to settle here.

REBECCA WOOLEVER
SCIENCE



WELCOME TO WAKEFIELD!

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

HS - Clay Center Community High School
Bachelor's - Kansas State University
Master's - Fort Hays State University

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

This is Janelle's first year as a counselor. She worked two years as the Alternative Learning Instructor at CCCHS and 14 years teaching biology at CCCHS. She has spent the past 5 years as the Asst. Dean of Student Accountability at KSU.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Janelle is married to Brian, who owns Perfection Auto Body. Her daughter, Julia, attends KSU, and her son, Jacob, is a freshman at CCCHS. Janelle also owns a portable restroom business called the Lucky Loo.

JANELLE RIEGER
K-12 COUNSELOR



CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS USD 379

School Board approves budget slightly above RNR

By Ryan D. Wilson
Publisher

While they technically approved a budget that exceeds the revenue neutral rate, the budget the USD 379 school board approved last week is only slightly more than what they budgeted for in the previous year.

Superintendent Brett Nelson reported that the good news with the budget is that the three-year enrollment average that state aid is based on continues to help the district, but as years with larger enrollments drop off, that cushion gets smaller. Between weightings and slight increase in base aid per pupil, they're receiving about the same amount of funding from the state as they did in the previous year. Based on kindergarten numbers and the number of outgoing students, they estimate losing about 11 students.

Initially, they thought it would be "a wash," but thanks to other districts also experiencing declining enrollment, they'll actually get a little more than they thought and slightly more than last year, Nelson said.

Despite a mill levy that's about 1.4 mills lower than the previous year, the 2027 budget will bring in about 1.83% more in revenue than last, largely because of a bump in property valuation, although there were other factors.

"And that's a little tricky because that removes any delinquent tax," Nelson said in reviewing the budget with the board. "So every

year we bring in delinquent tax that we didn't collect the year before."

That means the budget is only about \$40,000 above what they collected last year, Nelson said, and not about delinquent taxes that were collected in addition to what they had to budget for, also affected the RNR rate. Fortunately, more Clay County residents tend to pay taxes on time compared to the rest of the state, which is a good thing, Nelson said.

Nelson reminded the board in some instances they have to over budget to give themselves the authority to spend if they need to.

The board approved publication of the 2026-2027 budget with an estimated total mill levy of 49.625 and set hearings for both the budget and exceeding the revenue neutral rate with one of them at 6 p.m. Sept. 14 and the other slightly after.

In other board business:

– The board approved 2026-27 graduation for CCCHS on Saturday, May 15, at 9 a.m. and for Wakefield High School on Saturday, May 15, at 11 a.m.

– The board accepted a \$50 donation for CCCHS from The Citizens National Bank; \$100 donations for Lincoln Elementary from United Bank & Trust and GN Bank; \$100 donations for CCCHS from Ray's Apple Market, Bruna Implement, Phil and Jean Frigon, Mel's Pump & Plumbing, Court Street Veterinary Care, Wardcraft Homes, Clay Veterinary Clinic, NAPA Auto Parts, Republican Valley Title and Tina Stillwell; \$250 donations for

CCCHS from Court Street Veterinary Care, The Citizens National Bank, Bruna Implement, Happy Hippie and NAPA Auto Parts; \$500 donations for CCCHS from Wilder Auto Body, United Bank & Trust, Stillwell Counseling and Sink, Gordon & Associates; \$1,100 donations for CCCHS from Colton Monuments, Clay Veterinary Clinic, Avery Auto Parts and Union State Bank; and \$1,250 donations for CCCHS from Yellow Brick Realty, Clay Counts Coalition, Wardcraft Homes, State Farm, Perfection Auto Body and Glavan Ford; and a \$1,659.19 donation for CCCHS from Orange and Black Pack.

– The board hired Sherry McGuire, Kathy, Robinson and Victoria Whitaker as substitute teachers, Merlin Fowles and Bruce Laffery as substitute drivers, Genevieve Trevino, Shelby Cole, Sabrina Cloud, Deborah Swoboda, Miranda Rollins and Ryan Duey as paraprofessionals, Skylee Gordon as a custodian, Leanna Grater as a secretary at CCCMS, Renee Taggart special education teacher at Garfield School, Keegan McDonald as a PE teacher at Wakefield, Steve Squires as the alternative learning supervisor at CCCHS and Jeffrey Ochs as district maintenance.

– The board accepted resignations of Jodi McManus and Travis Zirkle as special education teachers at Garfield School, Lyndsay Stevenson, Katherine Carrier, Erin Parker as paraprofessionals, Kate Henry and Jace Ricketts as substitute teacher and Trynity McCoy as a bus driver.

CLAY COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

CCMC names Hein as ER medical director

Clay County Medical Center (CCMC) has announced that David Hein, MD, has accepted the role of Medical Director of the Emergency Department, bringing additional leadership and clinical expertise to the hospital's emergency medicine program.

Dr. Hein is an emergency medicine physician affiliated with Salina Regional Health Center and is board-certified in emergency medicine. A graduate of the University of Kansas School of Medicine, he completed his emergency medicine residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center and has been caring for patients across north-central Kansas since 2019.

As Emergency Department Medical Director, Dr. Hein will help ensure patients continue to receive timely, high-quality emergency care close to home.

"Rural hospitals rely on strong physician leadership to provide



Dr. David Hein

exceptional emergency care," said Austin Gillard, Chief Executive Officer of CCMC. "We are excited to welcome Dr. Hein as our Emergency Department Medical Director. His clinical expertise, collaborative approach, and commitment to quality make him an outstanding fit for our organization and our community."

Dr. Hein said he looks forward to partnering with the CCMC team.

"I am honored to serve as the Emergency Department Medical Director at Clay County Medical Center," said Dr. David Hein. "CCMC has built a strong reputation for delivering exceptional emergency care to the communities it serves. I look forward to partnering with physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, and staff to build on the department's solid foundation through collaboration, innovation, and continuous quality improvement. Together, we will continue providing compassionate, evidence-based emergency care so patients and families can rely on outstanding care close to home."

Under Dr. Hein's leadership, the department will continue to focus on quality improvement, patient safety, and delivering exceptional emergency care for residents throughout the surrounding region.

Scammers ask for gift cards from Kansas Republicans

The scammers are at it again. Kansas Republicans who subscribed to receive emails from the Kansas GOP may have recently received an email from Danedri (danedri@kansas.gop asking to talk via email. It's a scam!! I don't need any gift cards! Do not buy gift cards for a County GOP chair or other GOP official without talking to the requestor via telephone first!

Scammers are targeting Republican activists, posing as GOP officials and asking that the activists purchase gift cards on behalf of the GOP.

"WE DON'T NEED GIFT CARDS!!" said an email from Roger Lomshek, treasurer of the Kansas Republican Party. Please do not purchase any cards or any other item without making a phone call first! We don't want to see anyone else get scammed: