

## Community Development News

By Christy Hopkins

We welcomed spring with the arrival of some of the biggest snowflakes I've seen Monday morning. The wet, heavy snow was welcome and appreciated and though it's melting quickly, we'll gladly take the moisture in whatever form spring brings us.

Malinda Lehman and I, who have worked together for nearly a decade on the Progressive Ag Safety Day event, are disappointed to announce that we will not be having an event this year. The Progressive Ag Foundation, which oversees, provides insurance, and support for the Safety Days determined that while face-to-face events might be allowed after April 1, all events would have to be

held on school campuses, during the course of a school day. When you have a multi-school event like ours, that ruling provides a significant challenge as we would not be able to invite students from other schools, as we always do. We look forward to bringing back the event in 2022 and appreciate the community's past help and support.

We're on the downhill side of the school semester as the students, teachers, and staff returned to school Monday after spring break. This Saturday night is prom and track and golf season will be in full swing before we know it. The class of 2021 will graduate on May 15 at 11 a.m.

## Kansas Common Sense

By Senator Jerry Moran  
March 22, 2021  
**Speaking in Opposition of H.R. 1**

This week, I spoke on the Senate floor in opposition of H.R. 1, the partisan *For the People Act*, to highlight the drastic impact this legislation would have on federalizing elections, restricting free speech and further dividing the country along party lines.

H.R. 1 is an affront to the United States Constitution. Americans did not vote to give one party free rein to implement an unprecedented power grab, to nationalize elections and strip power from states and localities from now into perpetuity. As a conservative, I believe in individual liberties and in a federal government that exercises restraint, and that state and local units of government are inherently more responsive to the wishes of the citizenry. My adherence to the Constitution instructs deference to state governments to oversee their own elections, and I hope all Americans, including my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, take the time to read and understand H.R. 1 for what it truly is.

### Meeting with Kansas Health Officials Regarding Vaccination Efforts Across the State

*Visiting the Sedgwick County Vaccination Center*

On Monday, I visited the Sedgwick County COVID-19 Vaccination Center where more than 1,500 people received their shots throughout the day. During my visit, many Kansans made a point of telling me how well organized the center is and how pleased they are to receive the vaccine. My time at the center was a personal reminder that the goal of getting vaccinated is to keep people healthy so that they feel comfortable at work, comfortable hugging their grandkids and have the opportunity to go to church in person again—all the things that make up normal Kansas life.

I want to thank the many health care professionals and volunteers who

continue to work to ensure the center is run efficiently and the vaccination process is smooth. Thank you to Sedgwick County Commissioners David Dennis, Jim Howell and Pete Meitzner, as well as Sedgwick County Health Director Adrienne Byrne for joining me on the tour.

### Learning More about Johnson County's Vaccine Distribution

On Tuesday, I visited the Johnson County COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic and was pleased to hear reports that no vaccines are going unused. Dr. Sanmi Areola, Director of Johnson County's Department of Health and Environment, updated me on their vaccination efforts across the Kansas City area. Currently 117,000 residents of Johnson County have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

I also enjoyed speaking with all the Kansans at the clinic who got their vaccine to hear firsthand about their experience. Thank you to Dr. Areola, Johnson County Chairman Ed Eilert, Johnson County Commissioner Mike Ashcraft and Assistant County Manager Joe Connor for joining me on the tour. The efficiency of Johnson County's distribution is a testament to its leadership, and I again want to reiterate my thanks to all of the health care professionals and volunteers working at this clinic, and across our state, to get shots in the arms of Kansans so we can continue on this path back towards normal.

### Expanding the VA's Vaccination Efforts to Spouses and Caregivers

This week, I introduced the *Strengthening and Amplifying Vaccination Efforts to Locally Immunize All Veterans and Every Spouse (SAVE LIVES) Act* with my colleagues on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. This legislation would expand VA's COVID-19 vaccination authority, enable the VA to vaccinate more veterans than currently allowed and offer vaccines to individuals within a veteran's circle of care.

## Unified Supervisors meet

Unified Greeley County supervisors Justin Phillips, Monty Moritz, Corbin Myers, and Scott Steele met Monday, March 22nd, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in a regular meeting at the courthouse that was also streamed online. Also present were public works superintendent Brock Sloan, public works administrator Gina Bond, county clerk Jerri Young, and Pamela Forbes.

Steele called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved.

Dan Smith told supervisors about a training opportunity for the Road and Bridge Department for road maintenance. He said a four-day class could be offered in Greeley County for \$100 a person. The trainer is a grader operator himself. There would be eight people attending the class from Greeley County's department and could be more from Hamilton and Wallace counties. The class would be held April 26 to April 29.

Kleymann entered the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Dustyn Smith reported that the emergency sirens need new batteries. The old batteries are four years old or older, and the siren by the school is not now operational. He also suggested that the sirens be tested monthly. A motion was made to purchase batteries for the sirens locally from Myers Implement for \$863.73. Motion was seconded and passed 4-0, with Corbin Myers abstaining.

Bills for General Services District in the amount of \$375,013.35 were unanimously approved; this includes 5% of the annual appropriations.

Minutes of the March 8, 2021, meeting were approved unanimously.

Clerk and Sheriff fee reports, and treasurer's reports were approved unanimously.

Clerk Young presented information received from the ambulance department concerning the need to increase rates. Greeley County is lower than surrounding counties and hasn't increased rates for several years. The current charge is \$350 for non-emergent runs and \$450 for emergent runs, plus \$13 per mile. The suggested increase is \$50 to \$100 for runs plus an additional \$1 per mile. A motion was made by Myers, seconded by Moritz to increase non-emergent run rates by \$75 to \$425, to increase emergent run rates by \$75 to \$525, and to increase mileage by \$1 a mile to \$14 a mile. Motion passed unanimously.

Sloan reported that most of the dumpsters are 30 years old and new ones are needed.

After discussion, a motion was made to approve the purchase of new dumpsters in the amount of \$23,087. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Sloan reported that lightning had struck at the airport and someone is needed to look at the fuel pump, which is not now working.

Bond told supervisors she has received a request from AT&T to renegotiate the fee for the placement of their equipment on the county's water tower. The county attorney has suggested that supervisors find out what AT&T is wanting and then negotiate from there. In 2020, the amount paid by AT&T was \$19,941, Bond added. She will contact AT&T.

Bond said she had consulted with the county auditor because there are several large airport grant projects coming up. He suggested that the Airport Capital Fund be reopened for managing the finances of these grants, which will be about \$700,000 total, at least 90% of which will be reimbursed. A motion was made by Steele to reopen the Airport Capital Fund, with a limit of \$700,000. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

With regard to discussion in a previous meeting of refinancing the hospital general obligation bonds, a proposed calendar and engagement letter has been received from the bond company asking for permission to provide supervisors with more information on the proposed refinancing. They would attend a supervisors' meeting. After discussion, a motion was made to authorize the county clerk to sign approval on behalf of the supervisors, pending approval by the county attorney. Motion was seconded and passed, 5-0.

Sloan told supervisors that since it has rained, it is obvious that the Recycling Center roof is leaking even worse than it was previously. He suggested that Douglass Roofing personnel look at the roof when they are in town working on the city hall roof. Supervisors agreed to get that input.

Kleymann made a motion for supervisors to enter an executive session with the public works director and payroll clerk to discuss non-elected personnel for a period of 15 minutes. Motion was seconded and passed 5-0. Supervisors returned to open session with no action taken.

Meeting was adjourned. Official minutes of supervisors' meetings are available at the county clerk's office.

## Rep. Mann Announces Congressional Art Competition

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representative Tracey Mann announced his inaugural 2021 Congressional Art Competition - an opportunity for high school students in the Big First to showcase their artistic talents.

Each spring, a nation-wide high school art competition is sponsored by the U.S. House of Representatives to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation and in each congressional district. More than 650,000 high school students have participated in the competition since it began in 1982.

"As the newly-elected Representative of the Big First, I am thrilled to host this opportunity for students," said Rep. Mann. "The talent students bring to

competitions like this always amazes me. I am looking forward to recognizing this year's winners"

Applications for this year's competition are open and available to all high school students in the First District. All submissions will be reviewed and the winning artwork will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol. The winning artwork is also featured on the House.gov Congressional Art Competition page.

Students and teachers interested in applying or learning more can visit Rep. Mann's website at: <https://mann.house.gov/services/art-competition>. The deadline to enter a submission is April 30th, 2021.

## Sen. Marshall: President Biden's immigration policies created a crisis at the US border

(Washington, D.C., March 22, 2021) – U.S. Senator Roger Marshall, M.D. penned an op-ed for the Topeka Capital Journal highlighting the failures of the Biden Administration when it comes to the southern border crisis. Senator Marshall said in part,

"As a physician, I've done mission work all over the world and I know a humanitarian crisis when I see it... Since being sworn in, he [President Biden] has implemented a number of policies and proposed several others that are now serving as an immense magnet for individuals in Mexico and Central American countries to attempt to enter the United States. He halted construction of the border wall by unlawfully freezing funding, ended the Remain in Mexico Program and has reaffirmed his commitment to grant blanket amnesty to at least 11 million illegal immigrants already residing in the country, to name a few.

With less than two months in office, President Biden's policies have created a three-pronged crisis on the southern border unlike anything we've ever seen. First, it's a humanitarian crisis. The number of unaccompanied children being held in detention is unprecedented and the sheer volume of individuals arriving at our southern border is amongst the highest ever recorded. The number of children in Customs and Border Patrol custody has increased by more than 400%, up to more than 13,000. Holding facilities for minors in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas where I toured are at 363% capacity.

In February, the U.S. Border Patrol arrested nearly 100,441 individuals, the third-highest month in more than a decade and 45% higher than February during the 2019 border crisis.

Second, it's a health care crisis. The United States is emerging from a year spent battling a deadly pandemic that resulted in the death of more than half a million Americans. Migrants arriving at the southern border are testing positive for the coronavirus at between three and 10 times the rate of American citizens.

Third, it's a national security crisis. By exploiting the surge of individuals making the journey north, Mexican cartels are making money by assisting many of them across the border. The Texas Department of Public Safety told me that Mexican Cartels are making more money trafficking humans than they do drugs.

As a physician, I've done mission work all over the world and I know a humanitarian crisis when I see it. The situation at our southern border is a massive crisis. During a 30-mile helicopter tour in Texas, I saw more than 200 border crossers traveling by foot, car or raft as they ventured across the Rio Grande to take advantage of the lax immigration enforcement measures being deployed on our southern border.

This was just a fraction of what the state is seeing at this stretch of border on a daily basis.

The current administration attempts to blame this crisis on the previous administration, stating its predecessor's policies created a "pent-up demand." This dangerous deflection fails to acknowledge that the increased demand has come directly at the hands of President Biden.

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to attempt to enter the United States. He halted construction of the border wall by unlawfully freezing funding, ended the Remain in Mexico Program and has reaffirmed his commitment to grant blanket amnesty to at least 11 million illegal immigrants already residing in the country, to name a few.

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Apprehending unaccompanied minors and family units is also taking away resources from Border Patrol so it's unable to focus on drug seizures. In February, drug seizures increased 50% from January, including a 40% increase in methamphetamine and a 48% increase in heroin.

The Biden administration policies of an open border and mass amnesty have created a humanitarian crisis, a health care crisis and a national security crisis.

While we try to show compassion to everyone, keeping our border secure must be a top priority. Without secure borders, we cannot ensure our nation's safety, period.

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