

## Community Development News

By Christy Hopkins

Summer is quickly approaching, but first, we'll enjoy this lovely, soaking rain that set in over Greeley County Monday night into Tuesday morning. Though I clearly took the wrong vehicle to my brother's Monday night for a belated Mother's Day dinner, I'll happily fight mud in exchange for the blessed rain that brings a smile to every farmer's face.

We're gearing up for a few early summer activities, including June 4-6's June Jaunt. Here's what's on the agenda so far: Community-Wide Garage and Sidewalk Sales, the Gavin B. Kleymann Memorial Livestock Show & Vendor Fair, The Trench Annual Poker Run (which is being ridden for Wayne Moritz and supporting the Greeley County Victory Walk fund), the Tribune Tryathlon, and

a new event, a Road Rally/Scavenger Hunt on Sunday afternoon.

If there are other items to be added to the list, please let me know! Also, if you're planning a garage sale for that weekend, stop by the office, give us a call, or use the online link to make sure your sale is on the map.

Co-ed Summer softball registration forms are due next Monday, May 17. You can pick up a registration form from our office or A.J. Govert with Greeley County Recreation has some, as well.

The weekend after the June Jaunt is the Macinzie Jade Lehman Memorial Golf Tournament. The two-man scramble is scheduled for Saturday, June 12, with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. For more information, contact Malinda at (620) 376-8542.

## K-State to host wheat plot variety tours across the state

Numerous opportunities planned that cover new varieties and agronomics MANHATTAN, Kan. – Coming soon to a location near you: the opportunity to learn about the newest wheat varieties available, plus their agronomics and how they hold up to disease challenges.

After more than a year of virtual only events, Kansas State University will host numerous wheat plot variety tours across the state starting this week and stretching into June.

"This is an excellent way for producers to see and hear about what's available and what farmers in their own area have experienced with these new varieties," said Romulo Lollato, K-State Research and Extension wheat specialist.

From Dodge City to Parsons and other locations around the state, more than 50 tours are planned. Dates and locations are on the K-State Agronomy eUpdate website or by contacting a local K-State Research and Extension office.

For more questions, contact Lollato at lollato@ksu.edu.

"These wheat demonstration plots are usually organized by the county or district agents in collaboration with farmers in their region, giving growers an opportunity to see how the varieties behave when planted in a commercial operation before deciding to adopt a given variety. Our farmer collaborators are extremely important to make these events happen and we really appreciate their support."

## VA Announces Walk-in COVID-19 Vaccinations For Veterans, Spouses & Caregivers Following Sens. Moran, Tester Efforts

WASHINGTON – Building off U.S. Senators Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Jon Tester's (D-Mont.) successful efforts to expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to veterans and their families, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it is accepting walk-in COVID-19 vaccinations nationwide for eligible veterans, spouses and caregivers.

The VA began administering COVID-19 vaccines to all veterans, spouses and caregivers last month as a result of the Senators' bipartisan *Strengthening and Amplifying Vaccination Efforts to Locally Immunize all Veterans and Every Spouse Act (SAVE LIVES Act)*, which allows the VA to provide COVID-19 vaccination services to veterans and their families, regardless of whether they are enrolled in VA health care. As a result, the VA has vaccinated more than 2.7 million individuals, including more than 60,000 individuals under the *SAVE LIVES Act*.

"The COVID-19 vaccine is our best shot at getting back to normal, and it has been my priority to ensure every veteran has easy access to the vaccine," said Sen. Moran.

"This decision to begin walk-in vaccinations at VA facilities will help increase accessibility to the vaccine, and thanks to the *SAVE LIVES Act*, every veteran, their spouse and caregiver can now receive a vaccine at any VA medical center. I encourage all veterans to get the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine."

"This is great news for Montana veterans and their families who will no longer have to wait to get vaccinated," said Sen. Tester. "I fought hard to pass my bipartisan *SAVE LIVES Act* in Congress to ensure every veteran, spouse, and caregiver has access to a vaccine from VA, because the science shows this vaccine is a safe and effective tool in the fight to manage the spread of this virus and help save lives. I urge folks to take advantage of this convenient walk-in service at their closest VA facility as quickly as possible, so we can put this pandemic in the rearview mirror and our economy back on track."

This walk-in service ensures all veterans enrolled in VA health care and those authorized under the *SAVE LIVES Act* have an opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccination from VA at their convenience.

## Governor Laura Kelly Announces Kansas Receives National Recognition for Wind Energy Production, Capacity

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly announced that the state of Kansas has once again been recognized as a national leader in wind energy, with *Business Facilities Magazine* noting lofty rankings for Kansas when compared to all other states, and awarding an Honorable Mention to the Grain Belt Express project in the magazine's Deal of the Year competition.

According to *Business Facilities' 2020 State Rankings*, Kansas was:

1. No. 1 in percentage of energy generated by wind
2. No. 4 in Aerospace
3. No. 4 in installed wind power capacity

"I'm pleased that these national accolades have confirmed what Kansans have known to be true – our state is a driving force when it comes to wind power expansion, development, and innovation in our country," Governor Kelly said. "I thank all the hardworking Kansans across the state who put in the work to make this possible. My administration will continue to support wind power initiatives that will not only allow us to maintain our top-tier rankings, but also create jobs and boost economic development statewide."

In 2020, Kansas reclaimed the top spot it held in 2018 in percentage of energy generated by wind, as it was No. 2 in 2019 behind Iowa. Kansas also increased its installed wind power capacity significantly in 2020 in claiming the fourth-place spot.

Due to its significant economic impact and benefit, the Grain Belt Express was honored by *Business Facilities Magazine* with an Honorable Mention award in its national Deal of the Year competition. A new, 800-mile transmission line connected to the Grain Belt Express is expected to bring \$8 billion in investment and thousands of jobs to Kansas. According to *Business*

Facilities, 2020 was one of most competitive years for the Deal of the Year competition, with economic development projects from across the nation submitted and judged by an expert panel of independent site consultants and real estate executives.

Grain Belt Express, owned and developed by Invenergy Transmission, has created a renewable energy project that promises to deliver significant advantages in access to affordable energy, and added infrastructure for broadband. According to an analysis on behalf of the company, this expansion will create up to \$7 billion in electricity cost savings for Kansas and Missouri consumers by 2045.

"The Grain Belt Express project reflects our state's commitment to smart renewable energy and aggressive economic growth, and I'm grateful to *Business Facilities* for including this exciting project on their list of the nation's top successes," Lieutenant Governor and Commerce Secretary David Toland said. "We're on a roll in Kansas, and our team is proud to demonstrate the many ways Kansas is the nation's best place to do business. We'll be back competing for still more accolades that reflect Kansas' position at the best place in the nation to do business."

The Grain Belt Express will begin in southwest Kansas and wind through Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. Energy savings will result from the Grain Belt Express transmission line's direct access to one of the country's strongest and lowest-cost wind energy resources in western Kansas. This projected energy cost savings is in addition to the \$8 billion in economic investment in Kansas associated with Grain Belt Express.

## Unified Supervisors meet

Unified Greeley County supervisors Kirby Kleymann, Justin Phillips, Monty Moritz, Corbin Myers, and Scott Steele met Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. in a regular meeting at the courthouse that was also streamed online. Also present were public works administrator Gina Bond, public works supervisor Brock Sloan, county clerk Jerri Young, and health services CEO Trice Watts.

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

The first item of business was an appointment with Community Development director Christy Hopkins, concerning fireworks and the Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ) program. An agreement for a fireworks display, set up by Don Walters, was approved by the supervisors, contingent on the weather and dryness at the time. A motion was made to approve the contract with Wald and Co. for fireworks display, and to authorize Corbin Myers to sign it. Motion was seconded and approved.

Hopkins discussed the ROZ program; she said the Kansas Senate has extended the program for two more years, until July 1, 2023. There may be extended regulations in the next few years. There are currently nine persons in our program and some have graduated from the program, freeing up money for others. Supervisors said this program is nothing but good for the county. In the past, the supervisors have supported the program with \$30,000. A motion was made by Myers to approve the resolution for the program to continue for an additional year. Hospital CEO Trice Watts was present and spoke in support of the ROZ program.

Bills were reviewed and approved 5-0 for payment in the amount of \$78,946.90 for GSD and \$54,073.38 for MSD.

Clerk and Sheriff fee reports and the treasurer's quarterly report were approved 5-0.

Minutes of the April 26, 2021, meeting were approved.

A building permit was unanimously approved for Adriane Steidle.

County Health nurse Lisa Moritz entered the meeting and requested an executive session to discuss contract negotiations. A motion was made and seconded for the supervisors and county health nurse to enter an executive session for a period of 10 minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

Supervisors and county health nurse returned to open session, then entered an executive session for an additional 10 minutes to discuss contract negotiations.

due to the county contract with the school for the health nurse and health department.

Supervisors returned to open session and said they need to appoint two members to a negotiating committee. Phillips and Myers will be the appointed members, with Kleymann and Steele as the alternates. They asked nurse Moritz to set a date for the meeting with the school and notify them.

Dan Smith, Road Department, distributed a list of suggested roads to elevate or shape up. He explained his suggestions. Smith said the ditch class they had was very good and helpful. Next, Smith gave supervisors an estimate for repairs on a county tractor, and what the trade-in might be if they traded it in. Supervisors said they need Smith to get bids for them to compare. Smith said the department has good mowers now, but needs tractors to keep them going.

Mark Rine and Luther Keith met with supervisors concerning maintaining the VFW Memorial, which is about \$1600 a year. They said the VFW has run out of money for maintenance and wanted to know how the county wanted to handle the maintenance now. They have been doing it on donated memorial funds since May 2010 and that fund has run out. A suggestion was to ask 4-H groups to use that as a service project, and to see if Christy Hopkins knew of a grant, or if the county could spray for stickers. Maintenance includes mowing, light bulbs, and purchasing nine new flags when needed. Supervisors said they could get someone to spray and mow, and look for other long-term funding alternatives.

Bond told supervisors of airport funds that are available but grant must be completed by May 27<sup>th</sup>. Supervisors made a motion to accept the grant agreement and approve Kleymann to sign the grant application. She also discussed AWAS issues that have come up.

Bond updated supervisors on the roofing project, and that some parts of the building has flooded and she will keep supervisors updated.

She also had a page on \$5,000 covid bonus pay for health department personnel tax details. Appropriate motions were made and passed 5-0.

Sloan updated supervisors on county road and maintenance equipment status and needs. He distributed bids on a utility vehicle. A person to mow has been hired, he said.

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

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**We will NOT have tacos next Monday, May 17th.**  
**We WILL have tacos on Tuesday, May 18th!**  
**We are attending 8th grade graduation next Monday. Thanks!**  
**The Trench**  
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