

KVGB-FM NEWS & PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES – 3RD QUARTER, 2023.

Broadcast times.... 6:00am, 7:00am and 8:00am Monday through Friday

The following stories were broadcast and posted online during the reporting period listed above.

USD 428 to pay higher property insurance premium for upcoming year

Storm damage to the roof at Great Bend High School and an explosion next door to the new USD 428 Support Services Building are just a pair of exhibits as to the importance of property and casualty insurance. Thursday morning, the USD 428 Board of Education approved a new contract with the Kansas Educational Risk Management Pool for \$463,702.30. Superintendent Khris Thexton said that's \$180,000 more than the last contract.

(THEXTON-INSURANCE)

17 seconds

The coverage will be good from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The pool mirrors that of the district's health insurance policy.

(THEXTON-PROGRAM)

15 seconds

The policy includes a \$25,000 deductible for wind, hail, and water damage, and a \$10,000 deductible for all other peril, including vandalism, fire, and theft.

Two churches merge to form new Ellinwood Community Church

Since 2019, some 1,800 local Methodist churches have decided to disaffiliate from the main United Methodist church. Those impacts have reached Barton County. June 30th marked the final day for the Immanuel United Church of Christ and Ellinwood United Methodist Church (UMC). A Sunday-morning service on July 2 marked the birth of the Ellinwood Community Church (ECC). ECC Committee Member Nancy Baird said the change was necessary.

(BAIRD-WAYS)

22 seconds

Tom Reazin (REASON) was the minister of the Ellinwood UMC. He will transition to being pastor of the new non-denominational Ellinwood Community Church.

(BAIRD-COMMUNITY)

21 seconds

ECC services will be held each Sunday morning at 9:15 at the church located at 7th and Fritz in Ellinwood.

Great Bend councilmembers adamant on abatement changes

7/5

Before Code Enforcement Supervisor Art Keffer could present his list of abatements before the Great Bend City Council Monday night, he was thrown a number of questions about the procedure on how his department handles property violations. Councilmember Alan Moeder led the conversation, questioning how some properties get written up for overgrown vegetation or trash and refuse violations and other lots do not. Moeder specifically referenced the property at 1515 Tyler Street and its absence on the abatement list.

(MOEDER – LOOKS) 24 Seconds

While the code enforcement does patrol parts of the city when time allows, a good portion of ordinance violations are received from citizen complaints. Last November, Logan Burns was approved to become Great Bend Assistant City Administrator and oversee the code enforcement department. Burns served as Interim City Administrator since December when Kendal Francis announced his resignation. Now that Brandon Anderson has started his role as City Administrator in July, councilmember Jolene Biggs was hopeful Burns will oversee improvements to the city's abatement process.

(BIGGS – OKAY) 8 Seconds

Keffer noted between April 17th and May 15th, the code enforcement department wrote up 197 properties. By the end of May, 175 of those cases were taken care of or closed.

The Center offers suicide-prevention training for farmers

For the past couple of years, Leonard Kaiser has responded to and acted on calls about suicide-prevention information designed for farmers and ranchers.

Now, he is starting the process of contacting businesses and other entities that have regular contact with people who make their living in agriculture and livestock.

As a licensed clinical professional counselor at The Center for Counseling & Consultation, Kaiser is sending letters to individuals and organizations that understand the stressors on the farm.

Letters are going to co-ops, insurance companies, clergy, seed and chemical dealers, and social establishments frequented by farmers and ranchers.

Kaiser collaborates with the Farm Service Agency, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture, on suicide-prevention training. He can meet with groups at their convenience for whatever amount of time they want. The Center also offers a course called Mental Health First Aid, which is a more in-depth resource that teaches specific skills. Kristian Pearson, safety and onboarding coordinator, leads that class.

City of Great Bend continues to work on water leaks

The city of Great Bend's transition to automated water meter readers has not been without its glitches. Public Works Director Jason Cauley announced at the June 19 city council meeting that 237 retrofits had been ordered to complete the project. His department also continues to work on leaks. So far, the city has reduced the number of leaks from around 70 to approximately 40.

(CAULEY-INFRASTRUCTURE)

18 seconds

City crews are using a pair of solutions to address the leaks. Parts are on order for the easier of the two solutions. Crews will revert to the other solution until those parts arrive.

(CAULEY-REPAIRS)

14 seconds

Cauley said that makes a timeline for the repair of all leaks tricky. The city will continue prioritizing leaks that cause the greatest stress. Cauley expects full repairs to take at least a month.

One-day event for free school sports physicals in Great Bend

The University of Kansas Health System, in collaboration with USD 428, will offer free school sports physicals for the 2023-2024 school year for area middle and high school students. Free sports physicals for middle and high school students will be provided at a single event on a walk-in basis only.

Those will be available on Saturday, August 5th from 7 to 11 a.m. at the St. Rose Medical Pavilion at 3515 Broadway Avenue in Great Bend.

Please complete the Kansas State High School Activities Association preparticipation physical evaluation form prior to coming in to minimize wait time. Students who wear glasses or contacts should bring them to their exam.

Sports physicals are available without an appointment only at the walk-in clinic during regular hours, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Students ages 17 and younger will need a parent to accompany them.

One-way or stop signs considered at 12th & Baker with new police station

7/11

As the official opening of the new Great Bend Police Department station gets closer, Chief Steve Haulmark said the plan is to slowly move items from the current station on Williams Street. Haulmark recently completed a tour of 20,100 square-foot facility being built and said staff is excited about the new interview rooms, locker room, larger and more efficient evidence room and just overall expanded space.

The station, at the intersection of 12th Street & Baker Avenue, is being built on the city-owned parking lot that has residential houses across the street to the east.

(HAULMARK – WELL)

17 Seconds

With traffic at the 12th and Baker intersection a hazard, Haulmark did mention city officials have discussed either making Baker Avenue, in front of the station, a permanent one-way street or placing stop signs at the intersection.

The \$8.8 million project is expected to be move-in ready sometime in September.

Great Bend, other school districts likely to exceed revenue neutral

The Kansas State Legislature has tried to increase tax transparency in recent years with revenue-neutral rate laws. Any taxing entity that will collect more tax dollars than in the previous year must announce that intent to the public. The USD 428 Great Bend Board of Education Monday night agreed it will proceed on its budget plan with the intent of exceeding revenue neutral. Superintendent Khris Thexton said most districts in Kansas will do the same.

(THEXTON-FACILITIES)

15 seconds

Property valuations soared across Kansas last year. In Barton County, valuation increased from \$172 million in 2022 to an expected \$193 million for 2023. To remain revenue neutral, USD 428 would have to decrease its mil levy from 41.595 to 36.72. That would include dropping the general fund levy from 20 mils to 17.65 mils though state statute sets the levy at 20 mils. Thexton giving the county clerk notice to exceed revenue neutral will give the district more time to finalize a budget.

(THEXTON-AUGUST)

8 seconds

USD 428 will approve a notice to approve the 2024 budget at its Aug. 11 meeting, then approve the budget at the Sept. 11 meeting. The final budget must be turned into the county clerk's office by Sept. 20.

Hoisington Board of Education votes to keep lunch prices the same

School boards across the state are making many decisions with annual appointments and other housekeeping duties. Monday night, the USD ⁴³¹~~401~~ Hoisington Board of Education voted against a state recommendation to increase lunch prices and keep them the same for all students. Superintendent Patrick Crowdis said the district has approximately \$182,000 in its food service account with current pricing.

(CROWDIS-JUSTIFIABLE)

19 seconds

Reduced lunches are set by the state with breakfast costing 30 cent and lunch at 40 cents. The current breakfast price for all students is \$2.00, and the board voted to lower that to \$1.95. Student lunch prices range from \$2.60 to \$2.85, and the proposal was to raise that price by as much as 10 cents. Board President Dean Stoskopf was against the increase.

(STOSKOPF-COST)

22 seconds

Board Member Becky Mooney also spoke against the increase, and Board Member Sara Tarlton said families already complain about portion size. Raising the price and not increasing portion size could cause more students to bring their own lunch. The board voted 6-0 for the breakfast reduction, to keep lunches the same price, and to increase adult lunches to \$4.50.

City of Great Bend explains why tornado sirens failed during storm

7/18

The Great Bend City Council received several updates from department heads on the storm damage and how the city is moving forward at Monday's meeting. As of 5 p.m. Monday, Wheatland Electric informed city administration that approximately 1,500 customers were still without electricity following Sunday's storm that included strong winds and large hail. Great Bend Fire Chief Brent Smith said the initial report from emergency management was the storm included straight-line winds, ruling out a tornado. Despite the storm not classified as a tornado, many citizens were left wondering why the tornado sirens did not sound. Smith said Barton County Dispatch attempted to activate the sirens 10 times without any success.

(SMITH – BACKUP) 21 Seconds

Public Works Director Jason Cauley said his department helped clear the main thoroughfares, or most used streets, of branches and debris. One Public Works Department crew staffed the compost site with a constant line of vehicles backed up to the Railroad Avenue entrance at times. Those residents unable to remove their branches to the compost site, can stack them up near the curb as the city will conduct a city-wide pickup on Monday, July 24th.

(CAULEY – BACK) 15 Seconds

The Front Door, or utilities office on 10th Street, was closed Monday, but is operational as of Tuesday morning.

Advanced voting for USD 112 special election now underway Barton Co.

The Barton County Clerk's office continues to handle issues ^{that} ~~to~~ could throw a wrench in elections. First, there was the move to the new facility at 1500 Kansas Ave. in Great Bend. Then there were power outages that closed county operations on Monday. Clerk Bev Schmeidler announced Tuesday that early voting has started for the USD 112 Central Plains disorganization matter that will be decided across five counties on Aug. 1.

(SCHMEIDLER-TIME)

19 seconds

Advanced voting for the special election was already underway in Ellsworth, Russell, Rice, and Lincoln counties. Sunday's storms prevented Barton County from beginning its election on Monday. Voting will take place in an old fitting room inside the former JC Penney building. Chris Saenz (SIGNS) with the clerk's office cut the fitting room doors to make shelves for four voting machines, including one for patrons who wish to be seated while voting. Another fitting room may be used for those wanting a paper ballot. Schmeidler said the new facility is just as secure as the office in the courthouse.

(SCHMEIDLER-THAT)

21 seconds

A "no" vote in the election would mean keeping USD 112 intact, as is. A "yes" vote would mean disorganizing the district and turning decisions over to the state board of education.

Disaster declared for Barton County after Sunday storm

Sometimes the worst in life brings out the best in people. Several Barton County officials thanked county, city of Great Bend, and Wheatland Electric crews for teamwork following the wind and hail storm that roared through Great Bend Sunday. Emergency Risk Manager Amy Miller told the Barton County Commission Tuesday morning that an emergency declaration had been issued for the area.

(MILLER-PLACE)

14 seconds

On Monday, the National Weather Service out of Wichita concluded its survey of storm damage and determined damage was caused by wind-driven hail up to softball size, and winds up to 80 miles per hour. Meteorologist Dan Holiday said with the extra heat and humidity, summer storms can pack a punch.

(HOLIDAY-THREAT)

17 seconds

With a power outage throughout much of Great Bend Monday, county officials waited until Tuesday to sign the disaster declaration. Miller said state emergency management is often fine with a verbal declaration until paperwork can be signed.

Cheyenne Bottoms not filling up despite recent rains

Near the height of the drought, officials at Cheyenne Bottoms thought 10 inches of rain in a short period of time might help refill the wetlands. The experiment has failed. Bottoms Wildlife Manager Jason Wagner said the 10 inches of rain that have fallen near headquarters since June have barely made a visible impact.

(WAGNER-UP)

11 seconds

Wagner often monitors gauges of nearby water supplies that feed the Bottoms, but the Wet Walnut Creek has stopped flowing near Albert, and the Arkansas River is stagnant as well. But Wagner is hopeful that area rains will still benefit wildlife in the future.

(WAGNER-POOLS)

17 seconds

Soil moisture throughout March and April is required for even better food sources. Wagner said if water continues to collect at the Bottoms, the plants will be a good food source for waterfowl. If the water does not come, the plants will become an excellent food source for pheasants later on.

City of Great Bend notes uncertainty with SRCA Dragstrip

7/25

In a press release sent out Monday, the City of Great Bend stated they wanted to make a few clarifying comments involving the process that the city is involved in pertaining to the SRCA Dragstrip.

In late April, the SRCA announced the cancelation of the 2023 race season because the track requires substantial remedial work, possibly the replacement of track.

The City of Great Bend does not currently have a reserve fund for the purpose of repairing or rebuilding the track. The purpose and intent of the legal proceeding is to obtain the funds required for that purpose, but those funds will not be received until the resolution of the legal proceedings.

City officials could possibly be asked by the State of Kansas to repay the amounts the state contributed to the previous track project. If that happens then that amount will not be available for rebuilding the track. Great Bend was awarded \$3.4 million from KDOT's Cost Share program for reconstruction of the dragstrip and resurfacing of 10th Street.

The City of Great Bend noted they do intend to repair or rebuild the track and continue the tradition of drag racing here and is working toward that goal.

Great Bend delaying mosquito spraying during tree cleanup

Winds from the July 16 storm caused plenty of damage around Great Bend. As city crews prioritize cleaning up the aftermath, that leaves another byproduct of the storm and recent rains to remain unchecked: mosquitos. The city of Great Bend completed a 4-week cycle of spraying for the pests on July 13, and Public Works Director Jason Cauley said it may be a couple of weeks before spraying resumes.

(CAULEY-CLEANUP)

23 seconds

The city typically uses a horseshoe-shaped pit with a berm for burning at the compost south of town. With the number of limbs, the city now has four piles actively burning. City Administrator Brandon Anderson issued a release ahead of Monday's cleanup effort by the city, and Cauley said that's a reasonable timeline.

(CAULEY-WELL)

12 seconds

Since June 1, more than 13 inches of rain have fallen at the Eagle Media Center located at 12th and Baker in Great Bend. More than three inches have fallen since July 14.

Breaking down Hoisington's electric bills; how rates are determined

9/18

The City of Hoisington is able to generate its own electric power and does so to approximately 1,600 customers. The city purchases wholesale power from Western Electric and then distributes the power to citizens. Over the years, there have been various questions regarding electric bills from residents. Hoisington City Manager Jonathan Mitchell said there are three parts that make up an electric bill. There is a meter charge (customer access charge) which is \$21 to tie into the city's network. Then there is a base rate, for each kilowatt hour a customer pays 13.25 cents. Finally there is a power cost adjustment (PCA). Mitchell said the city wants to be very transparent with how residents are charged.

(MITCHELL – OFFICE) 12 Seconds

A portion of the 13.25 cents charged per kilowatt hour goes toward maintenance of the system, equipment and staff. Another portion of the rate is applied to the city's cost of purchasing power.

(MITCHELL – CENTS) 22 Seconds

On the flip side, if the cost to purchase electricity from Western Electric goes below the city's base rate, those savings are passed on to the customers.

The City of Hoisington owns and maintains roughly 36 miles of distribution lines, mostly overhead lines and some underground lines.

Barton Commission proclaims September as Recovery Month

Since 1989, Recovery Month has been held each September to promote awareness for substance use recovery. Tuesday morning, the Barton County Commission signed a proclamation to recognize the month locally. Rise Up Central Kansas Director Amy Ferguson said substance misuse costs society some \$820 billion annually and explained the importance of programs like Rise Up Central Kansas.

(FERGUSON-RECOVERY)

14 seconds

Ferguson said Rise Up Central Kansas is one of the local resources for recovery and resilience-based services. The organization has built a durable network of physical, mental, and behavioral health services. Rise Up Peer Navigator Sharr Hamby said shining light on substance use is one of the first steps to combat it.

(HAMBY-MENTALLY)

19 seconds

Recovery Out Loud, Every Voice Matters will hold its third annual event at Jack Kilby Square in downtown Great Bend on Friday, Sept. 22. A Narcan walk begins at 5:30 p.m. with the program to follow.

EPA continuing cleanup of contaminated site near Great Bend airport

9/22

In 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held a public meeting to discuss potential contamination at a site near the Great Bend Municipal Airport. The abandoned Plating Inc. building on west 6th Street used to be a chromium and zinc plating facility. Chromium is a metal used mainly for making steel and other alloys and is considered a contaminant of concern. Operations at Plating Inc. stopped in 2005, the company filed bankruptcy and the site was abandoned in 2006. Monitoring the site for years, Great Bend City Administrator Brandon Anderson said the EPA is preparing for on-site construction activities for the remedial action.

(ANDERSON – WELL)

13 Seconds

Removing the dirt will prevent current and future exposure to the chemicals. Domestic water supply wells for two businesses were impacted by the contamination and were supplied bottled water. Anderson said Clint Sperry, a Remedial Project Manager with the EPA, will present to the Great Bend City Council on October 2nd.

(ANDERSON – PIECES)

17 Seconds

The cleanup at the site is being funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL) which allows the EPA to clean contaminated sites through the federal law.

Youth Crew, HOSA Club sponsor anti-tobacco event at GBHS

Data suggests that one out of every seven teens in Kansas vapes. That's why Youth Crew, Central Kansas Partnership, and Juvenile Services continue to spread the message of why teens should not vape or use tobacco. Wednesday, Youth Crew partnered with the Health Occupation Student Association (HOSA) Club at Great Bend High School as part of a "Blow Bubbles Not Smoke" event. Juvenile Services Director Marissa Woodmansee said some 1,200 pieces of gum - all wrapped with a message - were handed out.

(WOODMANSEE-FALL)

11 seconds

The program includes information about the health impacts of vaping or using tobacco and resources to quit.

(WOODMANSEE-HELP)

20 seconds

Wednesday's event over the Great Bend High School lunch period also included infographics and quizzes about the information. The prize for correct answers: more gum.

Barton Co. Health Department hosting drive-thru Flu Clinic Sept. 30

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu season typically peaks between December and February. That makes early fall a perfect time to get the flu vaccine. Barton County Health Department Nurse Supervisor Lindsey Ensley said the department will host a drive-thru flu clinic on Saturday, Sept. 30 at 1300 Kansas Ave. in Great Bend.

(ENSLEY-PM)

13 seconds

Health department staff will take insurance information from patients, or there will be a fee for the vaccination for patients without insurance. The health department is offering a standard vaccine and a high-dose vaccine. Paperwork can be printed ahead of time or picked up at the facility Saturday.

(ENSLEY-TO)

18 seconds

The CDC projects manufacturers will supply the United States with between 156 and 170 million doses of flu vaccine for the 2023-24 season. Find a link to the paperwork at [Great Bend Post.com](http://GreatBendPost.com).