

AD ASTRA PER ASPERA BROADCASTING INC.  
ISSUES/PROGRAMMING REPORT

KNZS(FM) ARLINGTON, KS  
KSKU(FM) STERLING, KS  
KWHK(FM) HUTCHINSON, KS  
KXKU(FM) LYONS, KS

FIRST QUARTER 2023  
JANUARY 1-MARCH 31, 2023

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## KNZS/KSKU/KXKU/KWHK ISSUES FOR FIRST QUARTER 2023

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Within this broad area there were three major topics addressed in depth

One involved an ongoing issue with traffic congestion and safety at the intersection of 30<sup>th</sup> and Lucille on the northeast edge of Hutchinson. This intersection is south of Prairie Hills Middle School and is one of just two access points to the school from the west. A temporary traffic signal was installed there in 2018 during a bridge replacement project that closed the other access to the school. The signal was taken out in August, 2022, which increased congestion issues at the intersection and led to a petition with over two thousand signatures asking signals be put back in place even though the intersection does not meet “warrants” for their placement.

Another issue dealt with what has been an ongoing issue for the region, wildfires. In 2017 and again in 2022 there were major wildfires that destroyed numerous homes to the north and east of Hutchinson. This area has a combination of vegetation and terrain that makes control of fires such as this very difficult if not impossible in some cases. The 2022 fire killed one person and came very close to taking out a television station transmitter site that provides the only directly received TV signal for a major area north of Hutchinson.

The third issue developed late in the quarter, and involved fireworks discharge in Lyons. In 2010, the Lyons City Council passed an ordinance limiting discharge most years to July 4<sup>th</sup> only, though they can be sold July 1-4. During a codification of city ordinances, the online version of it included an earlier ordinance (changed in 2010) permitting four days of discharge. Concerns have been voiced on the impact of fireworks on persons, veterans in particular, suffering from PTSD and on pets, and issues also came up about how people were setting off fireworks, some of which landed on the roof of a City Council member in 2022 which fortunately did not cause any damage.

### CHILD CARE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of day care facilities in Reno County ceased operation, with others dealing with financial issues including low pay for staff. Affordability of child care is also an issue given the limited number of spaces available and other factors. The City of Hutchinson and Reno County have allocated a major portion of their ARPA funds to address child care issues. Since the allocation was made there was a significant change to the makeup of the Reno County Commission, which expanded from three to five members, with three new members more conservative than the Commission was in the past. The Hutchinson City Council also saw two new members take office in February as a result of resignations including that of the longest serving member of the Council.

### EDUCATION

On a statewide level education is a very hot topic before the Kansas Legislature this year. There is a push among many Republicans to implement tax credit and/or voucher programs for families sending their children private schools or who home school. There have also been discussions on special education funding and on what is taught in public schools and how.

Locally facility issues have been the major topic. In January Buhler USD 313 called a special election April 4<sup>th</sup> for a bond issue that would expand the district's administrative center to

among other things provide more space for an rapidly growing virtual program and for an indoor practice facility. As the quarter was coming to an end two other Reno County school districts (Nickerson-South Hutchinson USD 309 and Pretty Prairie USD 311) placed facility questions on the ballot in May. Additionally, KXKU also aired a program on planning leading up to a May bond election in McPherson USD 418, an area where KXKU has long been considered a "local" station.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

During the quarter, there were two major business layoffs in Hutchinson including the abrupt closing of a long time local industry. There is also currently in progress the development of a new master plan for Downtown Hutchinson.

#### AGRICULTURE

In addition to ongoing drought issues (over half of the area is in either extreme or exceptional drought according to the US Drought Monitor released as this report was prepared) A lot of attention is being paid to development of a new Farm Bill.

## KNZS/KSKU/KWHK/KXKU ISSUES PROGRAMMING

### FOCUS ON KANSAS

Aired Sunday morning at 6 AM, this is a 45-60 minute program (depending on length of material used) that is used to address issues in the areas served by the stations. Many of the issues identified overlap over multiple communities served, and for that reason programs are for the most part identical to all four stations. KXKU, by virtue of its much larger coverage area and in particular because of a long historical reliance within McPherson County of that station as a primary local news source (which since June, 2022 is now also provided by two stations Ad Astra Radio operates there), will on occasion have an additional segment dealing with issues in that area.

Segments within this program are also incorporated into the station's newscasts (see below).

Within Focus on Kansas are three weekly features that are provided by the K-State Radio Network, part of Kansas State University Research and Extension.

Sound Living is a program focusing on family and consumer issues. This is usually a 15 minute fully produced program but material is provided through which a 6-7 minute program can be prepared locally in the event local segments within Focus on Kansas require additional time. There will be occasions when this program is not used for that reason.

Kansas Profile is a four minute program produced by K-State's Huck Boyd Institute for Rural Development, and focuses on people, businesses and organizations making a difference in rural Kansas.

The Wheat Scoop is a three minute report on the Kansas wheat industry produced by Kansas Wheat, comprising the Kansas Wheat Commission (a state agency) and the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers.

### AD ASTRA CARES

This, along with scheduled news programs (see below), is an umbrella under which the stations' public service announcements and other issues are addressed. The public service announcement portion of Ad Astra Cares are scheduled at random, but regular times between 5 AM and midnight seven days a week.

In addition, a number of scheduled features are included during the week. These features usually air at 7:40 AM Monday through Saturday

MONDAY - "Reasons to Rise Up," spotlighting Rise Up Reno, a student driven group focusing on drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

TUESDAY - "Club Moment," featuring the Boys and Girls Club of Hutchinson.

WEDNESDAY - "Art in the Heartland," focusing on the area arts community in conjunction with the Hutchinson Art Center.

THURSDAY - "Chamber Chat," a program focusing on local economic development and other activities with the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce

FRIDAY - "Hutch Happenings," featuring community events with the Hutchinson Recreation Commission.

SATURDAY - "Kansas Bigs," spotlighting Big Brothers Big Sisters Serving Reno County.

## NEWS

Local newscasts are scheduled seven times per day Monday-Friday across all four stations, and on Saturday mornings except for KSKU. Newscasts are aired at 6, 7, 8 and 11 AM, 12 noon, 4 and 5 PM, except for KSKU where they air at 20 minutes past those hours Monday-Friday. Much of the coverage area of these stations has access to only one daily newspaper, operated by a national chain (Gannett) which has only one full time editorial employee at this time. Portions of the area have access to a second daily, one under common ownership with the other paper and the other the daily in Wichita which has largely eliminated regular distribution in areas north and west of Hutchinson within the past year. Within the region there are two newspapers published semi-weekly, with the remaining publications weekly only. Ad Astra Radio has for many years made it a practice to provide local news coverage over a wide geographic area, and will continue to do so.

## KNZS/KSKU/KWHK/KXKU ISSUES PROGRAMMING FOR FIRST QUARTER OF 2023

### CHILD CARE

On the January 29<sup>th</sup> (40:00) and March 26<sup>th</sup> (29:00) Focus on Kansas programs presentations made to the Reno County Commission and Hutchinson City Council respectively regarding how the ARPA funding allocated for Child care were discussed at length. A major topic of concern at both meetings was how programs proposed to be created can be sustained once ARPA funding has been exhausted. Various news stories also aired in the days prior to these two programs, each story running between 45 seconds and one minute. The January 29<sup>th</sup> program also included a brief discussion on Housing initiatives that were also allocated ARPA funding from both the city and county.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Focus on Kansas January 1<sup>st</sup> included a full presentation (45:00) on a discussion regarding traffic issues near 30<sup>th</sup> and Lucille held during the December 20, 2022 Hutchinson City Council meeting. The February 12<sup>th</sup> program featured a 15 minute segment on a discussion held at a February 7<sup>th</sup> Hutchinson City Council meeting regarding desires of Prairie Hills Middle School patrons to have traffic signals put back in place at 30<sup>th</sup> and Lucille. Two Buhler USD 313 bus drivers shared their experiences at that intersection, and several other people also addressed the Council including one resident living in that area who opposed putting a signal back in.

On newscasts March 8<sup>th</sup> there was a story on a study session held by the Hutchinson City Council March 7<sup>th</sup>, during which presentations were given on traffic engineers' opinions on the 30<sup>th</sup> and Lucille situation including some other options that could potentially be looked at including pursuit of grant funding to re-do the intersection which could also potentially address issues there.

The March 12 Focus on Kansas (40:00) included a presentation on expected wildfire dangers for 2023 from Reno County Fire Administrator Travis Vogt and Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar and Hutchinson Fire Chief Steven Beer. (Hutch Fire also provides fire protection services for Reno County Fire District #2, which includes some of the most vulnerable areas for wildfires in Kansas. A discussion with Reno County Commissioners on fire mitigation strategies was also part of this program

### PUBLIC SAFETY AND MENTAL HEALTH

The March 19<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas (30:00) was largely devoted to a discussion March 15<sup>th</sup> by the Lyons City Council on the dates fireworks can be discharged. Much of that discussion centered on two general issues – the impact fireworks has on pets and people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and problems with people not cleaning up fireworks after discharge especially on city streets, a practice that right now is not illegal in Lyons. Questions were also raised about enforcement of existing ordinances and how other communities handle this. (This issue was also the subject of a news story (:45) on March 21<sup>st</sup> after a follow-up discussion during the prior evening's City Council meeting)

### AGRICULTURE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The March 5<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas included a 15 minute segment that was derived from a media conference March 1<sup>st</sup> with US Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS) during which he discussed work on a new Farm Bill and on recent developments regarding the origins of COVID-19,

specifically as it has to do with the exact source of the virus and gain of function research which has been associated with the start of the pandemic.

Local agricultural stories are included within the regularly scheduled newscasts on KWHK and KXKU. IN addition these stations also are affiliated with Brownfield, the nation's largest agri-business network and carry multiple reports from them throughout the day.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The February 19<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas included a 7:00 interview segment with Bailey Ramsey with BowerComm, a Hutchinson-based marketing and public relations firm that has been awarded ARPA funding from the city of Hutchinson to develop a refugee relocation program to assist refugees from such areas as Ukraine who might be interested in relocating to the area.

The February 26<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas included a 5:00 segment with Hutchinson-Reno County Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Debra Teufel where she provided an update on the development of a new master plan for downtown Hutchinson including a survey that was at the time being conducted to obtain public input on future ideas for the downtown area.

The stations also provided news coverage of the abrupt closure of a long time Hutchinson manufacturer which put over 100 people out of a job combined with earlier layoffs at a local hospital that is Reno County's single largest employer. (Health care is a major economic driver with a large regionally focused clinic based in Hutchinson along with numerous long term care facilities, the vast majority of which are operated by non-profit entities and one that is tax supported.) This news coverage included reaction to the closing of that business, and promotion of a project that provided area employers a central location to interview laid-off workers.

An additional program that has somewhat of an economic development angle is Kansas Profile, a four minute program aired as part of Focus on Kansas each Sunday. This program, produced by the Hutch Boyd Institute for Rural Development, spotlights businesses and people who are making a difference in rural Kansas.

## EDUCATION

The February 19<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas (15:00) featured a segment on education topics currently before the Kansas Legislature including several proposals to provide tax credits or vouchers to families sending their children to private schools and homeschooling families along with increasing funding for special education in Kansas. This discussion, derived from a February 18<sup>th</sup> forum in McPherson, included Kansas Senate Vice President Rick Wilborn (R-McPherson, whose district includes the three largest cities in Rice County) and State Representatives Paul Waggoner (R-Hutchinson) and Stephen Owens (R-Hesston, whose district borders Reno County to the east and includes parts of one Reno County-based School District)

The January 15<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas programs (approximately 15:00 each) focused on a bond issue that Buhler USD 313 voters will consider April 4<sup>th</sup> that would expand the district's administrative center to being operations now at three locations to one along with expanding space for their Ad Astra Academies virtual program and an indoor facility for the district. Both programs included USD 313 superintendent Cindy Couchman and finance director Shane Hecox) and the February 26<sup>th</sup> program also included curriculum, instruction

and assessment directors Kyle McClure (PK-5) and Paul Erickson (6-12) and Ad Astra Academies director Erica Shook.

Also as part of the January 15<sup>th</sup> Focus on Kansas on KXKU only, There was an interview with McPherson USD 418 Superintendent of Schools Shiloh Vincent and Board of Education President Ann Elliott on an ongoing facilities planning process and community meetings being held during January and early February which led up to calling of a special election in May on a bond issue that has as it's major project replacement of the Academic section of McPherson High School. (20:00)

In addition to these programs, the stations provide regular news coverage of area school board meetings including information on agenda items prior to the meetings. Due to publication days of nearly all newspapers in the area (nearly all of which are weekly publications, along with lack of staff for the only daily paper much of the area sees) they are not able to provide this information.

## SOUND LIVING PROGRAMS FOR FIRST QUARTER 2023

3-26 NOT GROWING OLD; AGING WELL– The nation is aging. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2040, about one in five Americans will be 65 or older – up from about one in eight in 2000. K-State Research and Extension offers a variety of programs and publications to help people grow old gracefully, successfully and with increased longevity. K-State Extension aging specialist and interim director of the university's Center on Aging, Erin Yelland, says some of the keys to aging well are healthy eating, positivity, and being physically and socially active.

3-19 BEING MINDFUL ABOUT NUTRITION– March is National Nutrition Month. Each year, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics creates an annual campaign to help people learn about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits. K-State Extension assistant professor in the Department of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health and state program leader in nutrition and health for youth and adults, Priscilla Brenes, says this year's theme, Fuel for the Future, emphasizes eating with sustainability in mind.

3-12 WALK KANSAS ENCOURAGES CHANGE– K-State Research and Extension's Walk Kansas program has been helping participants improve their mental and physical health for more than 20 years. One of the keys to the success of the program is that participants are able to make small changes over an eight-week period that become a habit. In addition to being physically active and eating healthy, Walk Kansas state leader, Sharolyn Jackson, says the program provides information on chronic disease prevention, stress management, and how to select and prepare healthy recipes. (Not aired on KNZS/KSKU/KWHK/KXKU due to length of Focus on Kansas segments.

3-5 HYPERTENSION AWARENESS– According to Kansas Health Matters, nearly one-third of adult Kansans have been diagnosed with hypertension – or high blood pressure. K-State Research and Extension is in a pilot program that focuses on hypertension awareness, self-monitoring and prevention. Sara Sawyer, nutrition, health and wellness agent for Sedgwick County, and Stephanie Gutierrez, Extension Program Coordinator in the K-State College of Health and Human Sciences, are co-coordinators of the Hypertension Awareness and Prevention Program pilot project being offered in 11 counties throughout the state. They explain the need for the program, what participants will learn about hypertension and they'll benefit from the four month program.

2-26 LEARN IN NATURE'S CLASSROOM– A Kansas State University child development specialist says children benefit both physically and mentally from spending time outdoors with parents and other children. According to Bradford Wiles, children learn through play and being outdoors, in nature, offers children an opportunity to play and learn in a variety of fun and creative ways.

2-19 ARE YOU READY FOR TAX DAY?– If you've prepared your taxes and know that you're getting a refund, it may be tempting to spend it all at once. However, a tax refund isn't a bonus check from the government. It's money you worked hard for and should be treated as a regular paycheck. There are several ways a tax refund can be used. The key is to do what makes financial sense for you. K-State Research and Extension Resource management specialist Elizabeth Kiss (kish) says that might include paying down debt, building your savings and

having some fun.

**2-12 HAVE A PLAN FOR SEVERE WEATHER**– Weather forecasts aren't perfect; they can change very quickly. In Kansas, that means an increased chance for tornadoes, damaging winds, severe thunderstorms, lightning, large hail and flash flooding. The National Weather Service in Topeka has designated March 6-10 as Severe Weather Preparedness Week in Kansas, including a statewide tornado drill March 7th. K-State meteorologist and manager of Mesonet, a network of environmental monitoring stations across Kansas, Chip Redmond, says having a plan for what to do in the event of severe weather is the first step in protecting you and your family.

**2-5 VALENTINE'S DAY AND KINDNESS**– Valentine's Day typically centers around red roses, chocolates, greeting cards and romance. However, Kansas State University child development specialist Bradford Wiles believes it can also be a time for kindness. While Valentine's Day celebrates love, he says kindness is a key component of love. Wiles talks about how parents can show kindness toward their children and themselves.

**1-29 GEARING UP FOR WALK KANSAS 2023**– Making just a few lifestyle changes can have a huge impact on our health. In fact, two-thirds of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and others, can be prevented by making lifestyle changes. K-State Research and Extension's Walk Kansas program, an 8-week, team-based challenge to be physically active most days of the week and eat more fruits and vegetables, has helped thousands of participants make lifestyle changes to improve their mental and physical health. Walk Kansas state leader, Sharolyn Jackson, says the program enables participants to make small changes over several weeks to improve their health and well-being. This year's Walk Kansas begins March 26th and runs through May 20th.

**1-22 MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**– Surveys continue to show that the top benefits employees want from employers are health insurance, paid time off, retirement, vision, dental and life insurance, parental leave and health savings accounts. The three primary employee benefits are vacation or paid time off, health insurance and retirement. K-State Research and Extension family resource management specialist Elizabeth Kiss (kish) discusses how employees can maximize these benefits.

**1-15 BE PRESENT AND RESPONSIVE**– As we begin a new year, Kansas State University child development specialist Bradford Wiles suggests reflecting on the things we do well because we want to maintain those things while we try to improve in other areas. For parents, he recommends they pause and reflect on ways that will best help children develop as they work through adolescence. He says engaging in a daily dialogue with children from a young age demonstrates parents are really interested in their lives. It's by being present and responsive to their needs that parents can model life skills to their children. (Not aired on KXKU)

**1-8 A FOCUS ON LIVING BETTER**– K-State Research and Extension family and consumer science agents and specialists offer a variety of programming that can improve our health and well-being, including physical, mental and financial health, relationships and parenting. This winter, the 2023 Living Well Wednesday series will feature webinars on radon gas, legal documents, hypertension awareness, prevention and management, mental health, stretching

food dollars and positive parenting. KSRE family and consumer science specialist for the northeast region, Sharolyn Jackson, previews the winter series and Brian Hanson, the K-State Radon Programs Coordinator, has an overview of some of the material he'll cover on January 11th. (Program not aired on KNZS/KSKU/KWHK/KXKU due to length of Focus on Kansas segments)

No Sound Living Program was produced for January 1<sup>st</sup>, as this program is not released during the two holiday weeks.