

Continued from
Dec. 26 edition

March 28

The Burlington High School Ladycat softball hosted Anderson County for a doubleheader, with BHS girls winning both games. It was the team's season, home and Pioneer League opener for the 2024 season.

The Burlington High School Wildcat varsity baseball team opened their 2024 season with Anderson County with a doubleheader, and a win for each team in two very close games. Later in the week, BHS boys played two games at the Sabetha Tournament. They defeated Sabetha, 3-1, lost to Clay Center, 10-2.

The Southern Lyon County softball team hosted Lebo-Waverly Lady Wolfdogs for a doubleheader, which was both teams' season opener. Lebo-Waverly held on for a win, 16-10 for the first game. In the second game, the final score was Lebo-Waverly 31, SLC 15.



April 4

Southern Coffey County High School last week sponsored its 23rd Honor Flight to Baltimore, Md., visiting various memorials in the Washington, D.C. area. Six Coffey County area veterans were Ronald Lankton, Harry Linn, Harold Presley, Matthew Robertson, Edward Turner, and April Sanders.

The 26th refueling and maintenance outage at Wolf Creek Generating Station officially began at midnight, March 28.

The Burlington High School chapter of the National Honor Society inducted 16 new members during its annual ceremony.

Many Easter egg hunts and events were held throughout Coffey County on Saturday morning, March 30, with warmer weather in the 70s.

April 11

Coffey Countians experienced a 90% solar eclipse on Monday, occurring about 1:52 p.m. A local weather station charted the temperature drop from 66.4 to 61.2 degrees during the eclipse.

Coffey County Commissioners agreed to put into motion the act of selling 4.9 acres of county-owned land at a public auction. The land was divided into three lots, located at or near block 2 of the Meadows Addition to Burlington.

Late Sunday afternoon, Emporia Fire Department and several area fire departments were dispatched to a stretch of highway beginning at the 138 mile-marker on I-35 for a fire in the median and other fires were found further north into Coffey County. KDOT and Emporia Police Department responded to assist with traffic control due to visibility issues from the smoke on the interstate. The cause of the fire was undetermined.

City of Burlington Water/Wastewater Department employees worked for nearly eight hours to repair a 12-inch water main struck by a contractor in the southern part of Burlington. A handful of customers were without water during the repair. Other water customers south of town experienced lower than normal water pressure.

April 18

A new Holter monitor was purchased and donated to Coffey County Hospital by Alice Archer in memory of her late

husband, Ed Archer, who passed away in 2023. It is a portable electrocardiogram (ECG) that a patient may need to wear over a period of 24 hours or longer.

The East Central Kansas T's celebrated their 30th anniversary on April 13 with a meeting and catered meal at Kelley Hall. ECKMT is a family organization and a chapter of the not-for-profit National Model T Club of America.

Coffey Health System now offers a special program to help caregivers, led by Mental Health Therapist Amy Osner, once a month at The Meadows in Burlington.

FBLA members from Waverly and Hartford high schools competed at the Kansas FBLA State Leadership Conference in Topeka. Hartford High School had 16 students compete, and Waverly had 24 students compete. WHS freshman Colton Stice placed second in Computer Gaming and Simulations and 5th in Introduction to Information Technology.

He will represent WHS at the National FBLA Leadership Conference in Orlando.

Ty Anderson, a 2022 graduate of Burlington High School, broke the Emporia State University men's 100-meter dash record at ESU Welch Stadium with a time of 10.29 seconds. This performance ranked him ninth in the nation in the event.

Area track teams from Burlington, Hartford, Lebo and Waverly competed in Chase County's 2024 Tim Griffin Spring Relays at Cottonwood Falls.

April 25

The law enforcement certification of Brian Siedschlag, a former Burlington police officer, was revoked after an investigation that confirmed he engaged in incidents of unprofessional conduct. He worked as a full-time Burlington Police Officer from April 28, 2020, to Nov. 19, 2022.

A special meeting of the Coffey County Planning Board drew a full house at the Coffey County Courthouse on Wednesday evening, April 17, with an estimated 165 people in attendance at the public hearing to hear about the Commercial Solar Energy Conversion System (CSECS) Over-lay District regulations proposed addition to the county's zoning regulations. Many of the 30 individuals who spoke opposed large "solar farm" projects, expressing concerns about the environment, effect on property values, and taking agricultural land out of production.

The Burlington City Council heard a proposal at its April 17 meeting to use city-owned land on the Neosho River to reintroduce the Neosho Mucket and Ouachita Kidneyshell, both of which are freshwater mussel species. A presentation was made by a representative for Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Coffey County Hospital earned national recognition as one of "27 Critical Access Hospitals to Know." Established 70 years ago, CCH is training its clinicians in dementia diagnosis and treatment, with a new program in partnership with the Kansas City-based University of Kansas Health System.

The Burlington Wind Company BLKT team won second place in the Kansas State Finals held April 13 at Salina. The team members are Burlington High



School students, Brendan Devening, Logan Ferrara, Kasten Payer and Tate Sowder. The Burlington Wind Company MICZA team placed third in the Salina Finals. The team includes BHS students Matthew Dekat, Caden Hartpence, Isaac Rinker and Ivy Ziva Elmore.

Waverly High School held 2024 prom night April 13, themed "Waverly Wonderland Prom." Burlington High School's prom was themed "Living in Luxury" and held April 20. Southern Coffey County High School held its junior/senior prom with the theme "Let's Party" on the same evening. Couples attending enjoyed a night of specially planned events for making high school memories.



May 2

The Coffey Health System Board of Trustees unanimously appointed Stacy Augustyn as Chief Executive Officer during their April monthly meeting. Her appointment came after CEO Joben Rieth gave his resignation on April 15. Augustyn's appointment will be official Aug. 1.

Work on the new Coffey County Law Enforcement Center continued as scheduled, with concrete poured for the south half of the building slab (and the north half the following week). Sheriff Tom Johnson informed county commissioners a change in design is needed to enlarge the sally port area, which is an enclosed secure area where prisoners are transferred from a vehicle to the jail.

LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 held a public informational meeting addressing a \$2 million bond proposal to make improvements at the schools in Gridley and LeRoy. USD 245 voters will decide the issue during a May 14 special election.

Pieces and Patches Quilt Guild's guest speaker Jamie Needham of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) shared a need for pillowcases or bags that police give to children who are removed from a home. Unbeknownst to Needham, guild members surprised her, having sewn 65 to donate.

Southern Coffey County Trapshooting Club entered 10 students in the High School Invitational Shoot at Baldwin, two squads of five shooters. Squad 1 broke 460/500 total targets, which was a team high in the team's five-year history. Squad 2 broke 343/500 total targets.

May 9

Local pastor Jay Hale led a National Day of Prayer gathering at noon Thursday, May 2, at the Coffey County Courthouse. The National Day of Prayer is always the first Thursday in May.

Burlington Police Chief Doug Jones transported more than 370 pounds of medication collected over the past year to Topeka for safe disposal through the DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The Burlington Police

Department and Coffey County Sheriff's Office are authorized year-round collection sites for outdated prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines, animal prescriptions, and even illegal drugs.

Five area seniors were recognized at the Governor's Scholars award program at Washburn University in Topeka: Chandler Wright, Burlington High School; Grayson Dailey, Hartford High School; Katherine Ott, Lebo High School; Emily Rolf, Southern Coffey County High School; and Addison Miller, Waverly High School. They were among 525 students chosen state-wide, who ranked in the top academic one percent of Kansas high school seniors.

Local building contractor Michael Abendroth met with the Burlington City Council to share plans he has to annex and develop a 33-acre tract just west of Burlington on the north side of 12th Road, north of Rock Creek Country Club. The plat has 91 building sites for a proposed new subdivision.

Lebo High School held its 2024 prom with the theme of "Neon Disco." Many couples attending wore clothing featuring neon colors. Sky Zone in Topeka, was their after-prom destination to end the evening. Hartford High School's "Masquerade Ball" theme was held the same evening, with Urban Air in Lenexa their choice in entertainment.

May 16

The National Weather Service confirmed that two EF-0 tornados briefly impacted Coffey County during a severe thunderstorm Monday, May 6. An NWS team confirmed tree damage and structural damage including a barn in eastern Coffey County, with estimated peak winds of 80 miles per hour for both tornados.

Wolf Creek outage is officially over, which began March 28. Refueling the reactor and numerous planned maintenance and inspections were completed with an additional 700 supplemental workers. Most notable, a 10-year inspection was done and a switchyard modification was done to allow an additional transmission line in the future.

It was a busy Mother's Day weekend with several local high schools holding graduation ceremonies for their 2024 seniors. Burlington High School graduated 69 seniors held Saturday, May 11. Later in the day, 10 Southern Coffey County High School seniors received their diploma. On Sunday, May 12, Waverly High School graduated their 11 seniors, and Lebo High School handed out diplomas to their 13 graduates.

May 23

Burlington City Council learned that a hotel developer has found an individual, Mark Kern, a marketing/advertising professional from Lawrence, who would privately own and operate an amphitheater proposed last month.

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran was in Burlington to announce that the Coffey County Sheriff's Office was awarded \$157,000 in federal grant money, which will be used to purchase a full-body scanner for the new law enforcement office.

Voters in the LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 school district decided in favor of issuing \$2 million in general obligation bonds to make improvements at the LeRoy and Gridley schools, with an official

ballot count of 215-210.

Hartford High School Commencement ceremony was held May 18. Nine graduating seniors became the HHS Class of 2024.

Tammra Schillig, R.N., was honored with the Coffey Health System's DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses, during a ceremony on May 10.

May 30

Osage County, in collaboration with Coffey County, is preparing to apply for a railroad infrastructure federal grant. The location and proposed development of this rail-served trans-load facility is about three miles north of the Kansas Semiconductor Manufacturing Consortium (KSMC) industrial park to be located in Coffey County.

A local eating establishment in LeRoy has changed its name and owners. Formerly the Barnhouse Café, going forward it will be known as Harvester's Grill, LLC, owned and operated by Crystal Decker and Kerri Renee and Rhett Gleue. Farm fresh and locally raised beef will be part of the new menu in their farm to table atmosphere.

Multiple athletes from Hartford, Lebo, Southern Coffey County, Waverly and Burlington competed in state track and field events recently. Lebo High School track student, Caleb Durst, captured the state gold medal, finishing in first place in the 1600-meter run with a time of four minutes 27.34 seconds in Class 1A State Track and Field competition held at Wichita. Hartford's competitor, Grayson Dailey earned second place and the silver state



medal in the 400-meter dash with a new school record of 50.10 seconds. Burlington's Keely Hoback captured first place and the state gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.99 seconds. BHS girls' relay team, Hoback, Alexa Ratzlaff, Olivia Lyons and Haylei Potter won first place and the state gold medal in the 4x100-meter relay with a time of 49.34 seconds.



June 6

Coffey County Commissioners forgave the remaining \$1.4 million balance on a loan made to the Coffey County Hospital 10 years ago.

The reorganized Chamber of Commerce board of directors have requested county support through money for their budget in 2025.

Local Westphalia couple, Arthur and Barbara Lake, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary

on June 1.

June 13

The Burlington City Council approved a document that outlines a request for incentives for the construction of a hotel, RV park and amphitheater just north of Burlington. Tyler Ellsworth, bond counsel, stated it does not bind the council legally to the incentives, but does provide assurances to the developer that both sides understand what is being requested.

A Schwab Eaton engineer presented a water plant project to the Burlington City Council. An upgrade at the plant would help resolve settling of sedimentation, and restore the full capacity of the plant back to 3.1 million gallons per day. A final cost estimate of the project will be forthcoming. Expansion of the plant was not recommended.

Burlington USD 244 is considering adding on to the existing Burlington Elementary School building, or constructing a new BES north of the district's sports complex. With the possible CHIPS plant and the new law enforcement center, BES has been a topic discussion.

Governor Laura Kelly announced that the City of LeRoy has been awarded a \$3,000 grant to be used toward murals and public art installations to enhance public spaces and local tourist attractions. Eleven other Kansas communities with a population of less than 15,000 also receive an art grant that requires a one-to-one match.

June 20

Wheat harvest in Coffey

County began June 11 in the Lebo area. By Thursday, farmers were cutting wheat throughout the county. An above average harvest is being reported, with at least 50 to 70 bushels per acre, and some as much as 80 to 90 bushels per acre. One farmer south of LeRoy reported 102 bushels per acre. The price for hard red wheat ranged from \$5.52 to \$5.70 per bushel in Coffey County.

During a special meeting, Coffey County commissioners received an update from Trusted Electronic Materials (TEM) on the status of the semiconductor fabrication plant proposed for the county-owned Kansas Semiconductor Manufacturing Consortium (KSMC) Industrial Park. The main objective for the project currently is to get a PMT, a preliminary memorandum of terms from the Department of Commerce, a post-award which is the investment to begin the onsite build paid by the project.

Burlington USD 244 Board of Education gave the green light to Superintendent Craig Marshall to look into selling a piece of district-owned land south of the Burlington High School and west of the Burlington Recreation Center, on the condition the buyer must build housing on it.

Coffey County is one of 66 Kansas counties in a drought watch status, which means the county(s) are experiencing conditions that indicate the probability of a water shortage is rising.