

# Simmons appointed to Sunflower Foundation board of trustees

TOPEKA – Sunflower Foundation is pleased to announce the appointments of Lea Ann Seiler of Hanston and Stephanie Simmons of Beloit, as well as the re-appointment of Ben Schears of Hays, to the foundation’s nine-member board of trustees. Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach made the appointments.

Individuals can serve up to three, three-year terms as a trustee of the foundation, a statewide health philanthropy with a mission to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of all Kansans. The attorney general appoints eight of the trustees, with one appointed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. The board is tasked with governing the foundation’s work and developing the organization’s strategic direction.

Seiler and Simmons started their first terms at the board’s June 12 meeting.

Seiler, CPM, is Network Kansas’ community entrepreneurship manager for southwest Kansas, where she builds and maintains relationships with economic development organizations and communities and works to improve their access to programs, training and funding for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Simmons is chief operating officer for Mitchell County Hospital Health Systems in Beloit, where she spearheads strategic planning, development and philanthropic initiatives for the rural north-central Kansas health system.

Seiler, who previously served as economic development director for Hodgeman County, attended Kansas State University and later became a Certified Public Manager (CPM) through the University of Kansas School of Public Management. She serves on the boards of the Kansas Sampler Foundation and United Wireless and previously served on boards for the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Association (WKREDA), Kansas Economic Development Alliance (KEDA), and Hodgeman County Community Foundation.

“I’m truly honored to join the Sunflower Foundation Board of Trustees,” Seiler said. “As a rural Kansan, I’ve witnessed firsthand how strategic grant making can ignite meaningful change, and I’m excited to support this mission and contribute to something that matters so deeply to me.”

Simmons previously served as executive director of the Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation, where she worked to secure grant funding and private donations for the foundation and health system. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communications, with an emphasis in Public Relations, from Fort Hays State University.

As a life-long resident of north-central Kansas, she is passionate about rural health care.

“I am eager to work alongside the Sunflower Foundation Board and staff to collaborate across the state, listening and learning from diverse perspectives, and to help catalyze adaptive ideas that will improve the health for all Kansans,” Simmons said.

A graduate of the Great Plains Public Health Leadership Institute, Simmons also is a founding member of Mitchell County’s AWARE NCK health coalition.

“As respected voices in their communities and passionate advocates for health access and community improvement, Lea Ann and Stephanie bring critical perspectives that will deepen our insight and strengthen our work,” said Brandon Skidmore, Sunflower Foundation president and CEO. “We look forward to the impact we will achieve together.”

Schears, originally appointed in 2019 by former Attorney General Derek Schmidt, is starting his final term and serves as the board’s treasurer. He recently was named vice president for Economic and Workforce Development at Fort Hays State University, after previously serving as president of Fort Hays Tech | Northwest in Goodland, formerly Northwest Kansas Technical College.

Schears earned his Master of Arts in History and Bachelor of Science in History from Emporia State University. He has an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts from Cowley College in Arkansas City.



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# Beloit Chamber Commerce

## Member Spotlight



### Waconda Cultural Association History and Community

This week’s Member Spotlight features the Waconda Cultural Association, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the legacy of the historic Waconda Mineral Springs and enriching the cultural landscape of Mitchell County.

Founded in 2018 and led by Lucille Heller, the Association was born out of a growing concern that the history of Waconda Springs was being forgotten. Lucille, working in tourism at the time, recognized the value this story holds not only for local identity, but also as a draw for visitors to Glen Elder State Park. Since becoming a nonprofit, the organization has secured grant funding to restore the Waconda Springs replica, create a mini museum, and support educational and cultural projects across the area.

The Waconda Cultural Association is also proud to organize community events that bring people together. This year, they will be hosting LakeFest and the Fourth of July Fireworks show, taking place July 5 at Glen Elder State Park, a highlight of summer in Mitchell County.

As a Chamber member, the Association stays connected to businesses throughout the county and has gained valuable support in promoting its activities.

“It’s helped us stay visible and supported in our mission,” Lucille says.

Lucille believes organizations like this are essential to rural communities.

“We help create a successful lifestyle by educating residents and offering meaningful experiences for visitors. That’s what makes rural life so rich.”

# Beloit officers help in Gaede procession

BY SHARON SAHLFELD  
Call Editor

The Beloit City Council held their meeting on July 2, to cover the agenda. City Manager Halley Roberson discussed some updates including the Moritz Memorial Airport reports of obstruction lights being delivered and installed. Rolling Hills Electric will install the light on their pole. FFA is reviewing the Project Budget Summary and all the paperwork for the hanger project is moving along.

The Hospice house is fully moved out to the hospital and consideration on what to do with the property now consists of letting realtors take proposals for a sale.

The City wide clean-up takes place on Monday, July 7, as storm cleanup also continues.

Final work on the RFP for the EDA grant is in with the hope to be approved.

The final project explanation has been submitted for the KCC Pole grant, with the bid to go out soon.

The Walnut street project is going really well, with concrete pours approaching. The project needs to be complete by school time and mid-fall for everything.

A sewer break closed the north section on the Chautauqua bridge, Highway 14 north section

on July 2. It was quickly repaired with asphalt being placed so it could be reopened for the holidays. The City of Beloit police department helped in directing traffic while the repairs were being worked on.

– Beloit Police Chief Chad Lackey reported having some calls about cement trucks around the football field early, around 4 a.m. or so. “This work has to be completed,” said Lackey. “And with heat conditions, workers are working earlier hours.”

Lackey said three officers were sent to Stockton to help assist in the Phillips County Sheriff’s Deputy Brandon Gaede large memorial procession in escorting him home to Phillipsburg.

“Officer Gaede made the ultimate sacrifice on a call that went bad very quickly,” said Lackey. “We honor him and his wife and three children.”

Code enforcement has included 50 calls dealing with grass and environmental codes, junk vehicles, and around 26 calls on unfit structures.

Training ended with 40 hours for each calendar year on June 30, with pistol and rifle qualifications as well.

– Roberson reported on Community Development saying MIH is moving right along.

Leadership Business

Restoration and Expansion (BRE) are grouping together to develop the community in an intense course. This is a big effort to bring in business, but also to help businesses in town to expand. Questions are being put forth to pick a project.

“I’m laboring for a certain project that a lot of communities use,” said Roberson.

– The last City Council meeting minutes and appropriations were approved.

– Resolutions to set for hearings were approved for Resolution 2025-31 Unfit Structure 320 W. 3rd; Resolution 2025-32 Unfit Structure 208 S. Independence; Resolution 2025-33 at 704 N. Campbell and Resolution 2025-34 at 520 N. Campbell.

– In formal actions, a special event request was approved for Aug. 9, at Chautauqua Park in Beloit.

The Lift Station Contract for Midline and the Pipeline Change Order 1 were approved – both contingent on KDHE approval with a 4.75 add on generator. A verbal approval for formal authorization was taken on July 2, with formal authorization expected the following week.

– In the Work Session, the sales tax revenue is to be looked at before the state approval, and a 45 mill was approved to not go up this year in Beloit.

# Beloit Chamber Commerce

## Member Spotlight



### Solomon Valley Community Foundation

This week’s Member Spotlight features the Solomon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), a local nonprofit dedicated to creating lasting impact through philanthropy in Mitchell County. Led by Executive Director Julia Rabe, SVCF is committed to connecting people, building partnerships, and ensuring a strong future for rural Kansas through charitable giving.

Julia’s passion for community and connection drives her work. “Whether it’s supporting a nonprofit, working with donors to create a legacy, or partnering with local leaders, every day is a chance to invest in Mitchell County’s future,” she says. That commitment to local investment is what SVCF is all about.

What many may not know is that the Foundation was born from a grassroots effort. In 1993, a community-wide campaign to build the Solomon Valley Cinema led to the formation of the Mitchell County Community Foundation. After the theater was completed, leftover funds were used for small grants—and that simple act of shared generosity inspired a bigger vision. In 2013, the Solomon Valley Community Foundation was officially established to carry on the spirit of community giving.

SVCF proves that you don’t have to be wealthy to make a difference. Every contribution, large or small, is part of a larger mission: to create lasting support for the people, places, and ideas that make rural Kansas thrive.

As a Chamber member, SVCF has benefited from strong relationships with local businesses, civic groups, and other nonprofits. Julia adds, “The Chamber helps us connect with those who want to give back. Collaboration is key, and the Chamber makes that easier.”

SVCF believes that strong communities are built with intention. By growing endowments and supporting charitable projects, they’re planting seeds today that will grow into a stronger Mitchell County for years to come.

Thank You for Reading The Beloit Call!

• Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. • 111 E. South Street •  
• 785-738-3537 • beloitcall@nckan.com

The Beloit Senior Center offers meals (served at 11:30 a.m., Monday-Friday) for the cost of \$3.50 to \$4 through the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging  
Beloit 785-738-5802 / Glen Elder 785-545-3444

## SR CENTER MENUS

### Beloit/Glen Elder Senior Center

Week of July 14 to July 18

**Monday** - Tuna Salad, Bread, Pea Salad, Sliced Tomatoes, Mandarin Oranges

**Tuesday-** Salisbury Steak, Cheesy Hashbrown Casserole, Normandy Vegetables, Pears, Roll

**Wednesday-** Hot Turkey Sandwich, Mashed Potatoes /w Gravy, Green Beans, Sliced Oranges

### Thursday- BBQ

Chicken on a Bun, Baked Beans, Coleslaw, Mixed Fruit, Cookie

**Friday-**Meatloaf, Baked Potato, Carrots, Bread, Strawberry Shortcake

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