



ROYALTY: Lakeside Highschool Homecoming is next Friday, Sept. 19. The Knights will square off against Logan/Palco at 7 p.m. The homecoming king and queen will be crowned at ceremonies starting at 6:30. This year's candidates are, left to right, Landon Baetz, Zayda Ballard, John Schoen, Addison Schmitt, Maddox Bergmann, Tatum Miller. (Courtesy photo)

County Commission holds budget hearings

Call to Order - The Mitchell County Commissioners met in formal session on Monday, August 25, 2025. Chairman Tom Claussen and members Mike Riemann and Cole Eberle along with Heather Weston, County Clerk, were in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Forum – None
Consent Agenda - The consent agenda was approved on motion by Mike Riemann. The motion was seconded by Cole Eberle and carried 3-0. The consent agenda consisted of the Agenda for August 25, 2025 and the commission meeting minutes for August 18, 2025.

A bridge construction contract from King Construction, Hesston, was signed for project number 65C-5274-01 for a bridge replacement on J Road. The contract amount is

\$554,635.15. Cole Eberle moved to approved the contract. The motion was seconded by Mike Riemann and carried 3-0.

Commissioner Claussen read a letter for the Property Valuation Department stating that Mitchell County was in substantial compliance for the 2025 appraisal year.

The public Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) Hearing for Lulu Township was opened at 8:55 a.m. Resolution 25-19 was approved on motion by Cole Eberle to exceed the RNR. The motion was seconded by Mike Riemann and a roll call vote followed; Tom Claussen – yes, Mike Riemann – yes, and Cole Eberle – yes. The motion was carried 3-0. The public RNR hearing for Lulu Township was closed.

The public budget hearing for MCO Fire District #1, Lulu Township, Center Township, Eureka Township, Hayes Township,

Logan Township, Salt Creek Township, and Mitchell County was opened at 9:00 a.m. Mike Riemann moved to approve the above-mentioned 2026 budgets. The motion was seconded by Cole Eberle and carried 3-0. The budget hearing was closed.

The public RNR hearing was opened at 9:10 a.m. for Tipton Rural Fire District #2. Resolution 25-20 was approved on motion by Cole Eberle to exceed the RNR. The motion was seconded by Mike Riemann and a roll call vote followed; Tom Claussen – yes, Mike Riemann – yes, and Cole Eberle – yes. The motion was carried 3-0. The public RNR hearing for Tipton Rural Fire District #2 was closed.

The public budget hearing for Tipton Rural Fire District #2 was opened at 9:15 a.m. Mike Riemann moved to approve the 2026 budget for Tipton Rural Fire District #2. The motion was seconded by Cole Eberle and carried 3-0. The budget hearing was closed.

The public RNR hearing was opened at 9:20 a.m. for Mitchell County Rural Fire District #3. Resolution 25-21 was approved on motion by Mike Riemann to exceed the RNR. The motion was seconded by Cole Eberle and a roll call vote followed; Tom Claussen – yes, Mike Riemann – yes, and Cole Eberle – yes. The motion was carried 3-0. The

public RNR hearing for Mitchell County Rural Fire District #3 was closed.

The public budget hearing for Mitchell County Rural Fire District #3 was opened at 9:25 a.m. Mike Riemann moved to approve the 2026 budget for Mitchell County Rural Fire District #3. The motion was seconded by Cole Eberle and carried 3-0. The budget hearing was closed.

Jessy Bliss, IT, was present to discuss the possibility of a paid internship for an IT student from the tech college. This topic will be discussed further.

Yvonne Melton and Michelle Langham, Treasurer's Office, were present and requested an executive session. Cole Eberle moved the meeting of the Board of County Commissioners recess into an executive session for non-elected personnel for 15 minutes with Melton, Langham, and the three commissioners. The executive session started at 9:40 a.m. and the open meeting will resume at 9:55 a.m. The executive session was extended for 10 minutes on motion by Mike Riemann. The motion was seconded by Cole Eberle and carried 3-0. The executive session started at 9:55 a.m. and the open meeting will resume at 10:05 a.m. in the Mitchell County Com

•See Hearing, Page 4

Boil Water Advisory Rescinded for the City of Cawker City

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has rescinded a boil water advisory for the City of Cawker City water supply systems located in Mitchell County on Saturday Sept. 6.

The advisory was issued because of a waterline break resulting in a loss of pressure in the distribution system. Failure to maintain adequate pressure may result in a loss of chlorine residuals and bacterial contamination.

Public water suppliers in Kansas take all measures necessary to notify customers quickly after a system failure or shutdown. Regardless of whether it's the supplier or KDHE that announces a boil water ad-

visory, KDHE will issue the rescind notice following testing at a certified laboratory.

Laboratory testing of drinking water samples collected from the City of Cawker City indicated no evidence of bacteriological contamination and all other conditions that placed the system at risk of contamination were deemed by KDHE officials to be resolved.

For consumer questions, please contact the water system at: 785-781-4713 or you may call KDHE at 785-296-5514. For consumer information please visit our [web page](https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/468/Disruption-in-Water-Service): <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/468/Disruption-in-Water-Service>.

Gov. Kelly Announces Funding for Local Bridge Project

Governor Laura Kelly and Kansas Department of Transportation Secretary Calvin Reed today announced that 27 local and off-system bridge projects across Kansas will receive a combined total of \$40.5 million in state and federal funding as part of two local bridge improvement programs.

Included in the 2027 Off-System Bridge Program Project Recommendations was the S. 55th

Road bridge over the South Fork of the Solomon River in Osborne County.

The bridge is 1 mile south and 5.5 miles east of Osborne.

Local contribution will be \$65,521, or 4.3 percent of the \$1.6 million dollar project.

“By funding bridge projects across our state, we are directly investing in the future of our communities,” Governor Laura Kelly said.

•See Bridge, Page 6

August Total Tax Collections at \$692.3 Million

The State of Kansas ends August 2025 with total tax collections at \$692.3 million. That is \$26.2 million, or 3.9%, above the estimate. Total tax collections were up 4.0% from August 2024. “This month's stronger-

than-expected tax collections highlight the strength of Kansas' work to attract business investment and workforce development, evidenced by reported withholdings up 13.7% over

•See Tax, Page 2

News Office still closed

The newspaper office located in Downs remains closed to the public until the position of editor is filled. Applicants can call 785-454-3514 for more information or email downsnews@ruraltel.net.

While the physical office is closed, the phones will be answered from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday thru Thursday, and emails will be checked. Mail will be checked weekly, so you can still submit news items and subscription payments through the mail or by dropping off at the office, 717 Railroad, Downs.

News items, including photos, and advertising submissions can be sent via email for the weekly edition to: downsnews@ruraltel.net

Arasmith earns lactation counselor certification

Mitchell County Hospital Health Systems (MCHHS) is proud to announce that Jessica Arasmith, BSN, RN, has earned her Certified Lac-



Jessica Arasmith

tation Counselor (CLC) certification. The CLC credential is recognized as the premier national certification in lactation management, highlighting Jessica's dedication to providing expert guidance and compassionate care for mothers and infants in our community.

The certification is awarded to professionals who complete extensive training in breastfeeding support, education, and counseling. As a Certified Lactation Counselor, Jessica will play a vital role in helping new mothers with breastfeeding techniques, overcoming challenges, and promoting

overall maternal and infant health. Her expertise further strengthens MCHHS's commitment to offering evidence-based, comprehensive maternal

With this accomplishment, Jessica joins a team of Certified Lactation Counselors at MCHHS, enhancing the Birthing Center's ability to provide exceptional support to new mothers. Her skills and compassion exemplify the hospital's mission to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care while ensuring families receive the education and encouragement needed for a positive breastfeeding journey.

Storytelling Festival's Tall Tale preliminaries begin Saturday

The Kansas Storytelling Festival is holding 3 qualifying events for the 2026 Tall Tales storytelling contest. Anyone (amateur) is welcome to enter these preliminary events to become one of 4 finalists at the Storytelling Festival on April 24-25, 2026 in Downs, KS. All qualifier events are free to attend.

The first qualifier will be held Saturday, September 13, 2025 at the Tonganoxie Community Historical Society; 201 W. Washington St.; Tonganoxie, KS. beginning at 5:00pm. Art Events & Workshops | Arts Council Following the Tall Tale contest at about 7:35, Professional Storyteller Paul Strickland will perform.

The second qualifier will be held Saturday, September 20, 2025 at the Mid-America All-Indian Center; 650 N. Seneca St.; Wichita, KS from 1:00-3:00pm. Following the contest, previous Kansas Tall Tale champions and historical Legends will perform. Register by email at kansasstorytelling@gmail.com or contacting Mike at (785) 545-5285.

The final qualifier will be held in Downs, the “Storytelling Capital of Kansas” on Saturday, October 11, 2025 at the Zion Lutheran Church; 1018 Blunt Street; Downs, KS. The Downs event begins at 7:00pm. Register by email at kansasstorytelling@gmail.com or

contacting Mike at (785) 454-1177.

A tall tale is a unique form of American Story Telling in which the narrator usually has a part in the story. Telling a Tall Tale uses exaggerated detail describing things larger than they really are. A tall tale is a story based on a fact, or facts, and filled with unbelievable elements told as if they were true and factual. A tall tale has just enough truth to make a good story and to incite the imagination. Professional storytellers can not compete. Information and rules for the Tall Competition are posted at kansasstorytellingfestival.com

Interested individuals •See Prelims, Page 6