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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025

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A crew from the City's water department braved sub-zero weather on Wednesday, February 19 to work on a broken water main on Broadway Street near Sixth.

## Record-breaking Temperatures

This week is a far cry from last week, when Concordia broke temperature records that had stood for over a century. A stretched polar vortex drove Arctic weather deep into the Plains, causing record-breaking temperatures across the Midwest. In Concordia, on February 19, the coldest high temperature recorded had been 16 degrees, set in 1929 and again in 1959. The record was broken this year

with an official high temperature of 4 degrees. The previous low temperature for Concordia on February 20 was -5 degrees, set in 1918, and -3 degrees in 1889. Concordia shattered that record with a low temperature of -9 degrees, the lowest recorded temperature in Concordia on that day since the National Weather Service began keeping records in 1870.

## City Commission closes CDBG, helps with Miltonvale EMS

Closeout of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and a temporary resolution to the Miltonvale EMS issue were two of the action items at the regular meeting of the city commission on Wednesday, February 19.

Mayor Amy Jackson was absent from the meeting.

The meeting began with a proclamation that designated the week of June 5-9, 2025, as Freedom – Celebrate and Remember in Concordia. The proclamation pays tribute to all who have served and are serving our country with dedication and honor.

Whereas veterans from all military branches of service have given their time and even their lives.

Whereas the American Veterans Traveling Tribute Team seeks to bring the wall to all areas of the United States.

Whereas we want to maintain a culture of honoring those who serve and praising those who support them.

Whereas we want to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Whereas we seek to educate the present and future generations so that history may never die.

Whereas knowing that freedom isn't free, the CPRT team encourages all persons to thank our Veterans and First Responders by showing them the utmost respect and to honor our fallen Heroes for their sacrifice.

A public hearing was then held to close out the CDBG. Deb Ohlde of the North Central Kansas Regional Planning Commission, the Grant admin-

istrator for Concordia CDBG, spoke briefly to commissioners congratulating them on the success of the program.

The CDBG grant of \$550,700 was used to purchase a new fire truck for the City at a cost of \$1,101,655. The balance was paid by grants from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Dane G. Hansen (DGH) Foundation. \$30,000 in local funds completed the purchase.

Ohlde reported that the CDBG monitoring had been completed with no findings. The City has also completed the close-out process with the USDA and completed final reporting with DGH.

There were no other public comments at the hearing, and it was closed.

In the action item portion of the meeting, commissioners authorized Mayor Amy Jackson to sign a document officially closing out the CDBG.

In other action, commissioners authorized City Manager Amy Lange to sign an Agreement of Professional Services with Campbell & Johnson Engineers P.A. for the completion of the Mill and Overlay projects on West 11th Street and Highland Drive, in the amount of \$24,000.

The City intends to move forward with the mill and overlay projects on Highland Drive between West 11th and 13th streets, and West 11th Street from Highland Drive to the City limits west of town. These projects are budgeted through the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the Special Highway Fund for the year 2025.

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PHOTO BY CYNTHIA WILSON

## Fatal Fire In Concordia

RUSSELL GAGNON

On the morning of February 20, a house fire at 211 East Fifth Street tragically claimed the life of Concordia resident Marcus Stedman, aged 58.

In an official statement released to the Blade-Empire, Concordia Police Chief Brent Gering stated: "On February 20, 2025, at approximately 11:06 a.m., the Concordia Police Department responded to a 911 call reporting a structure fire at 211 East Fifth Street in Concordia. The Concordia Police Department, alongside the Cloud County Sheriff's Department, The Concordia Fire Department arrived on the scene approximately three minutes after the initial call to 911. Fire Chief John Christensen stated: "Upon arrival, the Concordia Fire Department discovered the residence fully engulfed in flames, with thick smoke billowing from the structure. ... A rapid search was performed but the trapped occupant

could not be located due to heavy smoke and fire. Fire suppression was started and continued until 3:00 p.m. when we were able to finally extinguish all flames."

The fire department was on the scene with six vehicles: Ladder 1, Engine 1, Medic 4, Medic 5, Command 1, and Command 2.

The Concordia Fire Department had 10 firefighters on the scene; Rural District #4 had three firefighters, the Clyde Fire Department had one firefighter, the Kansas State Fire Marshal's office had two investigators, the Concordia Police Department had six officers, and Cloud County Sheriff's office had one deputy at the scene.

Chief Gering stated: "Tragically, at approximately 3:50 p.m., the body of 58-year-old Marcus Stedman was located inside the residence. Mr. Stedman was pronounced deceased on the scene."

See FIRE on 2



## Tribute Wall Fundraiser, set for March 1st

RUSSELL GAGNON

Fifteen years after its first appearance in Concordia, the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) wall is returning to Concordia on June 5-9.

An 80 percent scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the wall measures nearly 400 feet long. The Wall contains every name etched on the original memorial.

This year, AVTT also will display the

Cost of Freedom Tribute – smaller tribute panels honoring American sacrifices in conflicts through the 20th and 21st centuries, including World War I, World War II, 9-11, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Rita Goodwin is the senior coordinator for the Christian Patriots Remembrance Team (CPRT) which is bringing the wall back to Concordia. "I was the oldest member of the team, that's why they gave me that title," she said with a smile.

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