

Future Fund grant deadline nears

Staff Reports

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PITTSBURG, Kan. — The deadline to apply for the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas’ (CFSEK) Future Fund grant is quickly approaching. The final day to apply is Sunday, Aug. 31, at midnight. Held since 2006, the

CFSEK Future Fund grant cycle is a “phil-anthropic giving circle comprising friends and family of the Pittsburg area who pool their resources to make a difference in Crawford County.” Awarding nearly \$200,000 since its creation, and \$17,873 in 2024, the grants support various projects within

the Crawford County area for non-profit organizations, schools, religious institutions, and governmental institutions. Recipients of last year’s Future Fund grant included Catholic Charities Inc., Cato Historical Preservation Association Inc., CLASS LTD, Colorful Connections Club,

DBLO Association, Families and Children Together Inc., Family Resource Center Inc., Fostering Connections, Integrated Behavioral Technologies, Spark-Wheel, and Special Olympics Kansas. The funds helped fund community-focused events, laptops, educational events, bed packages, Thanks-

giving meal packages, support programs, cold weather items, and food warmers. “The Future Fund is a tremendous example of what collective giving can achieve,” said Devin Gorman, CFSEK executive director, in a release. “When a group of visionary leaders started the Future Fund Giving Circle 20

years ago, they had the vision to build an endowment that would support our community forever. What a great gift they provided for future generations!” For more information, contact CFSEK Program Coordinator Kara Mish-mash at SoutheastKansas.org/Contact/Kara.

MEASLES

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es involved people who were not vaccinated against measles. Officials urged Kansans to ensure their families’ vaccinations are up to date, especially as the school year begins. The outbreak most affected Gray, Haskell and Stevens counties. Gray County residents had the highest number of cases with 29 in-

fections. Vaccination rates among kindergarteners have been decreasing overall in each of those counties, with marked decreases in measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, vaccinations. In Gray County, MMR vaccination rates decreased by 10 percentage points between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years, according to data from KDHE. In

Haskell, there was a 14 percentage point decrease, and in Stevens County, a 15 percentage point decrease. The MMR vaccine is the most effective defense against measles, health officials said. KDHE officials said state and local health departments will continue to monitor for cases. Janet Stanek, KDHE secretary, said she was grateful to the public health, health

care and laboratory professionals who played a part in dealing with the measles outbreak. “Your compassion, skill and unwavering commitment to keeping our communities safe did not go unnoticed and are appreciated beyond measure,” she said. Measles is a contagious respiratory virus spread by droplets emitted while a

person talks, sneezes or coughs. Symptoms can include high fever, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. As

the virus develops, a skin rash that spreads across the body often appears.

BOOK

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price. From 11 a.m. to noon, patrons can purchase a bagful of books for a cheaper price. All funds will go to the Friends of the Public Library, which helps financially support the library’s children’s programs. Pittsburg Public Library is closed for

regular business over Labor Day Weekend. Regular hours will resume at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 2. The sale event will be canceled in case of rain. This reporting is made possible, in part, by the Support Local Journalism Project Fund. Learn more at: southeastkansas.org/Localnews

COUNTY

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on how the budget and property taxes are calculated. To break it down “Barney style,” the process begins in late April as the commission asks the various county departments to produce their own budgets. This is more-or-less a wish list from that department. Over the next few months, the commission meets with department heads to discuss their budgets, prioritizing what is needed and paring them down to what is essential. Then the commission begins building the budget, publishing a “worst-case” version of it in the county’s official newspaper (which is The Morning Sun). This published budget represents the absolute maximum the county is planning to spend for the next fiscal year. The final budget can be less than this published version, but it cannot exceed it. Once a final budget is hammered out, the commission then looks to set the mill levy for their share of property taxes. If the budget is less than the previous year, then the mill levy is set at a rate that is “revenue neutral,” meaning the county will not collect more money than it did the previous year. If the

commission considers exceeding that rate, which it does not have to do, it must conduct a public hearing (done during Friday’s regular meeting) in which the public can speak their piece, for or against. To determine the amount of the property tax, there are two main factors — the mill levy and the assessed value. The mill levy is controlled by the county commissioners. Each of the past six years, the commission has reduced the mill. Assessed value is determined by the property’s appraised value as set by the state and the type of property, such as residential, commercial, agricultural, etc, as these are assessed at different rates. Residential property is assessed at 11.5% of appraised value; commercial is 25% and agricultural is 30% of the income from the land. The appraised value is the fair-market value of the property. To determine this, county appraisers use a computer model that accounts for several variables that include the year the structure was built, square-footage, number and types of rooms (such as three bedrooms, two bath), includes a finished or unfinished basement/cellar, outside appear-

ance, and the sale value of similar homes nearby. This model then generates an appraised value. The county’s appraisals are required to be within 10% (90% to 110%) of the fair-market value of the property based on recent sales of similar properties in the area. If the county is outside of these parameters, the state reserves the right to send its own personnel to appraise the property values. For the past two years, Crawford County has not been “in compliance.” This year, it is. Now, let’s make this as clear as mud. “Tom” owns a home appraised at \$100,000. The assessed value of that home is 11.5% of \$100,000, or \$11,500, which is multiplied by the mill rate and divided by 1,000. If the county’s mill rate is 41.979, Tom pays the county \$482 in property taxes for the year. However, the city and school district will set their own mill rates as well, adding to the total property tax Tom owes. For simplicity, if the county, school and city each have the same mill rate, they would each collect \$482 from Tom, making his total property taxes for year approximately \$1,500. But Tom’s appraised value can fluctuate

based on sales of similar homes in his area. If Tom’s neighbor, “Jerry,” with a home of similar size and appraised value, decides to sell, it can affect Tom’s appraised value. If Jerry’s home sells for \$90,000 to \$100,000, that falls within the 10% range, so Tom’s taxes may fluctuate a little. But if Jerry sells his home for \$125,000, Tom’s home is now potentially worth \$125,000, raising his property taxes. That’s good for Jerry, bad for Tom. The inverse is also true. If Jerry sells too far below market value, it can lower the value of Tom’s home as well, which is good for Tom when paying his property taxes, but not so much if Tom is also looking to sell as his home is now worth less than it was. With a total valuation of \$386,047,059, the commission voted unanimously to exceed a revenue neutral rate of 41.979, keep 2025’s mill rate of 46.590 and set a budget of \$37,474,930 for 2026. That should clear everything up . . . until next year. This reporting is made possible, in part, by the Support Local Journalism Project Fund. Learn more at: southeastkansas.org/Localnews



Sage Hill

KHP

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situation awareness courses for the Patrol, including use of force and the integration of air support assets into law enforcement operations.” Originally from Parsons, Hill is the recipient of several

Commander’s Commendation Awards for exemplary service along with being the co-recipient of the Airborne Public Safety Association’s prestigious “Captain Gus Crawford” Aircrew of the Year Award in 2024.

Your Opinions Matter!

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey for the Crawford Comprehensive Plan so your voice can help us plan for the future.



For More Information, Call:
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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/crawfordcountycomprehensiveplan>



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