

Neighbors raise concerns over solar expansion and new quarry plans

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 28, 2025

BY PHILIP STEVENS
HOMETOWN GIRARD

►► All three Crawford County Commissioners were present Tuesday for the board's regular meeting at the courthouse in Girard. The session opened with the pledge of allegiance and approval of the previous meeting's minutes, then moved to public comment, where most discussion again focused on land-use concerns surrounding proposed solar and quarry projects.

Lisa Rhodes, representing Shasta Power, apologized to the board for her tone at the previous meeting and said she has been working with Pittsburg State University battery expert Dr. Gupta to ensure the company's solar project will use safe energy-storage systems. She said the group is evaluating lithium-iron battery technology and consulting with a chemical engineer from Sandia National Laboratories. Rhodes invited commissioners and neighboring city officials to tour PSU's energy research facility after 4 p.m. to meet with Gupta and other scientists. Commissioners Tom Moody, Bruce Blair, and Carl Wood expressed interest and agreed that expert testimony would be helpful as the county continues to study energy proposals.

Mulberry-area resident Danny Childers said his 17-acre property would be surrounded by solar panels if the Mulberry annexation proceeds, claiming the development would destroy property values and wildlife habitat. He asked commissioners to imagine living beside such a facility; all three said they would not buy property adjacent to a large solar farm.

Resident Becky Willard submitted a handwritten request asking commissioners to place a temporary moratorium on new industrial developments until the county's comprehensive plan is completed.

Eddie Weber raised a separate issue about a possible rock quarry near Sheridan Township, west of the Crossroads Baptist Church. He asked that it also be reviewed under any future moratorium. Nearby landowner Philip McNew and Judy Prince echoed those concerns, citing potential noise, blasting, truck traffic, and higher farmland prices that could push out local producers. County Counselor Jim Emerson said no zoning application has yet been filed. Still, he confirmed that the property lies within a zoned area, meaning Planning and Zoning would require public hearings before any permit approval.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker presented the month's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) expenditures, which the board approved in a single motion. The allocations totaled \$59,892 and included county comprehensive-plan survey work and billboard advertising, childcare grants for New Foundations and Sugar Creek, and an electronic medical-records upgrade for the Health Department. Commissioners asked for an updated report showing remaining balances, which Lusker said she would provide.

Emerson announced the public hearing for the City of Mulberry's annexation proposal will be held at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, in the third-floor courtroom of the courthouse. He emphasized that the hearing is limited to annexation, not a final decision on wind or solar policy. The commission's vote is expected during the Nov. 18 regular meeting.

Emerson also reported he will attend a 5:30 p.m. meeting Tuesday at the Pittsburg Public Library with the Southeast Kansas Recycling Center Board to discuss the center's future, with a follow-up work session scheduled for Friday at 9 a.m.

The board approved Resolution 2025-030, authorizing a lease-purchase agreement with Commerce Bank for six

sheriff's vehicles at 3.8 percent interest over 48 months, replacing the county's Enterprise lease program. A second measure, Resolution 2025-031, approved financing for a new jail generator through Labette Bank at 3.75 percent for 36 months. Emerson said both projects address aging infrastructure and will guide a broader facility-maintenance plan.

Before adjournment, commissioners entered two 15-minute executive sessions, one regarding the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau and another for attorney-client consultation on the comprehensive plan, with no actions taken afterward.

Lusker reminded residents that early in-person voting continues through noon Monday, Nov. 4 at the County Clerk's Office, noting about 270 voters participated in Saturday's advance-voting event at the Homer Cole Center in Pittsburg.

The commission will meet on Friday, Oct. 31, at 8:30 a.m. to sign bills and payroll, followed by a 9 a.m. work session with S.E.K. Recycling. Leslie Lackamp of Mosaic and Bob Davis of Class LTD are scheduled for Nov. 7 to present a county mill-levy report, and the Board of County Canvassers will convene Nov. 14 at 9 a.m. to canvass election results.

Events through November 7th



Building Strong Readers Ages 0-5 - Join us for Building Strong Readers - our story time program - at Girard Public Library on **Wednesday, November 5th at 10:00 and or Thursday, November 6th at 10:00 am!** Have some Thanksgiving fun with stories and a craft!

Children's Halloween Party Ages 5-11 - Join us for some Halloween fun at Girard Public Library on **Wednesday, November 5th at 2:30 pm!** Sign up is required - please call or stop by to sign up! Halloween stories, crafts, and games!

Wreath Making Class - Get into the holiday spirit with our Wreath Making Class on **Saturday, November 15th from 9:30 am - 11:00 am!** Sign up for the class is required - minimum of 5 sign ups to hold the class. Cost is \$20 and may be paid the day of the class. **Deadline to sign up for the class is Friday, November 7th.**

Crock-tober at Girard Public Library - Stop by Girard Public Library for some tasty samples as we celebrate Crock-tober! We will have crock-pot recipes to sample throughout the day on **Mondays in October.**

Library Hours

- Monday: 9:30 am - 7:00 pm
- Tuesday - Thursday: 9:30 am - 6:00 pm
- Friday: 9:30 am - 5:00 pm
- Saturday: 9:00 am - 2:30 pm
- Sunday: Closed

New Items at Girard Public Library

The following items are just part of the new items that have been added to our shelves recently. Stop by the library to find out what else we have added.

Adult Fiction

- *The Perfect Look* by Blake Pierce (Jessie Hunt #6)
- *The Perfect Affair* by Blake Pierce (Jessie Hunt #7)
- *The Perfect Disguise* by Blake Pierce (Jessie Hunt #10)

Children's Picture Books

- *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* Illustrated by Constanza Basaluzzo
- *Ghost Says Meow!: A Halloween Story* by Lauren Kukla
- *Chicka Chicka Tricka Treat* by Julien Chung
- *Let the Good Times Troll* by Annie Auerbach

Children's Board Books

- *Land of Snow and Ice: Frozen*
- *Warm Hugs: Frozen*
- *There's a Wocket in My Pocket* by Dr. Seuss

Magazines

- *Bible Advocate* Nov/Dec 2025
- *Countryside* Nov/Dec 2025
- *Popular Mechanics* Nov/Dec 2025
- *Sports Illustrated* November 2025
- *Southern Living* November 2025

Protest protesting: Go outside and enjoy nature

EDITORIAL

BY DAN THALMANN
Owner/ Washington County News

►► Saturday was a pleasant day. I spent it mostly outside.

A hectic week weighed on me, but fortunately, the weekend weather was cool enough to start outdoor sweatshirt season, but calm and sunny enough for a nature hike.

I walked out of town to a dirt road and soon I was distracted by the unique landscape and bountiful wildlife that surrounds us here in Washington County.

Patches of sumac blazed red. Trees and prairie grasses are transitioning to their autumnal attire.

The winter sparrows are returning from their northern breeding grounds. I identified a handful of Lincoln's Sparrows and some Harris' Sparrows. A covey of bobwhite quail blasted out of the brush almost under my feet.

Later, while listening for birds, a pair of racoons must not have noticed me

(I usually stand absolutely still, listening for and watching birds for long stretches of time) and they rambled out of the brush and over to a small watering hole where they took long drinks as frogs jumped into the water beside them. One took a swim and the other meandered around before finally noticing me. It froze. I never moved. They lumbered away.

Later, I was surprised to find a Gulf Fritillary butterfly resting on grass, then another flew over. I found a third later in my yard. We are outside their typical range, but a few have been spotted in Kansas this year. Blazing orange wings on top and an intricate black and white pattern below.

That afternoon, I took my grandkids on a golf cart nature tour, first around our yard, then out and about in the country. Flowers, birds, swirled sandstone outcroppings... everything was interesting. They wanted to play in the dirt. I forgot to bring my

phone, which also meant we were untrackable. I got in trouble. This grandpa has a tendency to test his limits with grandkids. But we had fun.

Simple days like this can be so enjoyable and memorable.

What I didn't see during my walk were any protesters.

I fail to see the benefit of spending time on social media intentionally seeking out contemporary political controversy and then taking it a step further by spending valuable time participating in nonsensical protests. Protesters who aren't even opposing specific bills or legislation... they're just mad they lost the last presidential election.

The world on your phone is not real. It is trying to manipulate you.

If you set the phone down for a day and get outside and do something, your mental health and physical health will improve. Repeat this enough and you'll break free from the hypnosis and

realize these massive social media companies don't care about reality, they just want to mine your minds.

I shared pictures of the Gulf Fritillary with several people. I don't know if I was showing the pictures to Republicans or Democrats, but I was very excited about this unique find. Still am. Not everyone shared my heightened enthusiasm. I get it. But the oddities of our rural outdoors are almost always received with interest.

There is common ground when focusing on such things. We don't need to focus our entire existence on politics and tribalization.

You don't have to go searching for fritillaries, but you won't regret breaking away from your phone once in a while, getting some sunlight on your skin and experiencing the world in real life. Five stars, highly recommend.

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Historical Re-enactments - History - Music - Food!

SCHEDULE

- 9:00 a.m. - SIGN-IN.
- 9:30 - Music and History in the Church.
- 10:30 - Cavalry Saber Drills.
- 10:45 - One-room School House presentation.
- 11:30 - Historical re-enactment (1860 Settler Removal).
- 12:00 p.m. - LUNCH BREAK with music. Food sales benefit the CHPA.
- 12:30 - Drawing for Quilt.
- 1:00 - Wagon ride and history tour.

You are welcome to arrive at any time; however, we kindly request that you sign our guest book.
Cato is 2 miles west and 1/2 mile north of Highway 69 on 720 Ave.
Cato Historical Preservation Association www.catoschool.com
1151 N 200th St., Arcadia, KS 66711



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