

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks special hunt application period now open

PRATT — Looking for a hunting experience without the crowds in some of Kansas' most unique locations? The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) Special Hunts program provides limited access to areas not normally open to hunting. More than limited-entry opportunities will be available this fall and winter. While access through the program is free, hunters must still meet all licensing and permit requirements under Kansas law.

Opportunities for deer, upland game, waterfowl, dove and furbearers will be offered, with hunts taking place on a mix of public lands, parks, private lands and other select areas. Managers, biologists, landowners and partners offer these hunts with safety, management, and positive relationships in mind.

All fall and winter special hunt opportunities are available through a single application period, open until July 29. Details of each special hunt and application details are available at ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Special-Hunts-Information. Successful applicants will be selected through a random draw-

ing.

"The Special Hunts program offers hunters unique opportunities to access generally restricted areas under certain conditions. Whether public land or private, because access is limited for safety and management reasons, these hunts can be high-quality experiences for a wide range of hunters," said Brian Serpan, KDWP Public Lands Regional Supervisor. "The Special Hunts program does not guarantee a successful hunt or large numbers of wildlife, but it provides a great opportunity to introduce someone to hunting, explore a new area and enjoy the Kansas outdoors."

Both Kansas residents and non-resident hunters can apply, though some hunts are restricted to residents only. When applying online, hunters will select hunts by species, date and one of four hunt type categories: open, youth, mentor or disabled.

Open Hunts are available to all applicants with no age or experience restrictions.

Youth Hunts require each hunting party to include at least one hunter age 17 or younger, accompanied by a non-hunting adult

age 18 or older. Some hunts may have more specific age requirements.

Mentor Hunts are designed for youth and novice hunters supervised by a licensed adult mentor age 18 or older. Both the novice and mentor may hunt, unless otherwise specified.

Disabled Hunts are intended for hunters with disabilities. Some hunts may have specific eligibility requirements.

The drawing of applicants will take place in early August, and all applicants will be notified by email in mid-August. Successful applicants will receive their hunt permit and any additional details via email.

Hunters are responsible for purchasing any licenses, permits, tags, or stamps required by law, and must have completed a certified Hunter Education course unless exempt. Nonresident deer hunters must have drawn a Kansas deer permit earlier in the year to be eligible for deer special hunts.

For more information about KDWP's special hunts program, visit ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Special-Hunts-Information.

Local students named to KU honor roll

LAWRENCE — Nearly 8,700 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, earned honor roll distinction for the spring 2025 semester.

Area students who made the honor roll include Chloe Havens and

Olivia Havens, Burlingame; Samantha Cofer, Piper Rolla and Olivia Truelson, Carbondale; Logan Hamlet, Lyndon; Paige Burk, Kaityn Gantenbein, Rylie Oswald and Tyler Oswald, Osage City; and Sarah Brdecka and Adelle Higbie, Overbrook.

Blue-green algae watches continue

TOPEKA — The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) have issued an update regarding public health advisories due to blue-green algae.

Added to the advisory list as of July 18 are King Lake and Wooster Lake, both in Lyon County. Both lakes are under a blue-green algae watch.

Also remaining under a watch are Melvern Outlet River Pond and Melvern Outlet Swim Pond, both in Osage County.

The watch status indicates that a harmful algal bloom is possible and may be present, and the water may be unsafe for humans and animals. Areas of algae accumulation should be avoided.

For more information, visit kdhe.ks.gov/HAB.

Commission

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Frances Deters, senior center director, submitted a resignation from James Ratliff, a dispatcher and driver, which was approved as a formality. Deters also requested approval to hire Susan Barnes as a full-time driver and dispatcher at \$16.25 per hour, with potential cross-training for additional roles. The commissioners approved the hiring, noting Barnes' strong references and the need to address staffing shortages at the senior center.

County Clerk Michelle Morris presented the 2026 budget proposal for the Lake Region Solid Waste Authority, which included a \$5,000 county dues contribution, consistent with prior years. The

commissioners approved the budget and appointed Trisha Webb as an alternate committee member, replacing Glenn Tyson, after confirming the appointment with relevant parties.

Morris also proposed adopting the state health insurance plan for county employees, effective January 2026, citing better coverage and lower employee costs compared to the current plan. The state plan, requiring a three-year commitment, was seen as a way to attract and retain employees amid competitive labor markets. Despite concerns about increased taxpayer costs, with the county covering a significant portion of premiums, the commissioners approved a letter of intent to move forward with the state plan, while requesting a cost comparison from the current

broker.

The meeting included a brief discussion on payroll changes submitted by Sheriff Wells, approving the resignation of Jackie Beatty, and the hiring of Katherine Shepard at \$19.75 per hour. The commissioners also addressed vendor bills totaling \$163,138.41, clarifying minor queries about specific payments, including an 83-cent water protection fee and a weekly payment to Key Staffing for contracted services.

A discussion on improving meeting efficiency and agenda management was deferred to the following week due to time constraints. The commissioners adjourned the meeting, planning to revisit the elevator modernization and meeting flow topics at their next session.

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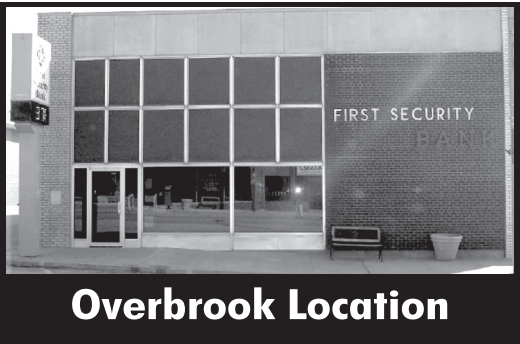
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