

COUNCIL GROVE REPUBLICAN

A Daily Newspaper on the Santa Fe Trail in Council Grove, Kansas Since 1872



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Briefly...

Correction: Scores were retailed in week 4 of the Pigskin Pick ‘Em, which showed Barb Adams as being the sole winner of the weekly contest. Adams, who correctly guessed 15 out of 18 contests, will receive a \$25 gift certificate that is redeemable at any of the contest’s sponsors.

This weekend’s Sethfest is a biennial family favorite with many music and art events for the whole family. The fun, spread throughout Council Grove on Saturday, October 10, begins at 9 a.m. and concludes at 10 p.m. The majority of the events are free. A schedule is available in the Tuesday, October 6 edition of the *Council Grove Republican* or on Facebook events at Sethfest 2026.

Reservoir Lake Level

Normal elevation1274.00
Current elevation1278.06

THREE-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

Corps of Engineers Readings,
Council Grove Reservoir

High and low
temperatures for the
24-hour period
ending this morning were
84 and 50, with the
8:00 am reading 56°.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 80. Northeast wind 5-10 mph becoming southeast. Mostly clear, with a low around 57.

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 83. South wind 5-10 mph. Clear, with a low around 62.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 84. South wind 10-20 mph with gusts to 25 mph. Clear, with a low around 63.



THURSDAY FORECAST

High 80
Low 57



The Council Grove Softball Club recently donated \$2,400 to the Council Grove Senior Center from proceeds of its benefit softball tournament. Pictured left to right are: Genna Edwards, Ricki Hughes, Tracey Oltmanns (CG Senior Center Site Manager), and Bailey Wiggins.

CG Council approves grants, advances City Lake projects

The Council Grove City Council approved more than \$14,000 in promotional sales tax funding Tuesday evening while also advancing a City Lake plat, two lake boundary adjustments and several community projects.

The Oct. 6 regular meeting also included requests from Fredrick Phillips American Legion Post 121, a tourism report from Destination : Council Grove Executive Director Zoey Wadick and discussion of possible naming rights for public park areas at Council Grove City Lake.

The council’s consent agenda included approval of \$41,748.85 in appropriations.

Wadick reported that work has begun on the 2027 Council Grove Guide, which will carry the theme “A Legendary Past and Still Making History.”

She also proposed a 30-day pilot program using three digital billboards in the Kansas City area to promote Candlelight Charm. The \$750 cost would come from the Convention and Visitors Bureau budget. Wadick said the billboards could generate between 68,000 and 99,000 impressions during the month. Council members supported moving forward with the program.

Wadick also received support to continue developing temporary branding for the Neosho Riverwalk Amphitheater. Two weddings are already booked there for 2027, and a new heavy metal and rock music festival, Flintlock, is planned for next spring.

She also announced that Council Grove will be named one of True West Magazine’s Top 10 Western Towns for 2027.

Candlelight Charm will return Nov. 14 with free horse-drawn carriage rides and additional vendors downtown. Home for the Holidays is being reworked into a one-night shopping event Dec. 12 and will include the return of a lighted Christmas parade.

City Administrator Nick Jones reported that he is awaiting a revised quote for downtown parking lines. He also said the Safe Routes to School Phase 2 project has been programmed and that he plans to begin the request-for-qualifications process for engineering services. Construction is expected in 2027.

Rebecca Elias, commander of Fredrick Phillips American Legion Post 121, received unanimous approval to include Greenwood and Sunny Slope cemeteries in the Wreaths Across America program.

The national program allows individuals to sponsor wreaths placed

on veterans’ graves. Elias said the Legion will administer the program and handle placement and removal of the wreaths.

The council also approved the Legion’s request for the city to construct a 3-foot-by-3-foot concrete pad near the military tank display for a collection box for worn and damaged American flags. Funding will come from the infrastructure general fund.

The council then considered three requests from the city’s promotional sales tax fund.

Nicky Tiffany of The Territory Ballroom requested \$5,000 for the

(See City Council, Page 5)

CG Softball Club blesses community

The Council Grove Softball Club raised \$2,400 for the Council Grove Senior Center during its 11th annual “Hit-Hard, Help Big” benefit softball tournament.

One hundred percent of the proceeds from the tournament, including team entry fees, meal sales and donations and sponsorships from local businesses, will be given directly to the Senior Center.

The annual tournament is part of the Softball Club’s continuing effort to give back to the community. During the past 11 years, the club has raised more than \$120,000 through its benefit tournaments, with all of the money directed back into the local community.

(See Softball Club blesses, Page 5)

USD 417 BOE begins bond planning, March vote favored

The USD 417 Board of Education reached a consensus Tuesday night to continue pursuing a facilities bond, with a majority of the board favoring a possible March election.

No formal action was taken on a bond amount, project scope or ballot question during the special meeting at the District Office. Those details will now be refined before returning to the board for consideration.

The meeting followed a series of community roundtables held to gather public input following the failure of the district’s previous bond proposal. Superintendent Tyson Eslinger said approximately 18 people attended the Council Grove roundtable and about 13 attended the Alta Vista meeting.

The relatively small turnout became notable considering criticism the district has received on social media regarding transparency and communication surrounding its facility needs and previous bond

proposal. Board members said the roundtables were intended to provide residents an opportunity to speak directly with board members, ask questions and discuss concerns. Eslinger said those who did attend provided useful feedback.

Much of Tuesday’s discussion centered on a need for clearer communication. Board members Patty Tally, Jessica Rohloff and Kelsey Hartman said residents wanted specific examples showing why projects are needed rather than simply being told classrooms are too small or facilities require improvements. Suggestions included additional photographs, videos and explanations showing how existing building conditions affect students and instruction.

The board also discussed confusion surrounding Building Blocks. Terry Powell said some residents appeared to believe USD 417 was operating a daycare, when Building

(See Begins bond planning, Page 2)



Mayor McDonald responds

When a recall effort was initiated against Council Grove Mayor Ryan McDonald on July 13, the *Council Grove Republican* reported that it would publish McDonald’s response. He has not officially responded until now. Below is McDonald’s official response to the recall group’s accusations.

With advance voting for the general election beginning next week, Council Grove voters will be asked whether I should be recalled as mayor. I believe voters deserve a clear explanation of the accusations behind that petition and the facts surrounding them.

The first accusation concerns a letter to the editor I wrote in May regarding personnel matters involving two city employees. The petition claims I “created legal and employment-related risk through the public disclosure of internal personnel matters.” I respectfully disagree.

My letter addressed matters concerning the operation of city government, including the resignation of a police officer and the circumstances surrounding a meeting involving the Chief of Police, the City Administrator and me. That meeting occurred on city property, during normal business hours, concerning the resignation of a city employee. Nothing I wrote was factually inaccurate, and the opinions I expressed were based on those facts.

The matters discussed involved the conduct and operation of city government and were matters of legitimate public concern. Kansas law recognizes that information concerning the operation of government and matters of legitimate public concern must be considered differently from purely private matters. I would

(See Mayor responds, Page 2)

Golfers compete at Anderson County

Council Grove golfers competed Monday at the Anderson County Meet, highlighted by a personal-best round from Desi Bachura. Bachura shot a 98 to place 17th overall and record a new personal best. Morgan Romme finished 34th with a score of 116, while Emily Teter placed 43rd with a 122.

Celebrating National Newspaper Week

Embracing Local Journalism for a Better Future

Do you have a good local newspaper? Take the test

By Ken Paulson

This is National Newspaper Week, a celebration of the role that papers and their online platforms play in our society. Candidly, it’s a tough sell. There are no parades, stores don’t have big sales and no one gets a holiday off from work or school. Besides, it’s hard to generate a lot of hoopla around a product introduced to America in 1690.

But that longevity cuts both ways. Those 336 years also suggest something that has served the American people long and well. We live in cynical and divided times with endless media platforms and it’s sometimes easy to forget how important it is to have a local news source with deep roots and a true history of commitment to the community.

That said, local newspapers need

to show that commitment every day. In an ever-more competitive environment, newspapers – and that includes print and online editions – cannot take your loyalty for granted.

Readers are entitled to ask, “I’ve subscribed for a long time. Is this still worth my investment?”

As an editor of a number of newspapers, including USA Today, I daily assessed the quality of each edition, asking myself if we were still doing the job that our readers expected. I’m sure many editors today do the same. I would invite all readers to do the same exercise, particularly if they’re on the fence about subscribing.

Here are some questions you might ask:

1. Does my newspaper carry more news and information about my town than any other outlet? Note that the question is not, “Does it carry more than it once did?” The economics of the news business have taken a toll on every outlet. My guess is that you’ll find local television to be outstanding on crime and weather. Local radio news is very timely and covers traffic in detail. But what about the big picture? What single outlet does the best job on news, sports, the arts and events?

2. Does my newspaper keep an eye on government and people in power? That need for accountability is the reason the first generation of Americans insisted on a free press. Does my newspaper cover the basics of local government? Is it telling me

(See Newspaper Week, Page 2)



MORE THAN \$22,000 AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS AT KANSAS JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW -- Twelve exhibitors were awarded a total of \$22,500 in scholarships ahead of the 2026 Kansas Junior Livestock Show (KJLS) Supreme Female Drive Saturday, October 3. With this year’s scholarships, the program has distributed \$620,050 to 423 juniors since its inception in 1993. Cassidy Dalquest of Wilsey received a \$2,750 scholarship. Pictured (L to R): Jewel Endicott, Uniontown; Ella Neher, Pfeifer; Genayla Warnken, Manhattan; John Aden Grathwohl, Hiawatha; Ella Hoeltzel, Olsburg; Cami Miller, El Dorado; Kamryn Kirkham, Hugoton; Kinsley Gillig, Blue Rapids; Leah Howard, Ellsworth; Katie Aubert, Rossville; Hannah Fieser, Plains; and Cassidy Dalquest, Wilsey.

