Wednesday, November 18, 2026

CHASE COUNTY

Explore the Flint Hills

Commissioners review insurance bids, approve health coverage renewal

by Jan Sciacca

The Chase County Commission voted Monday, November 16, to continue its employee health insurance coverage through UnitedHealthcare for another year and reviewed two proposals for the county's property and liability insurance, with a decision on the latter scheduled for November 30.

Warrants totaling $116,100.61 and the minutes of its November 9 meeting were approved at the beginning of the Monday meeting.

Commissioners received bids of $300,716 from KCAMP, a Kansas municipal self-insurance pool, and $295,122 from EMC Insurance, the county's longtime provider.

Christy Wright, an underwriter with KCAMP, presented the organization's proposal alongside member services representative David Lamb and risk manager Patrick Smith. Wright explained that KCAMP is a member-owned insurance pool serving Kansas counties, cities and other governmental entities.

The proposal includes property, liability, automobile, law enforcement and cyber coverage, along with risk management services. Wright noted that the county's cyber liability coverage would increase from its current $100,000 to $1 million. KCAMP also offers members an annual $2,000 risk avoidance grant and opportunities to recover up to 3% of their annual contributions by meeting certain risk management requirements.

Kirk Engle of Scribner Insurance presented the competing EMC proposal, noting that the company has insured Chase County for at least 40 years.

Engle said EMC's proposed coverage reflects an increase in insured property values from $31 million to $31.7 million, along with an increase in covered vehicles from 84 to 86. He also reported reductions in several insurance categories, particularly law enforcement liability, following a review of the Sheriff's Office policies and the county's level of risk.

Engle emphasized that EMC's proposal includes coverage for the county's drone, along with local service through Scribner Insurance.

Commission Chairman Tony Hazleton announced the bid amounts following the presentations. Commissioners indicated they would examine the coverage differences before selecting a provider at their November 30 meeting.

Commissioner Matt Miller reported that negotiations with UnitedHealthcare had resulted in an additional 2% reduction in the proposed renewal cost and a $30,000 premium holiday.

Commissioners discussed whether to introduce a health savings account (HSA) option but expressed concerns about adding another layer of complexity while employees are still becoming familiar with the existing insurance program.

Miller encouraged continued employee education, particularly regarding the claims process and the services available through Freedom Claims.

Commissioners also discussed the possibility of using county reserves to cover costs exceeding the amount budgeted for employee health insurance. Final financial figures were still being compiled.

Miller subsequently moved to continue coverage through UnitedHealthcare for another year. Hazleton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Dr. Caron Daugherty, president of Flint Hills Technical College (FHTC) in Emporia, provided commissioners with an overview of the college's workforce training programs, graduate employment and expansion plans.

Daugherty highlighted the college's commercial driver's license (CDL) training program, which includes a driving simulator that can be transported to communities for educational demonstrations. The simulator provides high school students and prospective drivers with an introduction to operating commercial vehicles.

She also reviewed the college's 2026 graduate placement report, noting that 93% of graduates remain in Kansas, with 87% of those graduates employed within the college's seven-county service area.

According to the college's economic impact study, FHTC contributes approximately $11.4 million annually in added income to the regional economy and supports 193 jobs.

Daugherty discussed plans for a 29,000-square-foot Advanced Industry Education Center that would accommodate the college's power plant technology and industrial engineering programs. Both have waiting lists but lack sufficient space for expansion.

She also recognized the college's partnership with Chase County Health through a mobile dental unit funded by the Patterson Family Foundation. The unit has already visited Chase County and is expected to return.

Daugherty, who has accepted the presidency of State Fair Community College in Missouri, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with Chase County and its residents.

County Attorney Brian Henderson reviewed a petition requesting the vacation of a rural county road, explaining that additional work is necessary before commissioners can proceed.

Henderson identified a potential additional adjoining landowner who may need to be notified and said the petition and description of the road segment should be clarified.

Under the required process, commissioners must appoint three disinterested Chase County householders to serve as viewers. The commissioners and appointed viewers would inspect the proposed road vacation before a public hearing and final determination.

Henderson explained that notices must be published and adjoining landowners formally notified.

Commissioners agreed to revisit the matter November 30, when potential viewers can be considered. No action was taken to vacate the road.

Commissioners discussed maintenance work at the courthouse, including the challenges of reaching high areas for courthouse Christmas lights. Miller reported that additional information and estimates are being sought for possible lighting improvements next year.

The next regular Chase County Commission meeting is scheduled for 8 a.m., Monday, November 30.

Christmas Dash 5K to kick off holiday festivities

Residents of all ages and fitness levels are invited to put on their running shoes and celebrate the holiday season during the Chase County Christmas Dash 5K on Saturday, November 28, in Cottonwood Falls.

Hosted by Harshman Creek, 306 Broadway, the free event is part of the annual Chase County Country Christmas celebration. Participants may run, walk or simply enjoy the morning with friends and family.



The festivities will begin at 8 a.m. with the Kiddos' Fun Run, a one-block race open to children of all ages. At 8:20 a.m., participants can choose between a 5K course and a shorter one-mile route. A mile marker will be provided for those choosing the shorter distance.

Organizers emphasize that the event is strictly for fun, with no registration required. Participants need only show up and join in.

Water, fruit and muffins will be available while supplies last.

Families and individuals are encouraged to wear festive attire and take part in the holiday activity, regardless of age or athletic ability.

The Christmas Dash will help launch Saturday's Chase County Country Christmas activities, bringing residents and visitors together for a morning of exercise, holiday spirit and community fellowship.

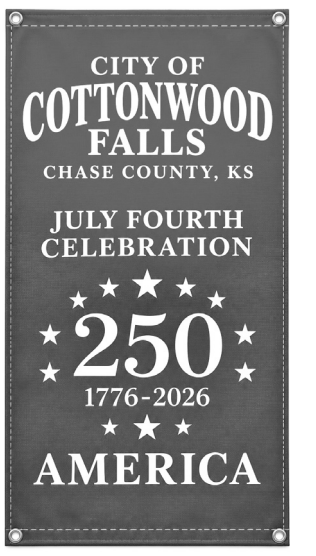
More information is available on the Harshman Creek Facebook page.



NEFF EARNS ALL-STATE HONORS -- Chase County volleyball player Natalie Neff has earned Class 2A All-State Honorable Mention recognition for the 2026 season, according to an announcement this week by Coach Brent Monihen. The honor follows another milestone for Neff, who surpassed 1,500 career assists in September, setting a school record.

CF offers banners, flags to support fireworks display

The City of Cottonwood Falls is offering commemorative banners and flags celebrating America's 250th anniversary, with proceeds benefiting the city's annual Fourth of July fireworks display.



The patriotic banners, measuring 18 inches wide by 36 inches tall, feature a red, white and blue design recognizing the nation's 250th anniversary, 1776-2026. The banners are available for $50 each, while commemorative flags are priced at $85 each.

The city announced a limited supply of 18 banners and three flags. All purchases must be paid in full when the items are picked up.

Proceeds will be allocated to the annual fireworks display sponsored by the City of Cottonwood Falls.

Those interested in purchasing a banner or flag may contact the Cottonwood Falls City Office at 620-273-6666 or stop by City Hall at 220 Broadway St.



Adopt a Resident offered by Chase County Care & Rehab

Chase County Care & Rehab is inviting community members to participate in its 2026 Adopt a Resident Christmas program.

Individuals interested in adopting a resident for the holiday season may contact Heather VanDegrift at 620-273-6369 or stop by the facility for additional information.



APPRECIATION BREAKFAST: Chase County Care and Rehab showed its appreciation for local firefighters, EMS personnel, first responders and law enforcement officers Friday morning by hosting a special breakfast in their honor. Guests were treated to coffee, orange juice, biscuits and gravy, and cinnamon twists. Residents also prepared personal thank-you letters, and each guest received a Mission Health coffee mug. The kind gestures were warmly received by those attending, who expressed their gratitude for the support, generosity and encouragement they receive from the community.

CHASE COUNTY SHERIFF REPORT

November 8

Car v deer, no injuries; US-50 & middle creek, motorist assist; EMS medical-general, transported to Newman's; Flint Hills One Stop, vehicle lockout; MM329 US-50, loose cow; MM319 US-50, traffic stop, verbal for speed; Car v deer, no injuries.

November 9

EMS medical-abdominal pain, transported to Newman's; MM334 US-50, deceased deer in the road; MM16 K-150, traffic control; EMS medical-fall, non-transport; US-50 & ED Rd, motorist assist.

November 10

K-177, traffic control; EMS medical- chest(cardiac), transported to Newman's; MM38 K-177, traffic stop, verbal for tail light; EMS medical- fall, non-transport; MM325 US-50, suspicious subject; MM313 US-50, traffic stop, cited 80/65.

November 11

Flint Hills One Stop, agency assist; MM8 K-150, agency assist; EMS medical-fall, non-transport; MM16 K-150, reckless driver; US-50 & Z Rd, traffic control/road hazard; Cottonwood Falls, vehicle lockout; MM334 US-50, traffic stop, cited 85/65; MM320 US-50, traffic stop, cited 79/65; MM325 US-50, traffic stop, warning for defective headlight; Flint Hills One Stop, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM334 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM316 US-50, warning for speed; MM315 US-50, warning for speed.

November 12

MM314 US-50, agency assist; MM318 US-50, motorist assist; EMS medical-fall, non-transport; MM317 US-50, traffic stop, verbal for headlights.

November 13

MM43 K-177, car v deer non-injury; Adult welfare check; US-50 & ZZ Rd, car v deer; US-50 & YY Rd, stand by; MM323 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed.

November 14

Car v deer, Cottonwood Falls; Scam report; Chase County Lake, motorist assist; Strong City, suspicious subject; MM321 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM316 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM315 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM315 US-50, traffic stop, warning for headlight; MM324 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM324 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM324 US-50, traffic stop, warning for speed; MM325 US-50, traffic stop, warning for headlights.

November 15

EMS, medical-fall, transported to Newman's; K-177 car v deer non-injury; MM316 US-50, traffic stop, cited 75/65; MM317 US-50, traffic stop, cited 94/65; MM317 US-50, traffic stop, cited 85/65; MM318 US-50, traffic stop, cited 80/65.



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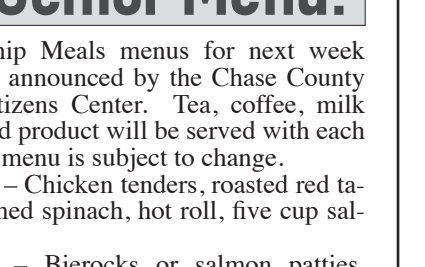
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This project funded in part by the KDOT Public Transit Program

CHASE COUNTY



History Shorts

Chase County, named after Salmon P. Chase, who was United States Senator from, and Governor of, Ohio, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was organized in 1859. The Cottonwood River flows through the county in a general northeasterly and easterly direction, emptying into the Neosho, in Lyon County.

CHASE COUNTY SENIOR CENTER

Senior Center News ~ *November 20 through November 27, 2026*

By Jessica Kelly

We are asking that you join us for Thanksgiving Dinner and Thanksgiving BINGO on Friday, November 20! Jene Burenheide will offer blood pressure checks from 11 a.m. until noon and again, we'll play Thanksgiving BINGO after lunch. Call early to reserve your meal, as the dining room will fill quickly. Deb Andres will again be in to help with Medicare Part D on Monday, November 23. If you still need an appointment, call ASAP, to schedule one as we are about out of open enrollment and appointments. We'll also celebrate National Cashew Day and enjoy music by Kathleen Lane and Nancy Brock before and after lunch. Thank you, ladies. Tuesday, November 24, is our monthly Birthday Party and Wheel-of-Fortune for November. We will celebrate National Cake Day, and who doesn't love cake? We'll hand out a Happy Birthday Fun Sheet before lunch, followed by Wheel-of-Fortune, after lunch. You won't want to miss the fun. We'll celebrate National Jukebox Day and National Be Thankful Day, with a Happy Thanksgiving fun page before lunch on Wednesday, November 25th. Be thinking of something you are THANKFUL for. The Senior Center will be closed for Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 26th and also on Friday, November 27th, so that our staff and volunteers can spend time with family. If you do not have plans, a free community Thanksgiving dinner will be served at St. Anthony's Hall on Thanksgiving Day from 11:30 to 1 p.m. And don't forget that Saturday November 28th is Chase County Country Christmas, with activities throughout the day and the Courthouse Lighting at 7 p.m. It is always a fun time and we thank all that help to put on the Thanksgiving Dinner and also Country Christmas. We are so blessed to be a part of such a great community.

To make your reservations for dine in, carryout, or delivery, please call 620-273-8511 any time BEFORE 9:30 a.m., or better yet, get on our regular meal list. Then you will only have to let us know if you are NOT going to eat.



Fellowship Meals menus for next week have been announced by the Chase County Senior Citizens Center. Tea, coffee, milk and a bread product will be served with each meal. The menu is subject to change.

Monday – Chicken tenders, roasted red tators, creamed spinach, hot roll, five cup salad.

Tuesday – Bierocks or salmon patties, sweet tator fries, succotash, hot roll (with salmon), cinnamon applesauce.

Wednesday – Roast beef, mashers with gravy, green beans, hot roll, peach parfait

Thursday - Closed

Friday - Closed