



Advance tickets available for 2026
Wild West Festival
A3

THE HAYS DAILY NEWS

SERVING ELLIS COUNTY
SINCE 1929

CHERRYROAD MEDIA | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026 VOL 96 NO. 33

\$2.00

Wasinger touts session successes

By Gaille Pike

Special to the Hays Daily News

State Rep. Barbara Wasinger outlined several achievements from this year's Kan. legislative session — one of the shortest in at least a decade — during a report to city commissioners last week.

Among the successes Wasinger cited were a 1.5% reduction in government spending, overrides of some of Gov. Laura Kelly's vetoes, "the bathroom bill," closure of a Second Amendment ammunition loophole and passage of the Charlie Kirk bill to protect free speech on college campuses. Other legislation Wasinger described as accomplishments included the school cellphone ban, a school recess requirement, kratom restrictions and protections for medical cost-sharing associations such as Medi-Share.



2026 City Water Line Project Map

But according to Wasinger, her greatest triumph of the 2026 Kan. legislative session was passage of the local control/water bill, HB 2433.

"I have asked for years what can I do to help, and this year when I was finally asked to do something, I thought, by golly,

I'm going to make that pass or I'm going to die. So I spent a lot of time on it," Wasinger said. She described the time and effort required to get a bill through the Legislature. "I got it through the House with only two noes out of 125 people. That was pretty exciting for

me," Wasinger said. She said the real work then began in the Senate, with repeated meetings with Senate leadership and committee members and back-and-forth negotiations over contracts.

"It was a great day for the cities of Hays and Russell, and I am deeply



Representative Barbara Wasinger

honored I had the ability to help with that," Wasinger said.

Wasinger sponsored HB 2433, which clarifies county authority over

water transfers and places that authority with the chief engineer and water transfer hearing panel.

SEE TOUTS A2

City commissioners, 3-1, support Speno's CDBG request

By Gaille Pike

Special to the Hays Daily News

Speno's One Twenty Seven Investments LLC is seeking \$300,000 in CDBG funds through the program, which is designed to assist private property owners in the rehabilitation of blighted structures and prevent the spread of blighted conditions. Though the program funds projects owned and operated by private developers, cities and counties are still required to be the official applicants for the CDBG funds. The city supported the project for the same grant program last year; however, it was unsuccessful because of a lack of available 2025 CDBG funds.

During the May 28, 2026, commission meeting, Mayor Mason Ruder, along with fellow commissioners Shaun Musil and Sandy Jacobs, again supported Speno's CDBG request. Commissioner David Vilaysing voted against all three CDBG motions on the agenda.

Before the votes, a public hearing was held. No citizens offered comments. Following the hearing, Speno and his grant writer, Brett Wagner, answered questions and concerns raised by Vilaysing.

"To give you some background, I took 50% of my personal retirement out of the stock market and invested into Hays real estate because I believe in Hays," Speno said. He said that he and his family are not moving, so when he reaches retirement, he intends to operate the property as a business owner and have his own restaurant on the property.



Left side: Hays Developer Tim Speno; Right Side L-R Commissioners: Mason Ruder (Mayor), Shaun Musil, Sandy Jacobs and David Vilaysing



Vilaysing said he appreciated Speno's investment in the community, but believed the project should not be funded by taxpayers.

"I did a little bit of research on you. I know you live in a house that's almost half a million dollars, and you own almost half a million dollars of property in town," Vilaysing said. He added that his belief, and the belief of many of his constituents, is that taxpayers could save money if "we stop paying for rich people to get richer."

"I appreciate you wanting to make Hays better, but I don't like it at the expense of taxpayers," Vilaysing said.

"It doesn't matter what kind of house you live in. Yes, it's taxpayers' money, but it is a fact that if we don't get the grant money in Hays, it's going somewhere," Musil said. He added that many people visit Hays because of the downtown area. "I hope we can continue that, so that's, to me, what we're voting on: we're allowing the process," Musil said.

"It is not lost on me the amount of investment you put in this community. I have great respect for it. I also am

excited that it's downtown. I have talked since the very beginning, 25 years ago, when we started developing downtown, that one of the greatest things we could accomplish to make it successful is to have a residential area, and that's what's growing. We appreciate that," Jacobs said.

Ruder voiced his support for the project's CDBG application. He also suggested it is possible to disagree with how the federal and state governments spend money, yet support local investment and development through the CDBG program.

"These are dollars that will be seen and tangible immediately come back to you. Banks aren't giving away money with no return on it. If you want a construction rehabilitation loan from a bank with 6% to 8.5% interest, then you're going to have to charge the business owner downstairs more rent or raise the cost of your Airbnb units," Ruder said. He said he would rather have his tax dollars come right back into the community to someone who lives here rather than to an outside



1012 Main Street, originally constructed in 1917 as the Hays Building and Loan Association.

developer interested only in flipping a property. "Knowing what you've done in the community I love and what you continue to do, I appreciate that," Ruder said.

J Corp wins 23rd Street water line bid

By Gaille Pike

Special to the Hays Daily News

On May 28, Hays city commissioners accepted J Corp's \$511,411 bid for a project to upgrade the water line along 23rd Street between Lincoln Draw and Fort Street. Improvements include replacing the water line, upgrading fire hydrants in various locations, installing new meter

cans and meters, and replacing one-third of the concrete street along the route.

According to Hays Water Resources Director Jeff Crispin, staff has spent significant time fixing main breaks along this stretch of 23rd Street over the past two winters. The project replaces a 4-inch water main

in residential areas that has had nine breaks and water quality issues in the

past.

Crispin, who presented J Corp of Hays' bid, the lower of two received, noted that the company has performed water line installations in Hays for many years and that its work has been excellent. He also said the J Corp bid is nearly \$45,000 below the engineer's estimate for the project. Work is expected to begin by the end of summer and be completed by

December.

"We appreciate this being under budget, and it'll be good to get it taken care of," Mayor Mason Ruder said.

"I would add that we have these guys go out in the middle of the night when we have these breaks, and that adds a lot of hours, so overall it will save even more as we take care of this," Commissioner Shaun Musil said.

Obituaries
A2

Game and Puzzles
A4

Sports
A6

Comics
A5

Hays Daily News
To subscribe 316-804-7720
© 2026 \$2.00
CherryRoad Media



6 65356 00075 5