

Honoring those who served



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC MEYER

An honor guard and bugler from the Florence American Legion post made the rounds to three cemeteries Monday, making a traditional volley of three shots from a firing party before sounding “Taps” at Marion Cemetery, where more than 60 people honored veterans and listened to a brief speech about former classmate by Casey Case.



STAFF PHOTO BY DEBRA STEELE

An impressive avenue of flags greets visitors Monday at Pilsen Cemetery.

Marion seeking new building inspector

By JUDD WEIL

Staff writer

Building inspector James Masters soon will leave Marion for a full-time position with Council Grove, prompting a search for a replacement.

A replacement may be hard to find, city administrator Brian Wells said, “Because of his caliber of work.”

Masters’ final day is Thursday.

The city has advertised the position through code-enforcement associations across Kansas but had not yet received applications, Wells said.

Until the position is filled, inspection duties likely will be divided among Wells, city police, and city’s electricians.

No projects are expected to be delayed because of the transition.

Masters worked in Council

Grove before being hired by Marion. He said the opportunity to return appealed largely because it was closer to home.

Council Grove city administrator Nick Jones said Masters left the city a few years ago on good terms.

“We’ve always talked about him coming back,” Jones said, “and we had an opportunity to bring him back, so that’s what we did.”

“James is a great guy, and has done a good job everywhere he’s been, so we’re excited to get him back.”

The Council Grove council voted 6-0 May 5 meeting to offer Masters the job full-time.

Masters said there have been discussions about whether he might continue working for Marion in a limited capacity after the transition but that no arrangement has been made.

Courtroom
A/V project
approved

By JUDD WEIL

Staff writer

County commissioners approved a grant-funded courtroom sound and technology project Tuesday while continuing discussions about county spending and outside funding requests.

Commissioners approved improvements to the courtroom after county administrator Tina Spencer presented a proposal that had not been included among meeting documents because final grant information arrived late.

The project will be paid for with a \$51,578.19 grant awarded by the Office of Judicial Administration to the 8th Judicial District.

It includes \$21,580 in acoustical wall treatments and \$29,998.19 in technology upgrades, including a new projector, additional cameras for virtual proceedings, and upgraded video equipment.

The work was intended to address sound-quality problems caused by high ceilings and hard surfaces, Spencer said.

Sound-absorbing ceiling tiles were not recommended because the ceiling was part of a previous historic preservation.

The project was approved unanimously with commissioner Mike Beneke absent.

Before the vote, public comment centered on last week’s allocation of \$42,000 to Marion County Conservation District. Brandy Smith urged commissioners to exercise greater restraint as budget as residents struggling with high taxes and rising costs.

Commissioners agreed to

creating a standard process for outside agencies requesting county money. Future requests should include financial statements, explanations of county benefit, and organizational background information.

Commissioner Clarke Dirks pushed for the policy, which was endorsed unanimously.

Commissioners also unanimously agreed to seek proposals for county auditing.

Spencer said the county had used the same auditor, Varney and Associates of Manhattan, for several years.

Gehring proposed seeking proposals every three years.

In other business, appraiser Nikki Reid delivered a quarterly update that prompted questions about the county’s EagleView aerial-imagery contract.

Dirks questioned the cost of the multi-year agreement while commissioner Kent Becker asked whether newer technology eventually might offer less expensive alternatives.

The imagery is used by the appraiser’s office, planning and zoning, mapping, emergency services, and local cities, Reid said.

She also reported that informal property-tax appeals fell from 120 last year to 59 this year.

Commissioners briefly revisited last week’s contract for custodial services after Becker said he still preferred waiting a week before voting on contracts.

Becker voted against awarding a three-year contract to Jani King of Wichita last week. He said local economic impact should be considered along with cost.

PEABODY: City council
fills 1 of 3 vacancies

FROM PAGE 1

als ranging from about \$2,430 in maintenance work to more than \$70,000 for replacement of warning sirens and automated weather activation systems.

Instead, court clerk Pandea Smith asked council members for guidance on hiring a Spanish-language interpreter for upcoming municipal court sessions.

Smith explained an interpreter likely would be needed in June and possibly July. She presented two options: Wichita-based Mid-American Language Services at \$85 an hour

with a two-hour minimum and another Wichita-based interpreter charging \$65 an hour plus mileage and drive time.

Council members discussed whether interpreters’ certifications needed to be verified and whether Zoom interpretation could reduce costs before tabling the matter until a future meeting.

Council members also approved two infrastructure-related pay estimates tied to ongoing grant-funded utility projects.

One authorized \$278,213.84 for the Walnut Phase 2024 wa-

ter improvement project. Another approved \$280,427.03 tied to a city electrical project.

Council member Linda Martinez said the city soon would need to discuss fireworks regulations ahead of Independence Day.

Council members authorized officer Charles Walker to help enforce existing nuisance and tall-grass ordinances after Penner said some weed complaints were not being addressed quickly enough.

HOSPITAL: Unsuccessful
candidate criticizes ex-officials

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cause he does not reside within the district.

During candidate remarks, Winkler revisited previous controversies surrounding the hospital, including disputes involving Lanning Pharmacy and former hospital leaders.

Winkler acknowledged leaking information to the newspaper during that dispute.

The election followed Haines’ annual report, which

highlighted continued outpatient growth and improved finances.

Haines reported outpatient procedures surpassed 100,000 in 2025, continuing a years-long trend toward outpatient rather than inpatient care.

Chief financial officer Bev Reid said the hospital posted \$29 million in gross operating revenue during the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, an 8% increase from the previous year.

The hospital recorded a \$430,000 operating loss in fiscal year 2025, though that was a 46% improvement from the prior year, Reid said. After including non-operating income, the hospital finished with a \$1.2 million bottom line.

Haines also highlighted employee retention. He said the hospital’s average employee had worked there for seven years four months — nearly double the statewide hospital average of 3.9 years.

CRASH: 2 seriously injured

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said Cooper suffered a head injury, retrograde amnesia, and possible leg fractures.

Marion ambulance transported him to Wesley after crews initially planned to take him to Newton. They were di-

verting because of the severity of his condition.

The driver also was transported to Wesley as a level-one trauma patient with a possible head injury, Price said.

A third injured person, the

47-year-old female, reportedly went to a hospital by private vehicle.

All four occupants were from Cottonwood Falls, Starkey said.



Marion's
Central Park

CHINGAWASSA Days

FRIDAY
June 5

5 p.m.
BEER
GARDEN

5:30 p.m.
COMMUNITY
BARBEQUE

6 p.m.
ICE CREAM
SOCIAL

9 p.m.
EDDIE
AND THE
GETAWAY

6:30 p.m.
PETTY CASH

7:30 p.m.
LECADE

SATURDAY
June 6

9 p.m.
ELI YOUNG BAND

6:30 p.m.
JARED BARNEY

7:30 p.m.
JARON BELL

SUNDAY
June 7

10:30 a.m.
COMMUNITY CHURCH SERVICE
Speaker Christian Davis at MHS PAC

Fun for all ages!

Pancake feed • Cornhole tournament • Bed races • Bingo
Watermelon feed • Face painting • Disk golf • Scavenger hunt
Inflatables • Dinky ducks • Rock-paper-scissors • Jenga
Human battleship • Paper airplanes • Heads/tails • Pucker up

Buttons required for evening and some other events. Buy yours at
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