

Riverwalk Park pond under KDHE ‘Watch’ status due to algae bloom

Neodesha’s Riverwalk Park Pond is currently off-limits due to a Hazardous Algae Bloom.

A sample of the water was taken by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment on July 20, and the results of that testing put the pond in a “Watch” status in KDHE’s weekly reports. The water recreation season in Kansas officially runs from April 1 to Oct. 31, as do the harmful algae blooms response program’s active operations.

Neodesha City Administrator Brogan Jones shared KDHE’s findings with city commissioners at the July 22 regular meeting.

The sample taken from Neodesha Riverwalk Park Pond showed 136,492 Cells/mL and < 0.3 µg/L of toxin (Microcystin).

As long as there are no last-minute changes, Jones said, the Watch Advisory for Neodesha Riverwalk Park Pond will remain in effect. Signage is posted at public access areas; the pond is tentatively scheduled for resampling on Monday, Aug. 3.

Also at the meeting, Mayor Devin Johnson read a proclamation for National Night Out 2026, which will be held Aug. 5 at the Civic Center, hosted by the Neodesha Police Department. The event fosters positive relationships between law enforcement, residents, and local organizations.

A public hearing on the dangerous structure at 1318 N. 8th was opened as a separate agenda item being considered independently by the commission, having been tabled on June 10. An ordinance establishing a timeframe for the property owner to achieve compliance and outlining the next steps in the process should the property remain out of compliance, died for lack of a motion to approve; however, the commission approved Ordinance 1833 as presented, authorizing a yard abatement 1318 N. 8th.

This was tabled to allow additional time for progress to be made on the property. Since that time, the opportunity for progress has been provided, and the matter is now before the commission for consideration.

Commission sees first draft of FY27 county budget

Wilson County Coordinator Kris Marple presented the first draft of the county’s FY2027 budget for discussion at the July 22 regular-session commission meeting. Nothing was finalized after discussion.

The commission had a sparse agenda, with just three Neighborhood Revitalization Plan agreements to review. Marple presented NRP applications from Steve and Michelle Finley, Tyler and Shawna Appelhans, and Will and Christine Preset. All were approved.

In other business, commissioners:

- Received the SEK Regional Juvenile Detention Center board meeting quarterly report;
- Approved warrants in the amount of \$206,023 and payroll totaling \$127,612;
- Received employee overtime reports.

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It is at the commission’s discretion to determine the appropriate course of action regarding the property.

In other business, commissioners approved the city’s investment policy as presented to ensure compliance with the requirements of House Bill 2152 and authorize staff to implement the policy. HB 2152 modifies Kansas law regarding the deposit and investment of public funds. This action will update the city’s investment practices to comply with the new state requirements effective January 1, 2026.

The commission will reconvene in regular session at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12 at City Hall.

Local group among grant recipients from Sunflower Foundation

TOPEKA — Furthering its commitment to building a stronger, more sustainable nonprofit sector, Sunflower Foundation has awarded nearly \$54,000 to 11 Kansas organizations to help them drive donor growth, including one from Fredonia.

From the first contact with prospective donors, to cultivating relationships, to securing long-term partnerships, donor development is critical to a nonprofit’s success. However, many organizations lack the resources to strategically manage this process. Sunflower’s donor development accelerator grants provided funds for nonprofits looking to create, test, or implement strategies for cultivating philanthropic support.

Findings in The Center for Effective Philanthropy’s State of Nonprofits 2026 report point to challenging times for nonprofits, with 66 percent of CEOs surveyed citing concerns about their organization’s financial stability.

“Knowing that our nonprofit partners are facing challenging financial outlooks, we viewed these grants as an opportunity to help them diversify their funding and build a broader network of supporters,” said Carlie Houchen, Sunflower’s director of Health Systems.

The following organizations received grants, which were capped at \$5,000:

- CASA of the High Plains, Hays, \$5,000
- Children’s Advocacy Centers of Kansas, Wichita, \$5,000
- Climate and Energy Project, Kansas City, Kan. \$5,000
- Full Circle Sustainability, Topeka, \$4,800
- HealthCore Clinic, Wichita, \$5,000
- Immunize Kansas Coalition, Topeka, \$5,000
- Kansas Land Trust, Lawrence, \$5,000
- Kansas Rural Center, North Newton, \$4,998
- Kansas Sampler Foundation, Inman, \$4,165
- Sunlight Children’s Services, El Dorado, \$5,000
- **The Building Community, Fredonia, \$5,000**

The grant program was open to eligible organizations that participated in The Dynamics of Donor Development virtual learning series, a free

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Rob Morgan/Neodesha Derrick News



4-H member Elliot Studebaker shares a laugh with the judge while having his rabbit evaluated at the Wilson County Fair last week. Below, 4-H members exhibit their cattle at the beef show. More fair results will be available in a later edition of the Citizen.

Rob Morgan/Neodesha Derrick News



Aug. 4 primary election ballot includes federal, state, local offices, constitutional amendment

Advance voting has begun for the Aug. 4 primary election.

As of Tuesday morning, Wilson County Clerk and Election Officer Kayla Busch said 116 people had opted to cast their ballots early; this option is available in the clerk’s office until noon on Monday, Aug. 3. Just as when voting on election day, voters must provide government-issued photo identification.

In addition to whittling down the sea of candidates, this primary election includes a Constitutional Amendment that focuses on how Kansas Supreme Court justices are appointed.

Currently, justices are appointed by the governor, through recommendations by the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission. The amendment in question would create partisan elections and six-year terms for justices, to be voted on statewide.

The explanatory statement on the ballot explains that the proposed amendment would give voters the right to elect Kansas Supreme Court justices with elections for positions 1, 2 and 3 in 2028; positions 4 and 5 in 2030; and positions 6 and 7 in 2032, and every six years thereafter. Any vacancy on the court leaving an unexpired

term will be filled at an election as provided by law.

This means that a YES vote would give Kansas residents who are duly registered to vote the right to elect Kansas Supreme Court justices as provided bylaw. The Kansas Supreme Court nominating commission, whose membership consists of a majority of lawyers, would be abolished.

A NO vote would continue the status quo, with the Kansas Supreme Court nominating commission providing a list of three qualified individuals to the governor to choose from for vacancies on the Kansas Supreme Court. Justices hold office for six-year terms and retain their offices if they win a retention election in which they do not face an opponent.

The ballot presents the question preceding redacted lengthy verbiage of the current procedure.

Local ballots also include races for Kansas Senate and Congressional House District 2 seats, as well as governor, secretary of state, attorney general, state treasurer, insurance commissioner, state board of education, house of representatives for District 13, and Wilson County commissioner.

Following is a list of candidates on the Aug. 4 primary

ballot: *(i) indicates incumbents.

Kansas Senate
R — Roger Marshall (i), Pond Narimore

D — Damon Anderson, Chrity Davis, Adam Hamilton, Jason Hart, Kevin Latz, Erik Murray, Sandy Neumann, Anne Parelhar, Patrick Schmidt, Michael “Mike” Soetaert, Noah Taylor

US House of Representatives 2nd Congressional District

R — Derek Schmidt (i), Chad Young

D — Dan Coover

Wilson County Commission District 1

R — Gerald “Jerry” Scott

(i)

Kansas Governor
R — Ty Masterson, Charlotte O’Hara, Nick Reinecker, Stacy Rogers, Philip Sarnecki, Vicki Schmidt, Scott Schwab

D — Ethan Corson, Cindy Holsher, Curt Skoog

Secretary of State
R — Pat Proctor

D — Jennifer Day, Samuel Lane

Attorney General
R — Kris Kobach (i)

D — Chris Mann

State Treasurer
R — Stephen Johnson

D — Juan Luengo

Kansas Insurance Commissioner
R — Daniel Hawkins

D — Dinah Sykes

Kansas State Board of Education
R — Destry Brown, Kristian Gerkan, Renee Slinkard

D — Heather Guernsey

House of Representatives
R — Duane Droge (i)

D — Mark Remmert

ASL group to meet Aug. 15 in Fredonia

A new group is seeking to support deaf and hard-of-hearing people in southeast Kansas.

The first meeting for SEK ASL (American Sign Language) will be from 5-9 p.m. Aug. 15 at El Puerto’s Mexican Restaurant, 1400 N. 2nd St., Fredonia.

This meeting is for anyone

in Iola, Humboldt, Chanute, Fredonia, Neodesha, and Independence who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, CODA (child(ren) of deaf adults) or hearing folks who are interested in learning ASL. As a dedicated space for the deaf community, this is an opportunity to share stories and learn from each other.