

# NEWS

COMMENTS, CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS? Contact Stephanie Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email sjump@kcnonline.com

## NEA

• From Page 1

• They cited one of the biggest complaints from CHS seniors was administrative turnover.

• They said that, while one previous conversation indicating that the schools were underperforming, that CHS is exceeding the state's graduation rate and that Anthony Elementary has met district-level goals even with 67 percent of the students on the free and reduced lunch program.

• They raised questions about positions being "created or filled without being posted for district employees to apply," such as dean of students, district librarian, curriculum director, human resource personnel, a health teacher and a high school counselor.

On that note, the representatives cited the negotiated agreement which states that vacancies must be posted immediately and include "a formalized job description so that qualified district employees have the opportunity to apply."

tunity to apply."

"The grievances that HCNEA will present will ask under what authority and under which specific section of the negotiated agreement did the district bypass... posting requirements for the positions," they said. "The manner in which the superintendent is making personnel decisions raises concerns that these actions may lead to grievances, formal complaints, and possible inquiries to the Office of the Attorney General, Kris Kobach, regarding potential violations of the Kansas Open Meetings Act."

• They emphasized that transparency and adherence to the negotiated agreement was essential to maintaining "trust between the district and the professionals who serve our students."

"We are not asking the board to ignore financial responsibility," the HCNEA representatives said. "What we are asking for is transparency, collaboration, and a thoughtful, long-term plan. When positions are cut

quickly and without a shared understanding of the financial realities behind them, it creates uncertainty and fear throughout the district."

The HCNEA representatives asked that the board pause the current plan until everyone had a clear understanding of the financial situation, to allow everyone to work together to find a proper solution.

"Teachers are great problem solvers and having more voices at the table to collaborate will nurture and cultivate trust between the board and district staff," they said.

As the meeting started and before public comment, Whetzel read a statement to those in attendance about the discussions that have taken place the past several weeks about plans to address district staffing.

"I understand that some of the decisions and actions over the past couple of months have not been received in the way that I had hoped for," Whetzel said. "I'm sure the board shares that feeling as well."

"That was never our intention, and as superintendent, I sincerely apologize for the ways this process may have caused confusion and even hurt."

He said that the goal of the board and district leadership was to make decisions they believe are in the best interest of the district.

"At the same time, we know that we can always learn, improve, communicate better, and we are committed to doing that," Whetzel said.

He said that, after spring break, he would resume "Coffee With Chris" in which he meets with staff and community members to have dialogue about school issues.

"At the end of the day, one thing I know for certain is that everyone connected with (USD) 361 cares deeply about our students," Whetzel said. "Thank you for being here tonight and for advocating for the people and the schools that you care about. Your voices and your engagement do matter."

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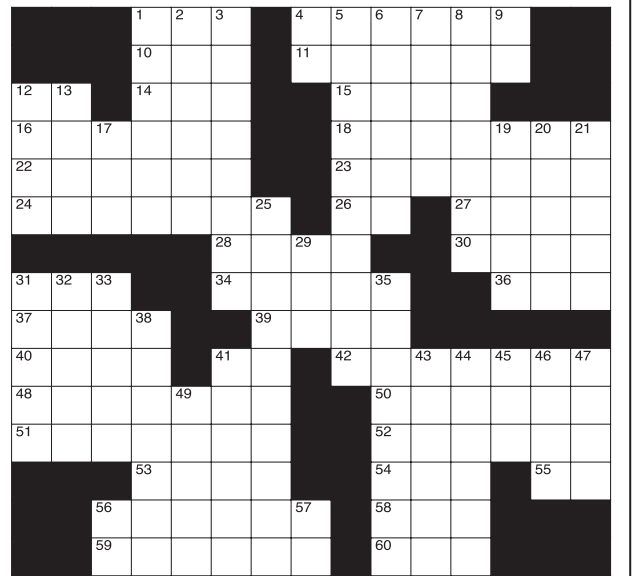
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### CLUES ACROSS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Inclined to do                       | 34. Slang for trucks with trailers      |
| 4. Sketches                             | 36. Swiss river                         |
| 10. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)          | 37. Exchange rate                       |
| 11. Atomic #58                          | 39. British School                      |
| 12. Dorm official                       | 40. College teacher                     |
| 14. Small Eurasian deer                 | 41. Foreign Service                     |
| 15. Southern constellation              | 42. Horse gear                          |
| 16. Workers' groups                     | 48. Cost to fly                         |
| 18. Former                              | 50. A salt or ester of boric acid       |
| 22. Excellent                           | 51. Mocking                             |
| 23. Romance language related to Spanish | 52. One who bird-watches                |
| 24. Reference                           | 53. Concluding passage                  |
| 26. Equally                             | 54. A major division of geological time |
| 27. Dirty towels                        | 55. Sodium                              |
| 28. A cargo (abbr.)                     | 56. A way to produce                    |
| 30. Ammunition                          | 58. Soak                                |
| 31. You get one in summer               | 59. Laughed loudly and harshly          |
|   | 60. Affirmative                         |

### CLUES DOWN

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Moth species phalonia                 | 29. Payment (abbr.)                   |
| 2. Quantum of energy                     | 31. Cuisine style                     |
| 3. Break the law                         | 32. Genus of true flies               |
| 4. Location of White House               | 33. City in western France            |
| 5. Official cancellation of a decision   | 35. Arrogance                         |
| 6. Where rockers work                    | 38. One holding a position of command |
| 7. Cut of beef: _ mignon                 | 41. Weekday                           |
| 8. Nocturnal burrowing reptile           | 43. An evening party                  |
| 9. Atomic #62                            | 44. Print errors                      |
| 12. Genus of evergreen shrubs            | 45. Not good                          |
| 13. Flowering plant of the legume family | 46. Egyptian Sun god                  |
| 17. Inches per minute (abbr.)            | 47. East German town                  |
| 19. Tropical fruit                       | 49. Olfactory property                |
| 20. Hot fluid beneath the earth's crust  | 56. Atomic #37                        |
| 21. James __, painter                    | 57. "Pollock" actor Harris            |
| 25. Popular dessert                      |                                       |

## COUNTY

• From Page 1

"What would be the difference in what you are doing versus someone from the county as far as negotiating and trying to do that for the county?" asked District 1 Commissioner Brian Waldschmidt. "What is your cost going to be?"

Waldschmidt said there are attorneys that do the same thing.

"The attorneys will not negotiate that for you," said Alba. "They are going to help your contracts stay legally strong but they are not going to tell you the has to be."

Waldschmidt again asked what the cost would be for the county if they chose to enlist Alba's services. Alba said the preliminary fee would be \$25,000 because there is a lot of prep work involved.

"When you get to negotiations, this is what is important, I charge \$100,000 that you are not supposed to pay. You are supposed to enter into an agreement with that developer and they are going to cover my fees to you."

"You wouldn't even be considering consulting services if this wasn't even coming into your community, right? It's the truth. It is not your jobs to be sub-

ject matter experts on this industry, it's not. Your job is to know your community. Your job is to know your neighbors."

McCurley asked if the \$100,000 was per project and Alba said yes although some projects will more than likely drop off.

"This is just where I am at. I am just one person. I am not interested in any of these projects," said McCurley. "I have had enough of the wind, the solar, the batteries, all of that. The board differs very much on that. There is not enough money in the world to make me put another one of these in Harper County."

"And I disagree," said Waldschmidt. "This place is falling apart. This place is dying. You don't have to agree with me but it is dying and there are not a lot of people lined up to say 'let's bring some money to your community' there is just not."

District 3 Commissioner Darrin Struble said he talked to someone who told him that they didn't really think it was the commissioners' job to decide what they did with their land. He also said he spoke with someone who told him they need to have a solar farm.

The commissioners took no action on the matter during Monday's meeting.

## CHS

• From Page 2

back to that office by April 20.

The Harper County Health Foundation will offer scholarships to Harper County graduates who are working towards a certification or degree in a healthcare related field. This

scholarship is offered to any Harper County graduate who is already enrolled in a qualifying program (college, vo-tech).

If they were awarded a scholarship last year and have met the qualifications and requirements, their scholarship will be renewed, no need to reapply. If they were not awarded a schol-

arship in the past, they are welcome to keep on trying. Applications are available online at the Harper County Health Foundation website (hcohf.org/scholarships) and are due April 1.

Dr. Marshall B. Flowers Memorial Scholarship - Flowers Memorial Trust: Residents of Harper or Kingman counties plan-

ning to attend the School of Medicine of The University of Kansas should contact the KU Endowment Association concerning this scholarship.

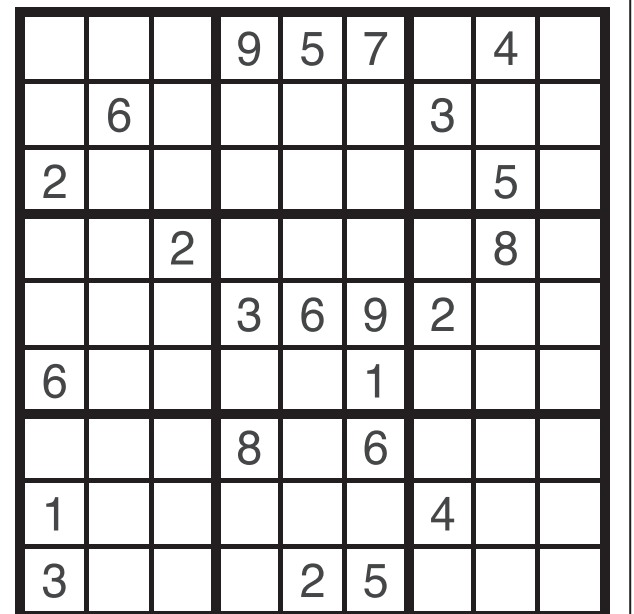
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### PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in The Harper Advocate on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026) 4t  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): 2026-01 HEALTH NUISANCE (TALL GRASS/WEEDS) MOWING**

The City of Harper is accepting sealed bids for the mowing of properties found to be in violation of the City of Harper's health nuisance codes, commonly referred to as Tall Grass/Weed Violations. The contract will be for the 2026 Summer Mowing Season (April - October). For a full list of requirements, bid documents can be picked up at City Hall 201 W. Main St. Harper, KS 67058 or downloaded from the city's website: www.city-ofharper.com. Sealed bids will be received until March 23, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall, and opened publicly at the regularly scheduled council meeting on March 23, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. The successful bidder will be coordinating efforts with the Chief of Police.



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