

New County-wide comprehensive plan near completion

BY LESLIE FOX
Contributing Writer

The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners met for their regular meeting on Monday, March 30, at 9:00 a.m. They met to discuss Health Department staff, fire aid, a Fleet Fuel RFP, rural regulations, County payroll software and GIS software. They also received the quarterly reports from the IT and Public Works departments.

Assistant County Administrator Kori White and Rick Whitson, Emergency Management, came forward to discuss grant funds for employment. "What we are trying to

do is trying to add an RN. The work load there is very high... We have a grant. It's called the Work Force Development grant. There is about \$111,000 in that grant right now. It's coming down to where that money needs to be spent or at least earmarked... It can be a temporary position until that grant runs out," Whitson stated.

"If we could get a year and a half out of this person through that grant, I think it should really help the work load down there in the Health Department." Jason Niemier, Health Department, is looking for more grants to support this temporary position, as well.



The Commissioners approved. Chair Mike Cordray asked for an update on recent emergency fire aid task force deployment. Two weeks ago, a number of Montgomery County Rural Fire crews provided emergency fire aid to both Salina and Hays. Aid was requested again last Friday. Rural Fire teams then deployed aid to Emporia. They got to try out their new radios. "We could sit out back and talk to Topeka,"

stated Whitson. Montgomery County is reimbursed for all aid they supply.

Michael Smith, Rural Fire, presented a Fleet Fuel RFP for approval. They only received one proposal, which was from Southern Fuel and Tanks of Caney. The Commission approved.

Chair Cordray asked for updates on local fires. Smith reported that there were two fires at the landfill over the

weekend. They had to solicit help from Mound Valley. The Bartlett Grain facility also sent water to assist.

Jonathan Booe, County Administrator, came forward to review and revise the comprehensive plan which will add zoning regulations in the County. "It is ready to go and

♦ See **NEW COUNTY-WIDE**, page 2

ICC moves forward with new welding facility

BY LESLIE FOX
Contributing Writer

The Independence Community College Board of Trustees met on Monday, March 30, at 5:30 p.m., in the Fab Lab. They met to receive the 2024-2025 audit, reviewed the Open Meetings Act, acquisition of property for the anticipated welding facility and more.

Christina Henson, Loyd Group, presented the 2024-2025 audit. The deadline was March 31. She directed the Board through the report, including the recommendations letter. She explained that outstanding checks must be addressed in under two years or they are reported to the State as unclaimed property. This year, the Loyd group focused on Amazon purchases across all their audits. They found several purchases from ICC that were delivered to private addresses. She recommended that all purchases be delivered to the college. Council member Logan Null asked what the process will be if there is an ordering mistake. There is no policy in place as of yet. She recommended that the college could make such a plan.

She then reviewed the bank reconciliations with the board. "There was a lot of catch-up, which was one of the reasons why this audit was pushed back so far," Henson stated. "Something like bank reconciliations doesn't get out of order overnight and it won't be put



back in order overnight. Now that this audit is finished and you've got a clean slate as of July 1, 2025, we'll work forward from there." This catch-up was largely necessary due to changes in staff. All of the issues are in the process of being addressed.

Henson also explained, "Your cash balances are tight." Student revenue and real estate tax collections both were down from previous years. Revenue in general was down by approximately \$1 million in total. Henson recommended that the college consider this when deciding on the price of tuition. The Loyd Group issued ICC a clean audit opinion. Council member Patricia Snyder motioned to accept. Council member Mark Lasater seconded. The motion carried.

Jeff Chubb, ICC Legal Council, came forward to review the Kansas Open Meetings Act requirements with the Board. The act is only in effect during a meeting. In a six-person board, two can talk amongst each other without violating KOMA. However, they must not reply all

♦ See **ICC MOVES FORWARD**, page 2

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi elects area students as new members

STAFF REPORT

The following area students were elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines:

Kelsea Watkins of Coffeyville at Fort Hays State University
Rachel Hendricks of Howard at Oklahoma State University

They are among approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by chapter. Only the top 10% of seniors



and 7.5% of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10% for the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann, who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and its territories. Its mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning."

IHS Band triumphs at Regionals

BY BREA SANFORD
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In one of their largest competitions of the season, the Independence High School band had a total of 33 events to participate in during the Regional Solo and Ensemble contest held Saturday. Thirteen events received a 2 rating of excellent and 20 events received a 1 rating of superior and will be able to perform at state competition. Congratulations to all!

HERE ARE THE IHS SCORES FOR THE EVENT:

- Sean Graham- 2-4 mallet marimba
- Dalton Werner- 2- clarinet
- Katelyn Spencer- 2- clarinet
- JP Tharp- 2-4 mallet marimba



- Lyric Goodwin- 2- French Horn
- Nic Seel- 2- clarinet
- Tamaya Wullenschneider- 2- flute
- Lacie Sanders- 2- flute
- Dalton Werner- 2- alto sax
- Charlee Barriger- 2- clarinet

♦ See **IHS BAND**, page 2

KANSAS HISTORY CORNER

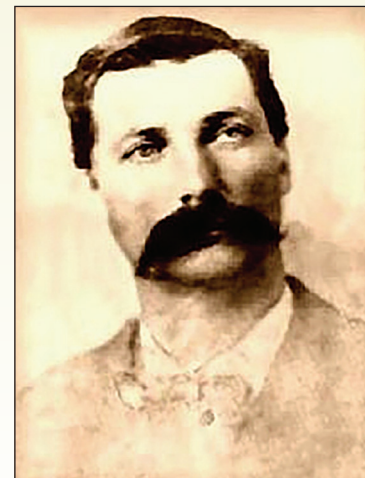
Notable Kansan Spotlight: George Newcomb

BY BREA SANFORD
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Born in Fort Scott in 1866, George Newcomb had to scrape for every penny he got. He began working as a cowboy at the age of 12 to help make ends meet. Eventually, he drifted into Oklahoma Territory, where he met Bill Doolin and later became an integral part of the Doolin gang of outlaws.

The Doolin Gang, who got their start with the Daltons when they branched out after fighting with Bob Dalton, just missed out on the ill-fated Dalton Raid on Coffeyville by a matter of months. By branching off, they saved their hides and Bill Doolin organized his own gang in 1893. They called themselves "The Wild Bunch." Including the remaining members of the Dalton gang and joined by Bill Dalton later on down the line, they became known as the Dalton-Doolin Gang.

A few years would go by with some small jobs here and there. By 1895, Newcomb had a \$5,000 Dead



George "Bitter Creek" Newcomb. findagrave.org | Courtesy Photo

or Alive reward out for his head. The gang frequented the rough and tumble Oklahoma village of Ingalls. The town, bawdy and dangerous, was frequented by the outlaw gangs that tended to spring up in the area. Local residents defended these outlaws, as they served a purpose- they protected them and helped spur the local economy. About this time, Newcomb fell in love with Rose Dunn, sister of the bounty-hunting four-

♦ See **KANSAS HISTORY**, page 2



IHS baseball and softball each earn home victory versus Cherryvale

♦ See page 8



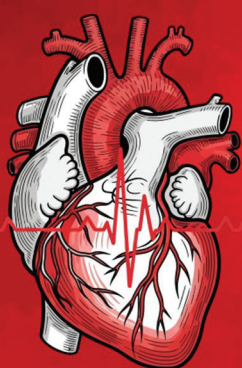
A Kansas mural raises a thorny legal question: Is it art or advertising?

♦ See page 3

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