

OBITUARIES

KELLY DEWAYNE SMALLWOOD

Kelly Dewayne Smallwood, age 64, passed away on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, Kansas. A memorial service celebrating Kelly's life will be held on Friday, May 8, 2026, at 11 am at Tyro Christian Church. The family will receive friends also at Tyro Christian Church on Thursday, May 7, 2026, from 6 to 8 pm. Ford-Wulf-Bruns Chapel has been entrusted with services.

CORRECTION

In the Saturday, May 2 edition of the Independence Daily Reporter, it has come to our attention that Chuck Voelker misspoke during First Friday when he claimed that he would be running for District 2 County Commissioner. Instead, he will be running for District 1 County Commissioner, the spot currently held by Robert Bever.

HAPPENINGS

SIXTY CLUB

Seniors 60 years of age and older are invited to join the Sixty Club for fellowship and games Friday, May 8, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Civic Center. Everyone is welcome to come and participate in games, fellowship and refreshments.

LET'S DANCE WITH JOE HARRIS

The 55 and better Dance has been renamed to "Let's Dance with Joe Harris!" It will be held, like always, the first and third Friday of the month at ICC Wes, located at 2615 West Main Street, from 7:00-9:00 pm. Get out and enjoy music, friends and fun!

ALTOONA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI BANQUET

The annual Altoona High School Alumni Banquet will be held May 23, 2026 at the school in Altoona. Potluck supper will begin at 6:00 p.m., meeting to follow. All graduates welcome.

CITY-COUNTY

TRAFFIC

May 3- IPD Officers responded to Walmart, located at 121 South Peter Pan Road, for a non-injury accident. A juvenile driver was cited into municipal court for driving without valid proof of liability insurance.
May 5- IPD Officers conducted a traffic stop in the 200 Block of North 11th Street. After investigating, Sidney Boyd, 20 of Independence, was placed under arrest and processed on charges of driving while suspended and driving with illegal tags.

THEFT

April 24- IPD Officers received a report of a bicycle theft at 104 Peter Pan Road. The theft occurred between 10:00-11:00 p.m. on April 23. Investigation into the stolen black Schwinn Avenue Hybrid is ongoing.

THREAT

May 1- IPD Officers were dispatched to the 700 Block of West Pine Street for a report of an individual who was threatening others. Investigation ongoing.

BATTERY

April 2- IPD Officers responded to the 900 Block of Circle Drive for a report of a potential active fight. After investigation, Alairia Blue-Briggans, 23, was arrested and cited into municipal court on charges of domestic battery.

FIRE/EMS

Medical Emergency, 7:37 am Monday, W. Walnut
Medical Emergency, 9:50 am Monday, S. 8th St.
Public Assist, 11:27 am Monday, N. 13th
Grass Fire, 11:50 am Monday, 108 E. Sycamore
Motor Vehicle Accident, 11:50 am Monday, McDonalds
Medical Emergency, 3:28 pm Monday, N. Peter Pan Road
Medical Emergency, 3:28 pm Monday, N. 75 Hwy
Slip or Fall, 5:08 pm Monday, Elk City
Medical Emergency, 7:08 pm Monday, S. 8th

LOTTERY



TOPEKA, KAN. - These Kansas lotteries were drawn earlier this week.
Super Kansas Cash.....Jackpot: \$200,000
Mega MillionsJackpot: \$195 million
PowerballJackpot: \$30 million

WEATHER



Normal for today..... 74 (high) and 52 (low)
Records 92 (2014) and 32 (1944)
Sunrise Thursday 6:19 | sets 8:18
Elk City Lake level..... 796.81 feet | outflow 308 cfs
Big Hill Lake level..... 858.38 feet | outflow 39 cfs
Tuesday's lake level info. Visit www.swt-wc.usace.army.mil and click on Daily Report for today's info.

Forecast for Montgomery County: Mostly cloudy and cooler, with a high near 57 degrees. Northeasterly winds 10 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 40 degrees. North northeast winds 5 to 10 mph, becoming light north after midnight. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph.

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• Cherryvale

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that they would be closing and going home without plans to return if the weather got bad and moved into the Cherryvale vicinity. The other two had discontinued use of their basements as public storm shelters due to structural or liability issues.

Council Member Conners noted that none of the structures that were previously used as storm shelters were FEMA rated, nor are they city-owned, so there is little that City Staff could do to open their doors during severe weather events. He did share that there is a cost-saving grant program through the state of Kansas called Sunflower Safe Storm Shelter grant. Once you purchase and install a storm shelter and FEMA makes sure it is in complete compliance, the state will reimburse you \$3500. In the end, the City's hands are tied regardless, Conners lamented. "We want the public to know that we're trying to come up with something," he stated.

City Clerk Karen Davis shared that she had been in contact with the City's insurance holder, the Jim Gill Agency. According to Davis, even though the City does not own the Library, they do cover the insurance on the structure. She had reached out to the Gill Agency after the storms and found out that the Library can serve as a storm shelter if needed, but it could not accept animals. All that is needed is the consent of the Library Board and for them to give the City a key to the building so they can unlock it if needed.

In the last public hearing, Cherryvale resident Brook Austin spoke to the Council regarding accountability when holding public office. Austin, who was chastised at a previous Council meeting for interrupting during Council proceedings, stood before the Council Monday evening to do a bit of chastising of her own. "After attending the April 6th Council meeting and being told that if I didn't like the data center proposal, to just 'Get a sign and protest out front,' I was surprised by that dismissive remark, Mr. Mayor," she stated.

"I came to that April meeting to find out more information, not to be dismissed... It became very apparent after the City Attorney spoke about the Open Meetings Act that some of you may or may not be in violation. I bring this up, because I had heard rumors in mid-March about the possibility that the Council was not going to renew our Police Chief Jimmy Holt's

• ICC technical

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"As we've moved forward, that bond amount has increased as we've tried to explore what our best options were. As we learn more about where our budget needs to hit next year, we are more and more concerned about what those loan payments would look like even with the grant amounts and that commitment. On Friday, we had another discussion about it, and the potential for another route came up — one, the purchase of a smaller facility or using the EDA grant only to revitalize part of the Fab Lab."

Crawshaw continued, "We are in a no-cost extension that ends June 30. We were supposed to have a special meeting tonight to vote on the sale of that bond and move forward. So Friday I called Branson Financial and said, 'At this point here is what we are looking at. What's our best option?' And he said, 'Let's hold on the sale, postpone it and let you guys meet and talk about what you are looking at. Then we can discuss on Tuesday.' So I postponed the sale of the bond that was supposed to be at 11:00 a.m. today. We are still waiting on calls back from a potential smaller building and a call into our original EDA grant. We believe we are in our last year of reporting on that, but we want to verify that.

"We don't believe that remodeling the back of West is a wise choice at this time. We think it will cost more, and if we are going to dive into that, we need to look at West as a whole project versus patching something in the back together," Crawshaw continued. "We looked at that on Thursday. Also, Greenbush has leased a portion of space for several years, and they are not going to do so anymore. So we have some room in the North shop that has been their offices that we could potentially play with, with this grant. We wanted to give you guys this update and have a discussion about where we might want to go. I know we are all invested in growth, where we want to expand

• Sycamore storm

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Plains Methodist Conference out of Topeka. She and her organization have agreed to pay for those dumpsters and we are going to pick two days when they are going to come down and help fill those dumpsters," he explained.

Whitson is trying to coordinate with a couple of other organizations to process fallen trees. The Department of Transportation agreed to help the Public Works department haul the trees and limbs off. "All of this is going to take a little while, but we are moving in the right direction," he stated. Whitson reported that in the last month the state of Kansas has had a record number of tornado warnings. The average is 219 tornado warnings a month across the state. In the month of April there were 469, double the typical average. To volunteer to help with the clean-up of the community of Sycamore, reach out to Rick Whitson at his Facebook page, @RickEWhitson, or call him at 620-330-1213.

County Administrator Jonathan Booe and Assistant County Administrator Kori White appeared before the Commission to discuss the RFPs submitted by firms interested in contracting to create a comprehensive plan that will include updated zoning regulations regarding solar, wind and data. In the packet, he included scoring sheets to help the Commission make their decisions.

These score sheets included eight different categories. Based on overall scores, Booe recommended accepting the RFP from Tessere Consulting of Pittsburg, at \$98,750. This amount will need to be accommodated in the 2027 budget for at this time there are no grants or incentives available for comprehensive plans.

"You guys have voiced your concern for stakeholder engagement, input from the public. There was a whole section dedicated to Tessere's approach to that and how they intend on having meetings, who they intend on having in those meetings with their firm, different surveys that they intend to kick out to the public," stated Booe. "Their overall engagement portion with the public stood out."

Commissioner Phil Clubine commented, "I think things are

contract... Along with the news of our City Administrator also giving his resignation. I bring all of this up right now because we, our town, has three of the biggest positions of leadership open — the Superintendent... The Police Chief and our City Administrator."

Austin went on to encourage the Council to think of the interest of the community they serve before their own. "You can show transparency and answer questions about your decision without being defensive and dismissive, then that's all we can ask as the citizens that elected you," Austin stated. "What you need to remember is that if you're not going to be held accountable as voters and citizens of the public, we will remember when we go to vote that next time. You have to be transparent and you have to answer the questions, even if you don't like them, that's your job," she continued. "That's why you're in office. We put you in those seats, and we can take you out of them."

In the last item of new business, City Clerk Karen Davis asked the Council's permission to convert back to GWorks for city operations. Last year, the City had migrated over to a cloud-based program. She shared that ever since they began moving files over, it had been a nightmare. Files were lost, the City auditors had problems finding the information they needed and even utility billing had been bungled. Since they ended the contract with GWorks, a new CEO had taken over and decided that their customers no longer need to migrate to the cloud, that they can continue to use the original software as they had been using. Davis shared that they are willing to give the City a credit of \$4,000 that will be applied to implementation fees, on top of a hefty discount on top of that. The Council agreed.

The Council finished up the meeting by approving the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the following items:

Appropriation Ordinance No. 26-04-24 in the amount of \$188,097.09

- Approval of purchases over \$5,000
- Jim Gill Agency (Insurance) \$86,875
- Blue Cross Blue Shield (Health insurance) \$21,349.76
- Community Ntl Bank (Payroll Taxes) \$9,904.33
- KPERS (Retirement) \$7,691.18
- Approval of minutes of the April 20, 2026 regular meeting.

and invest in our students and in our community, we just have to do so very cautiously right now. New options have come up. We'd like a couple more days to explore them and then inform you guys after that."

This new facility is for housing a welding shop. The DRAW grant can be used for the purchase of a new facility, while the EDA grant can only be used for construction. They also applied for three grants to purchase equipment that they are waiting to hear back on. Board member Isaias McCaffery responded with his appreciation that the sale of the bond had been postponed. Eubanks stated that they should know what the interest rate is before selling the bond.

Board member Susan Porter asked if the renovations can be done in phases. The smaller facility they are considering would be less than \$600,000 in cost, but they have not had the opportunity to tour the facility yet. There is equipment in the smaller building that may be included in the cost. Porter asked if they could ask the owner of the larger building to come down in price. Crawshaw stated that part of the appeal of purchasing a building is that students could start in the new facility in the autumn. Eubanks commented, "It seems the cost, \$2.4 million, just reflecting on it, I'm not sure it is something we should be doing at this point." He asked if they could lease a facility instead. "Either we figure out how to drop \$1.5 million or..." he stated.

"I think our top option at this time is the Fab Lab option. We just have to confirm that we are within that grant's regulations," stated Crawshaw. "We will for sure continue to investigate the two options, and we are going to need some sort of bond, just at a lesser amount." Eubanks concluded, "Keep us informed." The board took no action.

The board then set the summer rent rate again at \$550 per month for both the Villas and Captains dorms. Board member Logan Null motioned. Porter seconded. The motion carried.

The ICC Board of Trustees meets the third Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the FabLab's west classroom. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

moving along outside of us. I think we better be moving along, too." The Commissioners approved.

Chair Mike Cordray presented Booe with a packet of letters and an estimated 20 signatures from area land owners in opposition to the annexation of the old soccer fields on Peter Pan Road into the city limits of Independence for light industrial. Commissioner Bever stated, "What I'd like to see is [the City of Independence] address a meeting or something with this group of people ahead of time. How does the public, some 20 people, have their voices heard before it is just up and done on them? I think the people need to have a voice." The Commissioners requested that Booe follow-up with the City of Independence.

Chair Cordray then reported that Matt Debo, Environmental Health and Zoning, is needing some help with inspecting septic systems in a timely manner. The department has 54 outstanding inspections to complete at this time. "Talking with Matt, once they get the paperwork there is 30 days with the State for him to get out there and everything, but [the local realtors] are claiming that that's a little bit long. Some of the sales are dying because they don't get out there and get it inspected soon enough," Cordray explained.

Currently, the Environment Health and Zoning Department has two employees total. Commissioner Bever responded, "We are talking about adding another employee, more wages to the taxpayers. You've got the weather to contend with. This month you may have 15 people wanting houses, and next month you may have one or you may 30. I understand their frustration. I don't have an answer, but I'm concerned. We aren't increasing in population, we are just changing houses."

Commissioner Clubine added, "I think it's gong to get worse as we get further into the county zoning. It's all going to depend on how all that works out, but he may need a little help."

Booe updated the Commission on the County's juvenile justice detention contracts. He explained that in response to Montgomery County's decision to leave the Southeast Kansas Regional Juvenile Detention Center co-op, they adjusted their pricing. The County had been paying \$24,222 per month for participation in this co-op. They reduced this price to \$21,744 per month effective immediately. Based on the budget that they then prepared for 2027, they offered to reduce that price further to \$14,489.

In the first quarter of 2026, Montgomery County used a total of 99 bed days at Girard. If they had used the Johnson County facility, this cost would have come to \$14,800 for the first quarter, the promised reduced price of only one month at Girard. "My opinion is too little, too late. We got the process started, and I think we need to stick with it," stated Commissioner Clubine. Chair Cordray added, "Commissioners, we should have done this a long time ago."

The next meeting of the County Board of Commissioners will be held on Monday, May 11, at 9:00 a.m. in the lower level of the Judicial Center. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Recordings of the meetings are available for viewing at the new county website www.ks-montgomerycounty.civicplus.com under the agendas section.



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