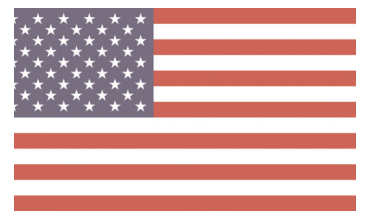


# NEWS

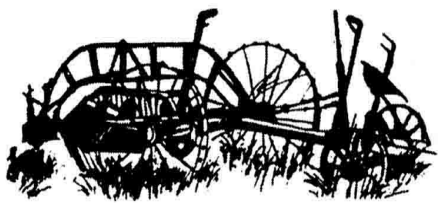
## The YATES CENTER

\$1 (Includes tax)

Serving Woodson County Since 1877  
Thursday, August 8, 2024, Volume 147, Issue 32



Land of the Free.  
Home of the Brave.



### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Rural school display at museum

Woodson County Museum is open. It is open Tuesday through Friday, from 1 to 4 p.m. Our display of one room school houses are being revamped with acid free paper in hopes of preserving these pictures for another 50 years. Also many community members who attended a rural school in Woodson County have shared their memories and pictures. These are being placed in a notebook to be shared in our one room school at the museum. If you attended a rural school and would like to share your memories and pictures, please call the museum at 620-625-5233 to set up a time, please leave a message.

#### OWL Hour program on tap

OWL Hour is for anyone who feels older, wiser and livelier. It is a monthly hour long get together for older individuals who want to learn, socialize and expand their horizons. It is a free program that is open to anyone. Our August topic is "Staying Strong". Discover the importance of staying strong and exercising as we age. We will be demonstrating some of our current Southwind Extension District programs, like Stay Strong, Stay Healthy and Walk With Ease. Monday, Aug. 12 we will be in Yates Center at the Woodson County 4-H Community Building. Tuesday, Aug. 13 we will be in Uniontown at the Community Center. Wednesday, Aug. 14 we will be in La Harpe at the Community Center. Thursday, Aug. 15 will be in Erie at the Neosho Valley Event Center. For more information about this program and to register, please contact the Southwind Extension District at 620-625-8620.

#### Back to school bash

The Yates Center Organization of Parents and Teachers are inviting the public to a Back to School Bash Saturday, Aug. 10 from 5 p.m. till 7 p.m. at the Yates Center City Park and swimming pool. There will be free swimming from 5 to 7 p.m. At 7 p.m. a free dinner will be served followed by the movie Kung Fu Panda 4 at dusk. Please bring lawn chairs or blankets.

#### Fire department fundraiser

The Toronto Volunteer Fire Department (TVFD) is holding a fire fighter benefit for a member who recently suffered a stroke. She and her husband have both been members of the TVFD for many years. The benefit will be Saturday, Aug. 24 from 6 to 8 p.m. with a mountain oyster and fish fry. It is a free will donation. All proceeds for this event go to help the family with ongoing expenses. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this fundraiser.

#### Highway 75 Resurfacing Project

The week of July 22, the Kansas Department of Transportation plans to begin resurfacing work on 14.5 miles of U.S. 75 in Woodson and Coffey counties. The project area is between the north city limits of Yates Center and the north K-58 junction. Project activity includes a mill and overlay. Flaggers and a pilot car will direct one-lane traffic through the work zone. Expect delays of 15 minutes or less during weekday daylight hours until late September.

#### Senior Center Dinner

The Yates Center Senior Center is having a "Too Hot to Cook" sandwiches and salads Thursday, Aug. 15 at 5:30 p.m., at 403 W. Rutledge, in Yates Center. Bring a side dish and table service and come join us.

#### Highway 54 Resurfacing

Starting Wednesday, July 17 and continuing through mid September, traffic will experience alternating lane closures on U.S. 54, at Yates Center. The city is patching and resurfacing the highway. Slow down and drive with care.

#### Church In The Park

The Yates Center United Methodist Church will host Church in the Park Sunday, Aug. 18. The simple, casual services will be held at 9:30 a.m. at the Yates Center City Park, 311 W. Chelliss St., Yates Center. Bring your lawn chairs and a friend! Join us as we worship together. Inclement weather will move the services to the Yates Center United Methodist Church, 301 S. Grove St., Yates Center.

#### Preschool Screenings

Call 620-625-8804 today to get signed up for Yates Center's Fall preschool screenings happening Friday, Aug. 2. Must be three by Saturday, Aug. 31, 2024. This is for all new to district students. Call now to get your spot. We can't wait to meet you.

#### Caregiver Support Group

Being a caregiver for a loved one can be emotionally and physically exhausting. Coffey Health System now offers a special program to help caregivers maintain perspective, step away for a while, and share their experiences with others who understand. Coffey Health System's Mental Health Therapist Amy Osner will lead a Caregiver Support Group on the third Wednesday of each month at The Meadows, in Burlington. There is no charge for participation. Respite care and activities will be available, if needed. Sessions begin at 6 p.m. at The Meadows, 1201 Martindale St., in Burlington. If you have questions about the program, call 620-364-4556.

#### Yates Center Transportation

Yates Center Transportation is available within five mile radius for residents 60 years of age and over, for a free will donation, Residents under 60 years of age, will pay a small fee. Transportation is available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. Call the center at 620-625-2254.

## Historic Woodson County Courthouse turns 125

By Kathe Hamman

As a person enters Woodson County from any direction, one can't help but notice the Woodson County Courthouse which has occupied the center of the town square in Yates Center for 125 years. The three story brick building rising 99 feet into the sky was completed in the summer of 1899.

After 1875, the center block of land that would come to be known as the town square was surrounded by a wooden fence for many years while the surrounding stores and buildings were being moved in or built on the streets lining the square. The first court house was set on the northeast corner of the square, across from the current post office. Later, the current courthouse building was constructed, becoming a landmark for the people of Woodson County. It took three bond elections before the county voters authorized the construction Nov. 8, 1898. A notice of sale of bonds for the courthouse was then published in The Yates Center NEWS Jan. 19, 1899, and the contract for the courthouse plans was awarded to G.P. Washburn of Ottawa. Other contracts awarded at the time included the plumbing, electric, and gas fitting, which were all rather new to the county in the late 1800s. The wooden and metal furniture, a vault door, and the new jail fixtures for the jail that was also completed the same year for a total contract of just under \$30,000. The cornerstone for the new building was laid during dedication ceremonies held Aug. 9, 1899, by Gilead Lodge No. 144, A.F. & A.M. The Masons would rededicate the building 100 years later in a ceremony held Aug. 9, 1999. They were joined by several other organizations in the community and across the state of Kansas.

Architect George Washburn said he designed the Woodson County Courthouse "to be a solid bastion of law, order, and civilization at the edge of the prairie frontier." According to The Yates Center NEWS of June 23, 1899, "Yates Center is proud of the magnificent \$30,000 structure which is being rapidly constructed in the public square and will be known as the Woodson County Court-house; a building which the people of this county may point to with pride and bring their visiting friends and relatives to see without hesitancy...The imposing brick mass symbolized safety and security, while at the same time utilizing simplified Romanesque Revival forms coupled with decorative detail spiraling up into the heavens, full of high ideals and hope."

An article from 1985 gave more historical detail on public sentiment and intention surrounding the structure: "At that time, the new brick courthouse not only symbolized the county's growth and prosperity, but also wrote the final chapter to a county seat battle that spanned more than 20 years of Woodson County's early history. The new courthouse supplanted a wood frame building transported for that purpose from Defiance, one of three towns vying for the honor of county seat. The hard-fought battle ended when Abner Yates donated land he owned in the exact center of the county, to be used for a county seat town, thereby satisfying partisans from Neosho Falls, Kalida, and



**THE WOODSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE** is 125 years old. Pictured as it stands today (left) the dedication cornerstones (above) and as it stood in 1910 (below).



Defiance. Yates made his bequest in 1875, prompting citizens of the former county seat at Kalida to physically move 19 of the town's foremost buildings two-and-a-half miles uphill to the site of present-day Yates Center. From 1857 to 1875, the county seat had passed from Neosho Falls to Kalida, back to Neosho Falls, then once again to Kalida, and on to Defiance before coming to rest finally in Yates Center."

Being chosen for the county seat also provided an impact in the form of an economic boom for the county, providing many jobs for those in the area. From the Yates Center NEWS of April 21, 1899: "There will be plenty of work for everybody in Yates Center this summer. Several new houses are in the process of construction. Mr. Winter will soon begin a two-story business room, and then there is the courthouse and jail. It will be a busy summer in Woodson's capital."

As for the interior of the build-

ing, there have been few changes to the courthouse over the years. The most noticeable have included lowering the ceilings, adding doors between a few rooms, and adding an elevator in the 1980s. All of the decorative woodwork has been left intact. Much of the massive, built-in furniture and the wooden stairway designed by Washburn and illustrated in his original drawings still resides in the old courtroom and throughout the building. Two above-ground basement entrances on the south facade are not original to the building plans and were probably built in 1928 in conjunction with construction of the bandstand just to the northeast of the main building. That particular gazebo-like structure was built in 1928 of red brick laid up with red mortar.

Major changes to the exterior of the courthouse over the last 125 years mostly involved the white cupola which crowns the brick building. The original roof built in 1899 was covered in slate

shingles, and the cupola that provided an ornate crown for the courthouse included a metal deck surrounded by white metal decorations, arches, and cone shaped finials which are reflected in the four corners of the roof today.

During one of the reconstructions of the cupola, the roof was also redone in May of 1960, the original material was replaced with shingles, and the decorative metal cresting was removed. A storm damaged the roof again in the fall of 1960, prompting another rebuilding of the cupola. After several leaks developed over many years, the courthouse received another much needed roof in 2022, thus maintaining that imminently recognizable profile.

The Woodson County Courthouse was built for longevity, and it will endure as a testament to that original pioneer spirit and a continued beacon for those who come after.

## Morrison, DeWitt, Shirley, and Clark win primary

Woodson County voters took to the polls Tuesday, Aug. 6 to cast ballots for the candidates of their choice. With no Democratic candidates filing in county races this election cycle all races will, barring write in candidates, be already be decided.

Races in contention are the offices of sheriff, county clerk, county attorney, and county commissioner in district 3.

Below is a listing of unofficial results as of the closing of polls Tuesday. Canvassing and posting of official results will take place Thursday, Aug. 15 at 10 a.m.

In the sheriff's race Jacob Morrison received 514 votes. Kenneth Robinson received 123 votes.

In the race for county clerk Amanda DeWitt received 449 votes. Jeffrey McCullough

received 117 votes. Esmeralda Vargas/Bartholomew received 65 votes.

The county attorney's contest saw Mary Ann Shirley get 407 votes to Elizabeth Oliver's 202 votes.

The final race for county commissioner district 3 saw 134 votes for Justin Clark and 92 votes for Rusty Drake.

Woodson County had 693 voters show up to the poll.

