

# Republic-Jewell Counties Reach Agreement On 10 RD

By Deb Hadachek  
Telescope News

A badly deteriorated stretch of 10 RD in northwest-ern Republic County will receive attention this year, thanks to a new agreement with neighbor Jewell County.

Republic County has agreed to assume responsibility for the asphalt surface on the county line road from the Nebraska line south five miles.

In exchange, Jewell County will accept responsibility of the remaining 19 miles of county line roads.

“We’re up there today to continue hot oil patching on 10 Road,” said Republic County Highway Administrator Ken Robbins. “That will continue this week and we’ll have most of the potholes filled. We plan to do a scrub seal there in next couple of months, which is hot oil and a coating to get into the alligator cracking and stabilize the base. We’ll put a new chip seal on top of that. “That won’t last more than three years,” he said.

“Within that three years we’ll come in with cold recycled asphalt overlay, and that road should return to a good useful for a 10 year cycle.”

Historically the two counties have had a patchwork agreement on which county is responsibility for which sections of the county line. Each county will continue to provide maintenance on their sides of the road for items like signs, trees, ditches, field entrances and driveways.

“Sharing maintenance responsibilities for that five miles of asphalt county line road surface has been challenging for both counties due to the declining condition

of the road,” says the resolution approved Monday. “Both counties are seeking a solution that will address the concern of our residents that the road be maintained uniformly and improved over time.”

**In other business Monday:**

\*Robbins told commissioners that in an apparent act of vandalism, a hole was chipped through the new road surface of 280 RD south of Narka between Jade and King RDs.

“Tool marks are obvious,” he said about the crater about the size of a dinner plate, “but the motive is unknown.

“It is truly odd. It wasn’t huge, and we fixed it.”

\*Robbins noted that Mike Wickstrum, a 47-year-veteran of the department, has announced his retirement.

\*Commissioners continued to work on the 2026 budget. They voted to use \$600,000 of the wind farm donation from NextEra Energy to mitigate a tax increase for next year; and establish a maximum of three percent salary increase for county employees instead of the six percent that had previously been considered.

The board also voted last week to reserve \$100,000 of wind farm monies towards the Republic County Housing Program, which provides a \$25,000 grant to qualifying new construction in the county. Enough for two more homes, \$50,000, currently remains of the initial \$600,000 invested in the program from the wind farm donation; a county contribution, and a donation from the Dane Hansen Foundation.

Commissioners also recently approved an expenditure of \$257,000 from wind farm funds for a new communications tower for emergency services.

# Bad News That’s Not “All That Bad”

The thought of property tax increases makes every home and property owner shudder.

City of Belleville residents who own property should get ready to shudder when they get their updated tax statements. The good news is: it will be a very mild shudder.

On Monday, members of the Belleville City Council laid the groundwork to decrease the mil levy from 62 to 60. This will be

the fifth year the City has decreased the mil, according to City Administrator Adam Anderson.

What that will mean, however, is a tax increase for property owners, Anderson said. But only slightly.

“In running the numbers on a \$100,000 home, that will mean an extra \$1.00 per month,” he said.

The council has set July 28 as the date for a public hearing on the coming budget year.

# Free Health And Cancer Screening in Belleville

Free health and cancer screenings will be held from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 2nd at the NCK Fairgrounds (west side of Commercial Building) in Belleville, Kansas.

The free screenings are hosted by the Kansas Masons, Belleville Masonic Lodge #129, the Masonic Cancer Alliance (MCA), and The University of Kansas Cancer Center. This community outreach event is free and open to the public. Insurance is not required. All ages are welcome. No appointments are necessary.

Belleville Lodge members and staff from the MCA, the outreach network of KU Cancer Center, are teaming up with health professionals from the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) to provide the following:

- prostate cancer screenings,
- skin cancer screenings,
- colorectal cancer take-home screening kits, and
- tobacco cessation information.

Area Masons work with staff from the MCA and the Kansas Masonic Foundation to coordinate many of the free screening events that often draw several hundred attendees of all ages. More than 20,000 Kansas residents have attended the screenings since 2003. Anyone identified with a possible health concern at one of the free screenings is advised by the screening team to follow up with his/her local physician or provided with

information on how to find a healthcare provider.

Additional supporters helping make the free health and cancer screening event possible include: Belleville High Banks, Kansas Community Empowerment Belleville, KR 92 FM 92.1, K-State Research and Extension River Valley District, NCK Free Fair, and Republic County Health Department.

For more information on the event in Belleville, call Rob Kasl at 785-955-7264.

# Pike Valley Board Commits To Weight Room Upgrade

By Katy Duryea  
Telescope News

The USD 426 Board of Education unanimously approved funding for significant improvements to the high school weight room.

Superintendent Mike Gritten outlined plans Monday to spend approximately \$13,000 from \$60,000 available in remaining bond funds to upgrade the facility, which he described as currently unattractive and inadequate for student needs.

Gritten added the face-lift is part of a broader effort by administration to boost Pike Valley athletic culture and encourage student participation.

“When we were having our six-man vs eight-man football meetings, I kept hearing about culture and getting kids to the weight room,” Gritten said. “But our weight room didn’t feel very attractive for students. I felt like we could do better.”

Improvements include new reupholstered equipment cushions and plans to order additional sets of free weights. Gritten said he would like to replace the two aging lift machines, install mirrors, apply fresh paint, and improve insulation to address temperature control issues.

“The weight room has seen heavy use this summer, with scheduled activities running from 6 to 10 a.m. daily,” Gritten said. “However, the current single set of

dumbbells creates bottlenecks when multiple teams need lighter weights simultaneously.”

“We have one set of each of the dumbbells, but when you get a younger team in there, like junior high, or another team that needs some lighter weights, they have to wait,” the superintendent added.

Gritten said in order to help reduce expenses he hopes to find volunteers and booster club members to help with the painting project. Additional improvements include a donated treadmill to expand the cardio equipment options for the Panther athletes.

The board also discussed using remaining bond funds for other facility improvements, including a preschool playground structure and other needs identified by teachers and staff at the elementary school.

Additional agenda items included:

- The nomination and election of 2025/26 President

“When we were having our six-man vs eight-man football meetings, I kept hearing about culture and getting kids to the weight room. I felt like we could do better.”

-Mike Gritten  
Pike Valley Superintendent

John Garman  
The nomination and election of 2025/26 Vice President  
Mason Runft  
Josh Garst resigned as Custodian and Head of Transportation  
Aaron Swanson was hired as Assistant Jr High Boys Basketball Coach  
Ryan Sothers was hired as Assistant Jr High Football Coach

# Inmate Dismisses Complaint On Handicapped Accessibility Of Jail

An inmate held in Republic County Jail on Monday asked the court to dismiss his civil suit alleging his cell is not handicapped accessible.

Wes Peters, Belleville, had filed a writ of habeas corpus in Republic County District Court alleging the shower facilities in his cell are “unsafe and inadequate” and that he has fallen getting up and down from the shower. Peters requested grab bars in the shower and toilet. He also said his wheelchair was broken and he was unable to get it repaired while he was in custody.

In a response to the petition, Republic County Attorney Justin Ferrell said that the sheriff’s office provided a wheelchair to the defendant from the Republic County Health Department to use instead of his personal wheelchair; grab handles for the toilet and shower had been ordered; and that the shower chair in the cell was one the defendant had used when he was previously in custody. The county attorney said the defendant has also received medical attention.

On Monday Peters asked Republic County District Court Judge Jennifer

O’Hare to dismiss the action because “acceptable accommodation has been made by the Republic County Sheriff.”

Peters has been held in jail since May on allegations of felony attempted aggravated burglary, and two felony counts alleging battery against a corrections and law enforcement officer, along with several misdemeanor counts. He is listed on the Kansas Registered Offenders List, convicted of felony aggravated assault in Republic County in 2010.

# Belleville Power Plant Upgrades Moving, But Very Slowly

By Fred Arnold  
Telescope Publisher

Spring has turned into summer. And it’s very likely summer will turn into fall.

The City of Belleville still doesn’t have a firm date when their new engine (Engine #9) will be on site and ready for installation in The Belleville Power Plant.

Plant Supervisor John McChesney spoke to members of the Belleville City Council on Monday and told city leaders, “We’ve done about all we can here,” as far as site preparation. McChesney said he spoke to the owner of the company doing the install, and he assured him everything possible is being done to expedite the process.

Belleville officials were initially told that the new

engine would be on site in late spring. That has shifted to “no time frame for delivery,” McChesney said. McChesney said he was told that a major hold up in the process was getting a new flywheel disc from overseas, China.

“I was told that it should be in this week,” he added.

Belleville’s interest in adding a second new engine (Engine #10) has seen equally slow progress. The municipality found a unit in Texas and paid a \$35,000 fee to put the engine on hold. City officials have yet to travel on site to see the unit.

McChesney said the generator portion of the new engine is currently in California. He said the sellers have said it will be shipped to Texas “soon.”

“We may be able to go down to view the engine in a month or month and a half,” he said.


High Banks Wind Energy Center  
Important Numbers to Know

Landowner Services:

Phone: 855-555-9872, prompt 3  
Fax: 561-304-5372  
Email: Landowner-Services@NextEraEnergy.com

Claims Department:

Handles crop damage and land restoration claims  
Phone: 855-555-9872, prompt 3  
Email: DL-NEER-Property-Damage-Claims@NextEraEnergy.com



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