

Healthcare plays major role in local and regional economy

BY DAN THALMANN
Publisher

The healthcare industry in Washington County contributes 261 jobs directly and pays out over \$13.8 million in labor income (based on 2023 data), according to a recent economic impact report by the Kansas Hospital Association. This adds up to 7.4% of the county's jobs and 11.2% of labor income.

Healthcare is also shown to have several indirect impacts, creating multiplier effects as businesses purchase local goods and services, such as utilities,

Industry	Direct Employment Contribution (jobs)	Total Employment Contribution (jobs)	Direct Labor Income Contribution (\$1000)	Total Labor Income Contribution (\$1000)
Hospitals	132.3	158.9	8,527	9,459
Offices of Physicians	0.0	0.0	0	0
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	58.8	69.7	2,346	2,779
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	13.3	14.8	483	541
Offices of Dentists	7.8	8.7	462	493
Health and Personal Care Stores	17.1	19.4	483	576
Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	0.0	0.0	0	0
Outpatient Care Centers	12.7	16.1	791	922
Home Health Care Services	0.0	0.0	0	0
Residential Treatment Facilities	0.0	0.0	0	0
Veterinary Services	18.8	20.5	718	778
Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	0.0	0.0	0	0
Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	0.0	0.0	0	0
Total	260.8	308.1	13,810	15,548

Sources: IMPLAN proprietary data and Kansas Department of Labor (see Appendix A)

and through employees spending income at local businesses. With those multipliers, the healthcare sector

in Washington County supports 308 jobs and over \$15.5 million in labor income.

The above table

shows specific numbers for Washington County, considered for the report.

See **HEALTH** on 3

Concerns voiced on lack of noxious weed control

BY CYNTHIA SCHEER
Managing editor

Noxious Weed and Solid Waste director James Yungeberg told the Board of County Commissioners on Monday that there are a few landowners who are not addressing their sericea lespedeza problems, and their neighbors are upset. Yungeberg said he has been trying to work with one landowner in particular for three

years, and that landowner is no longer responsive. Yungeberg said he can legally go in and spray for the sericea lespedeza, but then the county would have to try to get reimbursed by the landowner. He said he doesn't want to forcefully spray private property because "nobody wants the government coming in."

See **WEEDS** on 3

Grant received for new recycling trailer

BY CYNTHIA SCHEER
Managing editor

The county's recycling department has received a grant to purchase another recycling trailer. The grant will pay for 75% of a \$29,760 heavy duty utility trailer. The county has purchased several trailers for recycling through grants over the past few years.

James Yungeberg with the county's

Noxious Weed and Solid Waste department told the Board of County Commissioners on Monday that this new trailer will come from Blue Rapids, which is the same place the previous trailers have come from. This trailer will replace the current trailer that recycling employees drive around the county to pick up cardboard.

See **GRANT** on 3

Construction underway on road by hospital

BY CYNTHIA SCHEER
Managing editor

Construction has now begun on Washington's East Second Street, which passes east-west between the doctor's office and the hospital. During construction, the street from B Street east to Pierce Street will be removed and rebuilt. New sidewalk will be installed from B Street down to the former nursing home property. The curb, gutter, retaining walls and curb ramps will also be replaced. The box culvert will have some work done to it, but it will not need to be replaced.

The city had previously planned to install a temporary driveway across the grass lot north of the clinic during the construction for patients to access the doctor's office, but Chalfant told the News this week that those temporary detour plans have been scrapped.

"The contractor worked with the hos-

pital and clinic staff and decided that they could work that section [by the clinic] in phases enough to keep patient access to the clinic without having to install a temporary detour," he said.

InLine Construction is doing the work on the project and has 240 days for substan-

tial completion, which would be April 15, 2026, per contract.

InLine Construction was the only bid for the project and bid \$1.566 million. The majority of the construction cost will be paid for with a \$1.5 million street grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation Spring 2023

Cost Share Program. The city's portion will be about \$407,000.

In addition to the construction costs, the city will also have expenses for preliminary engineering, design, inspection, and right-of-way acquisition, which is not included in KDOT's cost share.



East Second Street in Washington, which is the road between B Street and the hospital and doctors' clinic, is closed while it is removed and rebuilt.

Ditch dirt reclamation process discussed

BY CYNTHIA SCHEER
Managing editor

Potential issues with farmers removing dirt from ditches, and county vehicle purchases were two of the topics of discussion during last week's Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Art Schottel told Road and Bridge's Jimmy Workman and Eric Helms that he was concerned about farmers digging holes in ditches after last week's discussion

regarding ditch cleaning.

Last week Bill Slater attended the meeting and asked questions about the dirt that the county removes when they clean ditches. Slater said he would have liked some of the dirt that was taken from ditches near his fields.

It was said that the dirt originally belonged to the farmers before it washed out of the fields.

See **DIRT** on 3

Some up, some down... mill levies budgeted by local cities vary across county

BY DAN THALMANN
Publisher

The amount of the mill levies used by the 12 local cities in Washington County to fund their budgets vary drastically across the county, and while most have gone down over the last 15 years, a couple have jumped significantly.

City councils budget for their general fund, but also

have separate mill levies for things like bond and interest, libraries, employee benefits, noxious weeds, special parks and GO bonds.

The township general mill levy is also included in the following city mill levies. Those mill levies are small, but do add to the taxes paid by city residents.

In 2024, the highest three mill levies in the county

were in the cities of Haddam (76.446), Mahaska (61.195), and Hanover (48.826). Two of those, Haddam and Mahaska, were the only two cities to have increases in their mill levies over time. Haddam is up 47.174 mills over the past 15 years and Mahaska is up 23.131 mills during that same time period.

The lowest three mill levies in the county were in the cit-

ies of Vining (23.048), Linn (25.967) and Hollenberg (30.732).

Barnes has seen the biggest drop in the mill levy over time, most of that in the last four years. The city has ranged from having a 72 to 77 mill levy for a decade before starting to decrease in 2022. The mill levy has come down almost 30 mills in just the last three years.

Other big decreases over the last five years were in Morrowville, which is down 22.670 mills; Linn, which is down 20.927 mills; and Palmer, which is down 19.043 mills.

Over the last few weeks, all taxing entities have been publishing public notices that include their budgets, showing proposed mill levies for the next taxing cycle.

LOCAL MILL LEVIES OVER TIME – CITIES

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	15yr dif	10yr dif	5yr dif
Local city mill levies																			
Includes all city-level budgeted taxes, including general, bond and interest, library, employee benefits, noxious weed, special parks, GO bonds and township general																			
Barnes	72.530	72.657	72.353	72.415	72.344	72.328	75.458	77.881	77.932	77.121	72.947	72.760	72.561	64.834	57.028	44.867	-27.663	-27.461	-28.080
Clifton	40.474	38.720	40.402	45.213	48.481	52.579	52.489	52.272	51.691	52.539	52.425	52.440	52.854	47.411	43.865	37.734	-2.740	-14.845	-14.691
Greenleaf	51.556	50.596	48.486	46.442	45.943	48.012	47.516	47.707	48.753	47.643	49.341	48.656	48.662	44.916	48.658	38.807	-12.749	-9.205	-10.534
Haddam	29.272	29.105	33.053	43.920	44.356	45.412	57.397	67.414	67.133	78.896	71.875	70.533	70.306	70.306	76.557	76.446	+47.174	+31.034	+4.571
Hanover	54.970	55.085	54.219	54.000	53.823	53.562	53.536	53.027	53.085	53.057	52.186	51.688	57.760	51.940	53.238	48.826	-6.144	-4.736	-3.360
Hollenberg	56.972	49.921	47.964	44.974	46.479	43.765	41.014	42.693	42.696	37.314	35.039	37.293	38.333	35.722	33.725	30.732	-26.240	-13.033	-4.307
Linn	37.694	49.093	46.336	47.561	47.377	48.672	46.521	52.146	48.493	48.129	46.894	43.584	41.894	32.965	31.203	25.967	-11.727	-22.705	-20.927
Mahaska	38.064	38.158	38.431	43.268	57.886	61.776	61.497	62.991	66.282	65.104	55.036	61.458	73.689	65.184	65.170	61.195	+23.131	-0.581	+6.159
Morrowville	68.160	64.913	64.208	63.454	63.316	63.740	64.477	68.553	69.791	70.597	68.667	67.478	65.141	60.380	49.473	45.997	-22.163	-17.743	-22.670
Palmer	61.960	60.557	58.612	57.816	59.008	62.114	61.145	61.163	60.902	60.753	59.642	49.019	49.133	45.089	51.995	40.599	-21.361	-21.515	-19.043
Vining	47.326	49.075	48.920	41.292	40.792	40.818	41.056	41.322	41.147	28.367	28.998	28.420	29.872	27.215	24.356	23.048	-24.278	-17.770	-5.950
Washington	45.173	45.161	45.149	45.141	45.516	45.581	46.273	45.791	46.030	47.809	46.375	46.016	47.602	49.297	45.097	43.910	-1.263	-1.671	-2.465