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ONLINE EDITION:
www.coffeycountyonline.com

Death Notices
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☐ Eileen Coker, 81



Area Easter
services,
egg hunts
planned

Burlington
Community Good Friday service will be held 6:30 p.m. Friday, April 18, at Radiant Life Church, 139 N. 1st Terrace, New Strawn. Pastor Brandon Winters of the Christian Church of Burlington will give the message. The offering received at this service is the primary means of funding for the Christian Life Scholarships awarded by the



Public Notices
Pages 9 and 10

- ☐ Joan Freeman Revocable Trust - Notice to Creditors.
 - ☐ Donna McCorkle - Hearing on Petition to Change Name.
 - ☐ Coffey County - List of March Warrants.
 - ☐ City of Burlington - Ordinance 2025-914 Summary, Grant for Light Replacement.
 - ☐ Coffey County Election Officer - Notice of Canvass for the May 6 Special Bond Election for USD 244.
 - ☐ Coffey County Election Officer - Notice of Equipment Test.
- Accesspublicnotices
throughout Kansasat
www.kansaspublicnotices.com

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The official newspaper
of Coffey County

Burlington, New Strawn, Lebo,
Gridley, LeRoy, Waverly,
and Hartford

Lebo-Waverly USD 243
Burlington USD 244
LeRoy-Gridley USD 245



Hospital ends obstetrics services

Tracy Jones
For The Republican

BURLINGTON — The Coffey Health System Board of Trustees voted on March 31 to cease obstetrics care at Coffey County Hospital. Labor and delivery services incurred a \$1.3 million annual loss in 2024, and projected deliveries in 2025 continue a downward trend.

The executive finance committee recommended the closure during the previous month's meeting. The board tabled the discussion

to allow the hospital's executive leadership team to develop a closure plan that meets regulatory requirements and helps families transfer their care to other hospitals. Hospital leadership also informed staff of the potential action and discussed options with the county commission during a March 10 meeting. With a plan in place and a commitment to continue care for all third-trimester moms, the board voted 8-1 to cease labor and delivery services effective June 30, 2025. Arden Payer

cast the sole dissenting vote.

While obstetrics has historically lost money, the hospital maintained it as a service to the community; however, declining numbers forced the change. In the last five years, the hospital averaged 65 births per year. Projections for 2025 are less than half that. An increase in high-risk pregnancies results in more deliveries going to urban hospitals equipped to handle the needs of the mom and baby. With so few deliveries, recruiting qualified obstetrics nurses is be-

coming increasingly difficult.

"This is one of the toughest decisions a small, rural hospital can face," said Chief Executive Officer Stacy Augustyn. "It certainly isn't something anyone is happy about, but the reality is that declining births would leave the service unsustainable. This decision is not a reflection of our obstetrics nurses or providers; on the contrary, they provide exceptional services and care

See **Hospital**, Page 4

LeRoy Council
member resigns
after complaint,
court order

Mark Petterson
Managing Editor

LeROY — A tense LeRoy City Council meeting Monday evening culminated in the abrupt resignation of council member Bryson Meats following the reading of a citizen complaint and a court-issued protection order.

About an hour into the 90-minute session, Mayor Steve Cox read the contents of a formal complaint submitted against Meats.

"The complaint reads that Bryson Meats is sexually harassing members of the community and his character is unfit for city leadership," Cox said. He noted the documentation included a petition for protection from stalking and sexual assault, filed March 25, 2025, and granted earlier Monday by the court for a two-year period.

Cox said he and City Attorney Daniel Smith had spoken with the complainant. He added that Meats did not appear at the court hearing earlier that day.

"I agreed with the judge and the court, so I didn't argue it," Meats told the council. "I called the court office and told them I would not be showing up to court and I was okay with this case number ... that is all I am going to say."

After citing Kansas statute K.S.A. 60-1205 regarding misconduct in office, Cox addressed Meats directly: "Bryson, if you don't want to resign, I am going to suggest that the city council make a motion that we move this on to [the county attorney] to be prosecuted."

"If you guys want me to resign, I will," Meats responded.

"That is up to you, Bryson. It is not up to us," Cox replied.

"Yeah, I think it's best. I will resign, effective immediately," Meats said. "I appreciate you guys for having me on council. This was fun. I think we got a lot

See **LeRoy**, Page 5

Tatman steps into Coffey County
economic development role

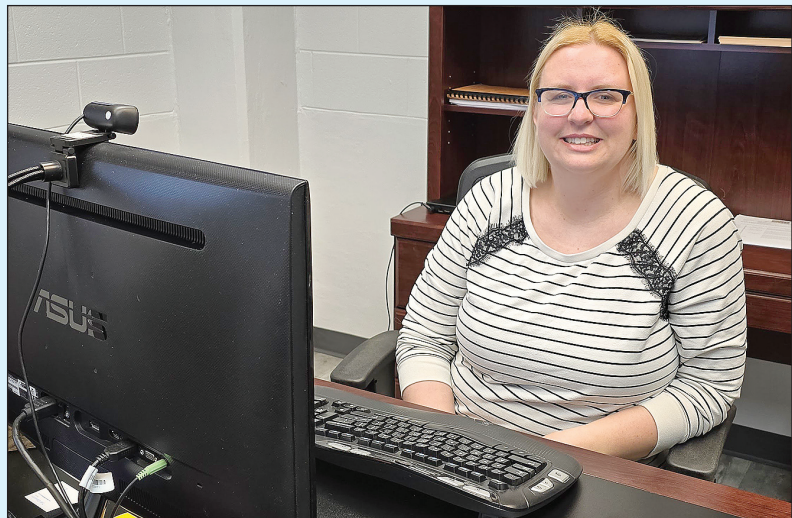
Mark Petterson
Managing Editor

BURLINGTON — A familiar face has stepped into a key leadership role as Coffey County welcomes its new economic development director, Jenny Tatman.

Tatman, a 2005 graduate of Lebo High School, returned to her hometown with her husband and two children three years ago after a decade working in libraries and nonprofit leadership across Kansas. She said the decision to apply for the position was driven by her passion for the area.

"Coffey County is home," Tatman said. "I want to contribute to a Coffey County that we can all continue to be proud of, and ensure it remains a place where our children can thrive."

In her new role, Tatman is focusing on building relationships across the county and familiarizing herself with ongoing projects. "I'm actively reaching out to introduce myself to community members, business owners, civic leaders, and other service provid-



Jenny Tatman, Lebo, began her role as Coffey County economic development director on March 31.

ers," she said.

Tatman said immediate priorities include enhancing workforce development, supporting small businesses, marketing Coffey County's strengths, and improving collaboration among communities.

Her experience includes serving as assistant director of Thrive Kansas, where she managed grant-funded programs, staff, and initiatives focused on rural health and community

See **Tatman**, Page 4

City Council awards chip seal project

BURLINGTON — The City of Burlington will spend nearly \$174,000 to chip seal several blocks of street this summer. During its April 2 meeting, the city council approved the lowest of three bids submitted for the work, awarding the project to APAC-Kansas, Inc., Shears Division, Emporia.

APAC's bid came in at \$2.15 per square yard for a total of \$173,990.90. The chip seal project will cover 80,926 square yards of roadway and is expected to begin in August, allowing time for necessary patch work (see sidebar). Bettis Asphalt & Construction, Inc., Topeka, and Vance Brothers, Kansas City, also submitted bids.

Mayor Stan Luke and council members Jerilyn Curtiss, Lila Van Horn, Cara Mays, Nathan Strawder, and Martin Ernst were present. Council member Maxi

Berryman was absent.

Department Reports:

Electric: Crews replaced power poles damaged by wind and began tree trimming in utility rights of way. A squirrel caused a temporary power outage on March 26 when it shorted the circuit feeder and tripped the tiebreaker with Evergy. No damage occurred.

Water/Wastewater: Staff attended safety training, attempted a lagoon burn, completed a sewer tap, and prepped generators for a potential storm. Superintendent Danny Hawkins called it useful emergency response training.

Street: Crews attended safety meetings, hauled waste, and straightened signposts impacted by strong winds.

Police: Officers responded to traffic and citizen assists, ad-

dressed nuisance properties, and participated in water plant training. Four applications have been received for two open officer positions; testing and interviews are underway. Street department staff assisted with repairs at the animal shelter and installed a window air conditioner.

Parks: Water service was restored to seasonal restrooms. Superintendent Kevin Boyce reported minor leaks and a broken toilet at Jones Park, which will be replaced. The mosquito fogging machine will be sent for annual calibration. The council approved a wage increase for employee Kyle MacFadgen to \$19.15 per hour, retroactive to March 15, following his annual evaluation.

Planning and Zoning: Permits

See **City**, Page 5

Preeo named Waverly
Elementary principal

Ida Wilson
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Lebo-Waverly USD 243 Board of Education has selected Alice Preeo as the next principal of Waverly Elementary School, effective August 2025.

Preeo, a Hartford High School graduate, earned both her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a Master of Science in Educational Administration from Emporia State University. She is currently pursuing a



Alice Preeo will be principal at Waverly Elementary School starting in August.

See **Preeo**, Page 5

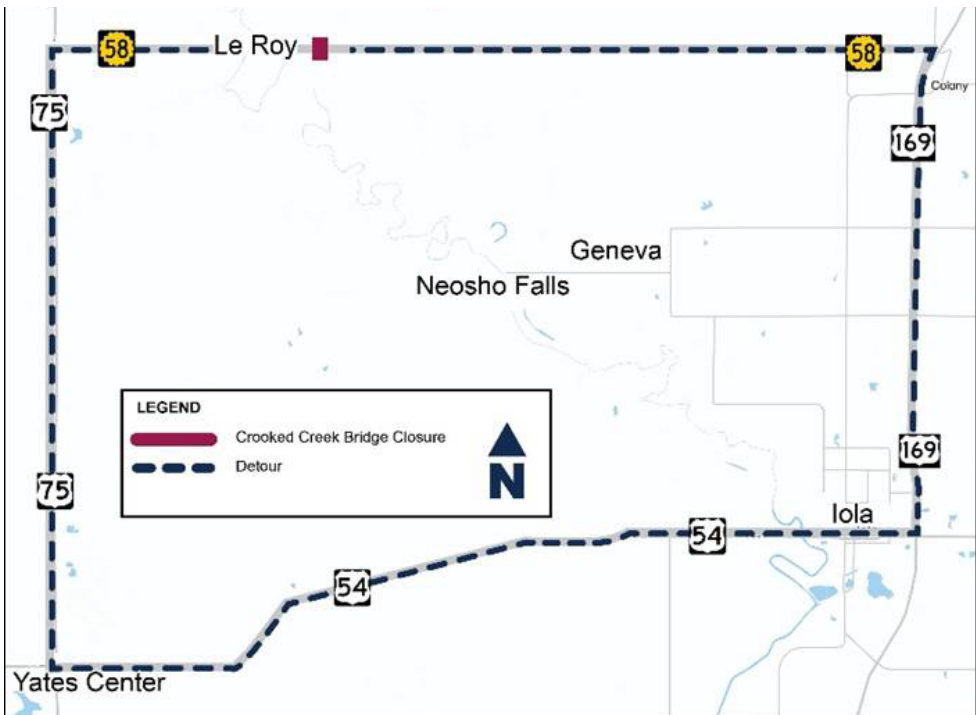
Commissioners hear
waste concerns

BURLINGTON — The Coffey County Commission met March 31 for a full agenda that included board appointments, infrastructure updates, economic development discussions, and resident concerns over industrial waste disposal. Commissioners present were

Chairman Wayne Thomsen, Mark Petterson, Todd Barker, and Steve McCurry. Commissioner Tom Hugunin was absent.

Board Positions
Mark Murphy of New Strawn was appointed to

See **County**, Page 5



The state signed detour route during the six-month Crooked Creek bridge replacement project.

Bridge on K-58 to be replaced

LeROY — The week of April 14, the Kansas Department of Transportation expects to start a project to replace the Crooked Creek bridge on K-58 east of LeRoy.

The bridge will be closed to traffic on Wednesday, April 16. Traffic will follow a signed state detour on U.S. 75, U.S. 54, U.S. 169 and K-58. Weather permitting, the new bridge should be open to traffic by late October.

KDOT awarded the construction contract of \$2.3 million to B & B Bridge Company of St. Paul. Check KDOT's updated traveler information website, www.kan-drive.gov, for more highway conditions and construction details. Persons with questions may contact Construction Manager Warren Ebberts at (620) 901-6549 or Public Information Officer Priscilla Petersen at (620) 902-6433.