

Emporia exhibit to honor Vietnam veterans who died after returning home

EMPORIA — Local families still have time to submit names and photos of Vietnam veterans who died after returning home to be honored at The Wall That Heals exhibit, coming to Emporia August 14-17.

As part of the mobile exhibit, the In Memory Honor Roll pays tribute to veterans who died due to service-related causes such as Agent Orange exposure, PTSD, and other illnesses. The program is part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's (VVMF) effort to recognize all who served in Vietnam, even if their names are not inscribed on the memorial wall in Washington, D.C.

Photos and names

of Kansas veterans accepted through the In Memory program will be displayed at the mobile Education Center when The Wall That Heals is in Emporia. There is no cost to participate, and the process requires a completed application, a DD214 form showing Vietnam service, a death certificate, and two photographs.

"This is an opportunity to proudly recognize our loved ones in our own community," said Richelle Birk, co-chair of The Wall That Heals Emporia Committee.

Honorees also receive a personal remembrance page online, a printed tribute certificate, and an invitation to the In

Memory weekend in Washington, D.C., where each veteran's name is read aloud at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial site.

A plaque dedicated in 2004 at the memorial site, and replicated in the traveling exhibit, reads: "In Memory of the men and women who served in the Vietnam War and later died as a result of their service. We honor and remember their sacrifice."

For more information on how to submit a veteran for honor, visit www.vvmf.org/inmemory. Details on the Emporia exhibit can be found at thewallthathealsemporia.com.

USD 244 BOE selects food service management company

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington USD 244 Board of Education met in special session Tuesday, July 1, to select a food service management company, as well as to approve the hire of a new BHS physical education teacher.

The district requested proposals for the management of school food services and asked that the food service management company (FSMC) provide management services according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations and guideline, as well as the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) policies and guidelines. The FSMC is registered with the Child Nutrition and Wellness

Division of the KSDE. A pre-proposal conference to review the contents of the request for proposal and to arrange inspection visits was held Monday, May 12, and proposals were due no later than 10 a.m. Monday, June 16.

The district received proposals from Southwest Foodservice Excellence, LLC (SFE) and OPAA Food Management, Inc. Proposals were evaluated by an evaluation committee on June 23. The committee rated the proposals according to the selection criteria provided by KSDE and as stated in the request for proposal document.

The board unanimously approved contracting with OPAA Food Management, Inc., for the 2025-26 school year, pending KSDE approval.

KSDE is reviewing the proposal and will provide feedback and next steps. Once guidance is received from KSDE, the district will begin negotiations with OPAA Food Management, Inc.

By a 4-0 vote, the board approved Noah Nordgren as BHS physical education teacher for the 2025-26 school year.

Four board members were present for the meeting, James Higgins and, via phone, Monique Hart, Johnny Hernandez and Selena King. Board members Lucas Allen, Ron Hess and Bob Plummer were absent. Others present included Superintendent Craig Marshall, Clerk of the Board Christy Hess and OPAA Business Development Associate Jack Koehn.

Model T Club to meet July 10

BURLINGTON — The East Central Kansas Model T Ford Club will meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 10, in the conference room of the Burlington Branch Library, 410 Juniatta Street. Before the meeting, the club will share a meal, with the entree and drink being provided. Members are encouraged to bring a side dish to share.

The meetings are a time for sharing experiences, road trips and events. Members will update progress on the workshop at Bud Redding's house; members escorting the Mobile Vietnam Wall from LeRoy to Emporia and talk about the event in Topeka. Several members will be attending the National Conference in Canada and we are looking forward to hear-



Photo submitted
Larry Tice at the Military Appreciation Day on June 14 at Forbes Field in Topeka

ing about their trip next month. Owning a Model T is not a requirement for membership or attendance. Meetings are open

to the public, feel free to join the fun.

For more information, contact Larry Tice (620) 364-8005.

State Nursing Board re-approves LPN program at FHTC

EMPORIA — Flint Hills Technical College's Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Program has earned a five-year re-approval from the Kansas State Board of Nursing following a successful site evaluation, reaffirming its status as a leading nursing education provider in the state.

The Kansas State Board of Nursing's Education Committee accepted the evaluation report and recommended the re-approval during its June 10 meeting. The full board confirmed the decision on June 11.

"We are absolutely thrilled to announce that our practical nursing program has received full five-

year licensure approval," said Juli Heitman, director of nursing at FHTC. "This milestone reflects the hard work of our faculty, staff, and community partners who are committed to delivering high-quality nursing education."

Heitman also credited the Program Action Committee, comprised of local nurses, and the program's clinical partners for helping provide students with real-world training experiences essential to their success.

The Kansas State Board of Nursing's evaluation process reviews curriculum, faculty credentials, student outcomes, clinical training

opportunities, and program resources. A five-year re-approval represents the highest level of confidence granted by the board.

In addition to the re-approval, the program achieved a 100% graduate placement rate in 2024, with all graduates securing employment in the healthcare field.

Founded in 1965, the LPN program at FHTC prepares students to deliver essential care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other healthcare settings across the region.

For more information about the program, visit www.fhtc.edu or call 620-343-4600.

Kansas launches Small Business Office to strengthen statewide support

TOPEKA — A new division within the Kansas Department of Commerce is aiming to streamline resources and boost support for small businesses across the state.

Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of Commerce David Toland announced the launch of the Kansas Small Business Office, a dedicated unit designed to serve as a central point of contact for entrepreneurs seeking guidance on development, permitting, certifications, capital access and mentorship.

"While large corporations relocating or expanding in Kansas tend to grab the headlines, we fully acknowledge small businesses are key drivers of our state's robust econ-

omy," Toland said. "With the creation of this new division, we are committing resources to double down on that growth."

Small businesses make up more than 99 percent of all businesses in Kansas, according to the Department of Commerce.

The office also introduced ConnectKS, a new digital platform powered by EcoMap that offers a real-time, searchable database of resources available to Kansas entrepreneurs. The platform connects users with funding opportunities, business programs, support organizations and events statewide.

"The Kansas Small Business Office is making it easier than ever for Kansans to find the resources they need to start

and grow a business," said Taylor Overton, director of the Kansas Small Business Office. "Whether launching a first venture or scaling a successful company, our office provides clarity, connectivity and confidence."

For more information, visit www.kansascommerce.gov.

Harris on Washburn Dean's List

TOPEKA — Washburn University has announced its spring 2025 Dean's List honorees. More than 900 students qualified for the Dean's List, including Teagan Harris from Burlington.

To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must be enrolled in 12 hours of graded credits and earn a semester grade point average of 3.4 to 3.99.

Lebo UWF to host Christmas in July Tea

LEBO — The Lebo United Women in Faith will host their third annual Christmas in July Tea at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 16, at Lebo United Methodist Church.

The event will feature a festive blend of tea, holiday-themed foods, and Christmas décor, along with a program highlight-

ing the true meaning of the season. Entertainment will be provided by Grace Isch, former Miss Augusta and Miss Hannibal, Missouri, accompanied by Misty Hampton.

Guests are invited to RSVP by calling Linda Combes at 620-364-6647 or Wendy Charboneau at 760-583-0835.

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