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THE HOLTON RECORDER

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Change in fireworks law won't apply here

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July Jubilee is Saturday

By Brian Sanders

This Saturday, June 28, the mood at Banner Creek Reservoir will be patriotic as area residents gather to enjoy food, music and fireworks at the Holton-Jackson County Chamber of Commerce's July Jubilee, it was reported.

The reservoir gates will open at 3:30 p.m. for the 18th-annual event, with live music starting at 4 p.m., along with food and arts and crafts vendor sales, concluding at 10 p.m. with a fireworks display provided by Jesse Kimmi and crew of Everest, which has provided the July Jubilee fireworks show every year since 2021.

There's no charge to attend the afternoon and evening events at the reservoir, although free-will donations will be accepted at the reservoir gates to help offset the costs of the event. Those who wish to make a contribution beforehand may do so online at exploreholton. com/community-resources/ donate#!form/Donations, and

will also be available.

This year's musical entertainment includes Kayla Rae Atkins and Company, a Silver Lakebased Christian country group; the Jackwagoneers, a Topekabased country group; and Undercover, a local rock group that describes itself as "an '80s experience."

Vendors at this year's July Jubilee will include Lentz Express Catering, Olde Guy Candles, Tailored Remodeling, Leaf Filter Gutter Protection, Sweet Kernels Kettle Corn and Lemonades, Premier Shaved Ice, Hague Quality Water of KC, Frozen Drinks On The Go, Party Penguin, R&R Entertainment (bounce house), Holton Community Hospital and Kansas Snack Shack.

This year's July Jubilee will cap a full day of activities at the reservoir grounds, starting with the seventh-annual Ron and Scott Strader and Tom Davies Memorial Run/Walk, hosted by the Friends of Banner Creek

a Venmo option for donations Reservoir with check-in at 8 a.m. and the event starting at 9 a.m. Printed registration forms may be picked up at the Chamber office, located at 104 W. Fifth St. in Holton.

Regular reservoir activities such as camping, swimming, boating, disc golf, fishing and kayak and paddle boat rentals will also be available that day. Fireworks will be on sale in Holton and the surrounding area for personal use by that weekend, but those who attend July Jubilee are reminded to leave their fireworks at home.

The first July Jubilee was held at Banner Creek Reservoir in 2007 after several years at Prairie Lake. The event has been held there every year except 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic canceled the event.

interested Anyone volunteering to help collect donations at the Banner Creek Reservoir gates is invited to contact the Chamber office at (785) 364-3963 for more information.



Holton Municipal Swimming Pool lifeguard Anna Schierling (shown above at right) helped Carston Barnett (center) learn how to float on his back in the pool in the "tadpole" level of swimming lessons at the pool last Friday while Atalie Askren (upper left) and Austyn Schumaker (upper right) waited their turn for Schierling's help. The pool's first week of swimming lessons was held last week with 110 youngsters taking group lessons and 70 in private lessons, it was reported.

County values up 3.6 percent

By Ali Holcomb

The assessed valuation of real estate, personal property and utilities in Jackson County increased by 3.6 percent, or \$5.8 million, this past year, according to recent figures provided by the Jackson County Clerk's Office.

The amount of increase is similar to last year. Between 2023 and 2024, values increased by 3.7 percent, or \$5.6 million.

The county's assessed valuation includes values for real estate, personal property, state assessed utilities and oil and gas properties, as well as 16M and 20M trucks and wa-

The new assessed value of all real estate in the county has been set at \$137,803,195, which is an increase of ation was set at \$152,421,170

personal Countywide, property values increased 11 percent this past year from \$3,568,379 to \$3,956,414. The value of state assessed

utilities increased 7.8 percent from \$19,188,183 to \$20,689,855 while oil and gas properties increased from \$13,478 to \$18,169, which is about 34.8 percent.

The value of 16M and 20M trucks in the county totaled \$1,268,582 and the value of watercrafts totaled \$174,343.

The county's total assessed valuation has been set at \$163,910,558, which is a \$5,811,502 increase from last year's value of \$158,099,056.

The county's assessed valu-

\$2,474,179, or 1.8 percent, in 2023 (a 6.6 percent infrom last year's value of \$135,329,016. in 2022 (a 5.4 percent increase), \$135,588,931 in 2021 (a 3.4 percent increase) and \$131,177,272 in 2020 (a 4.7

percent increase).
The assessed valuations for all three school districts in the county – Jackson Heights, Holton and Royal Valley – increased from the previous year.

The valuation for USD 335 Jackson Heights increased from \$28,266,427 to \$29,443,117 (a \$1,176,690 increase) among Jackson County values. The district also receives some values from Nemaha, Brown and Atchison counties, it was re-

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School boards OK pay raises

■ *Holton teachers to receive 4.4 percent increase*

By Brian Sanders

Teachers and administrators in the Holton school district will receive a 4.4-percent raise for the 2025-26 school year, according to action taken by the USD 336 Board of Education during a special meeting on Thursday, June 19 that district superintendent Trevor Ashcraft said "went well."

Board members Jenny Stous, Trent Tanking, Dena Swisher and Judy May, the latter participating via phone, voted unanimously to approve the negotiated teacher salary contract for the 2025-26 school year, which raised the base salary from 2024-25's \$45,250 to \$47,250 for the coming year - a \$2,000 increase. Incremental "steps" of \$720 included for years of service and continuing education were unchanged from 2024-25,

it was reported. Board members Terry Lierz,

Ryan Phillips and Rex Frazier were absent from the meeting.

Tanking moved to increase the classified base staff salary by 50 cents per hour, giving all returning classified staff a 60cent raise, and to give returning administrators the 4.4-percent raise that teachers will get, with May seconding the motion. Ashcraft said the increase in classified staff pay was needed "to begin a multi-year plan to be more competitive" with other districts in the area.

The pay raise for classified staff was approved on a 4-0 vote after Swisher's motion to amend the motion to separate the administrator salary increase for further discussion was seconded

by Stous. During the administrator discussion, board salary members noted that about eight administrators and directors would be impacted by the raise due to the number of new hires and appointments already placed at a starting salary for the 2025-26 school year.

After discussing comparisons to administrator salaries in surrounding school districts, Tanking's motion to approve the administrator pay raise was seconded by Swisher and approved.

In total, new money spent for salaries will be \$277,578, including \$204,200 for teacher salary increases, \$54,415 for classified staff increases and \$18,963 for administrative increases.

The board also approved a change in district-paid health insurance to cover premium increases for administrators during the 2025-26 school year, with the district paying all of the \$1,140 monthly employee-only premium and covering \$1,375 of

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Seeley to perform benefit concert

By Brian Sanders Grammy Award-winning Holton native Jim Seeley will be returning to his home town in August for a night of jazz at a benefit concert at Holton Community Theatre, it has been reported.

Seeley, a 1978 graduate of Holton High School and the son of the late Dr. James and Anita Seeley, will bring the Roger Wilder Trio to the theater for a concert at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16. A "meet and greet" with Seeley will follow the performance at the theater, and drinks will be served during the event.

Tickets are \$25 each plus fees and taxes and can be purchased online at holtoncommunitytheatre.org. Proceeds from the performance will benefit Beck Bookman Library's Building Fund, Holton Community Theatre and Jackson County Kiwanis, it was reported.

Seeley is known in the jazz world not only as an accomplished trumpet and flugelhorn player, but also as a composer, arranger and educator. He is described by jazz critic Alex Henderson of All-Music Guide as "an acoustic-oriented postbop/hard bop trumpeter who is

hard-swinging but can be quite lyrical and melodic at times." After his graduation from

HHS, Seeley headed to Boston to study at the Berklee College of Music, then moved to Los Angeles, joining the sextet of veteran jazz drummer Dick Berk for three years. After his work with Berk, he joined the Ray Charles Orchestra, playing with fellow trumpeter Johnny Coles before coming back to Los Angeles and playing with such legends as Harry James, Woody Herman and Artie Shaw.

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Local fourth through sixth-grade students who participated in Holton Community Theatre's recent summer camp performed "The Lady Pirates Of Captain Bree" last Friday for family, friends and community members. In the photo above, Gideon Hesed (at left) and Owen Morris (at right) are shown preparing to swashbuckle aboard the ship while the female pirates look on.

■ RV sets base pay for new teachers at \$50,000

By Ali Holcomb
Teachers in the Royal Valley school district will receive a 3.96 percent salary increase next year as part of new salary negotiations approved Monday night during the Royal Valley Board of Education meeting, and the starting salary for new teachers will be increased to \$50,000 a year.

"The USD 337 school district cares about its staff and wants to hire the best people. Our school board believes that there is a direct correlation between supporting our employees, having a consistently positive place to work with high standards and providing an excellent education for our students," Board President Boone Smith said. "Royal Valley USD 337 is a great place for our students to learn, and it's also a fine place to build a career."

Current teaching staff will continue to receive salary increases based on "step move-ment experience," it was reported. The base salary for new teach-

ers increased from \$48,000 a year to \$50,000, which Smith said was one of the highest in As part of the new contract,

the district will also increase its monthly contribution for health insurance for employees from \$515 to \$540 per month.

'This will cover all but \$3 of the increase on an individual health insurance plan," Superintendent Aaric Davis

The agreement also adds \$10 to the horizontal steps on the

teacher salary schedule. A new retirement match for

employees was also approved. If an employee contributes a minimum of \$25 a month into a district-managed retirement plan, then the district will match that \$25 a month.

"It's a \$300 benefit. The district already contributes \$500 a year (in non-matching funds) so they could potentially receive \$800 a year from the district for retirement," Davis said.

The plan also includes a new vesting schedule, which allows employees to access some of those retirement funds earlier if needed.

Davis said the new salary schedule represents a 3.96 percent increase, but with the additional insurance and retirement benefits, the new plan is a 4.7 percent increase.

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Jackson County Art Walk is Friday

Jackson County Arts will host a free "Summer Of Love" themed art walk this Friday, June 27, around the Holton Square, it has been reported.

The art walk will kick off at the gazebo on the Jackson County Courthouse courtyard at 3:15 p.m. when Becca Robertson and Chris Heineken, who are leads in in the upcoming Holton Community Theatre musical "The Wedding Singer," will preview a song or two from the production.

Charitable Vending will be set up on the east side of the courtyard and will be offering shaved ice and kettle corn.

785 Antiques will host wellknown local artist Joyce Shupe. Shupe will have several acrylic paintings on display featuring flowers, animals and landscapes.

The Jackson County Museum will feature three artists, Jerry

Reed, Kathleen Cobb and Marty Mavrovich.

Reed retired from his furniture business and started designing and modeling fire trucks, vintage automobiles and trucks, made from different kinds of wood, and all with a story tied to his family. The Soldier native has made and

gifted several canes and rocking

chairs over the years. Cobb is both a local and regional artist and is also a member of the Topeka Art Guild and the Flint Hills Cooperative. She prefers oil and paints a variety of urban and rural landscapes set in both Kansas and New Mexico.

Mavrovich, also a local and

regional artist, was a member of The Collective. Her new paintings explore the Kansas landscape in pastel and acrylic. Both Cobb and Mavrovich will be at the museum to greet

The Gossip and Uptown Treasures will have Carol Totten outside demonstrating and exhibiting her many paintings. Totten explores a variety of mediums, techniques and topics. She also exhibits her art in More Than Lemons gallery.

Blueberry treats and flowers from Triple B Farms will also be available at the Gossip along with be local music.

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THURSDAY'S FORECAST **CHANCE OF RAIN, HIGH OF 91** Look for the complete forecast on page 2.