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Today's Weather


Thursday
26



Partly sunny,
chance of
PM rain

High: 91
Low: 69
Precip: 60%


Friday
27



Mostly sunny,
rain possible

High: 90
Low: 71
Precip: 30%


Saturday
28



Mostly sunny,
rain possible

High: 92
Low: 72
Precip: 20%


Sunday
29



Partly sunny,
rain possible

High: 90
Low: 68
Precip: 40%

Monday
30



Partly sunny,
rain possible

High: 85
Low: 65
Precip: 30%

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Highline



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Ashcraft, Haussler explain budget process

By Brian Sanders
When school districts across Kansas — and Holton USD 336 is no exception — publish their proposed budgets for the upcoming school year each year, the publication of the annual budget raises questions with taxpayers, and Holton superintendent Trevor Ashcraft said it's important for a school district to be able to answer those questions.

That was the reason for a public meeting hosted by the Holton school district last Tuesday, June 17, in which Ashcraft and Holton Special Education Cooperative director Amy Haussler summarized for about 15 people present how the district is funded, how those funds are used and how the district is being accountable with those funds.

"We wanted to give everybody the opportunity to have access to this information, if they wanted it," Ashcraft told those present at the meeting, held at Holton Middle School. "We want to help to provide some understanding, because education funding formulas are very complex."

According to information presented by Ashcraft, 79 percent of the school district's funds come from state sources through a funding process that includes a 20-mill general fund property tax levy that is collected by the state and distributed to districts according to a per-student formula that is figured by the Kansas Department of Education.

"We're paying those taxes, but they're not coming directly to the school," Ashcraft said. "The state determines the payment amount that comes back."

About 14 percent of the district's funding comes from a supplemental general or "local



Holton USD 336 superintendent Trevor Ashcraft (shown above at right) explained the budgeting process during a special meeting held June 17 at the Holton Middle School library. Holton Special Education Cooperative director Amy Haussler (at left) was also present to explain how the process affects the special ed co-op. Photo by Brian Sanders

option budget" levy that is set at a percentage of the general fund levy, ranging from 15 mills to 33 mills. Five percent of school funds come from the federal level, and the remaining two percent comes from such sources as student fees, gifts and grants.

Only the district's general, supplemental general and capital outlay funds are supported by mill levies, one mill being \$1 of property tax levied against \$1,000 of a property's assessed valuation, although Ashcraft noted that the first \$75,000 of a property's worth is exempted from the valuation for the general fund, due to a legislative change in 2024.

The current levied rates for the district's funds include 20 mills for the general fund, generating \$1,016,239 locally; 17.19 mills for supplemental general, generating \$1,199,625; and eight mills — the maximum allowable, Ashcraft said — for capital outlay, generating \$558,275.

The district's levy also includes 12.11 mills for bond and interest, generating \$845,079 to pay off the construction costs at Holton Elementary School. Ashcraft said the bond for HES is projected to be paid off in "just a couple of years."

Capital outlay funds are generally used to make major improvements at district facilities, and Ashcraft noted those facilities in the Holton district include its three school buildings, the district office, the bus barns and Holton Special Education Cooperative offices.

The general fund covers day-to-day operations such as teacher salaries and classroom expenditures, and funds from the state are distributed to districts according to full-time equivalency (FTE) populations during any given year, as well as Base Aid for Student Excellence (BASE) funding set by the Kansas Legislature for each fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30.

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Change in fireworks sales laws won't apply here

By Brian Sanders
Changes signed into law earlier this year regarding Kansas fireworks sales laws won't have an effect in Holton — at least for this year, it has been reported.

Holton City Manager Teresa Riley said that the sale of Class C fireworks — firecrackers, Roman candles, rockets, shells, fountains, "cakes" and other small pyrotechnic displays — in Holton will remain the same this year as in the past, with fireworks allowed to be sold and

legally discharged in the city between Friday, June 27 and Saturday, July 5.

On April 8, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly signed legislation into law allowing the sale of Class C fireworks year-round at "brick and mortar" fireworks stores and expanding the sales window for seasonal retailers, such as volunteer and church groups and veterans organizations, to between June 20 and July 7.

The previous sales window for all Class C fireworks sales in Kansas before this year was between June 27 and July 7, shorter than in bordering states, it was reported.

The statewide change in fireworks sales laws gives cities and

counties the ability to choose a shorter timeframe for sales and not allow permanent fireworks stores, it was reported.

Fireworks may be discharged in Holton between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. starting this Friday, June 27, and continuing through Saturday, July 5, with the exception of Friday, July 4, when fireworks may be discharged between 8 a.m. and midnight, according to city ordinance. The public is reminded that fireworks are prohibited in any of the city's parks.

Bottle rockets and M-80s — firecrackers that contain more than 50 milligrams of gunpowder per cracker — are illegal in Kansas, as is the sale or discharge of metal-handled

sparklers and Chinese lanterns, or "sky lanterns," in Jackson County.

Those who discharge fireworks are also asked to be considerate of neighbors who may not enjoy the fireworks, as well as pets that may be frightened by fireworks barrages to the point of running off and getting lost.

Pet owners are advised to put their pets indoors at night, and if that is not possible, please make sure animals have proper tags and identifications in case they escape due to noise from fireworks.

For further information, contact Holton City Hall at (785) 364-2721 or the Holton Police Department at (785) 364-2174.

New structures in county under review

By Ali Holcomb
A total of 828 new structures were identified from 2021 to 2024 in the county using EagleView aerial imagery, it was reported.

During a recent Jackson County Commission meeting, Kate Immenschuh, county appraiser, said that the new structures were identified by the company between December 2021 to December 2024.

Of those 828 new structures, Immenschuh said that several will likely be "false positives."

"Some of those structures might actually be semi-trailers or campers or something on the property that has been moved around," Immenschuh said. "If they're large enough, the imagery will capture those."

The county issues about 100 building permits per year, so she estimated that there were about 500 new structures in the past four years that were built without a building permit and may need to be added to the tax roll.

In 2021, the county entered a six-year contract with EagleView of Bellevue, Wash. for high-resolution aerial imagery of properties in the county using an airplane.

This was done to reduce the amount of time county employees would have to spend inspect-

ing properties in person.

County Counselor Todd Luckman asked if some of those new structures were located on the Prairie Band Potawatomi Reservation. The county does not have zoning authority on the reservation and would not require those property owners to have a building permit.

"Our office still has to value those tax-exempt properties regardless of zoning," she said. "We still have to appraise them to the best of our ability."

Immenschuh said she spoke with a representative from the tribal zoning office, who said she would get her a list of new building permits issued through the tribe.

Cities also have their own zoning regulations and new structures added within city limits would be subject to city zoning regulations.

Immenschuh met with the commissioners again last week and told them that there were 499 properties built in the last three years without a building permit.

She and her staff have investigated 39 of the noncompliant properties, so far, utilizing other aerial imagery, such as Google Earth Pro.

They are trying to determine

when the structures were built between 2021 and 2024 and if they have proper setbacks.

"We have 460 left to review," she said. "It's going to take some time."

The commissioners and Immenschuh are still discussing how to address noncompliant landowners and if they should be required to pay back taxes.

Immenschuh was asked to reach out to neighboring counties to determine their policies.

In other business, according to the approved minutes from June 9, the commission:

* Approved the purchase of copier paper for Courthouse offices from Quill of Lincolnshire, Ill. at a total cost of \$1,894.60.

* Received a weekly report from Scott Kieffaber, public works director.

Kieffaber said he reached out to city of Holton employees about relocating several power poles in the Deer Run subdivision so the road can be rebuilt. The city employees told him they would be ready to help with the project in about a week.

He also called Bright Speed and Giant about moving some of their service lines for the project, but he hasn't heard back.

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Description	Price at Close	Change
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Lowe's	220.02	+1.45
Target	97.53	+1.00
Hershey	172.12	-1.01
Walmart	98.01	+0.14
Phillips 66	119.45	-1.58
US Bancorp	44.54	+0.45
Pfizer	24.31	+0.28
Deere & Co.	513.96	-0.12
United Parcel	100.63	+0.23
Apple	200.30	-1.20
Meta Platforms	712.20	+13.67
Goodyear	10.24	+0.09

Source: New York Stock Exchange
reports. Prices listed at close of trading
on Tuesday, June 24, 2025.

GRAIN

Description	Price at Close
Wheat	\$4.86
Corn	\$3.82
Milo	\$3.36
Soybeans	\$9.75

Source: Jackson Farmers Co-op,
Holton. Prices listed at close of trading
on Tuesday, June 24, 2025. Grain buying
hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday
through Friday. Cash bids subject to
change without notice.

FUEL PRICES

	Current	Last Mo.	Last Year
Kansas Average	\$2.90	+\$0.020	-\$0.146
National Average	\$3.18	-\$0.000	-\$0.233
Holton Average	\$2.92		

Source: GasBuddy.com. Current prices
listed as of Monday, June 23, 2025.

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