

Holton Commission OKs plan to treat utility poles

By Brian Sanders
A proposal to keep Holton’s utility poles from deteriorating and falling over — thus interrupting power service to the city’s homes and businesses — by treating poles that are still in good condition was approved by the Holton City Commission during its regular meeting on Monday evening at Holton City Hall.

Commissioners unanimously approved a \$13,750 proposal from Osmose Utilities Services of Atlanta, Ga., for inspecting and treating 59 utility poles in the city, including most of the poles in the alleys around Holton’s Town Square, the two “take-off structures” at the city’s power plant and a transformer structure located near Holton Middle School.

Holton City Manager Teresa Riley said that as part of the company’s proposal, Osmose personnel would dig down 18 inches around each of the poles, inspect them for structural integrity and, if they are still

in good condition, inject an insecticide and fungicide into them for protection. Poles that need to be replaced will be identified, and the city will be responsible for replacing those poles, Riley added.

Electrical Distribution Superintendent Corey Schuetz said that some of the poles that had been marked for inspection “appeared to be kind of questionable,” particularly those in the alleys around the Square. Some of those poles are encased in concrete, Schuetz added, and when it comes time to replace them, it’s “going to be a big job.”

“This way, we can hopefully get them inspected and treated and identify any that are potential problems, so that we can get it scheduled with the business owners and get it done on our time, as oppose to waiting for one to fail and then possibly causing any kind of property damage,” he said.

Once Osmose personnel have dug around the poles in

question, Schuetz said they can utilize computer software to take measurements of how much deterioration — if any — the poles have undergone and then make recommendations for either treatment or replacement.

“Basically, if a pole is going to fall down in the next stiff breeze, then yes, we’re going to have to be the ones to go in and plan it and coordinate it with the business owners, get the electricity shut off, drop all the lines and replace the pole,” he said. “We’re being selective and we’re controlling which ones we replace based on their recommendation.”

One of the city’s utility poles that was in bad shape had to be replaced earlier that day, and Riley and Schuetz noted that an electrical distribution crew from Ottawa had come to Holton with a “backyard machine” that handles pole replacements in hard-to-get-to locations to do the work.

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Eight-time Grammy winner and jazz trumpeter Jim Seeley, a Holton native, is shown above during a benefit concert last Saturday evening at Holton Community Theatre. Seeley performed with The Roger Wilder Trio during the concert where proceeds benefitted the Beck Bookman Library building fund, Holton Community Theatre and Jackson County Kiwanis.

Photo by Ali Holcomb

Veterans boost Holton choirs’ fund-raising efforts with donations

By Brian Sanders
Holton High School’s Notables and Concert Choir singing groups recently received \$5,000 from three veterans’ groups in Holton to put toward their planned December trip to Hawaii to participate in the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade, but there is still a fair amount of fund-raising to do before the students and their entourage leave on their trip, it was noted.

On Friday morning, Aug. 15, representatives from Holton Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1367, Mary L. Bair American Legion Post 44 and the Veteran Defenders presented checks to HHS vocal music teacher Alyssa Wendel to help with costs related to sending Wendel and the Notables, along with members of the HHS concert choir and a group of chaperones, to Hawaii.

“In order for the students

to attend free, we would need to raise about \$46,000,” Wendel said. “We were hoping to raise about \$1,000 per student, which would put us at \$18,000. We have currently raised \$12,940.”

Tim Unrein, VFW Post 1367 adjutant, said Holton’s veteran support groups were happy to help with the costs of the trip.

“We thought it was very historic that this little speck on the map, Holton, is sending a choir to perform there,” Unrein said prior to a Friday morning student assembly at HHS where Wendel received \$3,500 from the VFW, \$1,000 from the Legion and \$500 from the Defenders, which Unrein described as “an auxiliary organization” consisting of “relatives and descendants of veterans.”

Unrein also pointed out during Friday’s assembly that the Notables would

also be representing Milton Davis, a 1939 graduate of HHS who died while serving with the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Arizona during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Wendel said the Notables and Concert Choir are looking forward to walking in the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade on Sunday, Dec. 7 — the 84th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack — and will perform the national anthem along the parade route.

The next day, on Monday, Dec. 8, they are tentatively scheduled to perform on the deck of the USS Missouri, aboard which the Japanese signed a formal surrender in 1945 to end World War II. The Missouri is now a museum ship stationed along “Battleship Row” in Pearl Harbor, it was reported.

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Delinquent tax sale coming soon

By Ali Holcomb
Sixteen tracts of land in Jackson County will be included in an upcoming delinquent tax sale as county officials finalize the tax sale process, it has been reported.

County Treasurer Lisa Miller and County Counselor Todd Luckman provided an update on the sale to the Jackson County Commissioners on Monday.

The county typically holds a tax sale every three to four years when property owners have been delinquent on their taxes for three consecutive years.

Luckman said all property owners with land in the tax sale have been served and public notices have also been published in

The Holton Recorder.
At the start of the process, Miller said that there were about 40 or 50 tracts eligible for the tax sale.

Luckman said he will now file a journal entry of fault with district court on the 16 remaining tracts.

Once that process is complete, a date for the sale will be determined and another public notice will be published in *The Holton Recorder*. He said the sale will be held later this fall.

When the tax sale is held, the commissioners agreed that the opening bid to purchase each tract will be the amount of back taxes due.

Luckman, Miller and the com-

missioners discussed whether the 2025 taxes will be included in the opening bid of each tract, and Luckman said they should be added.

During the tax sale, the winning bidders must pay in cash.

“The bidders will get the title and the county will get the money. The bidder will then be current on the taxes and own the property free and clear,” Luckman said.

If there is someone, such as the former property owners, living or squatting on the property, then the new property owners would have to go through the eviction process to remove those people from the property, Luckman said.

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Holton pool attendance bolstered by water slides

By Brian Sanders
Holton’s municipal swimming pool wrapped up its 2025 summer season as young swimmers and lifeguards prepared to go back to school, finishing with a “Summer Splash” event that pool manager Jessica Rogers said was “probably one of the busier years we’ve had” for the pool-closing event.

The Saturday, Aug. 9 event marked an end to a summer swimming season that Rogers said was good, with pool attendance bolstered by a pair of water slides that were installed in 2024 and late-season sponsorships from local businesses, despite a cooler and wetter-than-usual July.

“We were so busy in June, and then July usually tapers off,” Rogers said. “I don’t think it tapered off as hard this year, but we had more rain this summer, and we had more days that we were shut down due to rain than I think we’ve ever had in a summer. But when we were open, we were busy.”

Rain and cooler temperatures in July also made the pool water colder, which Rogers said “doesn’t bring the kids in,” but that didn’t stop young people from coming to the pool.

“The kids still come because the water’s still nice,” she said. “We are a hangout, especially

during the week for those middle school kids. And it’s fun, because they have a safe place to go that they can enjoy.”

Per-day averages, according to Rogers, were around 80 in June and anywhere from 60 to 80 in July, but “not all at once,” and on weekends, anywhere from 30 to 40. It was noted that on a recent Thursday afternoon, a total of 80 people were counted at the pool.

Holton’s 385,000-gallon pool, built in the 1930s with Works Progress Administration funds and remodeled in the 1980s, also found itself in need of some repairs and upgrades prior to the start of this year’s pool season on May 24. A new sand filtration and balance tank were installed prior to the start of the season to keep things running smoothly, it was reported.

But it’s the improvements that people can see at the pool that continue to bring families in, and the two slides that were installed last year are evidence of that, with Rogers saying the slides have had a positive impact on attendance at the pool despite parents having the option to take their kids to more modern pools in the area with more features.

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Foster Ford celebrates 40 years in Holton

By Ali Holcomb
Foster Ford of Holton recently celebrated 40 years in business, and owner Scott Foster was recognized by Ford Credit for the milestone.

“It’s an excellent community. I’m really pleased that we came to Jackson County,” Foster said of starting the business.

The Foster family’s relationship with the Ford dealership business actually goes back 71 years, to 1954 when Scott’s father, Ray, and uncle, Hugh, opened the original Foster Ford in Horton.

Ray sold used cars in Effingham for several years before he and Hugh started the dealership, which remained in operation in Horton until 1988.

“You name it, I could tear it apart and fix it,” Scott Foster said of growing up at the dealership.

Foster graduated from Horton High School and then later earned a degree in business from Kansas State University.

After college, he worked at a bank in Hiawatha for nine years.

“Working for a rural bank in the 80s was not a lot of fun,” Foster said. “Times were tough, and there were decisions being made that I didn’t feel comfortable with.”

Foster said the previous Ford dealership in Holton had closed, and the property was being used for a restaurant.

“When I signed my Ford paperwork, I was eating lunch in the restaurant,” he said. “I was ready for a change and to do something different.”

Scott’s Foster-Ford Mercury opened in the summer of 1985 at 311 Arizona Ave. along U.S. Highway 75 in Holton. Foster said the first vehicle he sold was a Ford pickup.

“Working at the bank taught me the business side of it, but it was mostly a self-taught education,” he said of opening the dealership. “It was a lot of fun in the early days.”

Foster said he has witnessed many changes in the auto industry through the years.

“In 1985, you could deliver a new car in 15 minutes - show them how to turn the wipers on, adjust the radio and other simple things,” he said. “Today we’ll spend at least an hour to an hour and a half explaining all the technology and features of the vehicle.”

One thing that hasn’t changed is the dealership’s sales approach.

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Jordan (at left) and Scott Foster of Foster Ford Inc. of Holton were recently honored by Ford Credit for 40 years of business in Holton. The family business originally opened in 1954 in Horton by Scott’s father, Ray, and his uncle, Hugh.

Photo by Ali Holcomb