

# Parsons Sun

Friday, Oct. 10, 2025 www.parsonssun.com @ParsonsSun @theparsonssun \$1

## LOCAL NEWS

### Writ to be filed in road dispute between Labette, Neosho counties

OSWEGO — A dispute with Neosho County over road maintenance will be heading toward legal action.

After a closed session between Labette County commissioners and Labette County Counselor Brian Johnson on Monday, commissioners voted that Johnson should file a writ of mandamus against Neosho County.

The two counties share the maintenance of most of a shared border road, 27000 Road on the Labette County side and 10th Road on the Neosho County side.

The writ of mandamus is a court order compelling a government or agency to perform a mandatory duty.

Further information was not available.

See WRIT, Page 3.

### City approves equipment purchase

Parsons city commissioners met briefly on Monday and approved the purchase of a used van and a self-propelled sewer camera for \$104,350.

The city now has an older trailer that holds a 2012 Cues sewer camera. The camera, used to inspect main sewer lines, is broken and would be expensive to repair.

Derek Clevenger, director of utilities, said the refurbished 2020 EnviroSight sewer camera housed in a 2019 Dodge ProMaster van would cost \$127,850. The camera has 1,000 feet of cable with it,

See CITY, Page 2.

## DEATHS

Obituaries or notices for the following people can be found on Page 2 in today's Sun:

- Charles R. Bush
- William Durrett
- Bobby J. Myers
- Elizabeth E. Ostuni

## SMILES



Luany Santiago is a kindergarten student in Michaela Anderson's class at Lincoln School.

THIS ISSUE:  
Volume 154; Issue 34  
8 Pages; 1 Section



# It's time to bid you adieu

By Ray Nolting  
Former Executive Editor

It's time to type "30-" — the journalistic shorthand for the end of a story — for my time here at the Parsons Sun.

While I've experienced only a limited stretch of Parsons and Labette County history, I have treasured memories of my time here.

I've worked with some of the best people over the years, from writers to photographers to editors and publishers, all of whom guided my career. The publishers started with Bruce Buchanan, then came Ann Charles, Peter Cook, Shanna Guiot, plus a couple of others in between. Jeff Funk and later Jim Cook offered unparalleled guidance from the editor's desk. I remain friends with many of the reporters and photographers, especially the most recent group: Brian Holderman, Jamie Willey, Colleen Williamson, Sean Frye, Hailey Phillips. Friendships extend beyond the newsroom to production teams, pressmen, circulation, business and advertising.

I started here nearly four decades ago (a sweaty August Monday). As with most new reporters here, I had to dig into work quickly. One of my first big stories, the Friday of my first week here, was the beginning of the merger of the Katy Railroad with the Union Pacific. Back then, we had four to five reporters and two editors on the news side, plus a full time photographer. On Wednesday this week, only the sports editor and I darken the desks on the news side.

This didn't happen because of something I said to my fellow staffers. It's just the nature of the industry.

The life of most small town journalists is simple: Dig in and work. It's rarely glitzy. It's more about teasing a story out of a 2-hour city commission meeting, pursuing that person who did some interesting thing but doesn't want to talk about it and following every lead you can. Some days are broken up with calls from angry parents who didn't like their son's or daughter's criminal enterprises exposed on the pages of



Sean Frye/Sun photo

Ray Nolting (right) receives a commendation for his years of service to the community from Parsons Police Chief Robert Spinks (left) on Sunday during a celebration attended by members of the community at the Parsons Sun office, 1724 Main Street.

the Sun. Threats of lawsuits aren't common, but they have happened. The interesting times were encounters with someone rolling up into your face or phoned threats to your physical well being unless you retract what you wrote. That always seemed silly, because to retract what I wrote would require me to write it again.

Workdays always brought something different, something new to learn, some horror to forget.

That's the work I've lived, and that's what I'm leaving behind. It's time for someone else to burrow in. And it's time for me to try something new.

Ernest Hemingway drove my interest in journalism, a memory that has come up frequently these days as the final hours of my time at the Parsons Sun ticked away. Say what you want about him as a person, he was my favorite author in high school and early college years, and I loved to read and reread the stories he wrote for the Kansas City Star and the Toronto Star, a training ground for a young, talented author.

Hemingway's spare prose style called to me. I never had the dream of writing America's great novel. But I wanted to write. Hemingway said,

"There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed," I kept my blood, but I shed a tear or two or three.

Besides the above novelist's forays into journalism and war correspondence, this industry has continually produced great writers and great reporters. I read works of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the Washington Post, Donald Barlett and James Steele of the Philadelphia Inquirer and Mike McGraw of the Kansas City Star. Their investigations were inspiring.

But, back in Parsons, the everyday work at the Sun filled my hours and filled my heart. My love for the work made it easy to follow many storylines over the years, and it made it easier in recent years with a dwindling staff and budget to be the one-person news desk.

My driving force was to bring a variety of information to readers and cover as much ground as I could. That's the hard work of showing up, day in and weekend out.

It takes a toll.

I used to have hair, for example, as coworkers and family have told me over the decades. That's a small price to pay, though I sometimes miss

youthful curls.

Now I must say goodbye to this career and to the many people who shared stories, energy and friendship. I leave the Sun in good hands. Sean Frye remains on the sports desk and Hannah Emberton will take on my role. I wish them prosperous journeys.

To the readers of the Sun, thank you for allowing me to write for you over these years. It's been a pleasure; it's been tough, too. To the many sources in my career and subjects of stories, thank you for saying yes when I called for information, or yes when I took your photo and got your real name after you told me John Smith, or some derivative, when doing the former feature called Let's Ask (person on the street question and answer). Thank you for calling to share concerns, to complain, to compliment. All of those calls were appreciated, and they meant that you read what we wrote. It meant that you cared, and you cared enough to call.

That, to me, is the ultimate compliment to this newspaper. Keep them coming.

Farewell.

-30-

## Half cent sales tax up for renewal

In November, Parsons voters will decide if they want to extend a half cent sales tax used for property tax relief in the city.

The general election is Tuesday, Nov. 4, and the deadline to register to vote is Tuesday, Oct. 14. Advanced ballots will begin to be mailed Wednesday, Oct. 15, and must be returned in one of two ways: Either in person to any polling location in the county on Election Day or the clerk's office by 7 p.m. on Election Day, or mailed and postmarked on or before Election Day and received in the clerk's office by Friday, Nov. 7, according to a legal publication issued by the county clerk's office.

Early voting starts Oct. 15 in the clerk's office and ends at noon Nov. 3. The Nov. 4 election results are unofficial until the county commission, acting as the board of canvassers, reviews the balloting on Monday, Nov. 17.

The city sales tax that's on the ballot has been in place since January 1997. The sales tax expires Dec. 31, 2026.

The question voters will consider on Nov. 4 is: "Shall a retailers sales tax in the amount of one-half of one percent (.5%) be reenacted in the City of Parsons, Kansas to be used as a revenue source to reduce the ad valorem property taxes within the city to take effect after the expiration of the previous term, starting January 1, 2027 for a term of ten years to expire December 31, 2036."

Parsons City Manager Jeff Cantrell told the Sun in an email that the rising costs of basic commodities, health insurance, utilities and other expenses are the primary culprits straining the city's budget.

"Failure of the sales tax would have a dire impact on the city, so much so that live positions and programming would need to be cut," Cantrell said.

In 1996, the city commission was considering a large property tax increase but explored alternatives, including the sales tax. The city's offer to voters was to cut the proposed property tax levy for the 1997 budget by 16 mills to 40.027 mills if the sales tax passed in the August 1996 primary election. Voters approved the half cent sales tax, expected to generate \$550,000 a year at the time, with the promise of future property tax relief.

The revised 1997 budget called for \$13,447,946 in spending. Of this, \$1,376,269 came from property taxes. The original budget called for \$1.9 million from property taxes, according to Sun stories from the time.

The mill levy eventually grew in the decades after the sales tax collection started.

See TAX, Page 3.

## PARSONS SCHOOL CHOIRS PERFORM



Sean Frye | Sun photo

The choirs for Parsons Middle School and Parsons High School performed their first concert of the 2025-26 school year on Wednesday evening at Parsons High School. The choirs included the sixth grade choir, the seventh and eighth grade choir and the high school choir.

PSA - Test

TUMOR

CEA

AFP

PSA

Gamma-GT

NSE

PTT

hs-CRP

ADA (s)

ADA (u)

Speed

Labette Health

We Center Around You.

## FREE PROSTATE SCREENING CLINIC

### Wednesday, October 22

- For males under the age of 75 who have not had a prostate screening in the last year
- Screening includes a free exam courtesy of Logan Wineland, MD and Scott Fox, APRN-C
- PSA blood test courtesy of the Labette Health Lab

### To Schedule: 620.820.5833

You will be prompted to leave a message, including your name, address, phone number and date of birth. A packet will be mailed to you that will include your appointment time and required paperwork.