

St. Patrick School moves on to national math contest

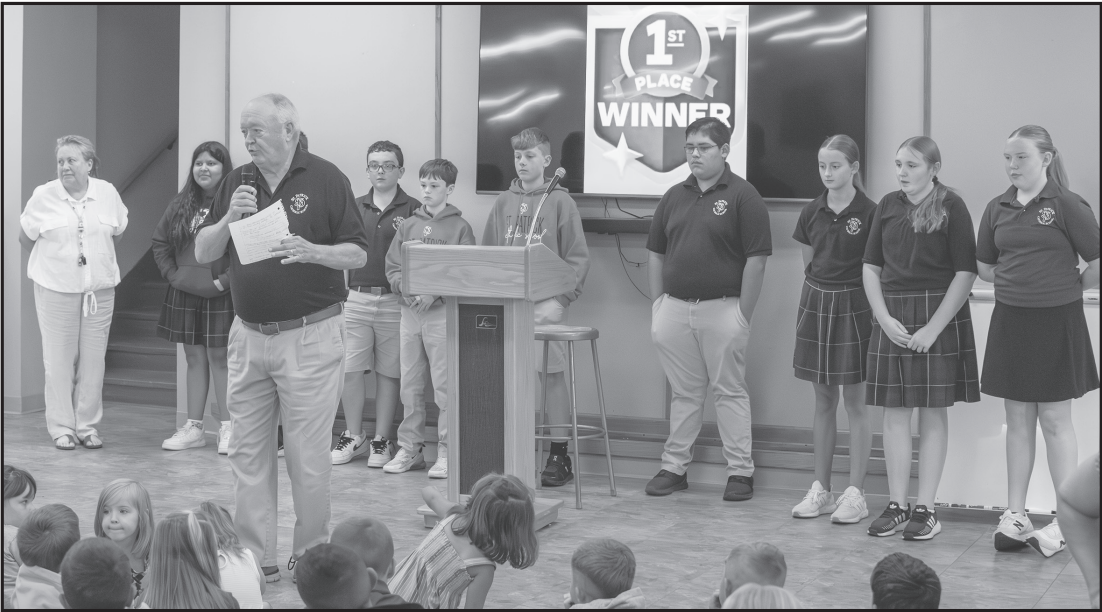
St. Patrick Catholic School in Parsons finished first in the state Prodigy math competition and will advance to the national contest in May.

St. Patrick competed in the Heroic division, which is for schools of 100 to 200 students. St. Patrick has 77 students. Parsons Middle School finished fourth in the same level and will be among the five schools in the state in Heroic division to advance to nationals.

St. Patrick recognized the students' efforts in a presentation on Thursday, Oct. 2. The sixth grade class was recognized for finishing first in the school.

Prodigy sets three levels for competing schools depending on the number of students. St. Pat's was in the Heroic level. Schools in the Mythical level have 250 to 500 students and schools in the Titan level have 500 students or more.

St. Patrick Principal Mike Carson said St. Patrick students answered 22,859 math questions correctly between Sept. 15 and Sept. 30. The sixth grade as a class answered 5,111 questions correctly, the most answered questions among grades in the school, Carson said.



Ray Nolting | Sun photo

St. Patrick Catholic School in Parsons finished first in the state Prodigy math competition.

Carson noted that St. Patrick would have won the Mythical level in Kansas as well given the number of correct answers.

"Pretty amazing," Carson said nationals will be in May and the school has a number of events planned to boost student morale. "The kids worked really, really hard."

"We have amazing staff. Amazing teachers and amazing students. They're all the best," Carson said.

Veronica Polak, the sixth grade teacher at St. Patrick, said students who competed in Prodigy did so in their free time. No class time was dedicated to the competition in the

15 days that the school participated.

At the assembly, teachers and Carson recognized the top five students who answered the most math questions correctly in the contest.

The top five were:
— Fifth place: Gabe Ridgeway, a third grader who answered 675 questions.

— Fourth: Mila Sharp, a second grader, who answered 823 questions.

— Third: Hannah Schibi, a sixth grader, who answered 900 questions.

— Second: Brooks Myers, a first grader, who answered 1,119 questions.

— First: Corbin

Myers, sixth grader, who answered 1,143 questions.

Polak is in her third year of teaching at St. Patrick. She's also taught at Labette Community College and Corpus Christi Catholic School in Lawrence.

She said Prodigy tailors the math questions to the student's grade level. The online game is similar to a quest game for the students and can be competitive. Correct answers allow the student's chosen character to level up in the game.

She said her class of 10 kids was focused. She attributes their success in the contest

to their drive.

"And they're competitive. They're very competitive," Polak said.

She attributed their finishing first in the school to the teachers before her and the school's curriculum.

"I think it's an amazing tribute to what our students are capable of," she said.

The Rev. Nic Jurgensmeyer of St. Patrick Catholic Church told students he was proud of their accomplishment.

"That's incredible. I think we can beat even the biggest schools. I think you guys are that good," Jurgensmeyer told the students.

TAX

Continued from Page 1.

The property tax climbed more than a mill in 1998, about 3 mills for 2001 (to 45.198 mills) and 3 more mills for 2005. The levy climbed to 47.2 in 2013. Another sales tax was passed in 2013, reducing the property tax levy for the 2014 city budget. This sales tax is for capital improvements for the fire and police departments but also aimed to fund the continuation of current city staffing levels, according to Sun archives.

The property tax levy has been in the low to mid-50s since 2015 (53.6, 53.6, 54.6, 54.6, 54.6, 54.9, 56.6, 56.7, 58, 59.6, 57.89 and an estimated 57.586 mills for 2026).

The owner of a \$100,000 home paid \$460.31 in property taxes in 1997 to support city operations and in 2026 will pay \$662.24, which is the city's approved mill levy. In that same time period, Kansas home values increased by 171%, according to a report from the Kansas Policy Institute in February.

The city of Parsons has three sales taxes on the books now, totaling 1.5 cents per dollar. Each half cent sales tax generates about \$1 million a year. The sales tax that is on the ballot generated \$997,000 in 2020, \$1.03 million in 2021, \$1.11 million in 2022, \$1.13 million in 2023, \$1.01 million in 2024 and \$830,000 into early Sep-

tember, according to a city report on the tax.

When adding the city's portion of the 1 cent countywide sales tax, sales tax collections for the city total about \$4 million a year, which is roughly 17% of the city's total budget authority of \$23,105,896 for 2026. Sales tax collections were as high as \$4.9 million in 2024, according to the city report on the tax.

The combined sales taxes create more revenue for the city than property taxes. Property taxes are expected to generate around \$3 million in 2026 for the city, according to the city's budget.

Cantrell said this makes the sales tax vote a key to the city's finances. He said losing the tax would be "catastrophic." Without the half cent tax, the city would either have to raise the mill levy 17 to 20 mills, or \$195 to \$230 a year for residential property owners, or make cuts. A mill is a \$1 tax for every \$1,000 in valuation, and each mill raises about \$60,000 in the city.

"It would adversely impact our future bond rating, resulting in facility closures, deferred capital improvements, lay-offs and consolidations of departments that would become too small to have independent supervisors, cessation of demolition work, fleet deferments," he said.

"It is vital for the city to obtain a renewal," Cantrell said.

WRIT

Continued from Page 1.

The commission also approved a resolution for a conditional use permit to allow the construction of a 415 foot communications tower at the southwest corner of 13000

and Lyon roads. The tower will have a 10-foot lightning rod at the top, making the total height 425 feet. The action followed a public hearing.

The land is zoned A1 agricultural and the permit was required by the county's zoning regulations.

NATIONAL
FIRE
PREVENTION
MONTH
OCTOBER

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HAVE A PLAN AND PRACTICE:
Conduct fire drills twice a year to ensure everyone can escape quickly and safely.

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Fire Safety Tip for Ranchers and Farmers:
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KNOW YOUR EXIT ROUTES:
In case of a fire, stay low to the ground, crawl to safety, and get out of the house immediately.

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Fire Prevention Tip:
Store combustible materials in open areas away from heat sources.
Place rags used to apply flammable household chemicals in metal containers with tight-fitting lids.

ENFORCE FIRE SAFETY WITH CHILDREN.
Teach children that matches and lighters are not toys and should be stored securely out of their reach. Ensure kids know how to "stop, drop, and roll" if their clothing catches fire.

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