

Commissioners hear update on nursing home renovations

BY DESTRY JACKSON

At the March 3 meeting of the Decatur County Commissioners, Good Samaritan/Sanford Health Center Administrator Noe Gillespie and Assistant Administrator Carl Noyes attended. Gillespie reported, “Things are going well at the center. We have 19 residents currently. We have nurses for all positions now, and all the shifts are full. We’re moving forward with the remodeling. It’s actually going to be cheaper than I had originally expected.”

“Adrian Rude needs paid for his painting work,” Noyes added. “The total so far is \$1,800. We’d like to have him do more painting. He does a good job. Do we need to bring you an estimate before each room is worked on?”

Commissioner Justin Scott said, “Maybe bring us an estimate before each group of three or five rooms that need to be renovated.”

“One of the updates we’re looking into is placing wooden blinds in 12 rooms to get them matched with the rest of the blinds that have been replaced in the previous few years,” Gillespie said. “We’re currently working on updating restrooms in Hallway 3. We have an estimate from Interior Connections, which specializes in curtains and other furnishings. It would be \$9,712 for nine rooms to get the new blinds. We also need a new printer. It will cost approximately \$8,000 for one that can do everything we need it to.” The Commissioners asked if that would need to come through Sanford Health, rather than from Decatur County.

“There are two small bathrooms that need replacing of the old tubs and showers in the 300 Hallway,” Noyes added. “The 100 Hallway has some small adjoining bathrooms that we’re looking to enlarge.” The Commissioners decided the matter should be tabled for next week when Stan McEvoy can be present.

“We can help to fix the building up, but we need to keep a financial buffer in place,” Scott said.

Decatur Health Systems Chief Executive Officer Julie Smith

reported, “I want to meet with you at 11 a.m. every other week to keep you updated on everything. Bids for the electrical project have been stretched out to a March 27 deadline now. The Decatur Health Foundation board will meet this month after the hospital board meeting. We had all our ducks

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in a row for our recent mock survey to make sure we meet all criteria for an actual survey. The parking lot is much better. The road crew did an excellent job. We have also had some referrals to the nursing home recently.”

Health Department Director Bobbi Koerperich reported, “I’m applying for more grants, as the department does every year. We’re looking to replace the sink and countertop in the immunization room. We have enough money in our budget to cover it.” The Commissioners approved applying for more grants and getting the new sink and countertop.

Emergency Management Director Jeff Burmaster gave a report for the fire department. He brought the Firefighters Relief Act renewal for the year. The Commissioners approved. There was also a bill from Lost Creek Tire for a new battery for the Jennings truck and Department of Transportation inspections on trucks. The price was \$935. The Commissioners approved.

Sheriff David Wachendorfer reported, “We have an Administrative Assistant position open to help with paperwork. It will be a very part-time position, and we have someone in mind for it. The bottom line is that I need some more help, as we are currently down one deputy.” The Commissioners decided to table the discussion for next week when Stan McEvoy can be present.

Road and Bridge Department Supervisor Tracy Soderlund reported, “We plan to trade in a road grader for a newer one. The company is holding a machine for us. If we don’t take them up on the offer in time, the cost for a newer one would have a six percent increase in cost, so this offer would

save us more money. The guy would like an answer within the next couple weeks.”

“There’s a new gravel pit near

McCook, and we can get some gravel there for \$10 per ton,” Soderlund continued. “We need a set of tires for one of the semi trucks. It’s around \$310 per tire. We need eight tires, so the cost will be approximately \$2,800.” The Commissioners approved.

Recreation Board Member Brent Olson reminded the Commissioners that someone needs hired soon for the summer recreation director’s job, as preparations for the summer programs begin soon.

Emergency Medical Service Director Megan Huntley reported that she had a bill needing ratified for an Emergency Medical Technician class for one of her workers. The Commissioners approved.

The Decatur County Commissioners meet every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon. Meetings are held in the Commissioners’ room on the second floor of the courthouse.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Prairie Dog Creek WTAP Sign-up to Open

The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) will conduct a Water Right Transition Assistance Program (WTAP) enrollment in the Prairie Dog Creek target area from February 15 – March 31, 2026.

WTAP is a voluntary, incentive-based water conservation program designed to manage aquifers and streams in critical need of restoration by compensating landowners for the permanent retirement of irrigation water rights. Priority in the spring 2026 enrollment will be given to retiring irrigation water rights that have the greatest impact on the local stream / aquifer system as shown below.

To be eligible, water rights must be in good standing with the KDA Division of Water Resources. Dryland farming is permitted after a water right is retired. Limited irrigation can also be temporarily allowed to establish a permanent cover on the land being transitioned from irrigation. Partial water right reductions will also be considered for retirement grants.

WTAP grants are approved on the basis of competitive bids. WTAP grants can be considered by the KDA Division of Conservation for up to \$6,000 per acre-foot of the “Historic Consumptive Water Use” value as calculated over the last 10 years of reported annual water use of the water right(s) proposed for acceptance. To help increase incentives to landowners, WTAP grants can be combined with other government or private conservation programs which also offer financial assistance.

This WTAP enrollment is part of a special water conservation project being funded by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Maps, application forms and other details are available on KDA’s Division of Conservation website at www.agriculture.ks.gov/waterconservationprograms. Contact Jake Dooling at (785) 477-4339 or jacob.dooling@ks.gov for more assistance. Water right information is also available from the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No.4 in Colby at 785-462-3915, and from the Division of Water Resources field office in Stockton at 785-425-6787.

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