

Historic stagecoach journey brings frontier history to St. Francis

BY ALEX BARTA
HIGH PLAINS NEWS

Area residents will have a rare opportunity to experience a piece of frontier history when the historic Stagecoach Journey stops in St. Francis June 5 and 6.

The coach and crew are scheduled to arrive at the Cheyenne County Fairgrounds the evening of Thursday, June 4, from West Plains, Missouri. Friday will be spent settling in with the crew and animals.

At 6 p.m. Friday, June 5, the Hardt Gallery will host the grand opening of the Western Art and Culture Exhibit at 202 W. Washington St. The public is invited to attend the reception.

Events continue Saturday, June 6, beginning with breakfast at the Farmers Market in the park. The stagecoach crew will then visit residents at the Cheyenne County Village, including a special pen pal mail delivery.



The historic Stagecoach Journey will stop in St. Francis June 5 and 6, giving residents a chance to learn about frontier travel and early mail routes. *Courtesy photo*

Later stops include lunch and a tour of the Cheyenne County Historical Museum.

At 2 p.m., the group will move downtown to the event space at 202 W. Washington

St. for a community gathering. Rick Hamby, owner of Stagecoach Journey, will share stories from the road and give a presentation highlighting the group's travels.

The crew will then return to the fairgrounds, where children will have the opportunity to climb aboard the stagecoach and learn what travel was like in the

1800s. Hamby also will share pen pal letters from Missouri students, showing how stagecoaches once carried mail.

At 6 p.m., a community supper will be held in the fair building, featuring an evening of stories and music.

On Sunday morning, June 7, the stagecoach crew will hitch up and head west, beginning a four-day trip through the Arikaree Breaks to Beecher Island.

The visit is part of an effort to preserve and share the history of early transportation routes that once connected communities across the American West. Hamby's mission is to highlight both history and the friendships formed along the way.

For more information, visit www.202onwashington.com or call 785-332-0308 or 785-332-4950.

Youth and family center nears opening after bowling alley renovation

BY SHEREE L. WINGO
HIGH PLAINS NEWS

The eight lanes of the former bowling alley are silent now. There are no excited squeals as children roll a ball toward the pins, hoping to knock some down.

But that may soon change as the SWITCH Youth and Family Center moves closer to opening.

Ryan and Andi Culwell raised money to buy the building in



2023. It took another year to raise additional funds to begin renovations. The building had sat empty for several years,

Renovations continue at the future SWITCH Youth and Family Center, where the former bowling alley is being updated for community events, youth activities and bowling. *Photo by Andi and Ryan Culwell*

leaving much work to be done.

Exterior improvements include new windows, new siding, updated gutters and fresh paint. Inside, the changes are even more dramatic, with updated bathrooms to handle

larger groups, new sheetrock, new electrical work, new lighting and a refinished floor.

The bowling lanes will be upgraded with electronic scoring equipment, replacing the old paper-and-pencil method. The kitchen for the former Dairy King still needs to be redone.

Work is continuing, and the center could open in three to six months. Days, hours and

a manager have not yet been determined.

The space could be used for after-prom events, graduation celebrations, school physical education classes, reunions and other gatherings. There already is interest in forming bowling leagues.

As the finish line comes into view after a long process, organizers said the community should stay tuned for a grand opening.

BRIEFS

Highway resurfacing begins on U.S. 36

Work to resurface about 25 miles of U.S. 36 in Cheyenne County began this week, according to the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The project stretches from 3 miles west of St. Francis to the Rawlins County line. Traffic will be reduced to one lane in work zones, with flaggers and a pilot car directing vehicles. Delays of up to 15 minutes are expected.

The \$6.1 million project, led by Venture Corporation of Great Bend, is scheduled for completion by the end of July, weather permitting.

Additional work also will be done on the access road in St. Francis from Lorraine Street east to U.S. 36 under

an agreement with the county. The county will not be charged for the work and will take over operation of the road in the future.

Power outages hit St. Francis

Two power outages hit St. Francis in early May, knocking out power across town.

The first outage occurred about 8:30 p.m. May 5. City crews were unable to determine a location or cause for the outage, which lasted only a few minutes.

The second outage occurred at 2:16 a.m. May 6 and was caused by a catastrophic failure at the substation. Schools were canceled about 6 a.m., though power was restored shortly afterward

by city crews.

School remained canceled for the day. The outage came on what was scheduled to be the high school awards ceremony and the class of 2026 seniors' last day. The ceremony and seniors' final day were moved to May 7.

Bonds reduced in Cheyenne County cases

Bonds were reduced for two Cheyenne County defendants during May 13 district court proceedings.

Jamie Keeney, 49, of St. Francis, who is charged with two counts of abuse of a child and two counts of aggravated endangering a child tied to alleged incidents between 2023 and 2025, had her bond lowered from \$250,000 to \$25,000 cash or surety. She was arrested in April following a Kansas Bureau of Investigation probe.

Maxim Quimby, 20, also had bond reduced from \$250,000 to \$25,000 in an agreed order ahead of a scheduled May 21 status hearing in case No. CN-2026-CR-000020.

Both defendants are subject to supervised pre-trial conditions, including no contact with alleged victims and oversight by court services.

Open house planned at REVIVE

REVIVE Performance + Rehab will host a community open house from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 20, as the clinic continues expanding its services and focus on community wellness.

The clinic is owned and operated by Dr. Mackenzie Lampe, physical therapist,

and her husband, Brett Lampe, a St. Francis native.

Physical therapist assistant Sarah Guthmiller has joined the REVIVE team. Guthmiller was born and raised in St. Francis and brings more than 14 years of experience in hospital and outpatient settings.

Administrative

coordinator Allyse Ross, also a St. Francis native, assists with patient scheduling, billing, office coordination and daily clinic operations.

Hospital Guild donates \$700 to emergency medical services

The final meeting of the 2025-2026 Hospital Guild season was held May 4 at

the Senior Center.

Guest speaker Margaret Poling presented a program on the aqua-size classes she teaches at the aquatic park during the summer. Classes are held from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Keely Loyd opened the business portion of the meeting. Sheree Wingo read the March minutes. The guild has \$181.12 in its account.

The Hospital Guild gave Jill Paugh with emergency medical services \$700 to order reflective vests and coats. Paugh gave Loyd pill boxes and safety cards.

The 2026-2027 Hospital Guild season will begin Oct. 7 at the Assisted Living Center.

Prices valid May 21-27, 2026



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