



INDEPENDENT ELLSWORTH COUNTY REPORTER

Remembering the true meaning of Easter
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Sherman honored with Legacy Award

BY KAREN BONAR
Ellsworth County I-R

Local attorney John Sherman was recognized with a Legacy Award during the annual Grow Ellsworth County meeting March 25.

"The one thing I can say (is) you need to dream," Sherman said. "All of the projects that have occurred have been as a result of someone having a great idea and deciding to follow through with it."

"Many of you here were those dreamers and those pushers. I was just the lucky guy to be on the sidelines and behind the scenes to help move things along."

GEC board president Justin Lindsley introduced Sherman. Lindsley said the local attorney was on the first economic development board of directors, as well as an advocate who helped the Ellsworth Correctional Facility become a reality. Lindsley also said Sherman assisted in the formation of the Smoky Hills Charitable Foundation.

"I appreciate seeing the board, the people here and especially our young people getting involved with community development. That's what we need," Sherman said. "To receive the Legacy Award,



Work on new houses moves forward Tuesday morning on the southern edge of Ellsworth.

that means you're getting old. Thank you very much."

Before handing out the award, the GEC annual meeting was held.

Lindsley said the group works to attract new investment by helping existing businesses succeed.

"(We're) committed to building a vibrant local economy that benefits businesses, residents and future residents," he said.

A year ago at the annual meeting, Lindsley said it was the new executive director's first week on the job.

"I'm excited to see where his vision and leadership lead Ellsworth County," Lindsley said.

GEC Executive Director Kevin Colle said his first year was filled with learning.

"The goals we're trying to accomplish are not just check off boxes and try to accomplish something tomorrow," Colle said.

"We have to do a lot of long-term visioning. Problems don't get solved overnight."

As he's worked his way through his first year, Colle said he spent a lot of time listening.

"One thing has stood out is that people really care and are dedicated to each of their communities," he said. "Each community has a unique identity. While we have challenges, we have a strong foundation to build on."

"My goal is to listen first, understand what needs exist and connect pieces moving forward."

Colle discussed four pillars to help build a successful community: business retention/expansion, housing, workforce and community development.

"We've been able to connect people with resources that exist. We want to continue doing that in the future," he said.



KAREN BONAR/Ellsworth County Independent-Reporter

John Sherman receives the Legacy Award during the Grow Ellsworth County banquet March 25.

Colle added GEC partners with Network Kansas to provide almost \$980,000 in gap financing throughout the county for local businesses.

He also addressed the recent rezoning in south Ellsworth.

"There has been some exciting momentum," Colle said. "We're seeing growing demand for housing across the whole county."

He said quality housing for a workforce is essen-

tial for growth.

"The need is here in Ellsworth. We've seen some development, but we need more," Colle said. "We need to continue to push throughout the entire county with housing."

He said he continues to seek connections with developers interested in helping grow housing throughout the communities in Ellsworth County.

In terms of the work-

force pillar, Colle said GEC invested \$45,000 in relocation incentives for "critical, hard-to-fill roles."

"(In terms of salary, that) translates to \$1.5 million annually toward local communities," he said.

For community development, Colle said GEC secured a tourism grant to help promote the entire county.

"There's great momen-

See BANQUET Page A3

Cowboy poet presents at GEC banquet

BY KAREN BONAR
Ellsworth County I-R

Ruralpreneurship was celebrated by keynote speaker Ron Wilson March 23 at the annual Grow Ellsworth County meeting.

"I'm always glad to be in Ellsworth — I'm a western history buff and a cowboy poet," he said. "The history here in Ellsworth is fantastic."

Wilson, who is the director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University, shared his passion for cowboy poetry by reading a poem he wrote about Ellsworth.

"I appreciate the fantastic history and people here in Ellsworth," Wilson said.

He spoke at the annual meeting regarding rural entrepreneurs and the ingenuity small business owners across the state share.

"It's so important, what you do," Wilson said. "At the community level, how can we help people in their communities move forward?"

As part of his work at K-State, Wilson writes and produces a radio program and news column, "Kansas Profile —



KAREN BONAR/Ellsworth County Independent-Reporter

Ron Wilson reads his poem about Ellsworth during the Grow Ellsworth County banquet March 23.

Now, That's Rural."

This follows in the footsteps of Huck Boyd, a man Wilson describes as "One Kansan who cared so deeply for his county, state and rural America."

Wilson shared a smattering of stories of success from rural Kansas communities.

Stories ranged from Don Landoll, Marysville, who started with a three-man welding shop.

"Today, it employs 900 people," he said. "It's

become a global service."

When businesses invest in their community, they also help provide quality service.

"He needs good health care for his people," Wilson said. "Don would say, 'If it's good for my people, it's good for my business.'"

He also shared some unexpected businesses for Kansas, including Cobalt Boats in south-east Kansas.

"You cannot get much further from an ocean

than Neodesha, Kan.," Wilson said.

He discussed beef production in southwest Kansas, as well as a retired insurance agent who, as a joke, started a family website claiming to be a tumbleweed farm.

"I said, 'What kind of sucker would order a tumbleweed over the internet?'" Wilson said. "By the time I was done (with my story), I

See COWBOY Page A5

KBI conducts death investigation

SPECIAL TO THE I-R

BROOKVILLE — The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is assisting the Ellsworth County Sheriff's Office with investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of a 5-year-old.

According to the KBI, at 3:15 p.m. March 28, a caller from a residence located south of the intersection of Kansas

Highway 141 and Avenue N, reported a shooting where two children were severely injured.

Deputies from the Ellsworth County Sheriff's Office, troopers from the Kansas Highway Patrol, game wardens from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and EMS all responded to the home.

See DEATH Page A3

Barnett appears in court

BY CATHERINE DOUD
Ellsworth County I-R

SALINA — Kiley Barnett, 39, Kanopolis, appeared in Saline County District Court March 25 for a review hearing. She was allegedly involved in a fatal crash resulting in a motorcyclist being killed on a rural Saline County road.

According to Saline County Attorney John Reynolds, the defense counsel asked for time to discuss the ramifications of the plea offer he issued them.

Barnett's next court

appearance will be April 22.

She is facing requested charges of no proof of insurance, driving while suspended and following too close.

The accident at issue happened at about 6:53 p.m. Oct. 17 near Brookville. Barnett was driving a 2003 Subaru Forester, traveling on K-140 Highway in Saline County, and allegedly hit Riley Faris, 30, from behind, ejecting him from his 1986 Harley Davidson motorcycle. He died after the accident.

Faris' family has expressed they want criminal charges brought against Barnett.



Ross Janssen's
Weather

April 1-6

WEDNESDAY 70/53
Scattered storms

THURSDAY 71/49
Mostly sunny

FRIDAY 74/54
Evening storms

SATURDAY 60/36
Windy

SUNDAY 63/32
Sunny

MONDAY 74/40
Sunny

TUESDAY 73/43
Mostly sunny

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