

The Horton Headlight

"Your Hometown news"

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The Horton Headlight



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VOLUME 139, NUMBER 14

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR BROWN COUNTY & THE CITIES OF EVEREST, MUSCOTAH & POWHATTAN

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Rainbow Communications to be Featured on National Television Series

Rainbow Communications will be featured in an upcoming segment of the television series All Access with Andy Garcia, highlighting the importance of rural broadband and the impact of fiber-optic technology on local communities.

Distribution to Public Television affiliates nationally is anticipated to begin the week of March 30, 2026. Additionally, a broadcast commercial piece featuring Rainbow Communications will air regionally on major news networks, including CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, Fox News, Fox Business, Headline News, TLC, Travel Channel, and Discovery, between March 9 and March 31, 2026, during peak and prime-time hours.

Both the segment on All Access and the commercial explore the challenges and opportunities surrounding broadband access in rural America and showcase how local leadership plays a critical role in ensuring communities are not left behind in today's digital economy.

Rainbow representatives appearing in the segment include: Jason Smith, General Manager/CEO; Angie Kreider, Director of Business Development; Trudy Wischropp, Rainbow board member.

The programs examine the financial realities of building fiber networks in low-density areas, the long-term value of fiber-optic infrastructure, and how cooperative ownership models prioritize service to members over shareholder profits.

"As a cooperative founded by the people we serve, our mission has always been about investing in the future of rural communities," said Jason Smith, GM/CEO of Rainbow Communications. "High-speed internet isn't a luxury — it's essential infrastructure for education, healthcare, business, and daily life."

The All Access segment also highlights how fiber connectivity supports innovative educational initiatives, including the restoration of a historic one-room schoolhouse, which will soon be equipped with modern technology.

Founded in 1952 to improve rural telephone service, Rainbow has been building fiber networks since 2010 and continues to expand multi-gigabit infrastructure across Northeast Kansas.

For more information about Rainbow Communications and its fiber network, visit www.rainbowtel.net.

Brown County District Court

Compiled by Melanie Davis, Headlight reporter

CRIMINAL

First appearance hearing on Matthew W. Hedrick has been scheduled for Mar. 25. He is charged with possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

First appearance hearing on Kenton L. McCowan has been scheduled for Mar. 25. He is charged with possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

First appearance hearing on Rogelio A. Guerras has been scheduled for Mar. 25. He is charged with possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Bond-Appeal hearing on Damien Scott Reinsvold, Galesville, WI., He is charged with possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Arraignment hearing on Sharon Louise Willey has been scheduled for Apr. 1. She is charged with possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Sentencing hearing on Travis Lee Winters, Leona, KS., has been scheduled to Apr. 1. He is charged with criminal threat, a level 9 person felony; criminal restraint, a class A person misdemeanor; domestic battery, a class B person misdemeanor; and criminal damage to property, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Status Conference on Jane Alice Teske was held and has been continued to Mar. 18. She is charged with possession of methamphetamine, a drug severity level 5 felony and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

First appearance on Carmen M. Rosario was held and has been continued to Mar. 25. She is charged with possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Arraignment Hearing on Dustin Ryan McCulley, Hiawatha, Kansas, was held and has been continued to May 11. He has been charged with two counts of aggravated assault, a level 7 person felony.

Arraignment on Blake Alan Kaler was held and has been continued to Apr. 6. He is charged with aggravated assault, a level 7 felony; criminal deprivation of property, a class A nonper-

son misdemeanor; possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; and unlawful possession of cigarettes or tobacco product while under the legal age, an infraction.

Arraignment hearing on Gerry Eugene Riling, Fairview, KS., was held and has been continued to Mar. 23. He is charged with attempted murder in the second degree, a level 3 person felony; aggravated kidnapping, a level 3 person felony; aggravated domestic battery, a level 7 person felony; battery on a correction officer, a level 5 person felony; interference with law enforcement, a level 9 nonperson felony; and battery on a law enforcement officer, a class A person misdemeanor.

Bond-Appeal hearing and Status Conference on Tonya C. White, has been scheduled for Mar. 23. She is charged with possession of methamphetamine, a drug severity level 5 felony; traffic in contraband in a correctional institution, a level 6 nonperson felony; criminal threat, a level 9 person felony; battery on a law enforcement officer, a class A person misdemeanor; and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Preliminary hearing on Troy Raine Enke, Hiawatha, KS., has been scheduled for Apr. 15. He has been charged with aggravated domestic battery, a level 7 person felony; two counts of criminal threat, a level 9 person felony; interference with law enforcement, a level 9 nonperson felony; and two counts of battery on a law enforcement officer, a class A person misdemeanor.

Arraignment hearing on Nichlos Wayne Norton, Hiawatha, KS., was held and has been continued to Mar. 23. He is charged with possession of methamphetamine, a drug severity level 5 felony; possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; and driving while license canceled, suspended or revoked, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Preliminary hearing on Chelsea Dawn Cohara, St. Joseph, MO., was held and has been continued to Mar. 25. She is charged with two counts of driving under the influence, a level 6 nonperson felony; driving while license canceled, suspended or revoked, a class B non-person misdemeanor; no insurance, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; transporting an open container of alcohol, an unclassified misdemeanor; and speeding, a traffic infraction.

Preliminary hearing on Kenneth W. Lynch, Hendersonville, TN., was held and has been continued to Apr. 15. He is charged with possession of methamphetamine, drug severity level 5 felony, possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Sentencing on Monica Syens, Fairview, KS., has been scheduled for Apr. 6. She is charged with possession of methamphetamine, a drug severity level 5 felony; possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Arraignment on Connor A. Barnes, Hiawatha, KS., was held and has been continued for Mar. 23. He is charged with possession of marijuana with intent to sell, a drug severity level 2 felony; possession of marijuana without a tax stamp, a level 10 felony; possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Arraignment on Glenda Marie Mendez, Horton, KS., was held and has been continued to Apr. 6. She is charged with possession of methamphetamine, a drug severity level 5 felony; 2 counts of endangering a child, a class A person misdemeanor; and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Sentencing on Tyrone Alexander Mendez, Horton, KS., was held and has been continued to Apr. 6. He is charged with possession of methamphetamine, a drug severity level 5 felony; possession of marijuana, a class B nonperson misdemeanor; 2 counts of endangering a child, a class A person misdemeanor; and possession of drug paraphernalia, a class B nonperson misdemeanor.

LIMITED
A case has been filed by Portfolio Recovery Associate, LLC., plaintiff, against Justin M. Driscoll, defendant.
A case has been filed by Citibank, N.A., plaintiff, against Regina Warren, defendant.
A case has been filed by LVNV Funding, LLC., plaintiff, against Kendra Jordan, defendant.

PROBATE
A petition for informal administration has been filed by James E. Parrish in the matter of the estate of Lester M. Parrish, decedent.
A petition for probate will and issuance of letters testamentary simplified estates act has been filed by Marissa A. Deeken, petitioner, in the matter of the estate of Otho Lee Stevens, decedent.

Headlight office not open Mar. 20

The Horton Headlight office will not be open Friday, Mar. 20. News and advertisements may still be submitted to *The Headlight's* email at: headlight@carsoncomm.com. Customers may also call the Wathena office at 785-989-4415.

SHERIFF'S DEPT. INVESTIGATIONS

On 3-7-2026 at approximately 11:25 a.m., a Brown County Deputy responded to a call of a reckless driver complaint involving a white sedan on US 36 Hwy. A traffic stop was initiated on US36 HWY near Goldfinch. Upon completion of the stop, the driver and sole occupant of the vehicle, Daniel Schaefer, 61, Kansas City, Missouri, he was arrested on charges of DUI and Transport Open Container.

Meeting minutes By Clerk Nikki Lee February 27, 2026

The Board of Brown County Commissioners met in regular session with the following members present: Chairman Lucas Heinen, Commissioner Richard Tesoriero and Commissioner William Pollock. Also present was Brown County Clerk, Nicole Lee. County Counselor Austin Parker was present for a portion of the meeting via Zoom. Chairman Heinen opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a prayer led by Commissioner Heinen.

COUNTY PERSONNEL / PUBLIC COMMENT
Retirement

The Commission congratulated Brown County Register of Deeds Nellie Brockhoff on her retirement and sent her well wishes.

Executive Session
At 1:02 p.m. Commissioner Heinen made a motion to recess into a 5-minute executive session for the purpose of discussing compensation for the Solid Waste Director position and protecting the privacy interests of non-elected personnel, with the meeting to be called back to order in the Commissioner's Room at 1:07 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Heinen to extend the executive session for an additional 5 minutes until 1:13 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pollock. Motion carried. The meeting returned to regular session with no action taken.

Solid Waste
The combined position of Solid Waste and Emergency Management Coordinator was separated effective February 15, 2026, when Don Pounds resigned as Brown County Emergency Management Coordinator. Motion by Commissioner Heinen to set the Solid Waste position as an hourly rate of \$25.58. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried.

Road and Bridge
Motion by Commissioner Tesoriero to hire Shawn Loyd as part-time Road Crewman 1 effective March 1, 2026. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pollock. Motion carried.

Executive Session
At 2:49 p.m. Commissioner Heinen made a motion to recess into a 5-minute executive session for the purpose of discussing duties of non-elected personnel and protecting the privacy interests of non-elected personnel, with the meeting to be called back to order in the Commissioner's Room at 2:54 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pollock. Motion carried. County Clerk remained present.

Berwick Oil And Ag Partners Announce Merger Approval

Berwick Oil Company and Ag Partners Cooperative are pleased to announce that Berwick Oil patrons have approved the proposed merger of the two cooperatives, following a second membership vote held on March 11.

Under Kansas state law, a merger between two Kansas-based cooperatives requires approval by a two-thirds majority of voting members. In the March 11 vote, Berwick Oil patrons voted 134 in favor and 65 opposed, exceeding the required threshold and formally approving the merger.

Due to the difference in overall member equity between the two cooperatives, only Berwick Oil voting members were required to participate in the vote. While Ag Partners patrons were not required to vote, the two cooperatives share a significant number of mutual customers.

The merger will become effective July 1, 2026, aligning with Berwick Oil Company's fiscal year.

Both Boards of Directors and management teams believe the merger is in the best interest of both cooperatives. A comprehensive feasibility study and due diligence conducted over the last year demonstrated opportunities for operational efficiencies, expanded services, cost savings, and long-term stability for customers, while maintaining strong local service.

With the merger approved, leadership teams and employees from both cooperatives will begin implementation and integration planning to ensure a smooth transition and continued high level of service.

Brown County Commissioners

present.

Commission Discussion
The County Commissioners gave updates on Klenda Austerman tax sale title work, emails between the City of Hiawatha and the Sheriff regarding dispatch services, and Amberwell primary care discussions.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS
Vicki Hubin and Chris Denner, representing the 22nd Judicial District Community Correction, presented the Kansas Department of Corrections 2027 Comprehensive Plans for Adult Corrections and Juvenile Services.

Motion by Commissioner Heinen to approve the 2027 Adult and Juvenile Comprehensive Plan Grants. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 2:01 p.m. Commissioner Heinen made a motion to recess into a 10-minute executive session for the purpose of interviewing an applicant for the Emergency Management Coordinator position and protecting the privacy interests of non-elected personnel, with the meeting to be called back to order in the Commissioner's Room at 2:11 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried. County Clerk and the applicant remained present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 2:31 p.m. Commissioner Heinen made a motion to recess into a 10-minute executive session for the purpose of interviewing an applicant for the Road and Bridge department and protecting the privacy interests of non-elected personnel, with the meeting to be called back to order in the Commissioner's Room at 2:41 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried. County Clerk, Road and Bridge Foreman Selland, and the applicant remained present.

Motion by Commissioner Heinen to extend the executive session for an additional 5 minutes until 2:47 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried. The meeting returned to regular session with no action taken.

ROAD AND BRIDGE
Motion by Commissioner Heinen to hire Ashton Rutland as a full-time Road Crewman 1 effective March 2, 2026. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried.

MINUTES 02-23-2026
Motion by Commissioner Tesoriero to approve the February 23, 2026 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Pollock. Motion carried.

PROPERTY USE AGREEMENT
The Commission was presented with a Property Use Agreement from the Hiawatha Chamber and Visitors Bureau to use Courthouse lawn for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4, 2026, starting at 9:30 a.m. Motion by Commissioner Pollock to

approve the Annual Easter Egg Hunt Property Use Agreement as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION
County Counselor Austin Parker presented the Commission with a resolution incorporating the State of Kansas—List of Applicable Codes for Construction Projects on State Property (Department of Administration, October 2021) as the standard for construction projects performed by contractors and/or professionals within Brown County, Kansas, and repealing all conflicting resolutions or portions thereof. Resolution tabled for further discussion.

A/P 02-27-2026
PAYMENT OF CLAIMS
The February 27, 2026, claims were approved as follows: Motion by Commissioner Tesoriero to approve the accounts payable as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Pollock. Motion carried.

001 General \$87,676.93
103 Road & Bridge 39,540.79
123 Historical Society 5,000.00
125 Employee Benefit 45,093.41
127 Election 2,500.00
129 Extension Council 10,666.67
131 Mental Health 7,442.92
133 Developmental Services 2,845.16
143 Appraiser 1,254.73
145 Ambulance 50,833.33
147 Noxious Weed 782.62
155 Diversion 301.34
160 911 SB50 50.00
165 ACC 4,917.39
167 JJCR 8,198.46
201 Services for Elderly 705.49
211 Solid Waste 61,653.79
909 Payroll 80.09
TOTAL \$329,543.12
Motion by Commissioner Pollock to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

MARCH 2, 2026
The Board of Brown County Commissioners met in regular session with the following members present: Chairman Lucas Heinen, Commissioner Richard Tesoriero, and Commissioner William Pollock. Also present were Brown County Clerk Nicole Lee and County Counselor Austin Parker. Chairman Lucas Heinen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a prayer led by Commissioner Pollock.

VACATE ROAD HEARING—240th STREET
Motion by Commissioner Heinen to open the public hearing at 1:00 p.m. to vacate a section of 240th Street. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tesoriero. Motion carried.

Commissioner Heinen asked for public comment. There being no public comment, Commissioner Heinen

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