

Secretary announces conservation sign-up results

WASHINGTON—Secretary Tom Vilsack says the U.S. Department of Agriculture will accept 3.9 million acres offered under the 43rd Conservation Reserve Program general sign-up.

During the extended five-week sign-up, the department received nearly 48,000 offers on more than 4.5 million acres, demonstrating the program continuing status as

one of the most successful voluntary efforts to conserve land and improve soil, water, air and wildlife habitat.

"For more than 25 years, lands in CRP have helped to support strong incomes for our farmers and ranchers and produce ... jobs throughout the country related to outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing," the secretary said.

The department says owners of land with an Erosion Index of 20 or greater should consider participating in the Highly Erodible Land initiative. Lands eligible for this program are typically the least productive land on the farm, the agency says.

Landowners with sensitive grasslands, wetlands and wildlife habitat are encouraged to participate as well. This initiative

increases acres set aside for enrollments that benefit duck nesting habitat, upland birds, wetlands and wildlife.

The program is designed to help farmers, ranchers and other producers protect environmentally sensitive land. They receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving cover on eligible land under

10- or 15-year contracts.

The department selects offers for enrollment based on an Environmental Benefits Index comprising five environmental factors plus cost: wildlife enhancement, water quality, soil erosion, enduring benefits and air quality. The minimal score for this sign-up was 209; the average rental rate was \$51.24 per acre.

Faculty changes approved

BOARD, from Page 1

Amy Cebula will be the assistant coach.

Jim Myers will be the head coach of cross country with Traci Price-Waugh as assistant coach.

Raymer will be the head coach for boys basketball with assistant coaches Chase Toppliff and Jeremy Stefan.

Andy Scheopner will be the head coach for girls basketball with assistant coaches Dixie Teeter and Dana Murray.

Sramek will be the head coach of wrestling with Jonathan Whisnant and Steve Evert as assistants.

Kent Teeter will be the head coach for track with assistant coaches Raymer, Stefan, Mark Hagerman, Livengood, Price-Waugh, Laura Biermann and Travis Whitman.

Mull will be the head coach for baseball with David Avila as assistant.

Tess Smith will be the head coach for softball with Joy Braun as assistant.

Terry Daise will be the head coach of boys golf.

Jessica VonLintel will be the cheerleading sponsor.

Mary Porterfield and Brenda Linin will be the sponsors of AFS.

Sarah Short will be the sponsor of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

Livengood will be sponsor of Girls Athletic Association.

Raymer and Sramek will be the sponsors of G-Club.

Duane Unger and Raymer will be the sponsors of National Honor Society.

Whisnant will be the sponsor for STUCO.

Toppliff will be the sponsor for DECA.

Brian Coon and Jeff First will be the sponsors for Science Olympiad.

Johnny Mercer will be the sponsor for the Buckaroo.

Mercer will be the sponsor for the Scholars Bowl.

First will be the sponsor for the Art Club.

Raymer and Toppliff will be the sponsors for the prom.

First will be the concession manager.

Dr. Nancy McFarlin will be the sponsor of Renaissance. Renaissance is an incentive program for good grades, attendance and behavior. There will different levels including gold, silver, bronze and high five. Rewards may include early lunch, hall passes and other rewards.

Incentives credited for jobs

JOBS, from Page 1

Solomon checks on businesses to see if the city's money is being well spent. Solomon said he does, and so far most of the businesses that have received economic development incentives are meeting or exceeding expectations.

In other business, the commission:

- Tabled a discussion on economic development incentives for the Mid-America Trailer Park. The park's owner, Alex West, is adding new units and asking for 70 percent of the costs to relocate the electric lines.
- Gerber said he is not recommending the commission approve the incentives because the incentive is geared more toward expanding companies that will create new jobs. This job, he said, is a residential project. The project would help address the problem of lack of housing in the city, he said, but the commission would have to decide if it wanted to lend support to trailers.
- Farris made a motion to approve the economic development incentives, but the motion died for lack of a second. Finley moved to table the issue, saying he would like more information on the trailers themselves. Farris seconded, and the

motion passed unanimously.

- Heard the annual report on the Carnegie Arts Center from Kay Younger. Younger spoke about the youth and adult art programs, fund raisers such as the Flatlander Talent Show, the recently completed mural on 10th Street and the Art in the Park program. Since the state funding has dried up, Younger said the Center relies more heavily on local people and contributions from the city.
- Authorized Gerber to apply for a Safe Routes to School grant. Safe Routes to School is a multi-year process to encourage more children to walk or bike to and from school. The commission granted approval for Gerber to begin applying for phase one, which would be a year-long study examining the routes kids can take to school and what obstacles prevent more of them from doing so. If the city gets approved for further phases, it would include some kind of infrastructure project dealing with those obstacles.
- Approved a bid from Brenner Ford for a pickup truck for \$16,549 for the electric distribution department. Brenner was the low bid, with Finley Motors bidding \$19,772.
- Gerber said the city originally went out for bids for used vehicles, but during the process, the dealers suggested they could bid new

pickups more cheaply. Garcia said he was fine with that in this case, but said the city should continue to prioritize used vehicles.

The truck will replace one that currently in use that has been breaking down a lot.

- Discussed a net-metering policy. Gerber said he was recently approached by a business that was looking at putting in some renewable power generation. Gerber said there needs to be a policy in place that says "if you want to do this fine, but here are the parameters." The policy should include disconnect safeguards, he said, as well as "load appropriate standards," which ensure that whatever power generation a company puts in place, it is designed to be appropriate for their energy use and not putting a lot of excess power on the grid.
- The policy also needs to take into account the new contract with Sunflower Electric, which limits the city to a certain amount of renewable power generation.
- Gerber said he was on a committee that developed a policy for the state, which he included for the commission to look at, and said he would put the item up for a vote at the next meeting.

Oil, education bills effect western Kansas

The session went into overtime Monday, May 14, was the 91st day of the veto session and many issues were still unsettled. We were able to adjourn on Sunday, May 20, after agreement on the budget. However, no agreement was met on redistricting maps, so the courts will be redrawing the maps for the Senate, House, Board of Education and a Congressional map.



rick billinger
state rep.

I will briefly explain some of the legislation passed during the veto session that directly affects Western Kansas.

Oil and Gas Depletion Funds (Senate Sub for House Bill 2537)

Last summer a group of Western Kansas Legislators, including myself, started to work on this bill. My first year in the legislature we saw these funds being threatened to be swept and put into the State General Fund. The bill passed out of the House and Senate with an almost unanimous vote, however, Governor Brownback vetoed the bill. Many wonder why? This bill was a bargaining chip in the Senate and late Sunday afternoon the bill passed in both chambers. The funds are paid in by each county that has oil or gas production as a fund that may be accessed when the counties tax collection on these wells fall below a certain level. By doing this, counties would use these funds in place of raising property taxes to fill in the void left when the well runs dry.

The bill would annually transfer to each affected county, the funds held in its trust account in the State Treasury. The bill would require each county that is to receive money from the Oil and Gas Valuation Depletion Trust Fund to establish a county oil and gas valuation depletion trust fund, to be administered by the County Treasurer. On October 1 of each year, the Director of Taxation, Kansas Department of Revenue, would certify the amount in each county's trust account within the State Treasury, and the State Treasurer would issue a warrant to the county for deposit by the

County Treasurer in the county's Oil and Gas Valuation Depletion Trust Fund. The statutory criteria for a county to receive a distribution from the Trust Fund would not change.

Technical Education

This bill will require the Kansas Board of Regents to establish a career technical education incentive program, which would award \$1,000, subject to appropriation, to a school district for each high school graduate who graduates from that district with an industry-recognized credential in a high-need occupation, as identified by the Kansas Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Kansas Board of Regents and the State Board.

The bill would allow the governing board of a community college, technical college, or institute of technology to apply to the Kansas Board of Regents for permission to establish a career technical education program outside of the institution's service area if the program is not currently being offered in the service area. The provisions of this section would go into effect on July 1, 2013.

Technical College Boards' Ability to Acquire Property by Lease-Purchase

The bill would amend the powers and duties of technical college boards by allowing the boards to acquire any property by lease-purchase, which is necessary or desirable for technical college purposes. The lease purchase agreement which is limited to ten years, may provide for annual or other payment of rent or rental fees, including maintenance or other expenses, and is subject to change or terminate at any time by the Legislature and must contain a clause containing such termination language.

At-Risk Students

The bill would make changes to the school finance formula related to

at-risk students. If a student submits an application for free meals under the National School Lunch Act, and it is later determined that the student should not have been eligible, the school district or the Department of Education

would notify the State Board of Education. After the notification, the Board would recompute the general fund budget of the school district based upon the adjusted enrollment, excluding the at-risk student. The amount of state aid to the affected district would be adjusted accordingly.

High-Density At-Risk Pupil Weighting

The bill would revise the provision in the school finance law concerning the calculation of the high-density at-risk pupil weighting.

The bill would provide for a linear transition formula to calculate the high-density at-risk pupil weighting for districts having between 35 percent and 50 percent at-risk pupils.

For those districts having an at-risk pupil percentage of 50 percent or more, or for districts having an enrollment of at least 35.1 percent at-risk pupils and an enrollment density of at least 212.1 pupils per square mile, the district would multiply the number of at-risk pupils by 0.105 to determine the high-density at-risk weighting. For those districts having between 35 percent to less than 50 percent at-risk pupils, the district would multiply the number of at-risk pupils by a factor of 0.7.

KAN-EDACT

Senate Sub. For HB 2390 would amend the KAN-ED Act to phase out the KAN-ED network. It would provide funding for the KAN-ED program from the Kansas Universal Service Fund (KUSF) for fiscal year 2013, subject to the provisions of appropriations acts. The purpose of the program would be to facilitate use by schools, libraries, and hospitals of broadband technology-based video communication for distance learning and telemedicine.

I will have one more weekly update, which will be a summary of the 2012 session.

UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas

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2012 Preferred Health Systems Wichita Open

June 21-24, Wichita
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(316) 219-9046, PHSWichitaOpen.com

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Kansas State Championship with 200 teams and over 200 judges. Includes children's activities and live music.
lenexabbq.org

Roundup Ranch Experience

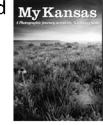
June 23, July 6-7, August 31, September 1-2 & 22, Dodge City
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www.dodgecityroundup.org

Kansas Byways

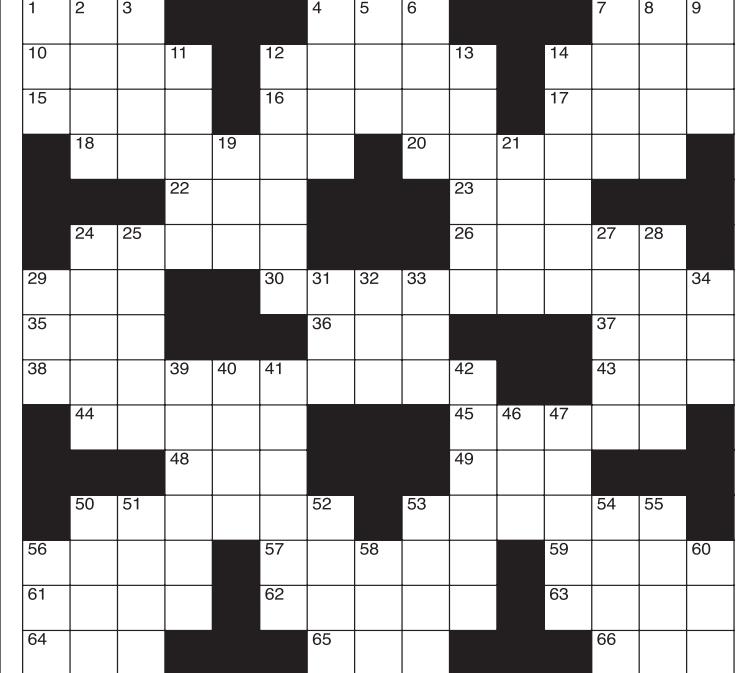
Kansas has eleven byways, eight scenic, two of which are National Scenic Byways and three historic byways. In addition to being beautiful drives, the byways each have a fascinating history and an abundance of activities to enjoy. ksbyways.org

My Kansas

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Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

- One point E of due S
- Picture border
- Having negative qualities
- Inner surface of the hand
- Spanish appetizers
- Large burrowing rodent of S and C Am.
- A profane state
- Sharp narrow mountain ridge
- Cain and ___
- Tranquil, calm
- Removes writing
- A Mississippi tributary
- Exactly suitable
- Extended blockade
- Encomium
- Dreaming eye movement
- Principle vein
- Japanese apricot
- ___ Speedwagon: band
- Fish eggs
- Ethiopian capital
- Considerate care
- Units of loudness
- Yemen capital
- Body fluid circulation tube
- Actress Lupino
- Gets up
- Moved contrary to the current
- Stretched tight
- Dark brownish black
- Syrian goat hair fabrics
- One of the Great Lakes
- Gull-like jaegers
- Taps gently
- Hamilton's bill
- One point N of due E
- No (Scottish)

CLUES DOWN

- Seaport (abbr.)
- Bleats
- Czech & German River
- Female horse
- Large tailless primate
- Modern London gallery
- Baseball's Ruth
- Breezes through
- Decaliter
- Genus uria
- Built for two
- Mexican men's shawl
- Pale & soft in color
- Records the brain's electric currents
- Three banded armadillo
- Plant germ
- Relating to imides
- Main artery
- City in north-central Zambia
- Royal Military Academy
- Shape of a sphere
- Earl Grey or Orange Pekoe
- Fireplace shelf
- Old world, new
- Request attendance
- Oceans
- Determine the court costs of
- Digressions
- Form a sum
- Greek river nymphs
- Swiss river
- Laying waste
- Japanese rice beer
- Arдор
- Israel's 1st UN delegate
- Aba ___ Honeymoon
- Vietnamese offensive
- Slang term for man or boy
- Point midway between S and SE

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