

State officials unhappy with judges' maps

MAPS, from Page 1

any indication that he plans to do so.
“I’d love to see them appeal it,” he added.
Ostmeyer said he doesn’t think the case will be appealed.
Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach has announced that the filing deadline, which was noon Monday, will not be extended, and the primary election will go forward as scheduled on Tuesday, Aug. 7. Across the state, many candidates had to refile and others jumped into races, based on the new maps.

Both the House and Senate districts are drastically different from the current layout. The old 120th included Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties. The old 121st included Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan and Graham counties.

With the 121st moved, the new 120th includes Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Sherman, Wallace and the northwest part of Thomas County, including Colby. The rest of Thomas as well as Sheridan and Graham counties are now in the 118th, represented by Don Hineman of Dighton. Norton and Phillips counties are now in the 110th District, which runs down to Hays.

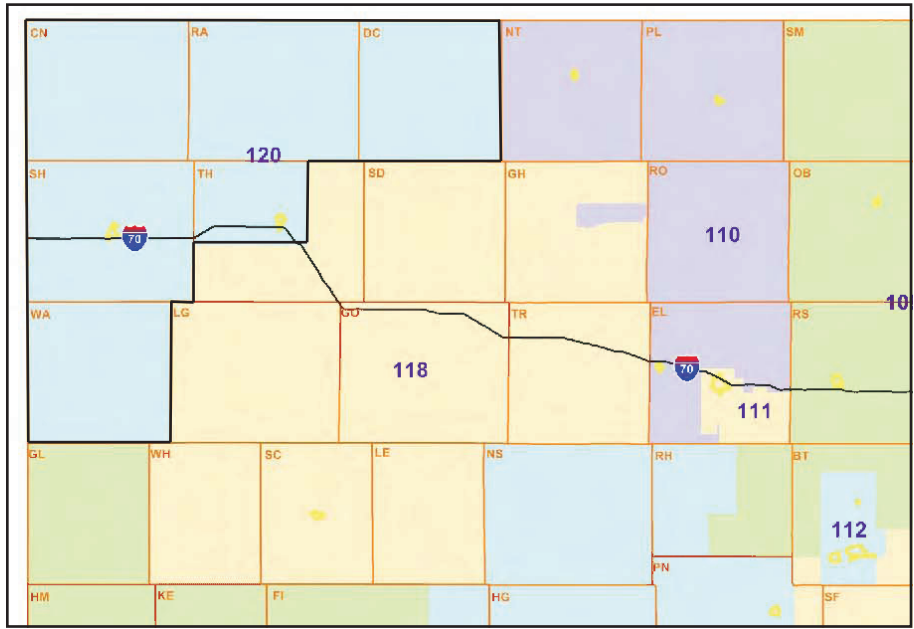
It’s a far cry from what Rep. Billinger thought he would be contending with.

“It’s appalling that three judges from Kansas City were the ones to decide the western Kansas districts,” he said.

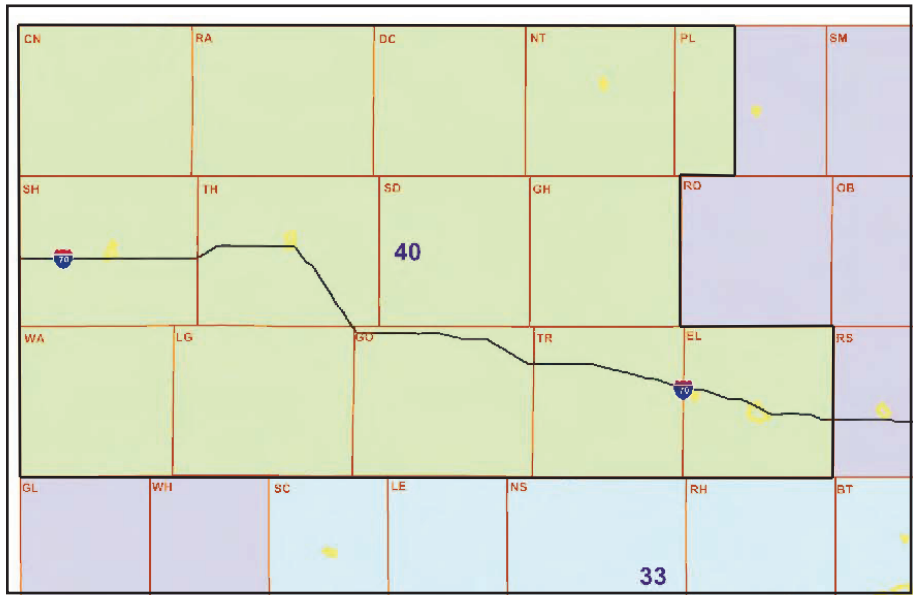
The House passed a map in just three days with more than 110 votes, Billinger said, but the judges didn’t even use it as a reference point. That map, he said, got the population numbers within a few percentage points of the ideal, and it took care not to put incumbents together.

This new map pits 23 incumbents against each others and created 25 districts that suddenly had no incumbent. In many cases, Billinger said, there hadn’t been anyone filed in those new districts. After Thursday’s announcement, party officials scrambled to find candidates for them before the Monday deadline.

Both Billinger and Cassidy much of their old districts. All that remains are from the old 120th are three counties, Cheyenne, Decatur and Rawlins. Another example, he said, is the new 106th District, which pits Rep. Clay Aurand of Bellville against Rep. Sharon Schwartz of Washington. The two had been in neighboring districts before the



New Northwest Kansas House of Representatives Districts



New Northwest Kansas Senate Districts

judges issued the new map.

Both Billinger and Cassidy said they expect their primary to be a friendly campaign.

“Ward’s a friend of mine, has been for many years,” Billinger said. “Neither of us wanted to run against each other, but circumstances have thrown us together.”

Cassidy said it is not a nice scenario. He had been campaigning across five counties, then suddenly two of those were taken away and new ones added.

“When the legislature draws a map, they

favor incumbents,” he said. “We were told that if the judges were to do it, they wouldn’t care.”

Cassidy estimated that in both houses there would likely be a minimum of 50 new legislators. The House will also be electing a new speaker, since the incumbent, Mike O’Neal, is not running for re-election.

Cassidy said his decision to continue running was due in part to being on the House Appropriations Committee during the last session.

“I was told I have a good chance of being

on it next session and I also have a chance of being educational budget chairman,” he said.

Cassidy said that gaining that amount of influence would allow him to do good things for western Kansas.

One way or the other, either Billinger or Cassidy won’t be heading back to Topeka for next year’s session.

“Both of us look out for western Kansas,” Billinger said. “It’s tragic that two good voices for western Kansas are pitted against each other.”

The 40th Senate District is in the same boat. The redrawn district includes Wallace, Logan, Gove, Trego, Ellis, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, Graham, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton and half of Phillips county – not including the city of Phillipsburg.

The old district boundaries stopped at Trego County and extended south to Greeley, Wichita, Scott, Lane and Ness counties. It also included Rooks County. To make up for losing these six counties, the district picked up half of Phillips County and Ellis, including the city of Hays.

“It’ll all work out,” Ostmeyer said. “Ellis County is a rural area, its got small schools and a college I support.”

Having Hays in the district does change the dynamic though. Ostmeyer said that Hays holds 33 percent of the new district’s population, and a Democratic incumbent. Schmidt, a Hays resident who had been in the 36th District, now is in the 40th.

“Schmidt and I are very good friends,” Ostmeyer said. “We talked during the session, and he told me that if we were put in the same district that he might not run. When we talked about it over this weekend, I told him to do what he needed to do.”

Schmidt announced Monday that he has filed to run in the 40th. He lost nine of his 10 counties, which he said represents a huge challenge.

“The job is not finished and neither is my service to rural Kansas,” he said in a press release. “Representing rural Kansas is a responsibility I take as conscientiously as I did my senior leader duties in the Army. It has been a privilege to represent the needs and values of rural Kansas these past two years and that responsibility has required firmly standing up to keep our rural representation against efforts to take away yet another rural western district because of population shifts.”

Schmidt is a one-term senator. He spent 32 years in the Army Medical Service before retiring as a colonel. He and his wife spent 12 years operating a dairy and he currently works as a business development manager for the Columbia Group.

Ostmeyer also has to run in the primary against John Miller, a long-time Norton County commissioner.

Including Ostmeyer and Schmidt, six incumbent senators have been pitted against each other. Ostmeyer said the Senate has no one to blame but itself.

“The judges punished us,” he said.

Ostmeyer said he suspected the conservative wing of the party has been hurt worse by the maps, but it is too early to tell.

“I still see that rift being there,” he said.

The judges also issued maps for the Kansas Congressional districts and the state Board of Education.

The 1st Congressional District only picked up a little territory, and now has far fewer than the old count of 69 counties. Junction City will be reunited with neighboring Fort Riley, and the district will now include Manhattan.

To even out the populations, the 4th District will pick up some rural counties in south central Kansas. To make up for losing Manhattan, the 2nd District will pick up the rest of Nemaha County and most of Marshall County in the north, Montgomery County in the south, and part of Douglas County. However it will lose part of Miami County to the 3rd District.

In the final opinion, the Court said it is satisfied that its plans meet the legal requirements for redistricting.

“The Court recognizes that because it has tried to restore compact contiguous districts where possible, it is pushing a re-set button; its maps look different from those now in place,” the opinion says. “Some changes may not be popular and some people – perhaps many – will disagree that the Court has struck the appropriate balance.”

The three judges in the case were Kathryn Vratil, chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Kansas City, appointed by President George H.W. Bush in 1992.; Mary Breck Briscoe, chief judge of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1995; and Senior U.S. District Judge John Lungstrum, also a George H.W. Bush appointee.

Hospital offers sun safety education for swimmers

Goodland Regional Medical Center is teaming up with the staff at Steever Water Park to increase awareness of sun protection practices among children ages 5-10 who take swimming lessons, their parents and other pool users this summer.

The hospital is providing lesson materials that will be taught by the lifeguards prior to swim classes each session, sun-safety signs that are displayed at the pool and sunscreen available for anybody to use while swimming.

The local program is based on Pool Cool, an evidence-based program that was developed at the

University of Hawaii, Emory University, the University of Pennsylvania and the National Recreation and Park Association with grants from the National Cancer Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Skin cancer is the fastest growing form of cancer in the United States with one million new cases diagnosed each year. Youth are the most at risk for overexposure to the sun’s rays, and those who receive the most exposure before the age of 18 tend to have the highest rates of skin cancer later in life. The Pool Cool program teaches children to cover up, seek shade, proper use of

sunscreen and avoid staying outside too long during peak sun hours.

SUNSCREEN TIPS:

Choosing a Sunscreen

- SPF 15 or higher
- Waterproof
- Protects against UVA and UVB rays

Safe for Children

How to Apply Sunscreen

- Apply 30 minutes before you go outside
- Re-apply every 2-3 hours or after swimming
- Use on all parts of your skin exposed to the sun (Include your ears, back, shoulders & back of

your legs)

- Spread all over your skin
- Apply sunscreen thickly and thoroughly

- Use cautiously around your eyes

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Governor attends ethanol plant event

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and thanked everyone involved in the project.

“In every endeavor, whether business, personal or family, when we find ourselves at a point where it comes to fruiting we look back and find there’s a lot to celebrate,” he said.

The plant will be a big boost for the local economy, Garcia said before introducing Gov. Brownback.

Brownback began by saying that in addition to being the Wheat State, he is hoping to make Kansas the Renewable State. This year, he said, there has been \$3 billion worth of new construction in wind energy alone. The state also boasts the lowest ethanol prices in the nation because of ready access to corn or other materials, and the market for distillers grain, a byproduct of the ethanol production process that can be used as cattle feed.

Brownback said he is trying to get more and more policies in place to help businesses expand in rural counties.

“I love seeing development in this part of the state,” he said. “I was just in Rexford to see the new dairy expansion.”

Brownback concluded by joking that he hopes to drink the first gallon of ethanol from the Goodland plant before too long.

“Governor, we will be making ethanol, and you will be getting the first gallon,” Johnson replied.

After the dignitaries dug up the ceremonial first shovel-full of dirt, there was a reception at the Sugar Hills Clubhouse.

Johnson said because of the heavy construction work, the company will not be able to provide tours of the plant until it opens.

July 4th through July 7th

**At Hays Municipal Park
Hays, KS**

Thursday, July 5th * 9:00pm * Hairball
Friday, July 6th * 9:30pm * Diamond Rio
Saturday, July 7th * 7:30pm * Glen Templeton
9:30pm * Easton Corbin

\$12

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Wednesday, July 4th * 10 p.m. * Fireworks Display

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UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas

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Washunga Days
June 15-17, Council Grove
Inter-tribal powwow at Kaw Mission Historic Site. Reenactments, parade, 5K run, arts & crafts, flea market, car show & live entertainment. councilgrove.com

Territorial Day
June 22-23, Lecompton
Celebrate the role Lecompton played in state & national history as Territorial Capital. Re-enactment, “Bleeding Kansas” play & more. Tour Constitution Hall, National Landmark & Territorial Capital Museum. lecomptonterritorialsdays.com

Roundup Ranch Experience
June 23, July 6-7, August 31, September 1-2 & 15, Dodge City
Take in the most exciting ranch rodeos in Kansas, enjoy meals cooked over the campfire, and experience the real west! (620) 225-2244, dodgecityroundup.org

Paola Heartland Car Show
June 23, Paola
Free to the public. Come enjoy the Historic Park Square & Gazebo. Stroll through classic cars from the past. 2-8PM, paolacarshow.com

3i SHOW
July 12-14, Dodge City
Western State Bank Expo Center
Th. & Fr. 8AM - 5PM; Sa. 8AM - 4PM
Over 500 indoor and outdoor agribusiness exhibits, consumer programs, health screens and vintage tractors. (877) 405-2883, 3ishow.com

American Indian Festival
July 14-15, Wichita
Century II Performing Arts & Convention Center
Contest powwow, Indian Fine Art Market, arts & crafts, food vendors, education opportunities and more! (316) 350-3340, theindiancenter.org

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