Road and Bridge issues dominate Commission meeting

The Board of County Commissioners of Neosho County met in regular session at the Neosho County Courthouse at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, September 12, with all of the commissioners present. Other than attendees were: County Clerk Randal E Neely, Deputy County Clerk Linda Powers, Payroll Director Patricia Geiger, Milford Hall, Chanute Tribune Reporter Harold Campbell, and Erie Record Reporter Joe Capolino.

The meeting opened with the commissioners going into an executive session at 8:05 a.m. for a time not to exceed 8:25 a.m. with County Attorney Melissa Dugan present to discuss non-elected personnel in order to protect the privacy of the individual, attorney-client privilege, pending litigation, and possible liability. No action was taken during or following the session, however, County Attorney Melissa Dugan gave the commissioners a Notice of Hearing on Court of Tax Appeals Docket #2008-5235-EQ, set for October 31 at 11:00 a.m. She informed the commissioners that this is not a task she will be able to cover due to other responsibilities, and they need to find a different attorney to handle the matter.

During the lull in business before Road and Bridge Director Roy Paisley gave his weekly report to the commissioners, Chairman Royce Edwards moved that since the commissioners have received a Release of Liability from Carol Harris, Chris Harris, and Linda Weidert to work on the Veterans Memorial erected on the courthouse grounds, they be allowed to do so. Commissioner Donnie Yarnell seconded the motion and Commissioner Scott Parish agreed. It was noted that anyone else wishing to do work on the Memorial needs to contact Melissa Dugan or the county clerk’s office to get a Release of Liability form to do any work on the site.

Road and Bridge Director Paisley opened his report by saying the oil he uses for chip and sealing has gone up to $2.81 per gallon as of last Tuesday which represents a .50¢ per gallon increase in its price. He stated he is considering making his own cold patch because cold patch is currently $90 per ton when they have to go pick it up. He has estimated he can get the price down to $44 per ton if the department can mix their own oil and rock. He is studying how to make it, as it takes special oil for cold patch.

Paisley stated he has also been learning blasting procedures for the rock quarry by consulting with Mr. Whitaker, at Ash Grove Cement in Chanute, and representatives at Beachner Construction. In addition Paisley asked that he and Assistant Road and Bridge Director Jason Thompson be allowed to attend a two-day workshop on Public Works I and II at Chanute on October 1 and 2. This training is presented through the Local Technical Assistance Program at the University of Kansas Transportation Center. He feels this workshop will help them do their jobs better. The registration fee is $135 per person. This course is a required course for the Road Scholar Level 2 - Supervisory Skills Program.

Commissioner Yarnell informed the group that he has had farmers calling him offering to use their grain trucks to haul rock to their road because the roads are getting very worn and they are getting so desperate for it. Paisley also noted there are also farmers that have been Bush Hogging the ditches along their property.

Commissioner Yarnell also reminded the commissioners that as of July 31, the Road and Bridge Department has only spent 45% of their 2008 budget, and moved that they allow Road and Bridge Director Paisley to hire up to 35 employees.

In the following discussion, which lasted almost an hour, Paisley was asked how his evaluation of the department was going and what he needs to move forward. He was asked to come back next week with a plan.

Off the top of his head, Paisley stated he has also been building his plan. Some of his men that had been working on the roads are in management now, and that the majority of his workers have a lack of proper training to do their jobs well. He advised the commissioners that some of his men need to be sent to training to get them up to speed on some of the department’s equipment so that the entire department can service the county better.

He continued that he has only been Road and Bridge Director five weeks, and that the persistent rain has held them up doing some things. They are mowing corners at intersections now, but that he needs more men and better weather to get all the jobs done in the county. He stated that with the rain and other weather conditions, there is not a mile section in the county that does not have the need for some form of repair.

Turning to the Shaw-Elk Road project, Paisley said all of the stop signs and road name signs are up at the intersections...
The discussion on Shaw-Elk Road was interrupted by a phone call from Dan Whitson of Thayer on the speakerphone concerning a bridge on Anderson Road, north of 90th Road. Whitson said six feet of the west side of the bridge is caved in, and the east side is almost impassable. He said the bridge has been that way for about six months, and he had called several times to get the bridge fixed. Paisley said he would get up there after the commission meeting to look at the bridge.

As Paisley noted he was not aware of the problem before the phone call, County Attorney Dugan suggested Roy keep a logbook on complaints phoned in to the Road and Bridge Department to help manage the public’s requests and to keep track of the information better.

Ron Clemens of Chanute, who was already in the meeting, was present regarding the condition of Chase Road. Clemens said he has been used to getting his road graded every two weeks, and now it gets graded every two months, maybe. He came to the meeting because he had been told by Commissioner Yarnell and Paisley that the Chanute Commissioners Parish and Edwards had blocked the hiring of new employees for the department.

Clemens was told by the Chanute commissioners that Paisley, when he had been hired for the position said he had wanted to limit the number of employees in the department and evaluate the situation when the first of the year came around. It was stated that the situation had changed and Paisley had just begun asking for new employees for the department.

Paisley, in a strained voice, again repeated that he had only been on the job five weeks, and that the weather had not been cooperating, he stated that he now has new grader operators that he is trying to get trained and is playing catchup with the back log of work in the county.

Clemens, in a second issue, said he has had businessmen in Chanute ask him if they can put signs on county right-of-way and noted there is one business now that has a sign on county right-of-way. County Attorney Dugan said there is an application process through Road and Bridge that must be followed. Dugan said the commissioners could make their own policy concerning signs so long as they treat everyone equally, replacing the current policy through the road and bridge department.

Once the discussions on the road and bridge department wound down, Chairman Edwards seconded Commissioner Yarnell’s original motion to allow Paisley to hire up to 35 employees in the Road and Bridge Department, although, he said he didn’t think the motion was necessary. Parish agreed, stating that Paisley hire the men that he need to get the job done.

Paisley was advised he could hire temporary help in order to get caught up and that he needs to be very specific about the position being a temporary position during the hiring process, and that the temporary employees would not be eligible for county benefits.

Payroll Director Patricia Geiger was present asking that the county’s Personnel Policy be updated. Dugan noted the commissioners have voted to make changes to the Policy book, but those changes have never been put into the Personnel Policy manual. Patricia asked County Clerk Neely to get her information on the changes the commissioners have voted to make to the county’s Personnel Policy correct and up-to-date.

Revisiting the earlier issue of the Tax Appeal, Chairman Edwards moved to allow County Appraiser David Thornton to hire an attorney to represent the county at the Hearing on the Court of Tax Appeals Docket #2008-5235-EQ, set for October 31 at 11:00 a.m. Commissioners Yarnell seconded the motion and commissioner Parish agreed.

Parish moved to authorize Chairman Edwards access to the former county counselor and human resources department files to secure the county’s contract with Venture Corporation for work on Phase I of the 160th (Shaw)-Elk Road Improvement Project and the county’s Flood Plain maps. The other commissioners agreed to the motion.

Chairman Edwards moved to adopt Resolution No. R-08-D authorizing the preparation and filing of a judicial tax foreclosure action to collect delinquent real estate taxes owed on certain properties for the year 2004. Again the other commissioners agreed.

The commissioners called and spoke to Dan Hallaway, engineer with Cook, Flatt and Strobel Engineers, P.A., concerning what they need to do to get Phase I of the 160th (Shaw)-Elk Road Improvement Project opened up to traffic. Hallaway said he needed time to research the matter but would get back with the commissioners if there is any action the commissioners can take to get this road opened.

Chairman Royce Edwards was authorized to sign Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Transportation Revolving Fund Draw Request #4 for $954,727.43. The draw will help cover expenses currently due on Phase I of the Shaw-Elk Road project.
Growing JCMH clinic adds Greiner

by Kenneth Lassiter

A Topeka native has brought his physician’s skills to the new medical clinic at Jefferson County Memorial Hospital in Winchester as hospital officials hope to continue to build up the fledgling clinic.

Will Greiner, MD, started work at the clinic Sept. 1 after a stint at the Atchison Hospital. He has been a doctor for three years after receiving his medical degree from the University of Kansas. His main cohort at the JCMH clinic is physician’s assistant Sue Quirk, who met Greiner while working at the Atchison Hospital and has been with JCMH since November 2006.

The clinic’s hours of operation are from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday and from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday. Quirk, who has been working at the clinic since it started up in May, said they are hoping to expand to Saturday hours in coming weeks.

Quirk said the clinic was the idea of new JCMH CEO LaMont Cook. She and another physician’s assistant got the clinic opened with the help of JCMH chief of staff Dr. John Eplee in May while more help was sought. Quirk remembered Greiner from Atchison and felt they had a good working relationship, so he was brought into the fold.

“I knew Sue through working with her in the emergency room at Atchison,” Greiner said. He lives with his wife and two daughters, ages 14 and 9, in northwest Kansas City. “She sent me a letter telling me about the Winchester clinic and I decided to look into it.”

Quirk said she felt Greiner would be a good fit at Winchester.

“I had heard he might be available, and we had worked well together at Atchison,” said Quirk, who lives in Valley Falls and is a native of Ohio. “I just thought he’d be a good person for it. Really, I think it was a little bit of fate. We were looking for the right person and he fit and was willing to come here.”

Greiner officially joined JCMH on Sept. 1 and has spent the first couple weeks on the job settling in and enjoying a shorter commute.

“It’s closer to home, which is good,” Greiner said with a chuckle. “It’s a little quicker than it was going to Atchison.”

Quirk said the clinic has been building up a patient base over the months. It takes both appointments and walk-ins with an entrance on the west side of the main hospital building. There are three exam rooms open to clinic patients and any blood work or x-rays can be done while the patient waits. Cutting down on wait time is one core priority to Quirk and clinic staff.

“If you go to an ER, your average wait time is anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours,” Quirk said. “Here, you’re guaranteed that, within 30 minutes, you’ll be seen by a provider.”

The clinic is designed for a family medicine approach. Quirk said another positive to opening the clinic is offering another source of prenatal care locally.

“We’ve started getting some people in who don’t want to drive to Topeka or Leavenworth or Atchison to visit the doctor,” Quirk said. She has been a physician’s assistant for 22 years. “We’ve grown to a five or maybe eventually a six-day clinic.

We aren’t going to have to turn away any phone calls. Everybody will be seen who wants to be seen. This is different from a bigger hospital because we can personalize (the service) more here.”

Greiner said the staff also has a focus on some preventative education, to some extent.

“We focus on preventative medicine,” Greiner said. “It’s about taking the time to talk to the patient about ways to keep from needing to come back again for the same problem.”

Quirk came to Kansas in 2006 and liked it so much she decided to stay. She said she continues to log some time doing some emergency room work to help keep her skills sharp (as does Greiner) and also is working on her master’s degree in business administration with thoughts of moving to the administrative side of health care at some point.

“I’ve worked for administrators of all kinds, and the ones with some experience on both sides of (health care) are usually the ones who get it,” she said. “It’s all about caring for people and thinking more about them than just the bottom line.”

Quirk said she’s been glad to see the clinic grow from month to month.

“We’re much more centered on the patient here than in other places,” Quirk said. She said the clinic staff is hoping to add sonogram and CAT scan equipment in the near future as well. “Word gets around if you don’t (take care of people right) but it also gets around...
We've gotten a lot of word-of-mouth business. Also, people are moving out to the rural areas more and more and the machine needs to be more and more well-oiled here to respond to that somewhat. “We've also got payment plans available for people who don't have insurance but still need to come in. You have that group of people out there who can't afford insurance and feel they have nowhere to go. JCMH is doing its part to make sure those people who feel like they aren't able to be seen can be seen.”

Physician’s Assistant Sue Quirk and Dr. Will Greiner are the main staffers of the Jefferson County Memorial Hospital’s medical clinic in Winchester. Greiner joined the clinic Sept. 1 from the Atchison Hospital.
University of Kansas researchers are joining a hunt for new, disease-fighting molecules through the largest federal research grant ever awarded in the state, officials said Monday.

The grant is worth $20.2 million over the next six years, and it's from the National Institutes of Health. The university will become part of a network of nine institutions across the nation trying to create molecular "probes."

"This indicates that KU is competitive with universities around the country," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said. "Good news on all fronts."

The University of Kansas will become part of a national team screening thousands of molecules to determine how they affect human biology — for example, by changing how cells act. The goal, officials said, is to identify molecules that show promise, then create more refined "probes."

Jeff Aube, the professor of medicinal chemistry who will lead the University of Kansas research team, compared the work to prospecting for gold, then turning nuggets into pieces of jewelry.

And Elias Zerhouni, director of the national institutes, said in a statement: "The information generated by this network will be important to developing a greater understanding of biology and its complexity."
Kansas receives $20.2M grant

TOPEKA — University of Kansas researchers are joining a hunt for new, disease-fighting molecules through the largest federal research grant ever awarded in the state, officials said Monday.

The grant is worth $20.2 million over the next six years, and it’s from the National Institutes of Health. The university will become part of a network of nine institutions across the nation trying to create molecular "probes."

"This indicates that KU is competitive with universities around the country," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said. "Good news on all fronts."

The University of Kansas will become part of a national team screening thousands of molecules to determine how they affect human biology — for example, by changing how cells act. The goal, officials said, is to identify molecules that show promise, then create more refined "probes."
Astronaut urges youths to study science

SOPHIA MAINES
SMAINES@FHEWORLDINFO

SOPHIA MAINES
SMAINES@FHEWORLDINFO

LAWRENCE

The activation last week of the world’s largest particle collider is momentous for science but also highlights the need for continued investment in research in the United States, according to Kansas University professor and former NASA astronaut Steve Hawley.

“There is an issue about the amount of investment in research and technology that we’re making compared to what other countries are making,” Hawley said when asked about the Large Hadron Collider near Geneva, Switzerland. “We were for a long time the leaders in investing in science and technology and I think we run the risk of losing that.”

Hawley, a Kansas native and KU alumnus who recently joined the KU faculty as professor of physics and astronomy, detailed his involvement with the Hubble Space Telescope on Sunday.

He delivered a lecture to a crowd of more than 100 people at KU’s Spooner Hall. The event was hosted by KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Launched in 1990, the Hubble has contributed to such advances as the discovery of the accelerating expansion of the universe.

Hawley has been involved in all of the Hubble’s missions including as a part of a flight crew for two missions.

“I think it’s been a tremendously successful science instrument, arguably the single greatest science instrument ever made,” he said.

Hawley brought mementos of his work with the Hubble. He showed the audience a Hubble image showing roughly 1,500 galaxies.

“We don’t know very much at all about 95 percent of the universe,” he said. “For all of you that are interested in astronomy, there’s a lot of work to be done.”

Hawley said he hoped his talk would inspire young people in the audience.

“I think it’s really important for kids growing up in Kansas to know that if they stay in school and take the hard courses and pursue their dreams with diligence and enthusiasm, that it can pay off for them,” he said.

He said the launch of the particle collider in Europe was a positive for science, but the amount of U.S. investment in research and technology was an issue.

“Hopefully we’ll see that the things we have today that make our life the way it is are the things we invested in decades ago,” he said. “So if we’re not investing today, then decades from now, we may not have the advances that other countries may have.”

Hawley’s talk was the first of a series called CLAS ACTS, sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and aimed at sharing KU’s intellectual capital with the community, said Joseph Steinmetz, dean of the college.

“The goal is outreach, to make sure that the general public in Lawrence and surrounding communities can have opportunity to interact with the faculty here,” Steinmetz said.
Daniel J. Barrera, a University of Kansas senior in biochemistry, is one of 31 students from KU and Haskell Indian Nations University who attend a welcome reception sponsored by KU’s Office of Diversity in Science Training.

Barrera, a graduate of Piper High School, is preparing to study medicine. His mentor in the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity program is Paul Hanson, professor of chemistry and medicinal chemistry.

Students and mentors at the reception are participating in 2008-09 programs funded by the National Institutes of Health that encourage minority students to pursue careers in biomedical science by supporting undergraduate research activities.

“The goal of these programs is to provide educational and research opportunities for students who seek to attend graduate school and enter careers in biomedical research,” said James Orr, director of the KU Office for Diversity in Science Training. “We are pleased to partner with Haskell in providing support for KU and Haskell student involvement in the sciences.”
Pi graduate involved in KU science program

Daniel J. Barrera, a University of Kansas senior in biochemistry, is one of 31 students from KU and Haskell Indian Nations University who attend a welcome reception sponsored by KU's Office of Diversity in Science Training.

Barrera, a graduate of Piper High School, is preparing to study medicine. His mentor in the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity program is Paul Hanson, professor of chemistry and medicinal chemistry.

Students and mentors at the reception are participating in 2008-09 programs funded by the National Institutes of Health that encourage minority students to pursue careers in biomedical science by supporting undergraduate research activities.

"The goal of these programs is to provide educational and research opportunities for students who seek to attend graduate school and enter careers in biomedical research," said James Orr, director of the KU Office for Diversity in Science Training. "We are pleased to partner with Haskell in providing support for KU and Haskell students in the sciences."
Area Students Honored By KU

Students from 10 Kansas high schools will be honored Wednesday, Sept. 17, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment.

A total of 35 seniors from high schools in Sumner County will be recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at a 6:30 p.m. dinner program at Wellington High School, 1700 E. 16th, Wellington.

The Kansas Honors Program began in 1971 and has honored more than 100,000 students. Scholars rank in the top 10% of their high school senior classes and are selected regardless of curricula, majors, occupational plans or higher-education goals.

During the ceremony, each student will receive an American Heritage Dictionary in hardback and CD versions, presented by KU alumni staff members.

Honored students will be guests of the alumni association and KU Endowment; parents and area alumni are welcome to attend for a fee.

Being honored from this area are: Argonia High School - Marc Allen and Karissa Pankratz; Caldwell High School - Renée Allen, Whitney Bolden and Leah Sparks.
Derby Mayor Dion Avello received four applications to fill a vacant seat on the Derby City Council following the recent resignation of Chuck Warren.

Applicants include Heath Horyna, Heather McCreight, Brad Ward, and Van Willis. The application period has closed.

Horyna is employed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment as an Environmental Scientist in the Wichita office.

McCreight has called Derby home for 10 years and currently serves on the Recycling/Trash Advisory Board.

Other community involvement has included coordinating school and church activities.

McCreight is an Art Education alumnus of Wichita State University and has taught in both Wichita and Derby Public Schools.

Biology and from Pittsburg High School.

Previous community service included Secretary of the Haysville Tree Board and Chairman of the Haysville Safety Committee.

See Council, page 3A
Council: Mayor receives four applications for vacant Ward II city council seat

She currently works for Special Anesthesia Services in Derby. Ward graduated from the University of Kansas School of Law and was admitted to the Kansas State Bar in April.

He recently served the community as Vice Chair of the ADA Advisory Board and is currently on the Derby Planning Commission. He is a Navy veteran and has experience working at the Coleman Company and Cessna Aircraft Company.

Willis works as a financial consultant with Commerce Brokerage Services in Wichita. He has an MBA from Baker University.

Avello is considering these four applications and conducting interviews of applicants. His nomination is anticipated at the Derby Chamber of Commerce. City Council meeting on Sept. 23.

The council meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. at Derby City Hall.
KU gets $20.2M federal health grant

TOPEKA — University of Kansas researchers are joining a hunt for new, disease-fighting molecules through the largest federal research grant ever awarded in the state, officials said Monday.

The grant is worth $20.2 million over the next six years, and it's from the National Institutes of Health. The university will become part of a network of nine institutions across the nation trying to create molecular "probes."

"This indicates that KU is competitive with universities around the country," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said. "Good news on all fronts."

The University of Kansas will become part of a national team screening thousands of molecules to determine how they affect human biology — for example, by changing how cells act. The goal, officials said, is to identify molecules that show promise, then create more refined "probes."

Jeff Aube, the professor of medicinal chemistry who will lead the University of Kansas research team, compared the work to prospecting for gold, then turning nuggets into pieces of jewelry.

And Elias Zerhouni, director of the National Institutes, said in a statement: "The information generated by this network will be important to developing a greater understanding of biology and its complexity, while hopefully discovering novel approaches to therapies and prevention, especially for rare or neglected diseases."