

Awards

Local Masons donate funds to local organizations and announce a local essay winner. Page 3



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OF MAIL
THE REPUBLICAN
P.O. DRAWER A
BURLINGTON, KS 66839

ONLINE EDITION:
www.coffeycountyonline.com

Death Notices

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- Bessie Bent, 87
- Roy Coleman Jr., 58



Average Gas Prices

Week ending Dec. 30, 2019

Kansas **Nation**

\$2.27/gal. \$2.57/gal

▲ 2.8 cents ▲ 2.0 cents
KansasGasPrices.com

Lake Levels

John Redmond

12 p.m. Monday, December 30
Lake Elevation: 1,042.60
Normal: 1,041
Inflow (cfs): 4,000
Release (cfs): 80

Council Grove

Lake Elevation: 1,275.00
Normal: 1,274
Inflow (cfs): 1,036
Release (cfs): 8

Marion

Lake Elevation: 1,350.40
Normal: 1,350.5
Inflow (cfs): 100
Release (cfs): 1

Melvern

Lake Elevation: 1,037.52
Normal: 1,036
Inflow (cfs): 3,300
Release (cfs): 20

Pomona

Lake Elevation: 976.09
Normal: 974
Inflow (cfs): 2,350
Release (cfs): 15

Public Notices

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- Estate of Dana A. Gillespie - Notice of Hearing and Notice to Creditors.

Access public notices throughout Kansas at
www.kansaspublicnotices.com

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The official newspaper of Coffey County

Burlington, New Strawn, Lebo, Gridley, LeRoy, Waverly, and Hartford

Lebo-Waverly USD 243
Burlington USD 244
LeRoy-Gridley USD 245



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Top Stories of 2019



Flood of 2019

(April 25, 2019) — Severe storm brings damaging hail — The first severe thunderstorms of the season brought large hail and heavy rain to Coffey County during the evening hours of Wednesday, April 17. Multiple severe thunderstorm warnings were issued that impacted areas of Coffey County.

The storms brought damaging hail. At approximately 8:20, 1.5 inch diameter hail was reported in two locations in the county, one mile south of Gridley and one mile northeast of Burlington. Twenty minutes later, 1.75 inch diameter hail was reported one mile west of Burlington. Burlington took the brunt of the hail and roofs have been reported to have been damaged.

Heavy rain also fell during the storms. The highest rainfall totals were above four inches.

(May 9, 2019) — Storms bring heavy rain, wind and hail — Monday, May 6, was wet and stormy for Coffey County and much of Kansas. At 8:01 p.m., a severe thunderstorm warning was issued, followed by a flash flood warning at 8:23 p.m. As the storms continued to impact the area, a second severe thunderstorm warning was issued just after 8:45 p.m.

In Coffey County, 2.5 inch diameter hail was reported four miles north of Gridley. A deputy reported a 70 mile per hour wind gust five miles west of Burlington. Two heavy rain reports were made, with 2.5 inches recorded in Gridley and 2.7 inches recorded in LeRoy. Countywide, more than 1.5 to two inches of rain fell, with many locations receiving two to 2.5 inches. Some locations, mainly in southern portions of the county, received 2.5 to three inches and a few locations south of K-58 highway saw three to five inches.

(May 16, 2019) — Lake level is third highest on record — Heavy rains that fell in Chase and Lyon counties, starting the last several days in April, caused widespread flooding in those areas. The Cottonwood and Neosho rivers carried the flood waters to John Redmond Dam and Reservoir where the water was held to allow the swollen Neosho River downstream from the dam to recede.

The lake elevation topped 1,060 feet around 10 p.m. Wednesday, May 8. Water entered the reservoir at well over 35,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) for the next 59 hours. The largest inflow recorded was 59,998 cfs at 5 a.m. Friday, May 10.

During much of that time, all 14 tainter gates were releasing around 14,000 cfs. As the lake elevation increased, so did the amount of water flowing through the gates. For 32 hours, more than 19,000 cfs was being released from the reservoir. During that time, all 14 tainter gates were open 1.17 feet, which caused the Neosho River to leave its banks in some areas and cause flooding in several areas.

The lake elevation crested at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 12, at 1,068.66, which is the third highest elevation on record (dropped to fourth highest later). The water was within inches of the top of the gates and windy conditions Sunday afternoon caused water to splash over the top of the gates.

(May 30, 2019) — Flood of 2019 — The Tulsa District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last week began releasing record amounts of flood waters from John Redmond Reservoir, resulting in downstream flooding not experienced since John Redmond Dam went into service in November 1964.

About 9½ inches of rain fell in Burlington during a 10-day period starting May 18. That combined with significant rain upstream from John Redmond Reservoir caused the lake to crest even higher than 1,068.66 feet recorded at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 12.

During this round of rains, the lake elevation crested at 1,068.71 feet, which is the third highest elevation on record. At one time flood waters rushed into the lake at about 75,000 cu-

bic feet per second (cfs).

Unlike earlier in the month when around 19,300 cfs of water was being released, the Corps maintained a release of more than 30,000 cfs for more than 55 straight hours, which caused the Neosho River to leave its banks and Rock Creek in Burlington to back up.

Heavy rains affected Burlington and the surrounding area Friday night, May 24. Rock Creek left its banks and inundated the Country Club Heights area of Burlington, located west of Rock Creek Country Club. Shortly after 11:30 p.m., flood waters surrounded approximately 15 houses. First responders assisted residents and pets from the area.

The American Red Cross opened a shelter at the First Baptist Church where 17 people were housed overnight. Water receded from Country Club Heights and residents were able to return to their homes Saturday morning. Two homes sustained significant flood damage in basements. Twenty-one homes had been affected by flood waters throughout the county. Coffey County Engineer Wayne Blackburn said the relentless rain caused gravel road damage not seen before in the northern part of the county.

Due to rising flood waters, LeRoy Post Office temporarily relocated all retail and delivery operations to Burlington on Thursday, May 23. Burlington Construction organized a sandbag filling effort at their shop. Builder's Choice, New Strawn donated some of the sand and the Corps of Engineers provided the bags. Dozens of volunteers met Friday, Saturday and Sunday to fill sandbags. Volunteers bagged a total of 90 tons of sand.

All camping areas at John Redmond Reservoir were closed during Memorial Day weekend, due to flooding. At Melvern Lake, rising lake elevations forced the closing of Outlet Park. At the time, the lake level was within three feet of the lake's uncontrolled spillway.

On Monday, May 27, an announcement was made that Burlington City Hall will be moved temporarily to the former Lyon-Coffey Electric building at 1013 N. Fourth, due to flood waters backed up in basement.

(June 6, 2019) — River levels trending downward — River and lake levels continue a downward trend in Kansas. John Redmond Reservoir has stabilized, but is still being monitored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As of 4 p.m. Tuesday, nine of the 14 tainter gates were open six inches releasing 5,162 cubic feet per second (cfs), which was matching the inflow of water into the reservoir. The lake elevation was 1,066.69, which is 25.69 feet above normal.

(Aug. 8, 2019) — Midnight storm slams area with damaging winds, hail — The month of August came in with a bang for much of Coffey County when a severe thunderstorm impacted the area overnight Wednesday into Thursday with enough force to bring back memories of another August 1, more than three decades before.

Just 10 minutes into August, a severe thunderstorm warning was issued for much of Coffey County due to the storm's double punch of 60 mile per hour wind gusts and quarter size hail, and the storm was far from tiring. The thunderstorm slammed much of the area with its winds and hail but dealt its strongest blow in central Coffey County, especially along and near U.S. 75. The cities of New Strawn and Burlington both experienced the storm's full force.

At 12:11 a.m., the Coffey County

Airport, located two miles north-northeast of New Strawn, measured a 60 mile per hour wind gust. Three miles north of New Strawn, an RV was blown into the side of a house, causing deck and window damage to the house and RV. Wind gusts were also clocked at 60 miles per hour one mile west of Burlington, where winds were reported to have shattered a vinyl fence. There were also reports of small structures blown over, trees snapped and many limbs, utility poles and power lines downed.

Lyon-Coffey Electric reported the winds brought down approximately 20 poles and equipment in the northeast portion of the company's service territory and resulted in around 900 meters off. Widespread power outages occurred between BETO Junction and Yates Center.

The storm also caused hail damage. One-inch diameter hail was reported one mile west of Burlington. Larger hail occurred in the storm's hail core, along and near U.S. 75, with many stones at 1.5 inches in diameter and a few reaching two inches. Vehicles and buildings alike sustained damage from the hail.

The county highway department had 20 vehicles damaged by the hail. Vehicles on the lots of Crow-Moddie Ford and Crow-Moddie Chevrolet also sustained hail damage.

Notably, the storm occurred 33 years to the day after a severe thunderstorm, often referred to as the "inland hurricane," left a trail of damage in Burlington and surrounding areas on Aug. 1, 1986.



Burlington City Council/ City Hall

(Aug. 29, 2019) — The Burlington City Council president made a lengthy statement about "widespread dialog circulating within the community on a variety of potentially controversial issues" and the council heard several citizens with appointments and requests when the council met Aug. 21.

(Sept. 5, 2019) — Mayor: No formal negotiation for LCEC building, at this time — Burlington Mayor Stan Luke told The Republican Friday, Aug. 30, the City of Burlington was not negotiating to acquire the former Lyon-Coffey Electric Cooperative building.

For the past 13 weeks, Burlington City Hall has been temporarily located at the former LCEC building, which has been vacant since LCEC relocated nearly two years ago to a new building in the BETO Junction area. And the Burlington City Council has met for 100 minutes in executive sessions (20 minutes at the end of each of the last five regular council meetings) for preliminary discussion relating to the acquisition of real property.

"There have been no negotiations,"

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Burlington man dies in rollover

BURLINGTON — A Christmas Eve accident southwest of Burlington killed one man and injured two others, one seriously. The accident occurred at 3:20 p.m. two-tenths of a mile south of 10th and Lynx roads.

Roy Coleman Jr., 58, Burlington, died at the scene of the accident. He was a passenger in a 2005 Ford pickup driven by Edward E. Hosford II, 24, Waverly. Hosford was airlifted to Stormont Vail Regional Health in Topeka with suspected serious injury. Another passenger, Gerald L. Hall, 49, Burlington, was transported to Coffey County Hospital with suspected minor injury.

According to the Kansas Highway Patrol, Hosford was driving the pickup southbound on Lynx Road. For an unknown reason, Hosford lost control and the pickup began skidding sideways. The pickup left the road to the left, completely sideways, struck the edge of the ditch, vaulted, struck a fence and rolled several times. The pickup came to rest upside down in a field.

No one in the pickup wore a seat belt.

COFFEY COUNTY COMMISSION

Board OKs settlement with former employee

Mark Petterson
Managing Editor

BURLINGTON — Coffey County Commissioners on Monday approved an undisclosed settlement with a former employee and viewed a public presentation of 2020 highway projects.

All commissioners were present for the last regular meeting of 2019: Don Meats, chairman, Bob Saueressig, Cody Haddock, Tom Huginin and Fred Rowley. They met with County Counselor Wade Bowie II via telephone in a 15-minute executive session to discuss ongoing litigation, under the attorney-client exception to Kansas Open Meetings Act. County Treasurer Karen Maley was also present for the closed-door session.

Upon return to open session, commissioners unanimously approved having the chairman sign a settlement agreement and release between Laura Hawkins and defendants Coffey County, Kansas, the Board of Commissioners of Coffey County, Kansas, Christopher Phelan, Karen Maley, Brenda Cherry and Heidi Harris.

The document will not take effect until signed by the remaining parties. Bowie said once the settlement agreement is approved and signed by all parties, the document will be subject to disclosure through a valid request.

Later in the meeting, commissioners met with Bowie in a five-minute executive session to discuss ongoing county litigation for matters deemed privileged under the attorney-client relationship exception to KOMA. No action was taken upon return to open session.

Bowie "planted a couple of seeds" for commissioners to think about. One, Bowie said the need exists for additional assistance in his office. He encouraged commissioners to discuss with the employees in his office activity that occurred in the past year. Two, Bowie said victims who come into the prosecutor's office should have a place to go, such as a conference room, where they do not have to sit in full public view. "I don't want anything for me. It is for the people who work for me and the (victims/survivors)," he said.

County Engineer Wayne Blackburn gave a visual presentation regarding a public hearing on 2020 projects. Blackburn said the purpose of the public hearing is to give the public a chance to comment on projects planned for 2020. No one from the public attended the meeting.

"We have the largest budget in the county and I think it is important to let people know what we are doing," Blackburn said.

Blackburn presented a summary of 2019 highway department activities, which included budget pie charts and maps of various planned activities for

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