

Hometown Heroes

Week two in this special series pays tribute to eldercare professionals and family members. Pages 8-10



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ONLINE EDITION:
www.coffeycountyonline.com

Death Notices

Page 2

- Wilbert Born, 91
- Paul Damron, 87
- Joan Hess, 83

Average Gas Prices

Week ending April 28, 2020

| Kansas | Nation |
|-------------|-------------|
| \$1.46/gal. | \$1.73/gal |
| ▼ 7.3 cents | ▼ 5.3 cents |

KansasGasPrices.com

Lake Levels

John Redmond
8 a.m. Tuesday, April 28

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Lake Elevation: | 1,043.00 |
| Normal: | 1,041 |
| Inflow (cfs): | 3,180 |
| Release (cfs): | 869 |

Advance mail out ballots

The Coffey County Clerk's office has been answering questions about mail out ballots. Coffey County Clerk Angie Kirchner said citizens wanting to request an advance mail out ballot for the upcoming 2020 primary election may contact the Coffey County Clerk's office at (620) 364-2191 or find it online at <http://www.kssos.org/forms/elections/AV1.pdf>.

Public Notices

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- Coffey County - Invitation to Bid Tires.
- Coffey County - Invitation to Bid 52 Miles of Roadway Paint Striping.
- Estate of Eleanor Rae Carley - Notice to Creditors.
- LeRoy-Gridley USD 243 - Public Notice of Hearing for Closing School Building or Buildings.
- Estate of Alfred Glenn Riftenbark and Gloria A. Riftenbark - Notice of Hearing of Petition For Determination of Descent.
- Estate of Myron J. Steinert - Notice of Hearing of Petition for Determination of Descent.
- New Strawn Planning Commission - Zoning Hearing for Storage Building.

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



CCHD confirms one new coronavirus case

Since Wednesday, April 22, the Coffey County Health Department (CCHD) has confirmed only one new case of COVID-19. One death and 11 recoveries have also been announced.

In the April 22 update from CCHD, there were no new positive cases or deaths confirmed. Five recoveries were announced. The update kept the total number of cases at 47 and deaths at six, while bringing the total number of recoveries to 27.

One person was announced to have coronavirus in the April 24 update and one more covid-19 death was also confirmed. Three more recoveries were also confirmed, bringing the total number of recoveries to 30.

The most recent update, released Monday, April 27, kept the number of positive coronavirus cases and deaths steady, while adding three more recoveries. As of that update, the numbers stood at 48 total positives, seven

deaths and 33 recoveries.

Of the confirmed positives, 12 are male and 36 are female. They range in age from 17 to 90 years old. The age distribution of the cases includes two in the 11-20 age group, one in the 21-30 age group, three in the 31-40 age group, one in the 41-50 age group, five in the 51-60 age group, 10 in the 61-70 age group, nine in the 71-80 age group and 17 in the 81-90 age group. There remain no Coffey County cases

in people in the 0-10, 91-100 and 100+ age groups. Of the positive cases, one is travel related and the other 47 are connected cases that are part of the Life Care Center outbreak.

CCHD will continue to identify close contacts of the individuals of each positive case. Close contact is defined as being within six feet for a prolonged period (10 minutes or longer) or having direct contact with infectious secretions.



Jalyn Griffith



Bailey Darbyshire



Cali Doudna



Caitlin Patterson



Logan Pyle

Area seniors named Governor's Scholars

Five area seniors have been recognized as Governor's Scholars: Jalyn Griffith, Burlington High School; Bailey Darbyshire, Hartford High School; Cali Doudna, Lebo High School; Caitlin Patterson, Southern Coffey County High School; and Logan Pyle, Waverly High School.

The Governor's Scholars program honors the top academic one percent

of Kansas high school seniors. Scholars are selected from accredited public and private schools in the state.

In the past, the governor formally recognized each recipient during a recognition ceremony. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the scheduled ceremony from taking place.

This program is coordinated by the Governor by the Confidence in Kan-

sas Public Education Task Force. It is funded by donations from private sector businesses in Kansas. The Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force was formed 30 years ago to strengthen public confidence in education. The following organizations are members of the Task Force: American Association of University Women, Kansas State Board of Education,

Kansas Association of School Boards, Kansas Congress of Parents and Teachers, Kansas State Department of Education, Kansas-National Education Association, Kansas School Public Relations Association, Kansas State High School Activities Association, Kansas League of Women Voters and United School Administrators of Kansas.

COFFEY COUNTY COMMISSION

Board cuts salary; lake reopening on hold

Mark Petterson
Managing Editor

BURLINGTON — Coffey County Commissioners decided to cut their own salaries 5.3 percent, effective May 1, when they met Monday for a regular weekly meeting.

"Because of the coronavirus situation we have and wanting to try to cut back on some things ... I think it is only fair that we cut back and try to help," said Commissioner Bob Saueressig, who made the motion. Commissioners Tom Huginin seconded the motion, which also received support from Commissioners Cody Haddock, chairman,

Don Meats and Fred Rowley.

Each county commissioner receives \$31,705 annually. After May 1, their monthly salary will decrease from \$2,642 to \$2,502.04.

Coffey County Lake/COVID-19

Kansas Governor Laura Kelly's current stay-at-home orders will expire May 3. While she has indicated the state orders will not be extended, restrictions on the county level will remain in place until lifted by Coffey County Health Officer John Shell, M.D., and the Board of Coffey County Commissioners. Commissioners plan to revisit the subject at their May 4

regular meeting.

In the meantime, Coffey County Lake remains closed on a week to week basis. Coffey County Sheriff Randy Rogers, who oversees operation of the lake, said he is not opposed to opening the lake under restrictions that could limit lake hours so employees can spend time disinfecting and cleaning. He said additional masks and gloves have been acquired for lake employees and new protocols have been developed to protect employees' health.

Coffey County Health Department Administrator Lindsay Payer said she has been communicating with Dr. Shell and as of Monday morning no

decision had been reached on reopening Coffey County. Payer said when the county reopens it will likely be a tiered reopening.

Payer told commissioners Coffey County Health Department will start seeing patients on May 1, by appointment only. She said staff will be wearing personal protection equipment. Payer said they could have been open all along; however, staff was busy dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak in the county. The number of positive cases totaled 48 Monday morning with eight active cases.

See **County**, Page 7

Group seeks 'exit strategy' for school district

Mark Petterson
Managing Editor

GRIDLEY — What appears to be an anonymous group of concerned parents and citizens of LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 has mailed a two-page letter to Gridley postal patrons in an attempt to gauge community support for an exit strategy. The letters arrived in the mail Tuesday.

"The optimism shown by our current superintendent and school board in attempting to keep our schools open is commendable; however, we believe these efforts are in vain and not in the best interests of our students or our taxpayer dollars," the letter stated. "Our tax dollars could be put to better use outside the boundaries of our current school district - where they could be used to provide high quality and specialized instruction and educational materials, rather than being invested into remodeling and renovating deteriorating facilities."

The LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 Board of Education unanimously voted at an April 16 special meeting to move middle school students from Gridley to the building currently known as the LeRoy Elementary and to have all elementary students, including preschool and fifth grade, to attend Gridley Elementary School, effective with the 2020-21 school year. LeRoy preschool will stay in LeRoy.

The school board will hold a public hearing at 5 p.m. Monday, May 11, at the district office, to close the middle school because of budget and financial considerations, declining enrollment and building condition. Closing a building requires the board to pass a resolution after a public hearing is held.

The group behind the letter said the issue is not being brought up because the Gridley middle school will be closed. "What we are trying to do is prevent more tax

See **Exit**, Page 7

New officer joins Burlington police force

Becky Richwine
For The Republican

BURLINGTON — A new police officer was sworn in April 20 at Burlington City Hall. Brian Siedschlag, a familiar face and name in the community, is switching careers from emergency medical services to law enforcement as a full-time patrol officer.

Siedschlag is currently being trained in the department's procedures and is going through field training. He will attend the 14-week Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center in Hutchinson after it reopens. Upon graduating from the academy, Siedschlag will receive state certification.

While going through the application process, Siedschlag participated in the ride-along program with each of the officers. "I never imagined I would become a police officer, as I was set on being a paramedic," he said. "I reached out to a friend of mine, Officer Devin Haines, who I met through my calls and shifts on EMS, for a casual ride-along. I spent 12 hours riding around with Devin, picking his brain,

and smiling from ear to ear. After that shift was over, I submitted my application packet and tried to find another officer to ride with. I asked as many questions as I could and learned as much as I could from each officer to assist me through the process. I knew this is where I belonged and was intrigued and interested in seeing calls for service from

the law enforcement perspective, as all I have known is EMS."

Siedschlag was born and raised in Southern California. After graduating high school, he obtained a paramedic license from Northeast Community College in Norfolk, Neb. In November 2017, he came to

See **Officer**, Page 6



Photo submitted
Brian Siedschlag takes an oath administered last week by Burlington City Clerk Regina Kewley. Siedschlag will be working as a patrol officer for the Burlington Police Department.

NEW STRAWN CITY COUNCIL

Plans for Strawnfest 2020 on hold

NEW STRAWN — The New Strawn City Council learned at its April 9 regular monthly meeting that plans are on hold for Strawnfest 2020, due to uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The celebration had been planned for June 20 to celebrate the town's 50th anniversary. The city had partnered with Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation (WCNOC) for the

celebration.

Mayor Mark Petterson presided at the meeting with council members Richard Croll, Jeanne Haas, Gary Haehn and Jim Weeks present. Council member Rhonda Taylor attended via Zoom. City Clerk Joni Hernandez was present and City Attorney Tom Robrahn attended via Zoom. Croll reported a problem was found

concerning the breaker box location at the Community Center. A correction will be made to comply with code. A ceiling fan/light will be installed in the storage room. A sink will also be installed.

Weeks explained the cost for repairing the clear well will be higher than the original estimate. No action is needed by the council at this time.

Taylor presented a proposed plan for 2020 street repairs and asphalt overlays. The council approved seeking bids for the work. The council also approved purchasing dust control for Industrial Drive from Coffey County Highway Department, up to \$3,000, if necessary.

See **Strawn**, Page 6