

County

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➤ To waive the purchasing policy as to competitive bidding, due to municipal program pricing with Sourcewell Government Purchasing Alliance with Coffey County and to approve the purchase of one 2020 John Deere 333G Compact Track Loader from Murphy Tractor and Equipment, Topeka, in the amount of \$72,840, less trade-in value of \$21,500 in the total purchase amount of \$51,340.

➤ To waive the purchasing policy as to formal bidding, due to three informal bid - phone quotes received for volume quantity of standard traffic items of traffic cones, 30-lb. Bases, D-cell flashers, metal posts and other miscellaneous items for increased traffic control devices on Old Highway 50 from U.S. 75 to Fauna Road and to approve the purchase of those items from National Sign Company, Ottawa, in the amount of \$26,739.50. Blackbourn said this will improve the safety along Old Highway 50.

During the past week, a road permit was approved for Evergy to install, operate and maintain 3.25 miles of distribution poles along Old Highway 50 and 26th Road, from the intersection of Old Highway 50 and Trefoil Road to Kenneth Combes Ranch.

Blackbourn updated commissioners on construction activities within the highway department. Many crews are involved with the start of the Mathias Lake project. Crews should be able to finish smaller fog seal projects late this week. Boom mowing continues countywide, especially in traditionally wet areas that are now dry.

Blackbourn discussed possibly adding dust control on Reaper Road near the Wolf Creek Rock Quarry; however, commissioners decided to honor a commitment commissioners made last week that would reroute county trucks using the quarry.

Commissioners agreed to add one truckload of gravel to the access road to Pleasant Hill Cemetery and to use a skid steer to spread the gravel. The elevated road is actually on county right of way.

Blackbourn informed commissioners about an accident involving a county mower hitting a telephone pedestal. He said the grass was taller than the pedestal. Blackbourn said the telephone company is starting to mark the pedestals to make them more visible.

Osage County RWD 4

Osage County Rural Water District No. 4 Board President Mark Newton and member Darrell Combes inquired about any county funds that may be available to replace existing water meters with automatic read water meters. The district has 359 water meters with 206 in Coffey County.

Newton said the district accepted a \$64,000 bid to replace 350 water meters, which is at a \$54,000 discount. The new automatic read water meters are expected to greatly help track water loss as well as allow tracking the actual use of water.

Commissioners declined to give funds for the project, citing the replacement should be part of maintenance. Commissioners also previously denied a similar request from Coffey County RWD 2.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management Director Russel Stukey presented his monthly report. Commissioners approved having the vice chair sign an application for a FY2021 Emergency Management Performance Grant. Stukey said Coffey County applies for the grant every year and typically receives \$17,000 to \$18,000.

Monday was Stukey's last commission meeting. He begins a new job as Riley County Emergency Management Director on Oct. 12. Commissioners appointed Amber Presley as interim emergency management director, effective Oct. 10.

COVID Question

County Treasurer Karen Maley asked about the county's protocol if contact is made with a county employee or a customer who tests positive with COVID-19. Maley told commissioners last week a person who tested positive for COVID was in the courthouse twice.

"Anything with COVID will start with the health department," Bowie said, request-

ing someone from the health department be present for the discussion.

Meats said the county has no formal protocol in place.

County Health Administrator Lindsay Payer doesn't anticipate this situation occurring very often. "It is dependent on the situation," she said. "We used our resources to make sure there was no risk ... I believe we handled it."

Last week, Payer said they worked with the custodians, a mask was worn and surfaces were wiped.

"My concern was (that) we had the person sitting in the hallway," Maley said. "If they did come into the office ... do we shut down (and deep clean)?"

Payer said if a known positive COVID individual enters an office, or the courthouse, they could possibly work with IT to view that individual's interaction in the building, which will help determine what to do.

"A lot of COVID is reactive ... because it is new," Bowie said. "If someone comes into the building and they were directed to stay at home and stay in quarantine ... there are legal remedies."

Payer and commissioners agreed if Maley encountered a situation with a positive COVID individual coming into her office that it would be appropriate to close the office to clean.

"It was a very stressful day for the rest of the day," Maley said, acknowledging that it is typical for her to plan for various scenarios.

Bowie added, "Outside of the health department ... you are probably not going to know who has tested positive."

Identity Theft

Maley said she and some of her employees received information about possible identity theft. She was told three employees had something happen with their information related to an unemployment center.

"I am not saying it was from the county," Maley said. "I am saying if it happened to three county employees, then I think all county employees need to be given a heads up."

"Did they report it to the sheriff," Rowley asked. "If it is not reported and no one knows about it, then how do we respond?"

Bowie said he had been notified. "The county is notified when a notice is received for unemployment benefits," he said. The employees were notified and the incidents were reported.

"It is being investigated," Bowie said. "The county notified the Kansas Department of Labor to let them know it is fraudulent."

Similar scams are happening across the state and the country.

County Clerk Angie Kirchner said her office received notification from KDOL last week, after the commission meeting. She had planned to inform commissioners during the "round table" held at the end of the meeting. "This had to do with the Kansas Department of Labor, not the county," she said. "Wade (Bowie) was notified. At this point, I don't see any concern ... everyone should monitor their credit report all the time."

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt addresses this scam in a "Consumer Corner" column published in today's edition.

Miscellaneous

Commissioners approved one tax abatement to the treasurer's tax roll in the amount of \$366.50.

County Appraiser Connie Lawrence introduced a new employee in her office, Megan Bangs. Lawrence said she will handle personal property duties in the Appraiser's Office.

Prior to adjourning, Bowie thought the board should choose a commissioner to sit in on a meeting scheduled next week with the architect and a "jail study" committee that has included the sheriff, emergency manager, administrative judge and others. Last week, a commissioner indicated the entire commission, which could violate the Kansas Open Meetings Act, or no commissioner, should attend the meeting. With several positions in transition, such as the sheriff and emergency manager, Bowie believes having a commissioner attend the meeting will provide some continuity.

Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in Room 201 of the Coffey County Courthouse. The agenda includes (9:05) Coffey Health System CEO introduction and (9:30) county engineer's weekly report.



The aftermath of an accident where a car drove through the front of The Medicine Shoppe on Sept. 29.

Driver crashes through pharmacy building

BURLINGTON — An 80-year-old Burlington woman was uninjured when she drove her 2008 Lincoln MKX through a window on the east side of The Medicine Shoppe around 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29. A number of employees and customers inside the building escaped without harm.

According to the Burlington Police Department, the driver, Carrol Louise Otto, pulled into the north entrance off Garrettson Street then turned west into a parking stall in front of the building. She told officers that as she pulled into the stall, she was concerned about a pickup truck parked to the north of her stall and that the sun was in her eyes. She apparently pressed on

the accelerator instead of the brake, and the vehicle proceeded over the concrete parking bumper and went through the window and side of the building. It struck the pharmacists' work area, knocking over several shelves.

Video footage from the business captured several customers and employees moving quickly away from the scene. A male customer, who was standing beside the check-out counter, jumped over the counter to avoid being struck.

The vehicle was towed from the business. Property damage exceeded \$1,000.

While that accident was being investigated by Burlington Police, another crash occurred at 5:17 p.m. on U.S. 75

at Garrettson Street, and was handled by Kansas Highway Patrol.

Charlotte D. Burrell, 57, Burlington, was stopped on U.S. 75 at Garrettson Street in her 1994 Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera, when she turned left in front of Adam Tyler Laflin, 29, Gardner. He was southbound on U.S. 75 and attempted an avoidance maneuver. Burrell's car struck Laflin's 2015 Chevy Silverado 1500 and both vehicles came to rest on the highway in the southbound lane.

According to the accident report, both drivers were wearing seat belts. Burrell was taken to Coffey County Hospital for suspected minor injury and Laflin had no apparent injuries.

Fraud scheme targeting bogus unemployment claims raises ID theft concerns

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, millions of Americans have lost their jobs and been forced to apply for unemployment.

The federal and state governments have extended unemployment benefits during the pandemic to provide greater support to help residents pay their bills and stay in their homes.

Unfortunately, the fraudsters have taken note. Many Kansans are receiving notices that they have filed for unemployment benefits - even though they have not. What is happening is that an identity thief has gotten access to the person's personal identifying information and used it to file fraudulent claims for benefits. In some cases, this false filing generates a notice - and a Kansan receives a notification letter from the Kansas Department of Labor, perhaps addressed to them or perhaps addressed to some other person who does not live there. Some Kansans have reported receiving multiple notices addressed to different people but all mailed to the same address. This problem is not limited to Kansas - nationwide, the number of fraudulent claims being filed is in the millions.

It is not always clear exactly how the scam works, and the likelihood is that there

are multiple fraudsters operating at the same time and each may be a bit different. But there is one common denominator: Somebody's personal information is being misused. So if you receive notification or otherwise become aware that this is happening in your name or using your address, you should take steps to protect yourself from identity theft.

What should you do? The first step is to notify the Kansas Department of Labor, which administers the unemployment compensation program in Kansas, that you suspect that a fraudulent claim has been filed in your name. An online form at www.reportfraud.ks.gov has been established by the Department of Labor specifically to allow you to report this fraud and initiate an investigation. The site will also guide you as to what steps to take to determine the extent of the fraud and begin the recovery process. This includes:

- Place a fraud alert on your credit reports. You also may wish to take the more-significant step of placing a freeze on your credit report, which now is free under legislation enacted a few years ago.
- Review your credit reports and see if there are any unauthorized accounts listed.
- Continue to monitor your credit reports for suspicious activity.
- Contact your bank and credit card companies to let them know your personal information may have been

compromised.

➤ Contact the IRS and Social Security Administration to verify your earnings and work history.

➤ Download the free identity theft repair document from the Federal Trade Commission for helpful information for navigating how to recover from identity theft.

Of course, the best outcome is to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft in the first place. So here are reminders to help keep your personal information from falling into the hands of identity thieves:

DO NOT give out information over the phone to an unknown person. There are a lot of scams with people pretending to be from the FBI, Kansas Bureau of Investigation, Social Security Administration and others, but their common goal is to trick you into giving them your social security number, bank account number, or other personal identifying information.

DO NOT click on emails or open files from unknown persons.

BE CAREFUL not to share too much information over social media.

If you think you may be the victim of identity theft, you may also file a complaint with our Consumer Protection Division. More information on how to protect yourself from identity theft is available on our consumer protection website at www.InYourCornerKansas.org or by calling our consumer protection hotline at (800) 432-2310.

Pigskin

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games. One game, Eureka vs. Wellsville, was not played until Tuesday, Oct. 6, and so was excluded from the contest. In the tiebreaker, the total points scored were 845. Richwine guessed 880 and was only 35 away, while Springman guessed 694 and was 151 away. As the closer of the two, Richwine wins the \$20 first-place prize for her effort.

The three most commonly missed games were all in

high school football. Only one player correctly selected the winner of the Burlington vs. Frontenac game, won 28-12 by Frontenac. Also missed often were Santa Fe Trail vs. Bishop Ward, won 55-42 by Santa Fe Trail, and Burlington game vs. Washington County, won 48-28 by Burlingame. Contestants largely did well predicting the three college games, with only three missing the KSU vs. Texas Tech game, won 31-21 by KSU, and the Georgia vs. Auburn game, won 27-6 by Georgia, and none missing the Oklahoma State vs. KU game, won 47-7 by Oklahoma State. A total of

seven games were correctly predicted by all contestants. Also among that number was the Chiefs vs. Patriots National Football League game. Despite being delayed a day due to COVID-19, the Chiefs picked up a 26-10 win over the Patriots to become the first team in NFL history to start their season 4-0 in four consecutive seasons.

There are more great games on tap this week, so grab a pencil and fill out your picks for the week six games, found on page 13 of today's newspaper. The rules are printed on the form. Good luck!

Activities

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students are involved in speech, debate, music, band and theatre activities each year. And the results of an aerosol study conducted by the NFHS and 125 other organizations show that if schools are in session, these activities can be safely conducted by implementing a mitigation strategy focused on Masks-Distance-Time-Air Flow-Hygiene.

Competing on the debate team or playing in the marching band or acting on stage as a part of the theatre team help students develop critical-thinking skills. They also learn to be better communicators and tend to be good listeners - qualities that are essential for success in life and in their chosen careers.

This week is also set aside to recognize the 51 NFHS member state associations, which have been working overtime for the past seven months with state government, health and education leaders to outline a safe return to activities.

The week of Oct. 18-24 is National Coaches, Advisors, Officials and Sponsors Week.

High school coaches are playing an even larger role this year in connecting with their athletes - whether that connection is virtual or in-person. In some situations, a coach may be the most significant mentor in a student-athlete's life, so keeping that relationship intact is paramount.

The nationwide shortage of officials has been exacerbated by the pandemic as some officials have decided not to return. To help with this critical situation, the NFHS is continuing its #BecomeAnOfficial campaign. Individuals can get started on a career in officiating by clicking on the following link: www.highschoolofficials.com.

The week of Oct. 25-31 is National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week. Schools across the country need financial support from communities due to the loss of revenue from the pandemic.

Whether as a participant, parent, coach, official, teacher, administrator, community supporter or general fan, millions are invested in the greatest education-based programs in the country - high school sports and performing arts. In Kansas, and throughout the rest of our nation, we encourage support of these programs more than ever during National High School Activities Month.

More information on National High School Activities Month is available at www.NFHS.org/HSActivitiesMonth.

Cooler

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winner," said Andrew Buchin, EMP Shield director of sales and marketing. "The other nominated Kansas-made products are amazing and the competition was fierce. The competition not only gave us an opportunity to share our product with Kansans across the state but also allowed us to meet many other manufacturers and learn about their products."

The tournament began with the top 16 of more than 50 products nominated. The Kansas-made products competed in head-to-head match-ups in a bracket-style tournament, with the product with the most votes moving to the next round. 37,534 votes were cast during the competition.

The final head-to-head match-up put number one seed Autoland by Garmin, headquartered in Olathe, against number two seed EMP Shield by EMP Shield.

Boofest

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take place in the dark in front of the stadium.

Another contest will be a Jack O' Lantern carving/pumpkin decorating contest. Pumpkins should be done ahead of time and brought to the stadium by 7 p.m. for judging.

The evening will conclude with a movie in the park east of Kelley Hall. Setting the mood for the movie will be a bonfire and popcorn station. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to watch the movie.

Participants are asked to social distance whenever possible. When social distancing cannot be maintained (hayrack rides, pumpkin decorating, etc.) everyone is encouraged to wear a mask.

Burlington Promotions organized this event with help and donations by several local businesses and service organizations. For more information, contact Burlington Recreation Center at (620) 364-8484.

A Cornhole for Cancer tournament will be at Kelley Park on this day, with registration at noon; games will begin at 1 p.m. A chili feed and cooler raffle is planned with this event.