

2020

Continued from Page 1

through the county the evening of May 14, and into the first hours of Friday morning, May 15. The storms brought damaging winds, heavy rain, hail and, for northwestern Coffey County, a tornado warning.

High schools in Lebo-Waverly USD 243, Burlington USD 244, LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 and Southern Lyon County USD 252 announced plans for outdoor graduation ceremonies: Lebo High School graduation 9 a.m. Saturday, July 4; Waverly High School graduation 1 p.m. Saturday, July 11; Burlington High School graduation 10 a.m. Saturday, June 20; Southern Coffey County High School graduation Saturday, June 27; Hartford High School graduation 9 a.m. June 20.

The Waverly City Council decided the Waverly swimming pool would remain closed for the 2020 season.

May 28

Coffey County Airport Administrator Darren Isch updated Coffey County commissioners about a major runway update at the airport. Ideker, Inc., St. Joseph, Mo., had the \$4.06 million contract to remove the existing runway and runway lights and replace the concrete and install new LED lights. The project is funded by 90 percent federal funds and 10 percent local match through the FAA grant process.



Burlington Boy Scout Troop 139 placed flags at cemeteries for Memorial Day to recognize those who served in the United States armed forces.

The Burlington City Council decided to allow Burlington High School senior banners to hang on utility poles along Fourth Street for about four weeks. The banner project was funded through a private effort that raised funds through GoFundMe.com and was not sponsored by the Burlington USD 244 school district.

June 4



Burlington Lions Club President Terry Weldin holds the club charter signed Feb. 3, 1995, which lists charter members. The Westphalia Lions Club is listed as the sponsoring club 25 years ago.

June 11

Coffey County Commissioners approve the 2021 budget request for Coffey County Hospital (\$1,019,747) and Coffey County Emergency Medical Service (\$1,019,747), both unchanged from this year. A decision about a \$2.9 million loan balance was discussed at a later date.

Jerry Clarkson, the veterinarian who owns Frog Creek Veterinary Clinic, 1491 Old Hwy. 50, announced he was closing his clinic and changing careers. He planned to raise cattle with his son, Jeff, and some sheep. He operated the clinic for more than 37 years.

June 18

Many people enjoy cooling down in the Burlington USD 244 Recreation's outdoor swimming pool June 15, the opening day for the pool. The opening was delayed three weeks due to state-imposed COVID-19 restrictions regarding mass gatherings.

The Coffey County Health Department has confirmed no new cases of COVID-19 in the past week and reported in a

June 12 update the two cases confirmed the previous week have both recovered.

June 25

Commissioners decided to waive half of the \$2.9 million loan balance owed by Coffey Health System to the Board of Coffey County Commissioners and to defer payments for 24 months with the intent to evaluate total forgiveness in May 2022. The loan was initiated in 2014.

The Coffey County Fair Board moved forward to have as normal of a fair as possible, July 22 through July 26 at the fairgrounds at Kelley Park. This was the 140th consecutive year for the Coffey County Fair, which is the longest running fair in Kansas. The COVID-19 pandemic put the fate of the fair up in the air until several weeks ago when the decision was made to move forward. A number of sanitizing precautions were taken and fair-goers were encouraged to observe social distancing.

July 2



Mick Sleezer, who has been a barber in Lebo for 65 years, announced his retirement. He arrived in town in March of 1955 and gave his last haircut the end of March 2020. Little did Sleezer know when he closed his barbershop in March, because of COVID-19, that he had given his last haircut. When COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, Sleezer had too much arthritis and hip pain to reopen the shop.

Gridley planned to hold a two-day Independence Day celebration July 3-4 while Lebo planned to hold its 31st annual Stars and Stripes Celebration July 3, 4 and 5.

July 9

Coffey County Commissioners passed two resolutions related to COVID-19. Resolution 855 exempted Coffey County from the requirements of masks and other face coverings set forth in Governor Kelly's Executive Order No. 20-52; however, the public was recommended to utilize masks or face coverings. Resolution, 856, allows the county to accept funds appropriated by the State of Kansas through the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). Commissioners appointed a committee to address and account for the county's \$1.7 million in coronavirus funds.

The Burlington City Council ratified Mayor Stan Luke's appointment of Philip Wright as city attorney for the City of Burlington. Wright had been serving as assistant city attorney while Tom Robrahn served as city attorney. Robrahn handled civil aspects of the job while Wright prosecuted cases for the city in municipal court. Robrahn resigned as city attorney last month. With the appointment, Wright will handle both civil and criminal aspects of the job.



Fireworks light up the night sky during Burlington's Freedom Festival July 4 in Kelley Park. The evening included a car show, music, food and lots of socializing — at a safe distance, of course.

July 16



Waverly's 124th annual Ohio Days celebration began Friday, July 10, and concluded Tuesday, July 14. "Hometown Heroes" was the theme of the parade. The Waverly High School Class of 2024 entered a COVID-19 themed float, featuring hometown heroes of the fight against coronavirus.

Cody Haddock, Waverly, announced he would resign from the Coffey County Board

of Commissioners following the July 20 regular meeting. Haddock accepted an offer for employment that will not allow him to continue serving on the board. Elected in 2018, Haddock was serving his first term as a county commissioner. He served as chairman this year.



A pair of severe thunderstorms impacted the area Saturday, July 11, including one that pounded Waverly with hailstones four inches in diameter in an occurrence rare for northeastern Kansas in July.

July 23

The coronavirus pandemic has claimed another large, popular event — OK Kids. Formally known as Outdoor Kansas for Kids, the event had been scheduled for Sept. 11-13 at John Redmond Reservoir Riverside West.

Republican candidates for Coffey County treasurer and Coffey County commissioner in districts 2 and 3, participated in a July 14 forum hosted by the Coffey County Republican Central Committee. Four candidates were vying for county treasurer.

The Coffey Health System 2019 annual audit showed continued growth.

July 30

The demolition derby at the Coffey County Fair had 115 entries and an estimated 3,000 people in attendance. The derby lasted about seven hours and finished about 4 a.m.

Coffey Health System CEO Leonard Hernandez announced his resignation, effective Sept. 21. He accepted the position of president and CEO of Susan B. Allen Hospital in El Dorado.

In an attempt to be transparent and to quell concerns about the voting process, Coffey County Counselor Wade Bowie II invited representatives of Election Systems and Software (ES&S) to explain the voting process on their election machines and safeguards that make election fraud impossible.



From Pioneer Days to Modern Ways was the theme of the Coffey County Fair parade. Smilin' Thru 4-H Club won first place for their float entry.

The Floyd Lewis Foundation named Ron and Sandie Hoover as Citizens of the Year and Jerilyn Curtiss as recipient of the Legacy Award.

August 6

Coffey County voters decided multiple contested county races when they went to the polls in the Aug. 4 primary election. In Republican races, Thomas Johnson defeated Michael Roney for Coffey County Sheriff; incumbent Angie Kirchner defeated Stella Eccles in the County Clerk race; Richard Croll won a four-way race against incumbent treasurer Karen Maley, Laura Hawkins and Stella Eccles; incumbent Don Meats defeated Christine Williams in the race for Coffey County Commissioner in District 2, and Jesse Knight defeated Randy Miller in the commission race for District 3. The Kansas House - 76th District was won by incumbent Eric Smith, Burlington, with 69 percent of all district votes, over Robert Harmon, Osage City. While Coffey County favored incumbent Bruce Givens over Michael Fagg in the Kansas Senate - 14th District race, 1,271-1,022, Fagg upset Givens districtwide with 54 percent of the votes.

Results from the 140th Coffey County Fair were printed in a special section. New Strawn City Clerk Joni Hernandez announced her resignation, effective Sept. 17. She and her husband, Leonard, were going to move to El Dorado, where he will lead the hospital.

Burlington City Clerk Regina Kewley announced her plans to retire Oct. 1. Kewley had been the city clerk since 2007 and had worked for the city for more than 33 years.

August 13

Burlington City Clerk Regina Kewley announced her plans to retire Oct. 1. Kewley had been the city clerk since 2007 and had worked for the city for more than 33 years.

As of Aug. 10, Coffey County had one active case of COVID-19. At that point, the county had a total of 67 positive cases, eight deaths and 58 recoveries.

August 20

New teachers were introduced to the public. Burlington USD 244 hired a new elementary school counselor, college and career advocate and three new teachers. Lebo-Waverly USD 243 hired one new teacher. Southern Lyon County USD 252 hired two new teachers, and LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 did not hire any new teachers.

The Coffey County delinquent tax list was printed.

August 27

Coffey County Republican precinct committeemen and committeewomen representing the five townships in District 4 selected a 26-year Coffey County resident to fill a vacant Coffey County Commission seat. After interviewing four candidates, they selected Tim Johnson to succeed Cody Haddock, who resigned the District 4 county commission seat on July 24 due to new employment.

Coffey Health System Environmental Services Supervisor Toby Paige accepts the organization's Health Care Worker of the Year Award. Chief Executive Officer Leonard Hernandez presented the award on Aug. 24 and thanked Paige for his outstanding attention to detail and commitment to safety, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic.

September 3

The Coffey Health System Board of Trustees selected Jeremy Clingenpeel to replace Leonard Hernandez as chief executive officer at Coffey Health System on Sept. 28. Clingenpeel brings 17 years of healthcare administration in western Kansas and north-west Oklahoma.

Fall sports was getting into full swing. Area fall sports teams were highlighted in a special section.

As of Aug. 31, Coffey County had seven active cases of COVID-19. The county had a total of 81 positive cases of COVID-19, with eight deaths and 66 recoveries.

Nearly 150,000 more Kansans turned out to vote in this year's primary than ever before, including an unprecedented surge from mail-in ballots. Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab, Attorney General Derek Schmidt and Gov. Laura Kelly convened as the state's canvassing board to certify results from 636,032 votes. That figure tops the previous high-water marks of about 487,000 two years ago and 488,000 in 2004. The 34.2% of registered voters who took part in the primary exceeds the 20-27% who participated in primaries over the past decade.

September 10



Workers completed the installation of a flexible membrane liner at the Coffey County Landfill. The \$200,000 liner was placed on the floor and walls of the newly constructed Cell No. 4, which is a 3.9-acre lateral expansion of the landfill. The new cell, scheduled to go into service early in 2021, will have an estimated lifespan of six to seven years.

The Burlington boys and girls cross country teams won team titles at Burlington's home cross country invitational.

September 17

The LeRoy community planned to celebrate its 72nd annual LeRoy Homecoming Sept. 18, 19 and 20. "Hometown Heroes" was the festival's theme.



Coffey County Health Department Administrator Lindsay Payer recognized her staff at the Sept. 14 Coffey County Commission meeting — Marilyn Eccles, Carl Lee, Kerri Huginin, Jenifer Huginin, Katie Rich, Tina Withers and Lindsay Beyer — who have spent the past six months working to contain the novel coronavirus in Coffey County.

Thirteen Burlington High School students planned their

own Patriot Day display on Friday, Sept. 11, the 19th anniversary of terrorist attacks in the United States that resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths. Prior to the start of school, they parked their pickups in a line on the west side of the parking lot with each pickup displaying one or more United States flags. None of the students had been born yet when terrorists hijacked four airliners on Sept. 11, 2001.

September 24



An aerial view of the new 5,500' by 75' runway completed at Coffey County Airport. The airport is open for business after being closed five months to replace the runway and to install new LED runway lights.

At Burlington High School's Fall Homecoming, Libby Stadel was crowned queen and Braden Sloyer was crowned king.

October 1

Coffey County Commissioners approved dispersing \$1,159,707.70 in COVID response funds, with proper documentation, as recommended by the county's Coronavirus Relief Fund Task Force. The money is part of a \$1.76 million awarded to Coffey County to be generally spent by government and non-government organizations/businesses for expenditures related to COVID-19 expenses. Grants are available to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures. The amount approved included \$76,666.86 for 13 small businesses in Coffey County and \$1.08 million for Coffey County cities, school districts and Coffey County Hospital.

Southern Coffey County High School crowned Queen Taryn Lather and King Larry Ratzlaff during Fall Homecoming.

Local 4-H'ers were recognized during National 4-H Week, Oct. 4-10.

October 8



After four weeks of competition, the Kansas Manufacturing Council (KMC) announced EMP Shield, headquartered in Burlington, is the 2020 Coolest Thing Made in Kansas. EMP Shield is the world's first Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) defense technology that can defend homes, businesses, an entire electric grid, and more from a high altitude EMP threat (HEMP). It also provides some of the world's most advanced power surge, lightning, and CME protection, defending electronics in less than 1 billionth of a second.

County commissioners appointed Amber Presley to be the interim emergency management director, after Russel Stukeley resigned to take a position in another county.

Area school enrollment was listed. Burlington USD 244 dropped 19 students from last year to 811; Lebo-Waverly USD 243 dropped 13 students to 475; LeRoy-Gridley USD 245 dropped 17 students to 183; and Southern Lyon County USD 252 gained 37 students to 564.

Demi Schrader was crowned queen and Carson Hein was crowned king at Lebo High School's Fall Homecoming.

During Hartford High School's Fall Homecoming, Brooke Finnerty was crowned queen and Trenton Schroeder was crowned king.

USD 244 faculty and staff were thrilled with the remodeled first-grade wing at Burlington Elementary School and the central office that moved to the former Burlington City Hall building. Ribbon cutting ceremonies were held at both sites.

New Strawn Mayor Mark Petterson appointed Lana Johnson to serve as New Strawn City Clerk. She took an oath at the Sept. 10 city council meeting.

October 15

The Burlington City Council ratified the mayor's appointment of Anne Brown as city clerk and approved a request to hold a demolition derby Oct. 25 at Memorial Stadium

in Kelley Park.

The Coffey County Health Department (CCHD) announced a new exception to quarantine for schools within the county. CCHD shared information with schools and on its Facebook page regarding the best type of masks to use in schools so students and staff will not be considered close contacts and have to quarantine if they come in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case. This exception is only for schools in Coffey County.

Queen Kaylynn Vogts and King Zach Skillman were crowned during Waverly High School's Fall Homecoming.

October 22

Burlington Promotions organized Boofest, a family event to celebrate Halloween. Activities included a hot dog feed, hayrack rides, candy cannon, pumpkin decorating contest, candy hunt, movie and costume contest.

The New Strawn City Council approved a request to hold a Halloween party in the New Strawn City Park. The council also ratified the mayor's appointment of Philip Wright as city attorney.

October 29



B & B Bridge Co., St. Paul, began work to repair and replace a retaining wall at the Burlington City Dam. A number of onlookers have visited the area to view the progress. Work should be completed within 90 days.

Coffey County Valnet customers learned they must find a new internet provider. Valnet, a Tulsa-based internet service provider, notified customers by letter about the closure of Valnet. On Oct. 5, Valnet Holdings filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in the Oklahoma Northern Bankruptcy Court.

Coffey County Commissioners reappointed Judy Reese (Dist. 5) as a member of the Coffey County Hospital Board for a three-year term. Commissioners also made two four-year appointments to the Coffey County Housing Authority, Greg Stice (Dist. 1) and Mike Skillman (Dist. 5), who was reappointed.

Burlington High School qualified four cross country runners for the state meet: Lilyan Gerow, M.J. Huff, Brian Payer and Seth Jarvis.

The Lebo Lady Wolves won the Class 1A substate volleyball tournament played at Lebo to earn a berth at the state tournament.

November 5

Angie Kirchner won re-election as Coffey County clerk, the only locally contested race in the 2020 General Election. Statewide, Roger Marshall, Republican, won election to the U.S. Senate and Jake LaTurner, Republican, won election to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Despite COVID-19 and cancellation of the Burlington Lighted Christmas Parade, organizers of the King of Coffey County Contest announced it would return for a second year.

Active COVID-19 cases up to 21 after 19 new cases and 11 recoveries were reported.

The Lebo Lady Wolves finished as state runner-up after losing 24-26 and 23-25 to Wilson in the Class 1A Division I championship match at Dodge City.

Burlington High School senior Seth Jarvis earned a medal by placing 19th in the state Class 3A cross country meet.

November 12



Workers from several City of Burlington departments worked together to place about 70 large veterans banners and about 40 smaller veterans banners along U.S. 75, Neosho Street and other downtown areas.

Several Coffey County teams played in Regional football playoffs. In 8-Man Division II, the undefeated Lebo Wolves beat the Waverly Bulldogs, 56-8, to advance to the sectional round. In Class 3A, Burlington lost 22-6 against Frontenac.

Continued to Next Edition