

USD 419 BOE to consider bond language Tuesday, Jan. 7

Finally, Christmas vacation...almost two weeks where I go into work and get some necessary things completed, though rest and relax some, and get ready for the start of the second semester of our 2024-25 school year.

During this timeframe there will be a continuation of school related projects and initiatives, though we also have Christmas and New Years celebrations, and Tara and I get to take a major trip.

On the school front, we



Jim Struber
USD 419
Superintendent

start the New Year early. Our Facilities Planning Committee will be meeting on Thursday, Jan. 2, followed by a district inservice the next day. Our commit-

tee will begin working on the planning and preparation for a possible bond resolution.

As I mentioned last month, the scope of work on the resolution includes replacing most of the elementary roof, HVAC controls-elementary, additional parking enhancements, covered walkway northwest entry; and at the junior and senior high school center classroom and office HVAC replacement and HVAC controls, replace north and south

asphalt parking, a vocational-agricultural building, and a six-lane rubberized track. Simpson Construction should provide us with a cost estimate, shortly, which will be included in the bond resolution. We are looking at \$3.5-4 million dollars. The USD 419 Board of Education will be considering the bond resolution language at a special board meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 7. If the resolution is approved there would be a bond election in late April. We also have a district

inservice on Friday, Jan. 3, where our teachers with TASN as they review screening data and work on student interventions, and several other topics such as standards alignment/pacing guides, SAEBRS screening(s), elementary discipline plan revisions, professional development plan/teacher movement on salary schedule, building related topics, and potential bond issue discussion and information.

As I look back on a most difficult, tragic, hyper

stressful '2024,' I realize, too, that I am also looking forward to a better '2025.' We will be working towards a possible bond issue election in April, which I feel will benefit our students and Canton-Galva community. Soon, we will also receive word on our KESA 2.0 action plan, and continue to work on that, which will benefit our students.

I hope we all have a great year in 2025.

A new year, a new resolution

Acts 19:1 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

In this Biblical account, we read of a group of believers living in the Ephesus area. They were disciples of the faith. These men and women had repented of their sins and were baptized by immersion, most likely in the Jordan River, where John the Baptist baptized many, including Jesus.

Jesus walked about 70 miles to the Jordan River to be baptized by His cousin John "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). How do we know Jesus was baptized by immersion? Scripture tells us, "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16). The original method of baptism, as described in the Bible, was immersion. The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word baptizo meaning "to dip under, immerse, or submerge." This was the method Jesus and every convert in the Bible under-



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went (Matthew 3; Acts 2, 8, 10, 19).

Anyone who says baptism is unnecessary or merely an outward sign of an inward cleansing is mistaken. Baptism is essential to salvation. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The "water" refers to baptism.

In Luke 24, Jesus instructed His disciples: "46 Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Remission of sins happens only through baptism in Jesus' name. This is why, when asked by those seeking eternal life in Acts 2:38, Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

This is the new birth Jesus spoke of in John 3: water (baptism) and Spirit (the Holy Ghost). It is essential to salvation. This truth transcends religion, tradition, dogma, or denominational beliefs. It is directly from God's Word. The Bible says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). I want my faith and salvation rooted in God's Word, not man's

interpretations.

Returning to Acts 19, these believers were sincere, honest, and good people—but God had more for them. I believe God has more for every one of us. He called them to a deeper relationship with Him by revealing their need to be re-baptized.

Though they had been baptized by immersion, the name of Jesus had not been applied to them during baptism. Paul reminded them that John the Baptist had pointed to Jesus, saying, "Believe on Him who should come after me." The name of Jesus is the only saving name:

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Jesus is the saving name, and immersion is the saving method. This is not man's interpretation; it is directly from the Bible. Every single account of baptism after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection was done by immersion and in Jesus' name.

Our souls are too valuable to take man's word alone. Eternity is too long to stake our salvation on "denominational beliefs." Our salvation must be rooted in the Word of God. So, to the law and to the testimony we go.

God bless, Godspeed, and have a Happy New Year.

New Legacy Church is now holding Sunday Services starting at 10:00 a.m. and Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. They would love to have you join them in service. 1215 N. Grimes McPherson KS, 67460. If you have any questions feel free to contact Dakota at 620-755-3942.

Nuclear fusion illuminates possible clean energy future

Since 1986, humorist and National Public Radio commentator Tom Bodett has been telling Americans about Motel 6. Each commercial ends with the famous tagline he reportedly ad-libbed: "We'll leave the light on for you."

Even allowing for time to change bulbs, that's still nearly 39 years of continuous illumination, which means a lot of electricity usage and the associated environmental impacts such energy consumption entails.

Luckily for Motel 6 and the rest of the world, a cleaner and more plentiful energy supply might be available sooner rather than later.

Scientists at the US National Ignition Facility (NIF) have been pursuing nuclear fusion.

According to Jeff Tollefson writing for Nature, these scientists have been using lasers "to compress hydrogen isotopes into a white-hot core, where their nuclei would meld to create helium and enough surplus energy to drive a cascade of fusion reactions [...] that was expected to achieve 'ignition': when an experiment generates more energy than the laser supplies."

This was accomplished in December 2022, and on Feb. 5, 2024, the team behind the achievement published a paper in the academic journal Physical Review Letters explaining how they pulled it off.

It's an exciting and promising development because a controlled fusion reaction would generate abundant electricity without negative consequences.

The use of nuclear fusion to produce energy



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is "considered by many to be the holy grail of clean energy," Tom Clynes wrote for IEEE Spectrum, which is a technology magazine and flagship publication for the nonprofit Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. "Fusion offers the prospect of a nearly limitless source of energy with no greenhouse gas emissions. And unlike conventional nuclear fission, fusion comes with no risk of meltdowns or weaponization, and no long-lived nuclear waste."

That's because nuclear fusion isn't the same type of fission reaction that current nuclear power plants use.

As Justin Klawans explained in The Week, "Unlike nuclear fission, which splits atoms to create energy, nuclear fusion generates power by combining atoms. It is best known as the process that powers the sun."

Of course, creating a star on Earth isn't easy.

For it to become a viable energy alternative, the price of the fuel needs to come down, the reaction has to produce more energy than it consumes in the process, and the size of the confinement system needs to be smaller and scaleable, among other hurdles and challenges.

Still, the progress being made suggests energy derived from nuclear fusion

could be keeping those Motel 6 lights on within the next decade, even if some are skeptical.

Commonwealth Fusion Systems (CFS) is not skeptical, though. Rather, they are going all in.

According to Laura Paddison of CNN, CFS plans to build "the world's first grid-scale nuclear fusion power plant" near Richmond, Virginia.

"When operational, the plant will be able to plug into the grid and produce 400 megawatts, enough to power around 150,000 homes," Paddison reported.

After all, a "fusion reaction releases around four million times more energy than burning coal, oil or gas, and four times more than fission," as reported by Angela Dewan and Ella Nilsen for CNN.

I'm not a nuclear physicist or an energy scientist, so I can't begin to predict when this will come to fruition. I am a nerd, though, and I am extremely excited by the possibilities of a safe, clean, inexpensive, and renewable energy source.

I hope 2025 proves to be a year of scientific advancement that brings us closer to implementing nuclear fusion as our country's energy needs.

As Tom Bodett said, "In the America I see from here, anything is possible — especially the impossible."

Todd Vogts is a native of Canton, a resident of McPherson County, and an assistant professor of media at Sterling College. He can be contacted via questions or comments via his website at www.toddvogts.com.

Get the most out of your farm ground, besides raising crops

As the world population is predicted to be nine billion by the year 2050, and the acres of viable land that we can grow food on continues to decrease, farmers have to be more efficient and more productive with what remains.

Here in McPherson County, most producers, will benefit from being more efficient. Top producers around our county have implemented new strategies that have started them on the right track. No-till, minimum till and the use of cover cropping has great benefits. Feeding livestock works well with some of these farming practices.

Being efficient is achieved first by optimizing forage growth. Every growth day throughout the growing season is an opportunity to grow more forage for later use. The more you can grow during the growing season, the more



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you will have to graze and the less feed that will be needed to run the livestock over the winter months.

Grazing corn and sorghum in January can save on buying hay to haul in and feed your livestock. Every day the livestock are out ingesting some stock residue, your stockpile is not being used up.

Stock residues normally are best utilized within 60 days of harvest and also allocated out in portions to reduce waste. In general, corn stalks have a crude protein value of about eight percent and a total digest-

ible nutrient value of about 70 percent. The nutritional value falls over time to about five percent crude protein and to about 40 percent digestibility.

This reduction can be two-fold. First, if livestock are not managed in such a way to allocate the residue out over time, they will eat their dessert first which is the most palatable, and leave the lower quality stock for later.

Second, nutrient content decreases over time as the residue weathers and soluble nutrients leach out. Stalks are best utilized for spring calving cows due to lack of sufficient energy for lactating or growing animals, especially over time, unless winter annuals or forages have been added, like cover crops

The addition of annuals such as my favorite combination of oats or triticale, and brassicas such as tur-

nips or radish, plus a winter hardy annual like cereal rye make an excellent addition to stalks if they can be planned and planted early in the fall. This mixture

needs to be balanced with some dry material to be utilized more efficiently. Those high nitrogen and water containing turnips or radish are too rich to be grazed alone. Adding these annuals not only helps stretch out those residues, but it helps the grazing livestock make better use of this feed and usually means a higher rate of gain. Livestock producers should refrain from feeding any supplements or hay in crop fields or by leaving livestock in the field over extended time frames, especially under wet conditions to prevent compaction issues the next crop year. Crop residue should be tested for nitrates if there was crop failure or chance that applied nitrogen was not

normally utilized. Livestock water should also be readily available and ideally moved with the livestock to new allocations of stalks.

A grazing stock scenario lowers costs and improves production maintenance of the cow. Cows need to be in good condition at calving in the spring and even better condition at breeding the following summer. The middle three months of gestation, or pregnancy are the time to improve cow condition. Can this be accomplished while the cows are harvesting well into later fall to early winter? The answer is yes, but keep in mind that herd management and calving dates also need to focus on grazing. In other words, calve on growing grass in the spring to maximize a cow's grazing potential.

But fall crop aftermath grazing is beneficial regardless of calving time. A spring calving cow is at her

lowest nutritional need. If the weather continues to be favorable, grazing stocks this time of year benefits both the farmer and rancher. Utilizing this practice can add more income for the farmer and rancher.

Just like conservation practices for reducing or preventing soil erosion on cropland, best management grazing practices can help preserve and or regenerate resources not only for present generation, but also for future generations. Keeping a field in forages will save more soil and conserve more water than almost all other erosion control practices.

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Funding public broadcasting educates Americans

I grew up on the street — “Sesame Street.” I stopped by “Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood” and took a ride on the “Reading Rainbow.” I imagined selling an old lamp for millions of dollars on the “Antiques Roadshow” before catching the bubbles on the “Lawrence Welk Show.”

I still keep my radio dial set to the local NPR station — 89.1 KMUW — so I can hear the latest news and interviews. Along the way, I compete against the panelists on “Wait! Wait! Don’t Tell Me!”

So the recent rescission of \$1.1 billion allocated to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) certainly caught my attention. After all, PBS and NPR receive a portion of their funding from the CPB.

President Donald Trump and his political allies



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believe these two public media outlets are politically biased. Such statements are false.

Research by Hans J. G. Hassell, John B. Holbein, and Matthew R. Miles studied more than 6,800 political reporters and found these “journalists do not seem to be exhibiting liberal media bias (or conservative media bias) in what they choose to cover.” Besides, the rescission bill barely impacts NPR and

PBS. As Victor Pickard wrote for The Nation, the “\$535 million that Congress currently allocates to the CPB covers roughly one percent of NPR’s and 15 percent of PBS’s budget.”

In reality, the funding claw back hurts small, rural media outlets.

As Austin Fuller reported for Current, the “CPB distributes more than 70% of its appropriation to local stations.”

These stations fill a vital role in their communities, many of which may not have adequate Internet or cellphone coverage.

Republican United States Senator Lisa Murkowski represents Alaska, and in May 2025 she wrote an editorial in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner where she explained that a loss of funding for public media

would mean that “warning systems for natural disasters, power outages, boil water advisories, and other alerts would be severely hampered.”

Proving this as the Senate debated the rescission bill, according to Associated Press reporting, “a 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck off the remote Alaska Peninsula, triggering tsunami warnings on local public broadcasting stations that advised people to get to higher ground.”

As Frank Langfitt reported, “radio remains the fastest way to let citizens know about everything from water main breaks to road closures.”

Yet this loss of finances will impact those small-town outlets the hardest, potentially putting lives at risk.

In fact, Wichita’s KMWU

lost \$225,000 in federal funding, and, according to the National Press Club Journalism Institute, Smoky Hills PBS, which reaches more than 1.2 million people in Kansas, receives nearly half of its budget via federal monies.

Kansas Senators Roger Marshall and Jerry Moran both voted in favor of the rescission bill.

According to scholars Allison Perlman and Josh Shepperd, there are “nearly 1,500 public media stations in the U.S.”

If they all cease broadcasting due to the loss of funding, the implications for our democratic society could be dire.

Writing for Nieman Lab, Joshua Benton highlighted research showing that democracies need public media: “the benefits of a robust public broadcaster

come from the simple fact that it exists — a centering anchor in the media marketplace — not only that it attracts a big audience.”

Though the damage has been done, this mistake can be rectified. Our political leaders should reinstate the funding, but that seems unlikely in our polarized political landscape. Until they see the error of their ways, support local media outlets by making a donation.

Public media outlets provide invaluable services, and we will become a less-informed and endangered citizenry without them.

Todd Vogts is a native of Canton, a resident of McPherson County. He can be contacted with questions or comments via his website at www.toddvogts.com.

Overcome with God in prayer

A vital key to being an overcoming Christian is developing a strong prayer life. As with all biblical topics, we should turn to the Bible for understanding.

The word “prayer” appears over 400 times in the Bible, with various Hebrew and Greek words translated as “prayer.” Many of these words mean to cry out or cry aloud, to beseech, vow, or petition. The common theme and biblical definition of prayer is intentional communication with God—often vocal, but not always.

Prayer is more than a mental exercise. While we should always keep the Lord in our thoughts and hearts, prayer often involves speaking aloud. At home, when the kids are asleep, we may pray quietly. In church, when the congregation is praying aloud, we join in. When praying with a loved one in the hospital, we pray softly by their side. The key is that we pray and communicate with God.

The Psalmist prayed aloud in Psalm 3:4: “*I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.*”

And Psalm 66:17 (KJV): “*I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*”

Ezra’s prayer in Ezra 10:1 (KJV) was demonstrative: “*Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of the Lord...*”

Jesus declared His house a “House of Prayer.” Church is where we gather as a body to pray collectively to the Lord. This is more



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than meditating or thinking. While God knows our thoughts, they are no substitutes for prayer.

Just as our loved ones know we love them, we don’t stop telling them so. Similarly, the Lord wants to hear our prayers, our appreciation, and our adoration.

Jesus said in Luke 21:36 (KJV): “*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*”

“Pray always” means maintaining a spirit of prayer, always ready to bring our cares to God. This doesn’t mean praying publicly for others to see, but carrying a willingness to communicate with Him. God desires a constant line of communication.

In Acts 4:24, 31 (KJV), we see early Christians in prayer: “*And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: ... And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*”

Prayer is more than whispering to God; it’s how we communicate with Him, just as we do with one another. The early apostles lifted their voices, magnifying God for His wonderful deeds, and God heard them. There is biblical precedent for God’s people crying out to Him throughout Scripture.

The book of James provides beautiful instructions in James 5:13-18 (KJV): “*Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*”

Prayer works if we work it. If we bring our needs before God, He is faithful to hear us. If we are sick, we can trust Him to be our healer. Our earnest prayers avail much, and God is faithful to answer. He desires to hear from each and every one of us.

New Legacy Church is now holding Sunday Services starting at 10:00 a.m. and Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. They would love to have you join them in service. 1215 N. Grimes McPherson KS, 67460. If you have any questions feel free to contact Dakota at 620-755-3942.

A wheat planting plan can reduce wheat streak mosaic

McPherson county wheat producers have many decisions to make prior to this year’s wheat planting. These decisions can account for a large proportion of the success or failure of the next year’s wheat crop. These decisions include: selecting a variety well adapted to the area and with a good yield stability record; soil sampling to determine fertility needs; pre-plant fertilization (N, P, K, lime); tillage for weed control and seedbed preparation (or using a contact herbicide in no-till situations); proper drill calibration increases the success of the wheat crop by ensuring the proper amount of seed planted per acre and seeding rate.

Wheat seeding rate recommendations in Kansas are in pounds of seed per acre and vary according to precipitation zone. However, seed size can have an impact in the final number of seeds actually planted per acre. A variety with larger kernels, when planted in pounds per acre, will result in less seeds planted per acre and possibly thinner stands. If the weather and soil fertility during the growing season are not favorable for fall tiller formation and survival, the thinner stand might reduce grain yields.

On the other extreme, a variety with small kernels can result in above-optimal stand establishment, increasing plant-to-plant competition for available resources such as water, nutrients, and incident solar radiation. Additionally, planting in pounds of seeds per acre can reduce seed costs when wheat kernel size is relatively small. Seed size can be measured



Shad Marston
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in terms of the number of seeds per pound. The “normal” range is about 14-16,000 seeds per pound, but it can range from less than 10,000 seeds per pound to over 18,000 seeds per pound. Although seed size is specific to each individual wheat variety, it can vary within variety depending on seed lot and seed cleaning process origin of seed.

Before planting, farmers also need to remember to control their volunteer wheat and other grassy weeds. Wheat Streak Mosaic (WSM) virus could be problematic this coming season, with rainfall encouraging volunteer development in all parts of Kansas and especially here in McPherson County. The WSM virus family consists of wheat streak mosaic, Triticum mosaic and High Plains wheat mosaic viruses and can severely affect next year’s wheat crop for wheat farmers and their neighbors.

One of the best preventative measures for wheat streak is the control of volunteer wheat early and often after harvest. If volunteer wheat is allowed to stand, it creates a “green bridge”, allowing wheat streak mosaic and wheat curl mites to survive locally. Volunteer wheat should be terminated at least two weeks prior to planting to allow sufficient time for mites to die off. They can

then blow into your field in either the fall or the early spring. Increased moisture and other weather events during the 2025 harvest contributed to more volunteer wheat and desirable conditions for the wheat streak mosaic virus to thrive in the current growing season. In severe cases, wheat streak mosaic causes yield losses of more than 80 percent. The disease also may result in lower test weight and reduced grain quality. The time of infection, variety, planting date, environmental conditions and other viral diseases influence the losses caused by wheat streak mosaic.

Volunteer wheat and other grassy weeds can be killed with herbicides or tillage operations. The weeds and volunteer wheat should be dead and dry for two weeks before planting the new wheat crop. In addition, avoid early planting. Planting wheat after the “hessian fly free date” reduces the risk that the new wheat crop will emerge when the populations of wheat curl mites are large and more likely to move to new locations. Lastly, plant wheat varieties with moderate or high levels of resistance to wheat streak mosaic.

For more information, make plans to attend our upcoming McPherson County Pre Plant Wheat School Monday, Aug 25 with a meal starting at 6:30 p.m. and the program to follow. This year we will again be having a ladies’ program starting at 7 p.m. presented by Laura Savage, the McPherson County 4-H agent. Both programs will be held at the First United Methodist Church, 1200 E. Kansas in McPherson.

Bonds sold; school to begin

On Wednesday, July 9, our bonds were put on the market, sold, and the board approved the sale on Monday, July 14. Soon, weather permitting, they will start work at the elementary school on the roof replacement. We are also working on several other bond projects: getting input, planning, and designing.

According to our bond company, Stifel and Co., there was a high demand for the bonds – orders for the bonds exceeded the bond amount. They were able to lower some of the bond yields and interest, and we ended up with a “true cost” of 4.02 percent – right where the pre-election estimate was. We will receive the proceeds from the bond sale, \$4.65 million dollars m/l, on Thursday, July 31. This will go into the bank with most reinvested.

We have a proposed construction schedule that provides timelines for planning, bidding and building. We also have a “draw schedule”, which indicates when Simpson Construction is going to need to get paid for services rendered. We can invest those “idle funds” to garner additional interest in 30, 60-, 90-, 180-, and 365-day CD’s, Money Market account, or treasuries. We have sent out a request for proposal to our local banks



Jim Struber
USD 419 Superintendent

– six total, to solicit bids. We can also invest this money in the Kansas Municipal Investment Pool (KMIP).

The roof replacement at the elementary school should start the first week of August – weather permitting. Initial plans were to start early July, however, the companies that bid on the project could not start until later, as they had other projects they were working on. It will take about eight weeks to finish the elementary roof. We should also be ready soon, to put the concrete parking lot on the northwest corner of the elementary out for bid, and then the covered walkway.

We are going through the preliminary planning and design phase of the six-lane rubberized track, and “other track facilities. We need to look at designs and building the long jump, triple jump, high jump, pole vault, shotput, discus, javelin, and a place to store equipment. We have looked

at where to place these facilities on our existing property – and also by adding to our property.

On Monday, July 14, the BOE offered the city of Canton \$9,000 for the purchase of the softball field, concession stand, and another storage building, 2.47 acres. At a special city council meeting on Tuesday, July 15, the City of Canton approved the sale. We are working on closing the deal. This will allow the school district to maintain and possibly upgrade that property. We might place “track facilities” on the property or look at additional parking. Nothing is finalized, yet.

With the upcoming enrollment, the imminent start of the school year, and bond projects getting started and planning for other projects it has been a busy July. A newsletter has also been sent to our school district patrons and this newsletter, district calendar, and student handbook is all on the district website. If you have any questions, too, please don’t hesitate to contact our building offices or district office.

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Ponder the penny's power purchasing presents this year

Despite rising costs and general economic uncertainty, the National Retail Federation is projecting that U.S. holiday spending will exceed \$1 trillion this year, which is a record. That's anxiety inducing.

The most stressful part of the holidays is gift buying. I never know what to get for people, and I struggle to determine the appropriate amount of money I should spend on a given gift. And now everything could get slightly more expensive — even your thoughts — since the penny is being phased out.

The U.S. Treasury Department pressed the final 1-cent pieces on Nov. 12 at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia, ending a 232-year run for the coin that started in 1793.

According to USA Today,



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“an estimated 300 billion pennies remain in circulation,” so you can still use the copper-coated zinc discs you have strewn across the top of your dresser or filling your vehicle's ashtray.

After all, the typical lifespan of a coin is 30 years, so pennies aren't disappearing overnight despite the ceased production, which means my dreams of wearing penny loafers can live

on for now.

If you're a collector, though, you can buy those final pennies, called “Omega Pennies,” when they are going to be auctioned off on Dec. 11 as commemorative sets. Securing the collectable coins will cost a tad more than one cent, though. Reporting by Popular Science, experts believe the pennies could cost between \$2 to \$5 million.

It seems crazy to spend that much for a coin that is worth literally one cent, but that's the reason the penny is being phased out.

According to NPR's Scott Horsley, the “government decided to stop making new pennies because each one costs nearly 4 cents to produce. The move is expected to save about \$56 million a year.”

From a fiscal perspective,

then, the decision to phase out the penny makes sense. However, there is concern about what the downstream impacts will be.

Researcher Nancy Foster-Holt, writing for The Conversation, reported that “local businesses are likely to round cash transactions to the nearest 5 cents. Rounding to the nearest nickel could cost businesses and consumers about \$6 million annually.”

This is called a “rounding tax” and would cause consumers to pay more.

On the other hand, in his 2007 article in the Eastern Economic Journal, Wake Forest University professor Robert Whaples argued that the “rounding tax” barely impacted consumers.

The Washington Post's “Post Reports” podcast also suggested that the

demise of pennies won't impact purchases. The episode discussed Whaples's research said the study found that the digit at the end of purchase receipts is randomized, meaning the presence or absence of the penny doesn't matter.

Also, consider what people earn, and the loss of the penny doesn't seem to matter as much.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average private sector hourly wage in August 2025 was \$36.58, making each second of work worth more than 1 cent.

So rather than stressing over what to buy or how much to spend, maybe the answer is to just spend time with people.

Or, if a person is artistically inclined, make a

painting. Though it's not easy to make a living as an artist, three paintings by famed PBS craftsman Bob Ross were auctioned off on Nov. 11, and they cost a pretty penny. They brought in \$662,000 to support public media following this summer's \$1.1 billion cut in federal funding.

An original painting by a loved one is a gift people will cherish for generations, or it could bring in a lot of pennies.

Todd R. Vogts, Ph.D., is a native of Canton, a resident of McPherson County, and a media researcher and educator. He can be contacted with questions or comments via his website at www.toddvogts.com.

Mary had a lamb

Matthew 1:21 “21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

This time of year, we are reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. We are reminded that the God of the universe stepped down from His throne to provide a propitiation for all of humanity. God did not send a co-equal, co-eternal, co-existing Son to do His will. Instead, God manifested Himself through the Son. Jesus was the fleshly manifestation of God. “Manifested” means “made visible.” God is a Spirit, so man cannot see the invisible Spirit of God (John 4:24). This is why God had to robe Himself in flesh as Jesus (John 1:14).

Jesus was not eternal; Jesus had a beginning (John 3:16). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Matthew 1:20). Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. The term “Son of God” emphasized the divinity of Christ, while the term “Son of Man” emphasized the humanity of Christ. This was the dual nature of Jesus Christ. As a man, Jesus was born;



Dakota Nichols
My Five Cents

as God, He is eternal. As a man, Jesus had limited knowledge; as God, He is omniscient.

The distinction between the Father and the Son is a distinction between deity and humanity. Jesus was both the Father (divine) and the Son (human). Jesus (the Son) was not a separate, distinct person in a triune godhead. Just as the Bible describes God as being the Lion and the Lamb, the Alpha and Omega, the Sacrifice and the High Priest, the Root and the Offspring of David, it describes the two natures of God as the Father and the Son. It is important that we not separate these natures into persons; rather, we must understand that these are descriptions of the natures and manifestations of the one true God.

God manifested Himself through Jesus, and Jesus became the Lamb that was slain for the sins of humanity. Jesus was God, but He took on the nature of a lamb. A lamb is humble and meek, gentle and innocent—and Jesus was exactly that! He was the Lamb of

God who takes away the sins of the world! And just as a lamb goes silently to the slaughter, so Jesus went to the cross (Isaiah 53:7). He never pleaded His case. He never defended Himself. Instead, He remained quiet and obedient.

Because Jesus took on this nature and allowed humanity to nail Him to a cross, we now have the privilege of experiencing this gospel message: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can experience God's salvation if we obey the gospel.

This was—and still is—what Christmas is truly about. Mary had a little Lamb. That Lamb was Jesus. God became flesh in Jesus. Emmanuel—God with us. He is the reason for the season.

So, this year, in the midst of the hustle and bustle, the shopping, the planning, the meals, and the banquets, let's not lose sight of why we celebrate Christmas. It is because of Jesus Christ. God gave us the greatest gift of all time.

Have a Merry Christmas! May the Lord bless you.

New Legacy Church is now holding Sunday Services starting at 10:00 a.m. and Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. They would love to have you join them in service. 1215 N. Grimes McPherson KS, 67460. If you have any questions feel free to contact Dakota at 620-755-3942.

Perfect the tradition of selecting a Christmas tree

Every December, just after Thanksgiving week, many families fall into the routine of putting up the Christmas tree. It is one that seems to mark the true beginning of the Christmas season. This starts for my family with a free, stay at home, weekend by digging the tree stand out of the shed, and heading out to choose the Christmas tree in the old farm truck with my spouse and dog by my side.

We don't have far to go; I remember seeing a prospect Eastern Red Cedar while checking cows in our pasture last month, not a mile from the house. For many families, selecting the right tree is as much a part of the holiday as baking sugar cookies or stringing lights along the porch. But with all the varieties and options out there, it can feel a bit overwhelming to know where to begin.

The first decision usually comes down to whether you're buying a fresh-cut tree or going the artificial route. Artificial trees are convenient, clean, and reusable. For those who relish the smell of fresh pine and the ritual of choosing a tree from a local lot or farm, nothing beats the real thing. Fresh trees also support local growers and, in many cases, land stewardship efforts that provide wildlife habitat during the rest of the year. If you decide on fresh, the next step is knowing what to look for.

Start by measuring your space at home—both the height and the width. It sounds simple, but it's the most common mistake folks make. I've brought home a few over-ambitious Christmas trees in my day,



Shad Marston
KSRE Events

only to find they brushed the ceiling or swallowed up half the living room. Make sure to leave at least six inches of clearance above the tree for the stand, the top branch, and whatever star, bow, or family ornament you like to place up there. Width matters too; a tree may look modest out in the open air, but once it's indoors, it gains presence quickly.

When you're at the lot or tree farm, don't rush. Give your family enough time to walk around, compare shapes, and find one that truly fits your home's personality. Each tree species brings its own perks. Fraser firs are dependable favorites—strong branches, soft needles, and excellent needle retention. Douglas firs offer a full, classic Christmas-card shape with a sweet scent. Scotch and white pines tend to be more budget-friendly and hold needles well, though their branch strength varies. Eastern Red Cedars are more for the county folks that are too cheap to go buy a tree (maybe that's just me), but it makes perfect sense since we have so many to pick from in our nearby pasture. If you would like a free tree, just come on out to the farm and I'll show you where to go to pick that special, free tree.

At a lot or store, check for freshness, gently grasp a

branch and pull your hand toward you. A few needles dropping is fine—especially if the tree has been recently shaken—but the branch should remain flexible and most needles should stay put. Look for vibrant color, sturdy branches, and a trunk with a straight cut. Avoid trees that seem brittle or dull. And don't be afraid to pick the tree up and give it a light tap on the ground to see how many needles fall; a good, fresh tree won't shed much.

Once you've chosen “the one,” ask for a fresh cut on the base before you leave the lot. This helps the tree absorb water when you get home. Trees can drink surprising amounts in the first week—sometimes a gallon a day—so keep the stand filled and check often. You can also add green food coloring for a longer-lasting greenery. Set the tree away from fireplaces, wood stoves, or heating vents, which can accelerate drying.

In the end, selecting a Christmas tree is about more than the tree itself. It's a small tradition that brings families together, sparks memories, and fills the house with a warmth no artificial scent can quite match. Whether you choose tall and stately or short and charmingly imperfect one, the right tree is the one that feels like Christmas the moment you see it.

Shad Marston is the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent for McPherson County K-State Research and Extension. He can be contacted by phone at (620) 241-1523 or by email at smarston@k-state.edu.

Bond project timeline

With Thanksgiving Day, we had a couple days of rest, time with family and delicious food to eat. On the bond resolution front, a couple projects just got started, a couple projects will start in early to mid-December, and some projects need to be bid out in January. We also started on another separate project at the elementary school on the old track.

At the elementary school, Prairie Landworks, Inc., construction poured the concrete for the parking lot on the northwest side. They have some additional dirtwork, or rockwork, to do around that area and the rock drive area. They will be working on a sidewalk to the parking lot and setting up the foundation(s) for the covered walkway. They plan on pouring the concrete for this, on 12/1 or 12/2 - weather permitting.

The covered walkway is being built and shipped in separately, arriving in mid to late January. Also, at the elementary school, in the furthest field to the south, we are resurrecting the old track. Ratzlaff Brothers have brought in scale (crushed limestone rock) and are spreading this around the old track and will also level this off. When completed, this will allow our elementary students and Canton-Galva patrons a surface to walk, jog, or run on, and junior/senior high school track athletes to use while the track facilities are being built this spring.

At the November 10



Jim Struber
USD 419 Superintendent

board meeting, the school board approved two projects at the junior and senior high school in Canton - vocational agriculture building and the track and 'other facilities'. Collectively, these projects, along with the approved alternate bids, represent about 3.1 million dollars of the approved bond resolution.

Some notable alternate bids include a seventh lane to the track, an additional discus and shot ring (two of each total), additional concrete patio area near vocational agriculture building/track, storage mezzanine added to vocational agriculture building, and chain-link fence around the southern 'U' of the track. There will be a groundbreaking ceremony at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the junior and senior high school in Canton, at the soon-to-be construction site. It is hoped, weather permitting, these two projects will be completed by August 6, 2026.

Later, in January - could be 'late January', the board will be reviewing two of the last bond resolution projects: a new HVAC system for the center offices and

classrooms at the JSHS, and HVAC control systems for both the elementary and junior and senior high school. The plan would be for the board to review the recommended bids from Simpson Construction Services by the February 2026 board meeting, and those projects would begin in the summer of 2026.

We still have track and field equipment to purchase, at least a 24'x30' storage building to build, furniture, fixtures, and equipment to purchase for the vocational agriculture building, and the north and south asphalt parking lots to refurbish, seal, and stripe. Some of these purchases are going to involve capital outlay expenditures. I would like to get the track and field equipment purchased and, in our possession, an RFP proposal for the 24'x30' storage shed for the board to review and hopefully approved, and an RFP proposal for those parking lots approved and a timeline established for their completion by late spring/early summer 2026.

There will be some delays as the weather will always be a wildcard, but we are going to have some notable facilities for our Canton-Galva students, and our community, for the foreseeable future.

Jim Struber is the Superintendent of Schools for Canton-Galva Unified School District 419. He can be reached by email at struberj@usd419.org.

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