

# Obituaries

## CHERYL SMYRES

Cheryl A. Smyres, 83, of Windom, KS, passed away on July 10, 2024, at Cozy Cottage Senior Living in Wichita. Arrangements are with Stockham Family Funeral Home, McPherson.

## FERN A. WILSON

Fern A. Wilson, 82, of McPherson, KS, passed away on July 2, 2024, surrounded by family at McPherson Health and Rehab. Arrangements are with Stockham Family Funeral Home, McPherson.

## MICHAEL BUTLER

Michael Wayne Butler, 67, of McPherson, KS, peacefully passed away on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, surrounded by his family at Hutchinson Regional Medical Center.



He was born on May 8, 1957, in Hutchinson, KS, the second son of Jerry M. and Dorothy A. (Decker) Butler. Mike graduated from McPherson High School in 1975. On June 3, 1977, He was united in marriage to Julie Ann Schlehuber in Canton, KS. This union was blessed with two children, Dustin and Sarah.

Mike worked as a pipeline and station operator at Enterprise Products (MAPCO & Williams Energy) for over 30 years.

Survivors include his loving wife of 47 years, Julie; a son, Dustin (Katie) Butler of Lawrence, KS; a daughter, Sarah (J.D.) Reeves of Augusta, KS; four grandchildren, Addison Butler, Jacie Butler, Avery Swemke, and Rylen Reeves; a brother, Steve Butler of McPherson, KS; and a beloved black lab, Maggie May.

He was preceded in death by his parents. A celebration of life (come & go) will be held from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM, Wednesday, July 17, 2024, at Stockham Family Funeral Home.

Memorial donations can be made to the McPherson Animal Shelter in care of Stockham Family Funeral Home, 205 North Chestnut, McPherson, KS 67460.

Personal condolences may be sent to the family at [www.stockhamfamily.com](http://www.stockhamfamily.com).

# Mastermind McPherson County Summit schedule finalized

by Tammy Johnson  
tjohnson@cherryroad.com

McPherson County Community Foundation has announced the final schedule for the Second Annual Mastermind McPherson County Summit.

Seven breakout sessions are scheduled for each community, paired with the county-wide summit. All sessions are scheduled to take place the week of July 29 through August 2. Sessions are to include community response data on the current needs of each town. Survey data, opportunities, and brainstorming a way forward on resolving the toughest challenges will be part of each session. Community

Leaders are especially encouraged to attend these sessions as this data could be useful in their decision-making process.

Information from last year's survey data can be found at <https://www.mcphersonfoundation.org/mastermind-mcpherson-county/>.

MCCF saw a significant increase in responses from last year's survey, receiving 973 in 2024. This survey data is especially important to MCCF as it allows the Foundation to recognize priorities and address them with grant dollars.

Email Director of Community Development, Betsy Davis at [Betsy@McPhersonFoundation.org](mailto:Betsy@McPhersonFoundation.org) or call 620-245-9070 to RSVP, or with any

questions you may have.

The summit schedule is as follows:  
Lindsborg: July 29, 10 a.m. at Lindsborg Community Library

Canton: July 29, 7 p.m. at Canton Township Carnegie Library

Galva: July 30, 12 p.m. at Galva Community Building

Moundridge: July 31, 7:15 a.m. at The Hub

Marquette: July 31, 12 p.m. at Smoky Valley Distillery

McPherson: August 1, 10 a.m. at McPherson Community Building

Inman: August 2, 7 a.m. at Inman Senior Center

County Wide Summit: August 1, 4 p.m. at McPherson Community Building

# Chamber to host County Commission Candidate Forum

provided by McPherson Chamber of Commerce

The McPherson Chamber of Commerce Civic Awareness Committee will host a candidate forum July 24th at 6 p.m. to hear from the three candidates for McPherson County Commission. The forum will take place at the American Legion, 401 N. Main.

The format is question-and-answer as opposed to debate. The audience will have the opportunity to submit questions as they arrive. The questions will then be screened for duplication, legibility, and must be appropriate for ALL candidates. Candidates will have one minute to

answer each question.

All three candidates who filed for the two open county commission positions have been invited to participate. Those candidates include David O'Dell (R) and Nick Reinecker (R) competing for District 3, and Dave Bohnenblust (R) running unopposed for District 2.

The McPherson Chamber of Commerce is not a political action committee, nor does it endorse candidates in elections. It has been hosting these forums for many years as a service to allow candidates seeking public office to express their views openly so community members can understand their positions and make informed voting choices.

**Important upcoming election dates:**

July 30, 2024 – Last day to apply for an advance voting mail ballot

August 5, 2024 – In-person advance voting ends at noon. No exceptions.

August 6, 2024 – Primary Election Day. All regular polling places in McPherson County will be open 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

August 8, 2024 – The Post Election Audit will be held in the McPherson courthouse, basement level at 10:30 a.m.

August 19, 2024 – County Canvass – Provisional ballots will be opened and counted after permission is granted and final official results will follow.

November 5, 2024 – General Election

# Return to the prairie

by Tammy Johnson  
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When in Canton for the McPherson County Fair this weekend, be sure to take a side trip and visit Maxwell Wildlife Refuge.

Maxwell Wildlife Refuge, north of Canton, provides visitors with a glimpse into prairie life in the 1800s as well as an opportunity to observe bison and elk.

The McPherson State Fishing Lake, which gives fishermen the opportunity to catch a variety of fish species, is also located within the refuge. The 46-acre lake is known for its healthy fish populations. The lake provides day-use facilities, camping, and fishing. It is operated in tandem with the refuge.

Maxwell Wildlife Refuge maintains a herd of roughly 200 bison. They are from the original herd that was bought in 1951 from



Visit during the Mountain Man Rendezvous to learn all about life on the prairie.

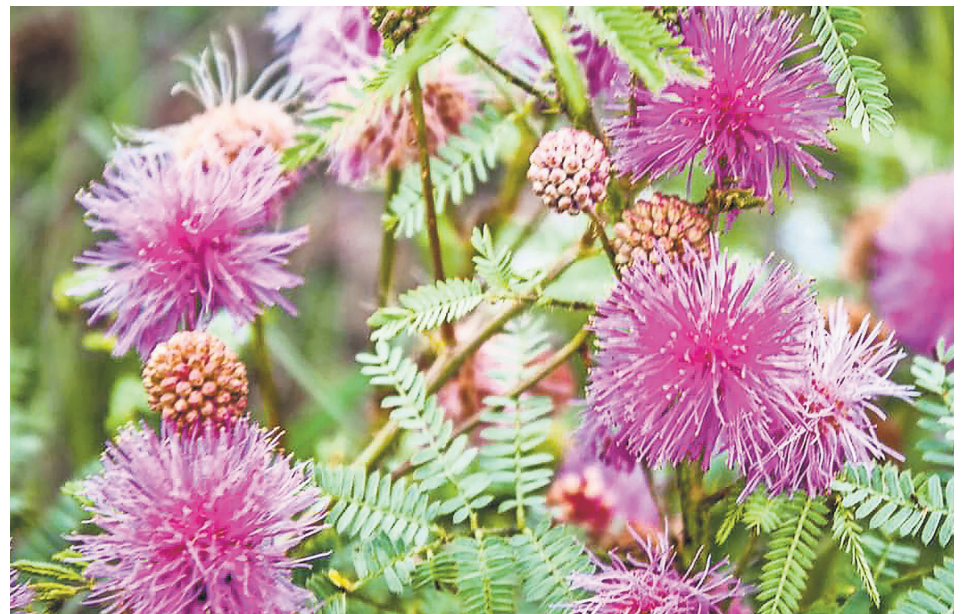
the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, in Oklahoma consisting of seven cows and three bulls. To maintain herd health, the refuge trades bison with neighboring sanctuaries periodically. Previously facing extinction, these magnificent animals have found safety at the refuge. At Maxwell Wildlife Refuge,

there is also a small herd of elk, which were once common in Kansas.

Tram tours offer a unique opportunity to see the bison and elk, both of which used to roam the plains freely in large numbers. Aside from the tour specific to elk, there is a better chance of witnessing bison. Elk prefer cooler temperatures, so the best times for observing them are at dawn and dusk or during the cooler months. The 45-minute guided tour includes up-close views of bison, native wildflowers, and native grasses, as well as a narrative of the prairie ecology.

Maxwell is also home to a wide variety of wildlife, including white-tailed deer and many birds, being home to more than 100 species. The wide variety of bird species that call Maxwell home is sure to thrill birdwatchers.

Maxwell is a unique



Wildflowers are just part of the beauty at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge. Photos by Tammy Johnson

place to visit for nature lovers. The refuge, which was first established to save and restore bison herds, has developed into a sanctuary for an array of plant and animal species.

Environmental awareness and education are given priority at the refuge. The Visitor Center at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge acts as a center for education, with exhibits and educational displays highlighting the need of protecting wildlife habitat and conservation. The experience is further enhanced by the knowledgeable staff and volunteers of Friends of Maxwell who are available to answer questions and provide information.

Events such as the Mountain Man Rendezvous and Christmas on the Prairie offer visitors the opportunity to experience what life was like for the people that lived in the area in the 1800s. The Mountain Man Rendezvous in October



Take a tram tour to get up close and personal with the wildlife.

features craftsman and traders who teach techniques of trapping and surviving. Christmas on the Prairie takes guests back to a simpler time with a story, refreshments, and a tour of the refuge.

The refuge is always open for self-guided driving tours if you would prefer to experience it on your own.

Maxwell Wildlife Refuges offers fantastic opportunities for nature photographers. The refuge offers a wealth of opportunities to capture the beauty of the Kansas prairie with events for photographers

scheduled throughout the year.

Maxwell Wildlife Refuge is located along the Prairie Trail Scenic Byway. The Prairie Trail Scenic Byway is a 56-mile route through north central Kansas. The Byway begins south of Canton and travels north along 27th Avenue, through the western edge of the Flint Hills.

Maxwell Wildlife Refuge is located at 2565 Pueblo Rd Canton, Kansas and can be contacted via email at [maxwellwildliferefuge@gmail.com](mailto:maxwellwildliferefuge@gmail.com) or by calling (620) 654-7230.

## STOCKHAM FAMILY FUNERAL HOME

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