

# THE FORT SCOTT TRIBUNE

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**INSIDE:**

Details about this week's Friday Night Concert are on page 5.

**INSIDE:**

Details about the annual Burke Street Parade and the Fort Scott National Historic Site Fourth of July activities can be found on page 5.

**INSIDE:**

See photos from Bronson Days on page 10.

## Care to Share organization receives \$70K grant to purchase stage

BY JASON E. SILVERS

The Fort Scott Tribune

The Care to Share cancer support organization wants to give back for all the support it has received over the years.

During Tuesday's Fort Scott City Commission meeting, Teresa Davenport, president of the organization's board and founder, and Cory Bryars, board member, spoke to commissioners about the organization.

Bryars said he had some news to share.

The Timken Foundation of Canton, the charitable arm of the Timken Company, awarded the local Care to Share group a \$70,000 grant toward the purchase of a community stage, Bryars said.

"We're trying to give something back to the city, the county and our catchment area, Crawford Coun-



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

Cory Bryars, right, speaks about the Care to Share organization during Tuesday's Fort Scott City Commission meeting. At left is Teresa Davenport, president of the Care to Share board.

ty and Linn County," he said. "And give back to all the citizens who gave \$3,000 last Saturday and almost \$1.5 million Care to Share has raised since its inception in 2007."

Bryars' announcement of the grant award was met with applause from commissioners, city staff and audience members.

Bryars said the Timken

Foundation has helped in the past with other needs or improvements in the community.

"This is the next contribution for our city, our county and our community," he said.

He said the community stage will be portable, can be hauled behind a truck

**SEE STAGE ON PAGE 6**

## Broadway closed



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

A portion of Broadway from Fifth to Sixth street is closed off Monday. On Saturday, City Manager Brad Matkin posted an update on the city's Facebook page, saying the street will be closed until further notice due to a sinkhole developing after a storm drain collapsed in the area. Matkin urged motorists to use an alternate route when traveling in the area. All residents in the block have access to their homes and are asked to use Sixth Street when entering their residences. Matkin said he would continue to update citizens on the city's findings. On Monday, Matkin said city officials currently have "no answers" and crews would likely not begin work on the street until next week.

## County agrees to commit funds to USD 235 ag building remodel

BY JASON E. SILVERS

The Fort Scott Tribune

Bourbon County Commissioners have approved contributing funds to USD 235 in Uniontown for help with remodeling an aging agriculture building in the school district.

On June 24, commissioners unanimously approved a motion by Commission Chairman Jim Harris to commit \$50,000 each year for four years, starting in 2025, using funds from a contribution agreement the county adopted in late 2023 with Hinton Creek Solar LLC, to help with the building project.

USD 235 Superintendent Vance Eden said he is "hopeful" to receive some money through a grant he has applied for, and combine those funds with a con-

tribution from the county, "with a large portion being district funds."

"We do have the opportunity to receive some grant funds," he said. "I can't disclose who that is and the amount."

In recent months, Eden has talked to commissioners about a possible partnership with the county, and using some of the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) funds associated with the the Jayhawk Wind energy program approved in 2020 or contributions from the Hinton Creek solar project in the southwest part of the county. Commissioners have talked about their willingness to support local school districts, and there has been discussion on how the county could assist.

"If there's a portion (of those funds) and what the numbers are," he said. "I hate to turn away grant

funding being offered." Eden said he would "like to have a conversation" and "make decisions on moving forward."

Eden said a "proportionate distribution model based on mill levies" will allow him to address funding for the building project. He said the amount would be more than the \$200,000 he initially requested from the county.

Harris said the commission was advised by counsel that funds in the agreement is a "distribution, not PILOT money."

In responding to questions at the meeting, Eden said the building would serve the Uniontown High School agriculture and FFA classes. He has said the building, built in the 1960s, is at the end of its life.

Eden has said the remodel would help keep the building open and there has

been discussion of expanding the agriculture program.

According to documents Eden provided in April, the total cost of the remodeling project would be \$756,804 and with a bond, the cost would increase to \$772,548. The total project cost on architect and engineering fees and owner contingency are added, is \$926,201.

On Monday, Eden was also asked if a new career and technical education center is created in the county, whether the ag building in USD 235 would still be needed.

"Absolutely," he said, adding the building in his district would be used for students in junior high through high school, while a tech center would be designed for "mostly high-end classes."

In May, USD 234 Superintendent Destry Brown said the district is pursuing

a \$20 million grant through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is partnering with several community businesses and organizations that would benefit from grant funding. The focus of the federal grant is renewable energy and workforce development. The bulk of grant funding would go toward construction of a technical education center in Bourbon County.

Harris said the county's contribution would help USD 235 reach the \$200,000 goal, "if everything goes right" and funds come in as planned.

Commissioner Brandon Whisenhunt asked Eden if the grant and the county's contribution will help "get to where you need to be?"

"That's up to my board," Eden said. "That is going to be close, and a little bit of a stretch. If we get that far,

we will try to make every adjustment we could to get there."

Whisenhunt said he would support contributing funds to USD 235. Prior to Harris' motion, Eden confirmed the funds would begin in November 2025, with payment in December that year.

In November, a bond issue which included two propositions designed to fund facilities improvements in the district, was voted down. The bond issue involved construction, renovations, improvements and additions to district facilities with costs over \$9 million.

Eden told the Tribune in April the district is looking at options related to addressing several items included in that bond issue.

## Commission continues to hear solar panel opposition, committee to review setbacks

BY JASON E. SILVERS

The Fort Scott Tribune

Bourbon County Commissioners on June 24 heard from two residents on the topic of solar panels; retired longtime educator Kyle Parks, and county resident Sage Hall, who said there are plans for solar panels to be placed near his property.

Commissioners also chose members of a sev-

en-person committee who will review setback requirements for solar panel projects, work with property owners and solar companies and make recommendations to the commission. District 1 Commissioner Brandon Whisenhunt said he plans to work with the committee.

Parks said he has "strong feelings" on solar panels, and he would like to see a solution that works for both sides.

"As ag teachers we had

a saying, we tried to do what's best for kids," Parks said. "Not what was best for me, not what was easiest for me. Not what would make me more money. I think we ought to change that little mantra to what's best for Bourbon County."

Parks said Bourbon County is a "very pretty county, and I would kind of hate to see eye appeal taken away by having these things all over the place."

Parks said the population

of the United States is 333 million people, and there are eight billion people on Earth, and both numbers are increasing. He said since 2015, the nation has lost 12 million acres of productive farmland, a trend he said will continue.

"That's a loss of 1.8 million acres per year," he said. "The U.S. has the cheapest food supply in the world, in part due to our agriculture practices. But they're asking us to produce more and

more on less and less and that trend can't continue. We just can't keep losing ag ground like we've been doing."

Parks also said he doesn't think land taken out of production for solar panels will ever go back into agriculture production.

"We need to think about future generations of Bourbon County, not just today and right now," he said.

Parks said he hopes people on both sides of the

issue can work together toward an option that works for everyone involved. He said one idea is keeping the panels set back so they don't intrude on views and properties.

"People who own the property, good for them," he said. "But I don't think the rest of us should have to look at them. I don't think there should be a fight where there's hard feelings."

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### WEATHER

A 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 85. Northeast wind around 6 mph becoming west in the morning.

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