



USD 417
District
Spotlight
Tyson Eslinger
USD #417
Superintendent of Schools



Reflecting on Success and Looking Ahead

As we wrap up an outstanding school year in USD 417 Morris County, I’m filled with pride as I reflect on the remarkable achievements of our students and staff. My first year as part of this team and community can only be described as phenomenal. May was a month of celebration, recognition, and preparation for the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

Academic Achievements

Our students have had an exceptional year academically and have shown tremendous growth in all areas of their work. We were thrilled to celebrate our seniors as they walked across the stage at graduation. This graduating class was remarkable not only for their academic accomplishments but also for the impressive awards and scholarships they received. This class received \$755,000 in scholarships.

Our junior high and elementary students also concluded the year on a high note with memorable celebrations and well-deserved recognition. The dedication of our teachers and support staff has made all the difference in these achievements.

Spring Activities and Events

Spring is always a busy time with various activities, and our students once again exceeded our expectations. Many of our high school art students were recognized for their talented work at the Flint Hills League Art Show. Our music students at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels delivered outstanding performances throughout the spring season.

Our athletic teams had exceptional seasons as well. The softball and baseball teams made impressive runs into the postseason. Our golf team had another outstanding season and competed with determination. We’re particularly proud that Drew Buchman tied for second place at the state golf tournament. The track team qualified numerous athletes for the state meet, where they competed and gave their absolute best. Logan Stockwell made us especially proud by finishing seventh in the 300 hurdles and earning a place on the podium.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported our students in all their activities throughout the year. We also want to recognize our coaches and sponsors—without your dedication, none of these opportunities would be possible for our students.

Staff Recognition and Professional Development

This month, we celebrated our outstanding educators during Teacher Appreciation Week. Our Morris County teachers go above and beyond every single day, and it’s important that we recognize their unwavering dedication. Multiple teachers and principals were honored this year for their exceptional work and commitment to student success. We were also able to show our appreciation to all staff members at our end-of-year luncheon, where we recognized our retiring staff members and celebrated years of service for our staff members.

Our commitment to professional growth continues through the summer, with teachers participating in multiple talent development opportunities. This investment in our staff directly benefits our students and strengthens our educational programs.

Summer Preparations and Programs

While students and staff deserve a well-earned break, our work continues through the summer months. Facility maintenance is already underway as we clean and prepare our buildings for the upcoming school year. We also have HVAC projects and other facility improvements planned for all our buildings. This investment in our facilities is crucial to the success of both our staff and students.

Our summer programming will offer students excellent opportunities in STEAM education through our LEAPES summer camp for sixth through eighth graders. We’re also excited about the various sports camps that will provide additional opportunities for our student-athletes to develop their skills.

Looking Toward Fall 2025

Planning for the 2025-26 school year is well underway. We’re excited to welcome new staff members who will bring fresh perspectives and expertise to our classrooms. We will be implementing new curriculum resources in social studies and continuing to enhance our other educational materials. New programs will also be part of our 2025-26 school year, and we’re eager to offer these opportunities to our students.

We will also be implementing the Yondr Pouch program for grades four through twelve. We will share more detailed information about this program as we approach the start of the school year. We’re excited to support our students in both their academic growth and mental health through this initiative.

A Personal Thank You

As I complete my first full year as your superintendent, I’m continually impressed by the Morris County spirit. Our school board provides steady leadership and clear vision, our administrative team works tirelessly to support teaching and learning, our teachers engage and challenge students in the classroom, and our classified staff ensure everything runs smoothly behind the scenes.

Most importantly, our students inspire us daily with their curiosity, creativity, and compassion. They are the reason we do this work, and they represent the bright future of Morris County.

As we head into summer break, I encourage everyone to take time to rest and recharge. Whether you’re planning family vacations, working summer jobs, or simply enjoying a slower pace, remember that learning happens everywhere. Visit our local library, explore nature, read together as a family, and stay curious about the world around you.

I look forward to welcoming everyone back in August for another year of growth, discovery, and success. Until then, enjoy your summer, stay safe, and remember—#BetterTogether417.

Sincerely,
Tyson Eslinger

PUBLIC NOTICE:

City of Alta Vista is accepting sealed bids for park playground equipment. This equipment is being sold in 1 group, is in “as is” condition, no warranty or guarantee or refunds, and must all be removed within 30 days after the bid is accepted. Bidder assumes all liability for equipment. Sealed bids must be received by 4pm Monday June 16, 2025. More information is available at City Hall by contacting 785-499-6620.



The Power of
Community

Jackie Mundt, Pratt County farmer and rancher

The recent tornado that stretched from Greensburg to Plevna went right through the middle of our farm, missing our house and the farm shop by about a mile. The destruction of neighbors’ homes and loss of livestock is incredibly sad, but our entire community has rejoiced that no human lives were lost. Things can be replaced people can’t.

Many Kansans have unfortunately experience storms that have left a lasting terror. In almost every conversation about the most recent tornado, locals have reference having that sick-to-stomach feeling of dread because they saw the tornado headed toward Greensburg and feared the worst again. I moved to Pratt about three years after the Greensburg tornados; I have seen pictures and heard many first-hand accounts, but I don’t think I will ever understand the trauma people in Greensburg and surrounding communities felt through those horrific nights.

Some people enjoy the thrill of storms. Storm-chasing vehicles are commonly seen in our area each year during storm outbreaks. I always thought of these people as hardcore “weather nerds” but last year’s “Twister” sequel showed another type of chaser. There is no doubt storms inspire awe with their massive ominous clouds, powerful winds or raging lightning. I just struggle to see the appeal for people to travel to Kansas to watch storms destroy our communities as a sort of adventure.

About a year ago the emergency management team in Pratt County started live broadcasting during storms on Facebook from their command center. The response in our community has been pretty incredible because in that short time it has built a huge local following. It is like being a fly on the wall, seeing the weather maps, hearing reports from the storm spotter on the radio and knowing the most up-to-date information about what is happening in the county. People know when to take cover and that is saving lives.

Not a lot of good comes out of the destruction of tornados except maybe the reminder of good people in our community. When we came up from the basement after the tornado, text messages poured in from friends and neighbors checking on our safety. We jumped in the truck to go find out if any neighbors needed help and if any of our damage needed immediate attention.

Driving around felt strangely like a warped block party. There were people keeping traffic away from downed power lines, checking for injured people and animals and getting supplies needed for people with the worst damage. Our local emergency management, storm spotters, first responders, law enforcement and utility workers all deserve gratitude for the way that they selflessly serve and protect people during tornadoes and other storms.

In the days following the storm, the power of community has been on display in our neighborhood and across the footprint of the tornado. Families connected through 4-H, church or other community organizations taking animals to their homes to be cared for, sorting through rubble looking for important family mementos; local businesses donating supplies and showing up with heavy equipment to move tree limbs and debris; utility crews from across the state working to get power lines back up.

Severe weather and tornados are an unavoidable part of living in Kansas. Most people know what it is like to experience loss and know it could happen to them next. This reality of disasters and loss has made the people in our communities compassionate, giving and resilient. When bad things in Kansas, you can be sure of one good thing: friends and neighbors will be there to help.

“Insight” is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state’s largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

KDA Photo Contest
Runs June 1 to
August 1

MANHATTAN, Kansas — Kansas agriculture has a beauty like no other, and we love to appreciate that beauty whenever we talk about Kansas ag. While that beauty can’t be fully captured with a camera, we encourage photographers to try, and then to share it with us in the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s annual photo contest. KDA will begin accepting photos on June 1, and will continue accepting entries through August 1.

This year’s KDA Photo Contest categories were selected to promote different aspects of Kansas agriculture: Picture Perfect Prairie, Farm Animals, Agriculture at Work, and Farm Fresh These categories allow you to showcase Kansas agriculture in many ways — the natural resources that make our state flourish; the farm pets and livestock which are our friends and partners at work; the various crops and produce that help feed Kansans; and the everyday activities in agriculture such as working cattle, fixing fence, and planting crops. As always, there is a separate Youth division, for young photographers age 18 and under. And a video category will welcome drone footage, harvest videos, or other short clips of under 30 seconds that showcase Kansas agriculture. Prizes will be awarded to the top two winners in each of the six categories.

KDA serves to advocate for agriculture, the state’s largest industry and economic driver. Photos which best capture the categories will be used throughout the year as we tell the story of Kansas agriculture. After submission, KDA is granted permission to use any photograph for publications, social media, websites, displays, etc. without payment or other consideration from the photographer.

Photo entries should be sent in .jpg format to KDA.PhotoContest@ks.gov. Videos should be sent in .mp4 or .mov format. Entries must include a title and brief description, where and when the photo/video was taken, the photographer’s full name and age, entry category, hometown, and email address.

Guidelines for the KDA Photo Contest, including deadlines, categories and prizes, can be found at agriculture.ks.gov/PhotoContest. Voting to select finalists will begin on KDA’s social media sites in mid-August. For more information, contact Heather Lansdowne, KDA director of communications, at Heather.Lansdowne@ks.gov or 785-564-6706.



June 9 - USD #481 Board of Education meeting, 7 pm @ White City School

June 9 - USD #417 Board of Education meeting, 6 pm @ District Office in Council Grove

June 18 - White City city council meeting, 6 pm @ White City Community Building (NOTE DATE CHANGE!)

June 21 - St. Paul’s Lutheran Church Hog Roast, 11am-2pm

July 7-11 - Community Vacation Bible School @ White City United Methodist Church

Save the Date for
Hultgren Annual Hog
Roast

Save the date of September 27, 2025 for the Hultgren Community HOG Roast. More information will come later.

Weekly Report

From the office of



Morris
County Sheriff

ACCIDENTS:

May 9, 8:30 am - Nahum Lopez, 35, of Emporia, driving a 2011 Dodge Van, was westbound when a deer came from the north ditch and the driver could not avoid striking the deer. The driver was wearing a seat belt.

May 22, 6 am - Jesus Solis-Acosta, 22, of Council Grove, driving a 2015 Chevy, was northbound when a deer came from the west ditch and was struck by the vehicle. The driver was wearing a seat belt.

May 21, 7:38 pm - Robert James Herbig Jr, 81, of Council Grove, was driving a 2017 Ram 1500 westbound on lake road when it struck a deer that had entered the roadway from the south ditch. The driver was wearing a seat belt.

May 24, 12:38 am - Gavin Carson, 18, of White City, was driving a 2005 Ford F-250 westbound on C Avenue when he failed to navigate a curve, ran off the road to the left and struck a tree causing front end damage. No report of seat belt usage.

May 26, 8:55 pm - Kevin Reeves, 35, of Council Grove, driving a 2023 Ram 1500 was southbound on K-177 near MM 71 when he struck a deer that had entered the roadway from the west ditch. The driver was wearing a seat belt.

Fort Hays State

University Announces

Spring 2025 Graduates

HAYS, Kan. (May 29, 2025) - Fort Hays State University recognized approximately 1,691 graduates during its Spring 2025 commencement ceremonies Friday and Saturday, May 16-17, at Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

Graduates who requested privacy are included in the count but omitted from this listing.

Area graduates include:

Alta Vista, KS - Samantha McDaniel, Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Please support the businesses who advertise in The Prairie Post.... they keep the newspaper going!



Saturday, June 21
11 am to 2 pm

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
9719 Clarks Creek Road, Junction City

“Entertainment by
The Church Ladies”

Free will offering with proceeds for new flooring in the Parrish Hall and Kitchen!

NOTICE

White City City Council Meeting
Date Change

The June meeting of the City Council in White City will be held at 6:00 p.m., June 18, 2025.



Macleod’s Liquor Cabinet

110 E. Mackenzie Street

White City, KS 66872

(785) 349-2110

Hours: Sunday - 12pm to 8pm

Monday to Thursday - 12pm to 9pm

Friday to Saturday - 12pm to 10pm