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THE SENTINEL

Serving Edwards County and Northeast Ford County

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Edwards County Residents Speak Out as Water Bill Advances in Topeka

By Faith Brokar
Residents of Edwards County are watching closely after House Bill 2433 passed the Kansas House of Representatives earlier this session by a vote of 116-6, a measure that could affect who ultimately has authority over water transfer projects tied to the county.

The legislation addresses who regulates the transfer or appropriation of water in Kansas. If the bill ultimately becomes law, it would prevent counties from regulating those transfers in ways that conflict with state oversight. Instead, authority would rest with the Chief Engineer of the Kansas Division of Water Resources and the state's Water Transfer Hearing Panel.

Under the bill, counties would not be allowed to require permits, impose restrictions, or charge fees related to water transfer or appropriation projects if those actions interfere with

state authority.

For residents of Edwards County, the issue is not theoretical. It is tied directly to the long-running dispute over water from the R9 Ranch. The cities of Hays, Kansas and Russell, Kansas purchased the ranch decades ago with the goal of eventually pumping groundwater and transporting it north through a pipeline to supplement municipal water supplies.

Town hall meeting draws local concerns

Concern over the legislation prompted a town hall meeting on Tuesday, February 24 in Kinsley, where local residents gathered to learn more about the bill and discuss its possible impact.

During the meeting, Edwards County Economic Development Director Heather Strate and County Attorney Mark Frame spoke with residents about the legislation and the po-

tential consequences for the county.

Strate told those in attendance that the proposal has moved quickly through the legislative process and warned that the measure could shift authority away from local communities.

"The bill essentially hands authority over to the Chief Engineer and the Water Transfer Hearing Panel and insulates that authority from any local action," she said.

Residents attending the meeting were encouraged to submit written testimony to lawmakers and several county officials prepared to travel to Topeka to speak during a Senate committee hearing on the bill.

For many in attendance, the discussion centered on how the legislation could affect local decision-making about water resources that originate within Edwards County.

Connection to ongoing legal dispute

The proposed legislation also comes while Edwards County and the city of

Hays remain involved in a legal dispute related to the R9 Ranch project.

In recent years, county officials adopted zoning and regulatory measures connected to the proposed pipeline and water transfer. Those actions have been challenged in court as the cities involved continue to pursue the project.

Supporters of HB 2433 say the bill clarifies that water resources are regulated at the state level, meaning statewide regulators should have final authority over major water projects.

Opponents argue that the measure could weaken county home-rule authority, limiting the ability of local governments to regulate projects that may affect their land, aquifers, and long-term water supply.

What happens next
Although the bill has passed the Kansas House, it has not yet become law. The legislation must still be considered by the Kansas

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Annual Soup Supper

The Offerle Fire Department Soup Supper will be held Saturday, March 14, 2026 at St. Joseph Hall in Offerle. Starting at 4:00 homemade chicken noodle and chili soups will be served. Also on the menu are hot dogs, chili dogs and ham sandwiches. Tom's Kountry Kitchen will be furnishing homemade cinnamon rolls.

Raffle prizes and gun tickets will be available for purchase. Take a chance on winning a raffle prize, a gun or ammo. Guns are 1. Henry Golden Boy 22lr. Oc-

tagon barrel, 2. Weatherby Vanguard bolt action 25-06, 3. Colt Competition 1911 45, 4. Browning Citori 12 gauge over/under, 5. Glock 19 Gen 4 "American Made-Farm" Compact Handgun 9mm Luger 15rd. Ammo is 223 ammo 500 rounds (2) and 12 gauge pheasant load ammo 6 boxes (2). You do not need to be present to win any of these wonderful prizes. So buy your tickets.

The Offerle Fire Department hopes to see you on Saturday, March 14 in Offerle.

Garden City Man Dies After Car is Struck by Train in Edwards County

A 25-year-old man has died in a train crash after his car got stuck on railroad tracks.

The Kansas Highway Patrol says that at around 3:29 a.m. on Saturday, February 14, Aaron JG Pineda from Garden City was driving in Edwards County on 310th Avenue, just north of US-50. His car got stuck on railroad tracks. He was 25 feet west of 310th Avenue, facing west.

An Amtrak train was headed east on the tracks and hit Pineda's car. Pineda died at the scene.

A conductor and engineer were on the Amtrak train, along with 113 passengers. No one on the train was injured.

Pineda's family has set up a GoFundMe to help cover funeral expenses.

Edwards County Commissioners Meeting Minutes January 12, 2026

The Edwards County Board of Commissioners met with Billy Brokar and Lyle Schuette present. Gina Schuette, County Clerk, was also in attendance.

Vice chairman Brokar called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Mr. Brokar moved to enter into executive session at 8:35 AM for 10 minutes to discuss non-elected personnel and to review payroll reports and to reconvene at 8:45 AM. Mr. Schuette seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

The Board reconvened at 8:45 AM with no action being taken.

Bo Nelson, County Commissioner Elect, joined the meeting.

Mr. Schuette moved to approve the December 15, 2025 minutes as presented. Mr. Brokar seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

The Board approved the following warrants and vouchers:

COUNTY GENERAL \$104,470.90
ROAD & BRIDGES \$25,042.21
NOXIOUS WEEDS \$3,019.77
EMPLOYEE BENE-FIT \$96,318.58
C O U N T Y HEALTH \$8,515.09
EDWARDS COUNTY 911 \$919.83
24TH JUDICIAL DIST DRUG/ALC TEST \$92.73
TOTAL VOUCHERS & WARRANTS: \$238,379.11

Mr. Schuette moved to adopt Resolution No. 2026-01 to designate the depositories for the year 2026. Mr. Brokar seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Mr. Schuette moved to adopt GAAP Waiver Resolution No. 2026-02. Mr. Brokar seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Mr. Schuette made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2026-03 which authorizes Edwards County to continue to participate in the Rural Opportunity Zone Student Loan Repayment Program. Mr. Schuette seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

A discussion followed regarding the county policies.

Mr. Schuette made a motion to approve and adopt the following policies. Mr. Brokar seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

COMMISSIONER MEETINGS: Any individual hearing or public hearing before the Board of Commissioners shall be heard, evidence accepted and the Board shall reserve the right to delay a decision until reviewed, discussed and a later time set for a decision.

The Board shall meet on the designated days according to the adopted annual schedule to conduct the business of the County as presented by the agenda. Agenda items may be added as approved by the Board.

Payroll vouchers and warrants shall be approved and paid biweekly by the Board.

Accounts payable vouchers and warrants will be approved and paid at a meeting on or before the 10th of each month.

All special meetings shall be subject to the call of the majority of the Board.

All commissioners shall act as co-chairman in the signing of county warrants, abatements and refunds.

PURCHASING: Each Department Head shall submit a written invoice for purchase of supplies, with prices for the same, to the County Clerk, acting as purchasing agent

for all purchases, with the exception of District Court expenses per K.S.A. 20-349. The County Clerk will approve the purchases as determined by the budgetary and cash basis laws and as authorized by the Board of Commissioners. Claims will not be paid without an invoice presented.

All purchases of new capital equipment exceeding \$2,000.00 dollars in value will go through the sealed bid process. Bids shall be submitted to the County Clerk's office and presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval before the purchases are made.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE: If possible, the Sheriff shall notify the Board of Commissioners prior to any out of state travel.

All property lost or broken, due to gross neglect, shall be assessed to the officer assigned. All Sheriff's Department vehicles shall be locked at all times.

Every officer shall furnish the Sheriff a list of any personal property used on duty, their blood type and allergies they may have.

The Sheriff, Undersheriff, and Deputy Sheriffs will be allowed \$20.00 per month for the cleaning and repair of issued uniforms. Deputy and Matron hire is designated at \$6.00 per hour not to exceed

\$60.00 per day. In the event that an on staff deputy is utilized, they will be paid at their regular hourly rate.

The Board will allow a maximum of \$4.00 per meal for prisoners. Edwards County shall charge \$50.00 per day for immigration, military and all other out-of-county prisoners. Local city charges shall be \$25.00 per day.

COURTHOUSE SECURITY: Any authorized personnel entering the Courthouse after regular business hours are required upon entering and exiting the building shall be responsible for securing the facility.

ROAD PETITIONS: For the opening and/or closing of a road and viewing thereof, the petitioner shall pay a \$100.00 fee to the County Clerk upon filing the petition.

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY: When the National Weather Service predicts accumulations of snow, preparations for removal will be made at the county road department. Equipment will be checked for readiness. If storm conditions exist, personnel may be released to go home and given instructions on when to report back to duty by the County Works Director.

No snow removal will com-

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THINGS TO REMEMBER

Editor's Note

If you have news that you would like to be featured in an issue of the Sentinel, please call the office at 620-659-2080 (leave a message) or reach me by email at edcsentinel@hotmail.com.

If you need to bring something to the office but I am not there, you may leave it in the dropbox outside the office door. The location of the office is at 221 E 6th St, Kinsley. Thank you!

Word of God

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

~ Isaiah 55:8-9

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Weather Forecast

From Weather Channel

Date	Hi	Lo	Prec. %
Thurs. 5	65	56	21
Fri. 6	73	32	11
Sat. 7	58	34	1
Sun. 8	73	47	1
Mon. 9	83	55	2
Tues. 10	71	31	6
Wed. 11	51	27	2
Thurs. 12	65	39	1

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