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GOVERNMENT

Commissioner's Desk



By Duane Morris
Ottawa County Commissioner
District #3

Please remember this is NOT an official documentation of the minutes, it is meant to be an informative synopsis of County Commissioner activities from my perspective. If you want more information on a subject I mention here, I encourage you to read the full minutes of the meetings elsewhere in the newspaper or online at www.ottawacounty.org.

Our meeting on Monday, December 29th was cancelled due to a lack of quorum. It seems as though the "bug" that's been going around got ahold of several of us. I want to offer this recap of the year.

January, Commissioner Grund and I were in Topeka for new commissioner training. Marie Ballou explained the possibility of a FEMA grant being available to help with the January blizzard and ice storm. We worked with Golden Wheel during renovation and searched for a cook to resume noon meals. We began discussion about a transient guest tax. The commissioners shared visions for the coming year.

February items included news that Miltonvale EMS was shutting down and how best our people could cover the areas of Ottawa County that were previously covered by Miltonvale EMS. Mid February saw predictions of deep freeze temperatures and more snow. Thanks to the Road and Bridge Department for keeping Ottawa County moving in tough times!

Golden Wheel noon meals were once again available in March. Road and bridge crews were cleaning out ditches and checking roads. The fair board shared plans and improvements for the 2025 fair. Katie Vanderhoff from Choose Ottawa County shared that other counties in our area are offering incentives for new people to move into their county. She is putting together a package to attract new residents to Ottawa County.

In April, Patrick Smith, KCAMP Risk Manager, presented a \$3,000 check for having one of the lowest insurance loss ratios of the counties they serve. April 14th Senator Jerry Moran stopped by to say "Hi" and gave a quick update on news from Washington D.C. Ottawa County Emergency Management presented a workshop on proper handling for batteries of all kinds. In May, Tammi Cox, County Clerk and Election Officer, completed certification for election officers. Sheriff Thornton is working with Junction City Juvenile Detention Center about housing juveniles in our jail facility. The courthouse electrical was

updated. Governor Kelly declared disasters for drought conditions in our area, but Ottawa County was placed in a drought watch.

In June, the Loyd Group presented a rough draft of the budget for 2026. The bid for chip sealing 30 miles of paved roads was awarded to Circle C. Company. Bennington Family Center hosted "Fun Day" downtown on rodeo weekend. In July, the 2026 budget was discussed again. The Ottawa County Fair was a success despite hot temperatures. Beth Lockhart was hired for the Ottawa County Museum. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) held a public hearing regarding the proposed hog farm north of Minneapolis.

August happenings were a ribbon cutting in Delphos for Automotive Video Innovations (AVI) in the old school building in conjunction with Del-Fest. Sheriff Thornton was gathering information about housing ICE detainees in our jail. Another award from KCAMP, our insurance carrier, for \$1,863.96 for last year's good loss ratio. The permit for the hog farm (Smoky Hills Pork) was approved by KDHE.

September will be remembered by the thunderstorms that dropped 12"-13" of rain in western Ottawa County. Some residents in Tescott were evacuated by fire trucks due to flooding, and there was major road and bridge damage in the county. The county budget was approved at 83.387 mills, same as last year.

Former Sheriff Ken White passed away; a "Last Call Memorial" was held at the courthouse. Chris Smith presented lease purchase agreements for four new trucks with a 7 year 200,000 mile warranty.

October 1st a news team from Minneapolis, MN came to town to document and explore life in the only other town in America to wear the name "Minneapolis". A tire recycling event was held for all residents of Ottawa County. Marie Ballou, Emergency Management Director resigned and is retiring after 41 years of service. Work began on a tax sale of delinquent properties in Ottawa County.

November highlights include a meeting at the AVI facility with Kansas Department of Agriculture Water Appropriations to discuss water rights. Delphos ALIVE group received \$650,000 grant for new playground, splash pad, and restrooms downtown. Southern Cloud School District is closing, and Dr. Stevens, USD 239 Superintendent, discussed possible effects on USD 239 and the county.

As December arrived, Jason Gipson was welcomed as our new Ottawa County Emergency Management Director. Several items are on the radar for 2026, including meetings with city councils across the county to get a joint vision of what we see as Ottawa County's future. How can we work together to make it happen?

God bless you and your family in 2026!
Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

(First published in The Minneapolis Messenger on December 25, 2025)

IN THE TWENTY-EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT, OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS
PROBATE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF)
) Case No. OT-2025-PR-000029
JOYCE LOUISE SHOEMAKER, DECEASED)
Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 59

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are notified that a Petition has been filed in this Court by Gwyn L. Schuler, a daughter and one of the heirs of Joyce Louise Shoemaker, deceased, requesting:

Descent be determined of the following described real estate situated in Ottawa County, Kansas:

The West Half of the Southwest Quarter (W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Thirty-two (32), Township Eleven (11) South, Range Three (3) West of the Sixth (6th) Principal Meridian, Ottawa County, Kansas; LESS All that part of the Southwest quarter of Section 32, Township 11 South, Range 3 West of the 6th P.M., Ottawa County, Kansas, lying North and West of the centerline of Battle Creek;

and of all personal property and other Kansas real estate owned by Decedent at the time of death. And that such property and all personal property and other Kansas real estate owned by the Decedent at the time of death be assigned pursuant to the laws of intestate succession.

You are required to file your written defenses to the Petition on or before January 20, 2026 at 10:00 am in the city of Minneapolis in Ottawa County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail to file your written defenses, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

Gwyn L. Schuler, Petitioner

SUBMITTED BY:

Cody Branham, #27183
ADAMS JONES LAW FIRM, P.A.
1635 N. Waterfront Parkway, Suite 200
Wichita, KS 67206-6623
Phone: (316) 265-8591 / Fax: (316) 265-9719
cbranham@adamsjones.com
Attorneys for Petitioner

(First published in The Minneapolis Messenger on January 1, 2026)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OTTAWA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

To all qualified electors residing within the boundaries of the Ottawa County Conservation District, notice is hereby given that pursuant to K.S.A. 2-1907, as amended, on the 14th day of January 2026, at 6 p.m., an annual meeting of the Ottawa County Conservation District will be held at the Golden Wheel Senior Center, 114 S. Concord, Minneapolis, KS 67467.

The meeting agenda shall include the following business items:

ONE:

The supervisors of the Ottawa County Conservation District shall make full and due report of their activities and financial affairs since the last annual meeting.

TWO:

The supervisors shall conduct an election by secret ballot of qualified electors there present, of two supervisors to serve for a term of three years from the date of said meeting.

The term of Tyrel Owens and Brody Buzzard is expiring.

All in the county of Ottawa, in the State of Kansas.

By Tyrel Owens, Chairperson
Ottawa County Conservation District

Attest:

Shannon Myer
District Manager

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(First published in The Minneapolis Messenger on January 1, 2026)

IN THE 28th JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT OF Ottawa COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF

Ashly JoAnn Doering Present Name Case No. OT-2025-CV-30

To Change His/Her Name to:

Ashly JoAnn Forshee New Name Div. No.

PURSUANT TO K.S.A. CHAPTER 60

NOTICE OF HEARING - PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL WHO ARE OR MAY BE CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that Ashly JoAnn Doering [Petitioner's Full Name], filed a Petition in the above court on the 20th day of January, 2025, requesting a judgment and order changing his/her name from Ashly JoAnn Doering to Ashly JoAnn Forshee.

The Petition will be heard in Ottawa County District Court, 307 N Concord [Court address], Minneapolis [City], Kansas, on the 20 day of January, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. p.m.

If you have any objection to the requested name change, you are required to file a responsive pleading on or before March 1st, 2026. [Insert date at least 41 days after first publication] in this court or appear at the hearing and object to the requested name change. If you fail to act, judgment and order will be entered upon the Petition as requested by Petitioner.

Petitioner, Pro Se
Name (Print): Ashly JoAnn Doering
Address 1: [Redacted]
Address 2: [Redacted]
City, State, Zip: Minneapolis KS 67467
Telephone Number: [Redacted]

(First published in The Minneapolis Messenger on January 1, 2026)

ALLEN & ASSOCIATES LAW, LLC
212 North Concord
Minneapolis, Kansas 67467
(785) 392-2105
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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

MATTHEW VILLAPANDO Plaintiff,)
)
vs.) Case No. 25 CV 31
)
MATTHEW DUTTON)
ROBERT ANDERSON)
HEARTLAND CREDIT UNION)
CARI FRIESEN)
KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF)
REVENUE AND KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL)
Defendant)

NOTICE OF SUIT (Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 60-307)

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO:

Any interested party

You are hereby notified that on the 23rd day of December, 2025, a Petition to Quiet Title to Personal Property, specifically a 2014 Ford Flex SUV VIN#2FMGK5D88EB07021 was filed in the District Court of Ottawa County, Kansas, by Matthew Villapando, praying for judgment against the above-named defendant and any interested party.

You are hereby required to plead to said Petition on or before the 14th day of February, 2026, at 10:00 o'clock a.m., in said Court, at the Ottawa County Courthouse, 307 North Concord, Minneapolis, Kansas. Should you fail to plead therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course on said Petition.

/s/ Matthew Villapando
1 Matthew Villapando, Plaintiff

PREPARED AND APPROVED BY:

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough."

~Franklin D. Roosevelt