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Grand Finale for Symphony in the Flint Hills Signature Event

MARCIA LAWRENCE/CCLN

Daniel Wiley conducts the Kansas City Symphony as Logan Mize leads the audience in singing “Home On the Range” at the 20th Symphony in the Flint Hills Signature Event Saturday evening.

By MARCIA LAWRENCE
The Chase County Leader-News

As the last strains of “Home On the Range” faded into the dusky prairie twilight, the bittersweet end of a 20-year tradition was reflected in the faces of those singing their love for the beautiful Flint Hills. While Saturday night’s sun set on the final Symphony in the Flint Hills “Prairie Sunset” Signature Event concert, the sun also rises on a new day for the Symphony in the Flint Hills organization.

Addressing the sold-out crowd of 8,000 on the main orchestral stage in the middle of a verdant prairie pasture on the Evans Family Ranch in Chase County, SIFH board chair Mary Ice said, “The Signature Event is the show-stopping event that everyone thinks about when they think of our organization. Our mission is to increase

awareness and appreciation of the Flint Hills and tallgrass prairie. Our amazing staff and volunteers spend countless hours behind the scenes giving all of us a day we will never forget. They work tirelessly to provide this experience and deserve our thanks for a job

well done! The landowners who have shared their properties and the beauty of this region also have our thanks. Additionally, we have a dedicated board of directors who care deeply about this event and the Flint Hills. A birthday party for Jane Koger started the dream

of the Signature Event. We should be in awe that this organization has provided an unmatched event celebrated by thousands for twenty years. Symphony in the Flint Hills has grown and exceeded all expectations. We have a dedicated group considering the possibilities

of ways to continue to provide opportunities for people to celebrate and appreciate the Flint Hills.”

Final reunions of long-time volunteers and concert-goers, a wedding, and an 80th birthday party were poignant reminders of the magic surrounding the Signature Event. It has always been a family affair for SIFH staff, with family members by their sides each year on event day. Every year feels like a reunion, and many volunteers have become friends over the years.

Fifteen-year volunteer Lynda Costello hails from San Diego. “My most memorable experiences have been the annual meet-up with dear friends and staff members. Being able to give a hug to people who share my love of the Flint Hills is always the high point of every event and one that I will sorely miss.”



MARCIA LAWRENCE/CCLN

A sold-out crowd of 8,000 enjoy the Kansas City Symphony in a pastoral setting Saturday for the final Symphony in the Flint Hills Signature Event.

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CROSSWINDS OPENS NEW OFFICE IN COUNCIL GROVE, EXPANDING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



By JESSIE WAGONER
Chase County Leader-News

On Monday, CrossWinds Counseling and Wellness opened its new office in Council Grove. The new office is located at 501 E. Main St. in Council Grove. This office building will replace the agency’s two previous locations in Council Grove.

CrossWinds says the new site allows the agency to consolidate its previous Morris County operations in a single, unified location. The new location is conveniently located just one block from local schools.

“Increased square footage will

allow for the addition of telehealth therapy spaces, expanded in-person counseling and group meeting rooms, and a new office for patient navigators,” CrossWinds representatives said.

The patient navigators are available to provide same-day intakes to help clients connect to care without delay.

CrossWinds’ expanded presence in Council Grove is part of the agency’s larger commitment to providing accessible, high-quality behavioral health services across its seven-county catchment area. The new office addresses increasing community demand in Morris County, ensuring

all in need can receive timely, whole-person care.

“CrossWinds sincerely thanks the Council Grove Area Foundation for its generous contribution supporting the renovation of group spaces,” CrossWinds Representatives said. “This gift directly enhances the quality of care we can offer to individuals and families by creating a more therapeutic environment necessary to healing and growth.”

For more information on CrossWinds Counseling and Wellness and its services, visit crosswindsks.org or call 620-343-2211. The agency will hold an open house at the new location in the future.

CHASE COUNTY COMMISSION HEARS BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

By JESSIE WAGONER
Chase County Leader-News

The Chase County Commission began to hear budget and appropriations requests during their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday.

Kristen Hughes with the Soil Conservation District visited with commissioners regarding appropriations. This year, the county appropriated \$17,000 to the conservation district and they are asking for the same amount for the coming year.

“This year, that allocation goes towards district manager salary and public education funds, so when we host events or do educational events it provides materials and things like that,” Hughes said.

Scott Wiltse, Supervisor for Emergency Preparedness, met with the commission to discuss the yearly budget. He advised that he would need to add a couple of line items to his budget this year for fuel and maintenance on a new utility vehicle being used in the county. He anticipates that it will increase the budget by \$1,000 to \$1,500.

While there, Wiltse advised that they are trying to get damage estimates regarding the recent flooding in the county. He is working with the road and bridge

department and city officials to gather estimates to be submitted to FEMA.

Chase County Sheriff Jacob Welsh reviewed his budget with the commission. Over the last year Welsh has tracked spending in various areas, noting some increased costs and some decreases. Welsh reported a decrease in expenses related to maintenance and laundry services. He saw an increase in fuel costs for transports, food, salaries and medical expenses.

“Food is food,” Welsh said. “The costs continue to go up. We are now going through three different vendors for food, and my kitchen supervisor is shopping all three of them for all of the items to see which one she can get the cheapest from each week.” So, that’s a big increase, just in the commodities there, but that’s where we’re at with food.”

In other business the commission:

Approved a \$1,000 donation to the Chase County and Morris County Sharpshooting National League to help the group fund their trip to a national competition being held in Rogers, Arkansas. The funds are from the crime prevention fund.

Approved warrants and minutes.