

INSIDE:


Travel back in time with the tap of a finger. See page 6 to read about a new National Park Service app being piloted at the Fort Scott National Historic Site.

INSIDE:

The Shead Farm hosted its bi-annual Homestead Festival Saturday. See page 4.

SPORTS:

The Fort Scott High School Lady Tiger softball team won a Class 4A regional title Tuesday. See page 9.



Storm brings deluge, tornado threat

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

Severe thunderstorms that swept through Bourbon County dumped several inches of rain as storm sirens blared throughout the county Monday evening.

On Tuesday, Fort Scott City Manager Brad Matkin said he estimated some portions of Fort Scott received about four inches of rain in a “very short period of time,” causing flash flooding in some areas. He said the Marmaton River had risen Monday night, but had begun to recede Tuesday morning.

Matkin said flash flooding occurred under the railroad tracks at Third Street, and in some other areas that typically flood with heavy rainfall. He said Gunn Park was closed as the Marmaton River went over its banks.

Matkin said a fallen tree on Lowman Street caused “some damage,” but the city’s public works crews made repairs and also managed the closing of roads due to flooding.

“Public works was out last night, and public safety (personnel),” he said. “I felt dispatch did a really good

job communicating with me on the sirens and warnings.”

Matkin said he provided updates to community members through social media. Storm sirens were activated on two occasions due to radar-indicated rotation near the Garland area. Storms moved east and northeast into Missouri.

“I thought it went well,” Matkin said. “Luckily there was no tornado here, but there was one out by Garland.”

Matkin said there were issues with two of the nine storm sirens located within the city. He said a siren at Eighth and Holbrook and one in the area of 12th and Margrave streets did not work Monday night.

“A couple sirens did not go off, so we’re concerned about that,” he said, adding those sirens worked properly during a test about two weeks ago. He said the plan was to test storm sirens Tuesday afternoon.

Bourbon County Emergency Manager Brian Allen said Tuesday most of the concerns reported to him involved flooding and washed out roads. He said he talked with some citizens north of Fort Scott who reported two inches of rain,

while others south of town said they received at least five inches of rain.

“I called around the region and it was rain and flash flooding,” he said. “Some counties did not get much at all.”

Allen said the activity was typical of severe thunderstorms, including downed tree limbs, wind and rain. He said there was “no major hail.”

“I haven’t heard of any wind damage,” he said. “I called the guys in the field and they’re not saying they see wind damage, just water standing everywhere.”

Allen said he talked with city and county officials who were surveying the county Tuesday. He said he spoke with Bourbon County Public Works Director Eric Bailey late Monday, and public works crews were working to move trees off roads and deal with washouts.

Allen said the tornado reports he heard were “more radar,” and the warnings were issued due to rotation indicated in the far southeast part of the county.

“Looking at the tracks, it was more Arcadia than Bourbon County, from what I was seeing,” he said.



Tammy Helm/Tribune photo

Samantha Baglin and 5-year-old Tony Baglin do a little wading with their dog, Groot, in water that accumulated at 3rd and Hulett streets during Monday evening’s deluge.



Teresa Klumpp/Tribune photo

It’s a new day as the morning sun shines on the Marmaton River’s overflow Tuesday morning along 300 Road in Vernon County, just north of U.S. Highway 54.

Discussion of separating landfill from public works returns to the table

BY JASON E. SILVERS
The Fort Scott Tribune

Bourbon County Commissioners on Monday discussed the proposed separation of the public works and landfill departments. Eventually, commissioners agreed to not take any action at this time.

The item was tabled during the commission’s May 12 meeting until commissioners obtained more financial numbers to support differing claims. A motion at that meeting by Chairman Brandon Whisenhunt to separate the two departments died for lack of a second.

Commissioners on May 12 passed 2-1 a motion by Commissioner David Beerbower to table the matter until June 16 and Beerbower invited citizens with concerns to attend that meeting. Beerbower and Commissioner Mika Milburn-Kee voted in favor and Whisenhunt voted no.

At that meeting, citizens representing trash haulers voiced concerns about potential increases in rates and its effects on residents. There was some discussion about increasing charges for out-of-county entities that dump locally.

On Monday, Beerbower said he wanted to apologize to his fellow commissioners and citizens who watched last week’s meeting “for my failure to follow Robert’s Rules of Order, the disrespect I presented toward the chairman in bringing this motion forward. A heated discussion went on between myself and three citizens. We did not follow the rules nor did we allow the chairman to have control of the meeting.”

Beerbower explained his reasons for bringing the matter back to the table and why he recommended the separation. He said misinformation had circulated regarding increases in rates at the landfill, and he was concerned his name was attached.

“Since then, I have thought about it and the purpose that was given to me on why I asked for it to be tabled and discussed later, I’ve since learned it was based off of, for lack of a better word, fraudulent information regarding an email on rates,” he said. “That’s not why I was recommending this motion.”

Beerbower said concerning a cost analysis on the landfill, the budget and service at the landfill are important issues.

“The long range forecast regarding cost and inflation and government regulations and environmental safety, we don’t know what that’s going to bring,” he said. “It could bring a higher cost. Looking at payroll, that could bring a higher cost.”

On May 12, Beerbower said benefits of the separation would be lessening “the responsibility of the current public works department and funding of the landfill can be generated through its revenue.” He said he views the separation as “part of an overall restructuring.” Whisenhunt said the landfill, or transfer station, has its own budget within public works, which is about \$800,000.

“There’s not any reason why it can’t stand on its own, be its own budget item, have its own supervision,” he said. “And that person reports directly to the commission.”

On Monday, Beerbower said he could not discuss some of his reasons for looking at the separation as they involve non-elected personnel.

“I believe some of the factors in the decision regarding the landfill is right now it’s part of a bigger operation, on its own would be its own priority,” he said. “It would get a lot more attention than it gets now, as far as the operational control. It isn’t about punishing anybody, and it’s not about whether we save money or don’t save money. We’re gonna save because we’re not increasing the budget now.”

He said the 2025 budget would remain the same.

“When you lessen one department, logically, if I’m paying X number of dollars and I take part of that out of there, X number of dollars comes out of that as well,” he said. “What you’re paying somebody to do as a supervisor, they’re not doing it anymore and you don’t continue paying that person that money. So in the end it all still balances out.”

Milburn-Kee discussed her concerns with the proposal, later saying a work session had been scheduled to thoroughly discuss several factors. Milburn-Kee has said she would like to hear the opinion of experts, as well as see a risk assessment, and analyses on benefits and costs.



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

Bourbon County Commissioner Mika Milburn-Kee, left, voices her concerns with a proposed separation of the landfill from the public works department as Commission Chairman Brandon Whisenhunt listens during Monday’s commission meeting.

SEE LANDFILL ON PAGE 6

WEATHER

Sunny, with a high near 73. Northwest wind 5 to 7 mph.



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