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THE TIMES

P O T T A W A T O M I E C O U N T Y , K S

WAMEGO • ST. MARYS • ST. GEORGE • WESTMORELAND • BELVUE • LOUISVILLE • EMMETT • ONAGA • OLSBURG

Thursday, June 19, 2025

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Beth Day | The Times
Members of the Onaga Historical Society cut the ribbon to dedicate the new Heritage Hall last Saturday as part of the organization's 50th Anniversary. To the right, Wilma Honig, a charter member of the Historical Society, is introduced.

Onaga Historical Society celebrates 50 years

Beth Day
The Times

The Onaga Historical Society on Saturday celebrated its 50th Anniversary with an open house, retrospect of its own history, building dedication, quilt presentation, and flag retirement ceremony.

Historical Society grounds were

open for visitors much of the day, with special emphasis placed on the new Heritage Building, completed earlier this year.

A special ceremony was held for the building dedication.

"Welcome to our dedication today," said Debbie Berges, Onaga Historical Society president. "Thank you for tak-

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Celebration Saturday at Mt. Mitchell

The Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards invites the public to a celebration and ribbon cutting on Saturday.

The Prairie Guards are celebrating the 20th anniversary of its organization and the completion of the 2019 expansion project.

"With your help the Project has expanded the Park from 45 to 164 acres by completing the purchase of 125 acres of the former Mitchell farm adjoining the Park on the north, constructed a new main entrance and trail head at 29000 Mount Mitchell Road, construction of an interpretive kiosk, and the installation of visitor amenities, including drinking fountain," said Michael Stubbs, member of the board of directors.

The day will include guided wildflower walks and tours of the Mitchell log cabin across the road from the Park will be given from 9 a.m. until noon. The cabin was a station on the western most branch of the Underground Railroad. Escaping slaves were given shelter there on their journey to freedom in Canada.

At 11 a.m. descendants of William Izott Mitchell, who envisioned the Park in 1953 and donated the original acreage, will be present at a ribbon cutting ceremony in a tent located at the bus-turn-around in the new parking area. Golf carts will be available to ferry visitors from their cars to the tent

Westmoreland pool plan progresses

Lily Hansen
The Times

Planning for the new Westmoreland pool continues as Council member Jessi Kincaid shared progress and initial designs at the June 12's city council meeting.

A rendering of the design was presented to the Council showing plans for a shallow pool with a beach entry deepening to 3.6 feet, connecting steps to a larger pool around nine feet deep, multiple sun shades, a slide, a diving board, a handicap lift, and a concrete pool house. Additions will be possible in the future if they are so desired.

The project is estimated to cost \$1.8 million in total with money being set aside from tax revenue, FEMA contributions, and the city's budget.

This \$1.8 includes demolition, which is predicted to start quite soon.

Mayor Waide Purvis said that the "whole community wants this to happen as quickly as possible" and starting on demolition is an exciting step in the right direction. The new pool is projected to be complete and open to the public Memorial Day of next year.

CELEBRATING THE 4TH

Meaghan Moore of the Westmoreland Social Society spoke at the June 12 City Council meeting in preparation for the 4th of July celebration.

Several events for the community are planned for the day including bike decorating on the front lawn of the courthouse, a children's parade down Mainstreet, and concluding with a fireworks show. Carnival games, a cookout fundraiser, and possibly a beer garden are expected, providing fun for the whole family.

Some roads are expected to be closed for the parade but it is only projected to last 15-30 minutes. The council approved this plan, donating \$1,000 to the Westmoreland Social Society for community events, as preparation continues.

USD 323 reviews policy updates

Loryn Clauson
The Times

The Rock Creek School Board met June 9 and reviewed policy updates recommended by the Kansas Association of School Boards.

These updates include limiting costs for public record requests, limiting the personal business interest of students and employees on school grounds and at school functions, updating the employee whistle blower policy, as well as enrollment of military students, and the participation of students in the Kansas State High School Activity Association activities.

The board also approved the creation of an activity account for the Rock Creek High School Environmental Club and reviewed the Professional Development Plan for USD 323. The plan highlights changes to the salary advancement and professional development points system.

Additionally, the school board approved the selection of the Kansas School Improvement model. Rock Creek chose a Fundamental Standards Alignment, which states "We align lessons, instruction, and materials to Kansas standards and clearly identify what students must know and be able to do. This includes interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive skills in pre-K-12."

With this Fundamental choice sublevel measures of Professional Learning, and Professional Collaboration were selected as overall structures. These new policies are required by the Kansas State Department of Education for the school accreditation process.

Wamego board recognizes students

Loryn Clauson
The Times

Numerous students and scholars were recognized last Monday at the USD 320, Wamego, Board of Education meeting.

The recognition was for spring athletic and activity participants who made it to state level competition including FFA, softball, track and field, and boys golf.

MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Trenton Ross, director of mechanical systems, discussed facilities maintenance across the district. He noted the district installed two new boilers at West Elementary over the summer which matched the make and model of the ones installed a couple years ago at the high school, simplifying maintenance and repairs.

Ross also discussed an electrical issue with West Elementary caused during the re-roofing process.

"The roofers accidentally hit a bunch of electrical lines in the roofs," he explained, adding the repairs were managed at night without shutting the school down during the day.

The water lines are aging through the school buildings, and Ross has repaired a water line break in the high school, and over the summer a line at Central needs to be replaced.

LIABILITY, WORKMAN'S COMP INSURANCE

Superintendent Rob McKim recommended the board stay with the same consortium that many other schools in Kan-

Please see **USD 320 Page A2**

Fire causes Walmart evacuation

Staff Report

Manhattan's Walmart store was evacuated last Friday afternoon due to a fire, according to an MFD press release. It reopened Monday.

The Walmart store is located in western Pottawatomie County.

At 4:45 p.m. on Friday, the Manhattan Fire Department was dispatched to 101 Bluemont Ave., Walmart, for a report of a structure fire, the release said. Upon arrival, crews found people evacuating and light smoke showing at the doors. Employees were extinguishing the fire as crews arrived at the middle of the store where the fire occurred. Crews ensured the fire was extinguished by overhauling the area and taking smoldering material outside. A total of 16 firefighters responded on six



Courtesy Photo Manhattan Fire Department
Manhattan fire personnel last Friday respond to a blaze at Walmart.

fire apparatus.

No injuries were reported. The fire loss is not yet available, but it is expected to be considerable due to smoke damage throughout the building. The owner is listed as Wal-Mart Real Es-

tate Business Trust of Bentonville, AR.

Riley County Police Department, Pottawatomie County Sheriff's Office, and Pottawatomie County EMS responded to assist.

According to a *Manhat-*

tan Mercury report, the store was reopened at 12:30 p.m., Monday.

Officials said Monday the store had passed the required inspection and was preparing to open again after being closed for all weekend.

In an emailed statement to *The Mercury* Monday afternoon, Walmart spokesperson Anne Hatfield provided an update on the situation.

"Our apparel section suffered a total loss in the fire and online pickup and delivery services will be shut off for the time being as we work to replenish merchandise as quickly as possible."

A video posted on social media shows a blaze in the shoe section of the store. No arrests have been made. Police said they filed a report for aggravated arson and are conducting a criminal investigation.

Walmart's auto care center reopened Saturday.

Cops N' Bobbers set for Saturday

Kids can hang out with local cops, fish and enjoy some good food Saturday at the annual Cops N' Bobbers event at Wamego's City Park.

The free event runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch will be provided and there are prize giveaways.

Register by scanning the QR code or visit <https://eventbrite.com/e/cops-n-bobbers-tickets-1333123280619>



Area Farmer's Markets are open for business

The opening of farmer/community markets herald the arrival of summer. Markets in Pottawatomie County are open for business.

• Wamego. The Community Market is from 4-7 p.m., Wednesdays, in the United Methodist Church parking lot.

• St. George. The Farmer's market runs from 3:30-6:30 p.m., Thursdays in the city park.

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