



THE TIMES

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

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Beth Day | The Times

The Mt. Mitchell Prairie Guards on Saturday held a 20th Anniversary Celebration featuring a ribbon cutting for the park's new entrance. Handling the honors are: Owen Mitchell, William Mitchell, Henry Mitchell, Jeanne Mitchell, Kirk Buster, Shannon Buster, David Mitchell, Ryann Buster, Julie Mitchell. Far back: Michael Buster, Reece Buster.

A beautiful sign marks the new entrance to the park. Mt. Mitchell is seen behind the sign and to the right.

Mt. Mitchell is located south of Wamego on Highway 99.

Mt. Mitchell Park celebrates 20th anniversary, expansion

Beth Day
The Times

The Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards had a lot to celebrate Saturday, as they marked their 20th Anniversary and held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new entrance to the park.

The park, officially known as the Mt. Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park, has connections to Kansas as old as the state itself.

"In reality, there are four things that make this place

special," said Bruce Waugh, Prairie Guard Board member to those gathered in attendance.

"It's connection to the indigenous peoples is a sacred place," he continued. "In the early 1800s there were trails going west for the pioneers. There was the Underground Railroad.

"Finally," he went on, "I believe this is the only place in the United States that captured all four of those things. So you're in a very special place."

The origins of Mt. Mitch-

ell Heritage Prairie Park came about in the 1950s, when Will Mitchell deeded 30 acres of his farm to the Kansas State Historical Society to become a public park.

But its true history goes much deeper.

For Native Americans, it is a sacred hill where ancestors are buried.

The area marked the passage of mountain men and fur trappers. John Fremont passed over it exploring routes to the west.

For later Americans, the

area became a catalyst in the antebellum "Bleeding Kansas" period of the Civil War, tied to the historic Beecher Bible & Rifle Church in Wabaunsee and the sacrifices of the abolitionists. The western edge of the Underground Railroad ran through it to the Mitchell farm, where runaway slaves were granted sanctuary.

Overlaying it all, is the natural beauty and preser-

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Pott. County in good health

Lily Hansen
The Times

Pottawatomie County stays healthy, according to Leslie Campbell, Health Department director.

Campbell on Monday told commissioners Pott Co continues to score among the highest in the nation in terms of population health and well being, alongside community conditions.

She said that her department has been active for the past six months, seeing a 41 percent increase in clients and a 76% increase in overall visits.

Campbell attributes this to "our full staff" as well as the provided sessions given at the senior center. There has

been an increased engagement with immunizations as well which is to be expected as the measles outbreak continues to spread throughout southwestern Kansas and back-to-school prep begins. The Health Department has also been focused on community outreach and education with events such as a baby shower that hosted 16 expectant and postpartum moms as well as their families. The Health Department partnered with 20 vendors, and held 27 senior sessions at various locations discussing healthy aging. It sponsored four safe medical disposal information events and three Lock up Medication sessions leading 45 families to take a pledge to safely store medication in locked bags or boxes.

Finally, with several school part-

nerships, they provided 50 Stop Vape Kits, 35 Stop the Bleed Kits, and 380 lice kits.

Despite feeling the impacts of national spending cuts, with disease investigation, women and children's food events, and general funding all being dramatically reduced, Campbell remains excited for the coming months.

There are plans to expand preventative care services, begin Safe Kids Coalition for the summer promoting sunscreen and providing first-aid bags, and prepare for fall flu and covid vaccine season. Campbell summarized they "have had a really good six months."

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St. Marys looking at downtown upgrades

Ellie Baker
The Times

St. Marys is looking to improve the downtown area, with emphasis on Railroad Park.

This discussion occupied the city commission for a good portion of the June 17 meeting.

Commissioners met with the city's Recreation Advisory Board and with members of the Kaw Valley Chamber of Commerce to discuss the planned improvements.

"Our primary motivation, getting involved in this public-private partnership, was our Main Street com-

mittee," said Chris Johnson, president of the Chamber of Commerce.. He mentioned that the city had approved the committee's plans for improving spaces near downtown. "We would like to work closely with the city on this plan," he said.

Johnson explained that he had three categories for improving downtown spaces: "parking, safety, and aesthetics."

"We need, maybe, to look at crossing safety," he said, elaborating on the second category. Johnson also mentioned ideas for public restrooms and a toddler splash pad at the park on Alma Street. "My

statement to you is that the board fully supports the work of the Main Street Committee, and we're here to help," said Johnson. He said he would like the commission to "be specific on how you would like to see us work together.

"I think everybody would like to see a comprehensive plan," Johnson continued. "In my opinion, this is like an elephant: and how you eat an elephant is one bite at a time. I think we need to prioritize these things."

Johnson said that he felt that the parking and public restrooms were particularly important issues.

The commission discussed whether the proj-

ect should include the golf course. The park planning group had plans for all the parks in town except for the golf course.

"Someone has to coordinate this whole thing," said Commissioner Matt Childs, "and whether or not people want to deal with the golf course, we [the commission] have to deal with the golf course. It's a major piece of property that's a recreational space, and I think we need to figure out what to do with it."

Johnson said that including the golf course in the

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Pottawatomie County will be all lit up through next week to celebrate freedom. Events start Friday in St. Marys and continue through Wamego's Boomtown Pyro Show on July 4.

St. Marys Red, White & Blue Friday, Saturday, June 27-28

All events at Riverside Park unless noted.

FRIDAY

- 5 p.m. -- Softball tournament.
- 7 p.m. -- Bingo at the Armory.

SATURDAY

- 8 a.m. -- Volleyball tournament.
- 9 a.m.-noon -- Softball tournament
- 10 a.m.-2 p.m. -- Car show, fire department open house, Cancer Walk.
- 1 p.m. -- Parade on Bertrand featuring Fort Riley color guard and Topeka High School Drumline.
- 2 p.m. -- Food trucks.
- 2-4 p.m. -- Literary Club Pie Sale at Senior Center.
- 2:30-7:30 p.m. -- Children's Bounce House.
- 2:30 p.m. -- Topeka High Drumline performance.
- 3-10 p.m. -- Live music (Jayme Green, Cleveland Blue, Michael Ramage, Garrett Rake).
- 6:30 p.m. -- Local Comedian Ben Dabrowski
- 8 p.m. -- Skydivers.
- 9:55 p.m. -- National Anthem (Clare Bryan).
- 10 p.m. -- Fireworks.

Havensville Independence Day Celebration Saturday, June 28

Events are centered around the Havensville Rural High School Building.

- 5 p.m. -- Parade (line up at 4:30 p.m.)
- 5:30 p.m. -- Meal at HRHS.
- 6-8 p.m. -- Carnival.
- 6-9:30 p.m. -- Inflatables.
- 6:30-8:30 p.m. -- Music (Copper Petals).
- 8-9:15 p.m. -- Ice Cream.
- Dusk -- Fireworks.

Celebrate Freedom in Wamego Saturday, June 28 -- Friday, July 4

SATURDAY -- THURSDAY

- 6-10 p.m. -- Carnival, city park (wristbands required).

FRIDAY (JULY 4)

- 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- 50th Annual Walter P. Chrysler Car Show, city park.
- 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. -- Annual Kaw Valley Antique Engine, Truck and Tractor Club Show, ball diamonds east of city park.
- Noon-5 p.m. -- Drama Club Bar Cocktails, Columbian Theatre (ID required).
- 1-9 p.m. -- Food Court, Lincoln Ave (Bittman Mercantile Parking Lot).
- 1 p.m. -- BOOMTOWN 2: Behind the Fence. Wamego pyroshow documentary followed by Q&A with the Pyro Crew, Columbian Theatre.
- 1:30 p.m. -- Hot Wheels Races for kids, city park.
- 3-10 p.m. -- Carnival, city park.
- 4-9 p.m. -- Parking shuttle begins running. Free shuttles from Wamego High School Sports Complex (Hwy 24 & Columbian Rd.) and Wamego Middle School. Returns after fireworks show.
- 6-7 p.m. -- Parade down Lincoln Ave. from 8th to 4th Street.
- 7:30 p.m. -- Pre-Fireworks concert with the 1st Inf. Div. Rock Band, Wamego Rec Complex (Hwy 24 & Balderson Blvd.).
- 10-10:35 p.m. -- Wamego goes BOOM! Fireworks show, Wamego Rec Complex. Get there early! Show is timed to the soundtrack broadcast on B104.7 FM.
- 10:30-11 p.m. -- Post Fireworks Concert, the 1st Infantry Division Rock Band will be back on stage.

Things 'going well' at Wamego power plant

Lily Hansen
The Times

Ben White and Josh Hendricks from the Wamego Power Plant, last Tuesday told city commissioners, "everything is going well" during their annual report.

There are nine engines and four staff who are able to get to the plant quickly if an outage were to occur. The Power Plant is also locally active, having participated in tours for grade school students and an open house for the community, something they are hoping to do again as more generators are installed. Mayor Clifford Baughman thanked the team for their hard work and City Manager Stacie Eichem said they are "very humble but do a great job."

Please see **Wamego Page A4**

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