# Kansas approves \$275,000 settlement of wrongful death lawsuit in inmate's death

Suit stems from alleged strangulation inside 2-person cell at Lansing prison

**BY: TIM CARPENTER** 

Kansas Reflector

The governor, attorney general and bipartisan leaders of the Legislature agreed to a \$275,000 settlement of a lawsuit filed against the Kansas Department of Corrections by the estate of Gary Raburn after he was strangled in a cell at Lansing Correctional Facil-

Attorney General Kris Kobach recommended the State Finance Council make the deal to end the suit filed in Leavenworth County District Court.

In 2024, Gov. Laura Kelly, Senate President Ty Masterson, House Speaker Dan Hawkins and others on the State Finance Council endorsed a separate \$150,000 payment to Raburn's estate to remove state prison health provider Centurion of Kansas from the for failing to protect the 62-year-old

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation ruled Raburn's death in 2023 was a homicide after determining he had been strangled in a two-person cell at Lansing. He was housed with Ladarious Racquez Barkers, who has been charged with capital murder.

Before the attack on Raburn, Barkers had been the subject of dozens of state prison disciplinary reports, including instances of assault, battery, arson, theft, fighting and inciting a riot while incarcerated at El Dorado, Hutchinson and Lansing. His four most recent citations in June were for

Barkers had been sentenced to prison for aggravated battery and aggravated robbery in 2017. He was ordered to serve 15 years for robbing and beating a priest in Kansas City, Kansas.

The lawsuit brought by Raburn's family alleged the Department of Corrections and Centurion were negligent Raburn from Barkers.

At 9:30 p.m. Jan. 6, 2023, Lansing Correctional Facility contacted the KBI to report a suspicious death. Corrections department officials said LCF personnel were summoned to the cell by Barkers. Raburn was found unre-

At the time of Raburn's death, he incarcerated for violating the state's offender registry law. He was convicted in 2005 of aggravated kidnapping in Neosho County and served eight years in prison. He was returned to state custody after failing to meet requirements of the registry.

The State Finance Council voted 9-0 on Tuesday to approve the latest settlement in the case without debate following an executive session closed to the public. The motion to adopt the agreement was made by Hawkins, the House's top Republican, and seconded by Masterson, the Senate's GOP pres-

# Bridges, budgets and ballots

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scheduled for letting in November. Bridge 913A on CR 1800 is waiting for funding through KDOT. Bridge 59 on Buckeye has a new overlay. The Bridge Crew has been working on CR 1400, mile one west of Caney. There is a series of five pipes there that needed maintenance. They replaced a box culvert on CR 3300. A box culvert on CR 4000 at mile five is undergoing repairs currently.

Road and Bridge purchased 272.32 tons of salt to add to their inventory. They spread approximately 1,297 tons of wintery mix last year, which cost \$36,113. The mix runs at \$27.83 per ton. Road rock used up a good chunk of the budget due to rain wash-outs. They have had to use 65,331 tons so far this year. Three rail cars of dust control were delivered to Beechner Grain for pick up and 57 residents applied for dust control.

The Peter Pan project was awarded funding from High Risk Rural Roads. This project will continue the Peter Pan road improvements north from CR 4600 to CR 4800. The design is currently being completed by Cook, Flatt and Strobel. Public Works applied for funding through the BUILD grant but was not awarded. They will prepare to reapply.

Ami Standridge, County Clerk, provided the Commission with her department's quarterly report. She reported that her office hired a new employee just last week. Standridge and her

staff completed the Revenue Neutral Rate processes for the entities on June 16. The RNR reports will be mailed out by August 8. They attended a budget training and finalized the budgets for the County's 15 cemeteries and 12 townships. They have three notary publics available in their office now. They have already set up the general election, which will be November 4, but they still need to set up the pole worker training and order the ballots. They must have a minimum of 90 election pole workers, but they like to have 111. The Clerk's office has verified 117 election workers so far, which leaves therapy groups that they do in-house. Their final goal is them with few backups. Standridge is investigating a focus on evidence based whether the County can reduce the number of poling locations for townships to cut down on the number of

pole workers they will need. Denise Webb, Community Corrections, presented the Comprehensive year-end Plan outcomes from fiscal year 2025 which ended in June. Their first goal is to analyze the revocations due to technical violations. Sixty percent of closures successful. Forty percent were revoked and sent to the KDOC. Many of the technical violations were not reporting in, discontinuing treatment and continuing drug use. They reviewed their appointment reminder system that they put into place last year to see how effective it has been. The second goal was to target what they do based on probation assessments; looking at how the officers are writing their case plans and how they are trying to intervene. Webb audits a minimum of 10% of the case load. Another objective is addressing mental health to reduce recidivism. He stated, "Jail sanctions are not necessarily effective. You put someone in jail for 42 to 78 hours and they come out and keep on doing what they were doing." Community Corrections paid for 13 mental health intake assessments and medication assessments and six individual therapy sessions. They also have cognitive

Representatives Bukaty Companies gave a report on their health insurance broker services for Montgomery County. Medical costs have not increased in cost. However, pharmacy costs have doubled since last year; going from 20% to 40%. The County has a strong network with Aetna.

The next meeting of the County Board of Commissioners will be held on Monday, August 4 at 9:00 a.m., in the lower level of the Judicial Center. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Recordings of the meetings are available for viewing at the new county website www.ks-montgomerycounty.civicplus.com under the agendas section.

## Neosho County man

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fender act after a search warrant was served at 22030 Ottawa Road in Erie, as per a release from KBI stated.

According to the Kansas Registered Offender list, Hawkinson has been a lifetime registered offender since 2016, stemming from a 2013 conviction for felony aggravated indecent solicitation of a child under 14 years of age.

The KBI Child Victims Unit had been investigating Hawkinson since a tip was received from the Nation al Center for Missing and Exploited Children in May. Following his apprehension, Hawkinson was booked into the Neosho County Jail. It is unclear if he has been given a bond amount as of press time and, according to the KBI, this investigation is ongoing and is expected to be prosecuted by the Neosho County Attorney's Office.

If anyone with information related to this investigation would like to come forward, KBI urges them to call 1-800-KS-CRIME. Anonymous tips can also be submitted online at www.kbi.ks.gov/sar.

## Scammer

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warrant had to do with the federal courthouse in Johnson County. And the scammer assured him it did.

"At that point, I thought, I'll just let the cat out of the bag," Grissom said. "I said, Well, I've practiced law for 42 years, and I've appeared quite often in federal court. I've never been to a federal courthouse in Johnson County."

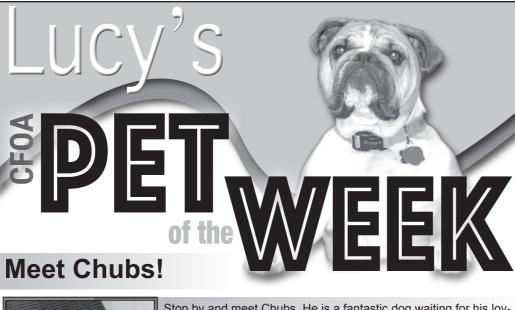
And the phone went "Click."

Later, Grissom called the number he got from "Sgt. James," and sure enough, the scammer answered.

The 747 area code is out in my old neck of the woods, in and around California's San Fernando Valley.

So to scammer 747-212-6854, whoever you are: You just tried to swindle a former federal prosecutor, and you gave him a working phone number, you

meathead. You might want to think about dropping off the grid for a little while. Pro tip from a former local: the Angeles National Forest is nice this time of year.





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**Helpful Tips** 

#### Make the most of your staycation with these activities

Staycations have grown in popularity in recent years. A 2018 poll from YouGov Omnibus found that 53 percent of the more than 100,000 participants had taken a staycation at some point, proving that forgoing traditional vacations for relaxing respites in the comfort of home is a wildly popular trend.

While they might not be as exotic as venturing off to parts unknown, staycations need not be limited to days spent lounging by the backyard pool or laying out on the living room couch. The following are a handful of activities that can help people make the most of their staycations.

Spa experience: Who doesn't like the chance to engage in a little pampering when staying in a fancy hotel? That same luxury can be enjoyed during a staycation by booking an appointment at a local spa that offers all the amenities, including a sauna, steam room, beauty treatments, and, of course, massage services.

A day on the links: The opportunity to test one's mettle on a new course in an idyllic setting is one golf lovers simply cannot pass up while vacationing. A similar challenge can be found when staying at home. Do a little homework to find the most challenging course within driving distance of your home and then book a tee time, treating yourself even further by indulging in a good meal in the clubhouse once your 18

#### **Helpful Tips**

holes are up.

The wonders of nature: Professional and personal lives can make it hard to enjoy the great outdoors, even when it's steps from your front door. During a staycation, commit to exploring local parks, hitting the trails to hike or mountain bike or renting a boat or kayak and taking to the

· City life: Just because you aren't traveling far away doesn't mean you cannot still get out of town for a day. Plan a day trip to a big city within driving distance of your home. See the sights, visit a museum and cap it off with a visit to a restaurant serving your favorite ethnic cuisine. "Go" camping: Parents of

young children can make a staycation more special by spending a night camping in the backyard. Leave your devices indoors as you sit around the firepit telling stories and making some delicious s'mores. Then set up the tents and sleep under the stars for a memorable night in the

· Rainy day: If the weather is not cooperating during your staycation, create a backup plan to add a little life to rainy days. Plan a daylong film festival in which each member of the family gets to choose a movie everyone can watch together. Make sure you have plenty of popcorn on hand and order in a few pizzas so everyone can focus on the films. Families planning staycations

can make these relaxing respites at home more enjoyable by incorporating a few unusual activities throughout the week.

#### Types of firepits for your backyard oasis

Outdoor entertaining areas are popular among homeowners, and firepits are one of the most sought-after additions to such spaces. In fact, a 2016 survey from the American Society of Landscape Architects found that fireplaces and firepits were the most popular outdoor design element in 2016. Various styles are available to homeowners who want to add firepits to their backyards, and choosing the right type may come down to budget, the amount of yard space available or even personal preference. Wood firepit: As their name suggests, wood firepits burn wood, which may appeal to homeowners who already have wood-burning fire-places inside their homes. . Because they don't require homeowners to tap into gas lines, wood firepits are generally easy to set up and install, and many homeowners prefer the aesthetic appeal of crackling wood and flames that's synonymous with wood firepits. Gas firepit: Gas firepits are touted for their convenience, as they don't require homeowners to carry wood and build fires. Upon being connected to a gas source, gas firepits provide fire at the click of a switch. Gas firepits are also appreciated for their safety, as there is little or no risk that flames from gas firepits will grow too large and become difficult to control. · Gas fire tables: Gas fire tables might be ideal for those homeowners whose sense of decor favors more modern looks. Gas fire tables come in a variety of shapes and sizes and, like gas firepits, there's no need to struggle with lighting a fire or carrying firewood. Tabletop firepits: Homeowners, condominium or apartment dwellers with limited backyard space may want to consider the convenience of tabletop firepits. Restaurants may use ta-bletop firepits in their outdoor seating areas because they provide warmth and ambiance without taking up much space. Tabletop firepits fueled by gas will not need to be connected to a gas source, which may appeal to consumers who want something that's simple as well as small. · Fire urns: While they might not technically qualify as firepits, fire urns provide a similar effect as firepits. Fire urns

### **BUS DRIVERS NEEDED**

are typically gas-powered

and may be an ideal choice

for homeowners who are

looking for a unique, awe-

inspiring feature for their

outdoor entertaining areas.

Chautauqua County U.S.D. #286 is now accepting applications for regular route bus drivers. Applicants must be able to obtain a CDL and pass a health physical. CDL training and assistance is available through U.S.D. #286. Starting pay is \$13 per hour, with a two-hour guarantee for each route.

Applications can be picked up at the District Office, 416 E. Elm Street in Sedan. For more information, please contact Lindsey Carter, Transportation Supervisor, at (620) 725-