

OPINION

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 886-5654 or email ghp@gyphillpremiere.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

When my husband Terry and I moved to the family farm in 1991, the people we met left a lasting impression.

My first job was as deputy clerk in the Barber County District Court, working under Clerk Darla Stone. Among my early responsibilities was processing traffic tickets issued by Kansas Highway Patrolman Bryan Quick. His impeccable uniform, polished shoes and purposeful demeanor stood out. One day, he confided that local parents were upset about the speeding citations he issued to teenagers. When I asked how he felt about the criticism, his response was straightforward: "If a ticket saves even one kid's life, it's worth the hassle to me." That principled stance gave me confidence in the community's future.

Thirty-five years later, I find myself addressing the same individual – this time as a county commissioner – regarding a proposed data center near Sharon. My husband and I have worked our entire lives toward a peaceful retirement: enjoying quiet summer evenings on the front porch,

watching deer move through our wheat fields and listening to distant birdsong. That vision, shared by many long-time residents, including families whose land has been in their hands for six generations, is now at risk.

We have attended numerous meetings before the Barber County commissioners and the Sharon City Council to voice our concerns. Despite extensive research, we and others have presented on issues such as water usage, energy demands and constant noise pollution, our questions remain largely unanswered by both the commissioners and the project proponents. A petition circulated by Herbie Landwehr in Sharon and Sharon Township garnered signatures from approximately 90 percent of residents opposing the data center, yet it was dismissed. Requests for rezoning and a moratorium were also denied.

I recognize the challenges facing our county: an aging and declining population, the absence of zoning regulations and the need for economic growth without raising taxes. Proponents highlight potential revenue,

and I understand why a company like Google selected Barber County as the site for what would be Kansas's first rural data center. However, questions linger about promised funds from previous projects, such as wind and solar farm revenue that has yet to materialize as expected.

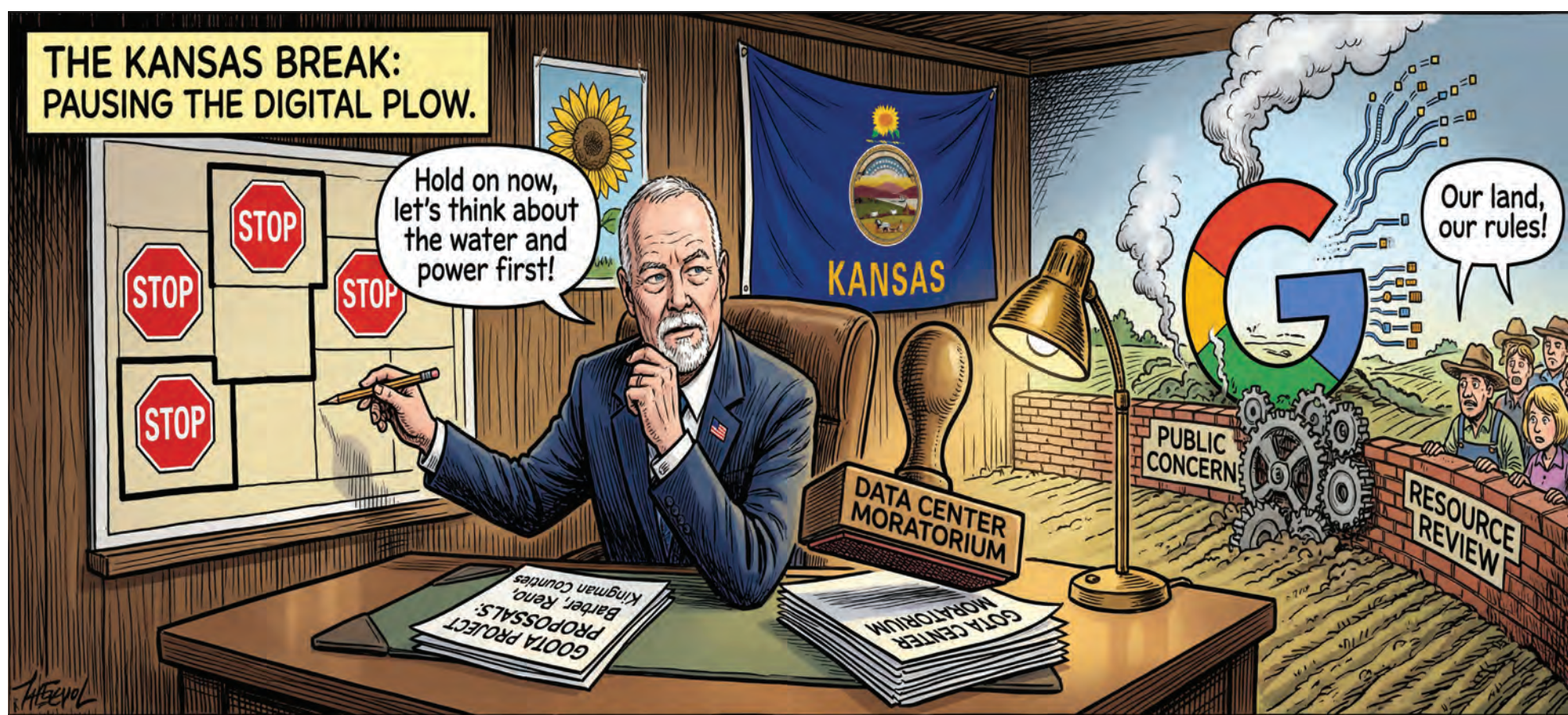
I harbor no personal animosity toward anyone involved in this decision. My primary concern is the apparent disregard for the clear will of many residents as expressed through public testimony and the petition. Our elected officials serve the people, and both the U.S. Constitution and the Kansas Constitution affirm that government derives its authority from the consent of the governed. Decisions of this magnitude warrant broader input.

Rather than assuming widespread support, I respectfully urge the commissioners to place the question on the ballot. Let the residents of Barber County have a direct voice in determining our community's future.

Sincerely,
Dee Saddler
Sharon

Sen. Murphy Calls for Moratorium

Senator Michael Murphy (R-Sylvia) released the following statement: "While large scale data centers may come with some enticing incentives, they also bring some very well-known, and unknown, problems. Data centers use huge amounts of water, water we do not have to spare. Additionally, these centers devour more electric power than you can imagine. One data center would consume more than the new power plant planned for Reno County could produce. Transparency is always an issue with any industry, but more so with these trillion-dollar corporations from out of state. Our citizens have many questions, questions that receive vague answers or are simply ignored. Who will bear the cost of the increase in power demand? What are the long-term effects of exposure to infrasound? Before we bring these centers to our counties, we need some answers to these questions and more, data driven from serious studies not just answers to placate the people. With so many potential long-term consequences to our infrastructure, our land and citizens quality of life, I call on the county commissions of Reno, Kingman and Barber counties to adopt a three-year moratorium on new data center development. This pause should allow time for meaningful, thorough scientific studies. Doing so would restore confidence within the people. As Majority leader Blasi has stated, if these moratoriums are not instated, I will join him in the introduction of legislation to ensure the best interests of the community are protected. I hope we can continue the good relationship between the state and the district and look forward to working together in the best interests of our citizens and communities."



DATA CENTER MORATORIUM IN BARBER, RENO AND KINGMAN COUNTIES, KANSAS: LOCAL CONTROL vs. BIG TECH EXPANSION.

PUBLIC NOTICES

(Published in The Gyp Hill Premier on Thursday, March 19, 2026) 2t

PUBLIC NOTICE: REQUEST FOR BIDS – USD 254 BARBER COUNTY NORTH

USD 254 Barber County North is soliciting bids for a roof recover at the Jr/Sr High School, 400 Eldorado St., Medicine Lodge, KS. Scope includes removing EPDM membrane to existing insulation and installing 1/2" HD Securshield cover board with a Carlisle 115 Mil Sure-Weld Reinforced Gray TPO Energy Star Rated "Class A" system. Requirements include a 20-year manufacturer's material/labor warranty, 3" hail, and 72 MPH wind coverage. Contractors must have maintained ESP Hall of Fame status for the last 3 years. Bids must be received by April 1st, 2026, at 4:00 PM. Submit bids to Supt. Ryan Cunningham, 100 East 1st, Medicine Lodge, KS 67104, or rcunningham@usd254.org. For full specifications or to schedule a site visit, contact 620-886-3370. SITE VISIT IS REQUIRED FOR BID TO BE CONSIDERED. Bids must be received by April 1st, 2026, at 4:00 PM.

(Published in The Gyp Hill Premier on Thursday, March 19, 2026) 2t

PUBLIC NOTICE: REQUEST FOR BIDS – PLAYGROUND TURF INSTALLATION

USD 254 Barber County North is soliciting competitive bids for the supply and installation of high-durability playground turf at Medicine Lodge Grade School. The project includes site preparation, drainage considerations, and the installation of a safety-rated synthetic turf system. Bidders must be licensed and provide proof of previous institutional installations. Bids must be received by April 1st, 2026, at 4:00 PM. Bids should be submitted to Supt. Ryan Cunningham, 100 East 1st, Medicine Lodge, KS 67104, or rcunningham@usd254.org. For full specifications or to schedule a site walk-through, contact 620-886-3370. SITE WALKTHROUGH IS REQUIRED FOR BID TO BE CONSIDERED. Bids must be received by April 1st, 2026, at 4:00 PM.

Got News to Share?

Call (620) 886-5654 or email ghp@gyphillpremiere.com

LEGAL NOTICE

(First Published in The Gyp Hill Premiere on Thursday March 12, 2026) 3t

IN THE THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT DISTRICT COURT, BARBER COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of
BOB SOWARDS a/k/a BOBBY D. SOWARDS
a/k/a BOBBY DEAN SOWARDS, d/o/d 10/16/2023
and
LARRY SOWARDS a/k/a LARRY JOSEPH SOWARDS
d/o/d 06/21/2020

Case No. BA-2026-PR-4

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in this court by Evan Sowards, heir at law of Bob Sowards a/k/a Bobby D. Sowards, a/k/a Bobby Dean Sowards, deceased and Larry Sowards a/k/a Larry Joseph Sowards, deceased, praying for the Determination of the Descent of Bob Sowards a/k/a Bobby D. Sowards, a/k/a Bobby Dean Sowards, deceased and Larry Sowards a/k/a Larry Joseph Sowards, and pertaining to the devolution of title to the following interest in property:

An undivided one-half interest in and to all the minerals in and under said land, and/or oil and gas royalty interest, including working interest:

A tract of land beginning 320 Feet East of the Southwest corner of the NW/4 of Section 18, at a fence corner and going Easterly along the half-section line a distance of 4910.7 feet, thence turning left and going Northerly along the East side of said section a distance of 2550.0 feet, thence turning left and going Westerly along the North side of Section

18, a distance of 1316.0 feet, thence turning right and going Northerly into Section 7, a distance of 1321.7 feet, thence turning left and going Westerly a distance of 1316.0 feet, thence turning right and going Westerly a distance of 2600.0 feet, thence turning left and going Southerly along the West line of Sections 7 and 18, except for a short deviation at the South end, a distance of 3905.0 feet, containing 422.3 acres, more or less, All in Township Thirty-three (33) South, Range Thirteen (13) West.

AND

The Southwest Quarter (SW/4) of Section One (1); the East Half of the Southeast Quarter (E/2 SE/4) of Section Two (2); the Northeast Quarter (NE/4) and the East Half of the Northwest Quarter (E/2 NW/4), the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (NE/4 SW/4); and the North Half of the Southeast Quarter (N/2 SE/4) of Section Eleven (11); All in Township Thirty-three (33) South, Range Thirteen (13) West of the 6th P.M.

and all other property, real and personal, or interests therein, owned by the decedent at the time of death; and you are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before April 9th, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. of said day, in said court, in the City of Medicine Lodge, Barber County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

EVAN SOWARDS, Petitioner
ALAN C. GOERING GOERING AND SLINKARD
P. O. Box 366
201 South Main
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104 (620) 886-3751
Attorneys for Petitioner

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