

Enrollment: Decrease

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3A, except in football, which is 2A. Valley Heights stayed at 2A, and Axtell, Centralia, Frankfort and Hanover remained in 1A.

“It (the decline) was a little more than we thought,” said Marysville USD 364 Superintendent Darren Schroeder. “There are a lot of factors. Our pre-kindergarten numbers are low. Families are just not having as many kids.”

At Marysville Elementary there are 27 pre-kindergarten 3-year-old students. Last spring, 52 sixth-grade students were promoted to junior high, which is a net loss of 25 students, Schroeder said.

“We are seeing a trend of lower class sizes entering into preschool,” he said. “Kansas had 7,500 fewer students enroll in kindergarten last year, and the state birthrate is reaching lows for the past 50 years.”

The state association compiles enrollment figures for its 349 member schools yearly. This year 14 schools changed classifications from last year. None of those schools was in Marshall County. The closest to this area was Clifton-Clyde, which rose from 1A to 2A.

“There are other factors that are impacting this trend besides lower birth rates, such as the economy, online and homeschooling,” Schroeder said. “The enrollment decline is most notable at the elementary level, which the district has been aware of and has been planning for the last couple of years. We project that there will continue to be a decrease at MES for the foreseeable future. We’re trending downward, as the whole state is. With all of this being said, we are going to continue to provide programs for our students to help them be college- and career-ready.”

A building and trades program opened this year at MHS, and plans are to continue to improve in other areas, Schroeder said.

Marysville’s enrollment was 684 from pre-kindergarten through high school. There were 325 at MES, 125 at the junior high and 234 at the high school. Last year there were a total 714 students. This year, the smallest grade level is 27 students in second grade and 27 pre-kindergarten 3-year-olds. The juniors have the largest class at MHS with 70 students.

Marysville also has two parochial schools — St. Gregory’s Catholic School and Good Shepherd Lutheran School.

Enrollment numbers were down at St. Gregory’s. Enrollment was 145 this year; a decrease of 10 students from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade from the previous year.

The largest class was 24 first-graders.

The smallest was pre-school 4-year-olds.

At Good Shepherd, there are 65 students in kindergarten through eighth grade and 10 in day care and pre-school. Numbers are about the same as last year, said principal Kyle Erickson.

Second grade is the largest class at 13. The smallest is first grade at three.

Area districts

A total 363 students are enrolled in the Valley Heights school district, which includes Waterville Elementary School, Blue Rapids Elementary School and Valley Heights Junior-Senior High. The overall number is down by nine students from last year.

The biggest classes are 33 in eighth grade, 32 in sixth grade, 31 seventh-graders and 31 sophomores. The smallest classes are pre-kindergarten 4-year-olds at 17, kindergarten at 16, first grade at 17 and the junior class at 18.

“Our incoming classes (kindergarten) are not matching our outgoing classes (seniors), causing a majority of the decline in our enrollment,” said Superintendent Sean Spoons. “Our district has not seen a major decline in enrollment in one year but has been declining over a period of time.”

Axtell School continued to remain consistent in enrollment at 155. There were 44 enrolled in high school this year. Freshmen were the largest class with 16 students. Sophomores and seniors each had nine students, which are the smallest.

Axtell had 111 students from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade. The seventh-grade class had 13 and was the largest. The fifth-grade class was the smallest at eight.

“Our numbers are pretty similar to where we were last year in both high school and elementary school,” said Axtell principal Whitney McGinnis. Overall at Hanover, 175 were enrolled in the public school from pre-kindergarten through high school. There were 30 in preschool, 80 in kindergarten through eighth grade and 65 at the high school.

The biggest class is kindergarten with 23 children. At the high school, both the freshman and junior classes have 19 each. The smallest class is the seniors with 10 and second grade with one. In USD 380, which is Centralia and Frankfort, the numbers were similar to last year. Centralia reported 332 enrolled students in pre-kindergarten through high school. There were 35 in pre-kindergarten, 151 in kindergarten through sixth grade, 48 seventh- and eighth-graders and 98 in high school. The largest class was the fourth grade with 28 students. The smallest is first grade at 17.

At Frankfort, 299 enrolled from pre-kindergarten through high school. There were 142 in elementary school and 117 in junior and senior high school. The largest class was 28 in fourth grade, and the smallest was 16 in eighth grade.



Frontier Development's Tyler Holloman opens original pocket doors that are part of a Broadway Lofts apartment.



Photos by Sarah Kessinger

Square bolts are part of the history remaining in the western building now under renovation in the Koester Block.

Broadway Lofts project preserves the past while installing updates

By Chris Pannbacker

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The second floors of 901 and 905 Broadway are starting to take on the look of a new life, even as interesting features of their past are revealed and saved where possible.

In a walkthrough last week, Tyler Holloman, co-founder and managing partner of Frontier Development Group, Manhattan, said the Broadway Lofts project remains on track for opening in late 2027, despite challenges. Plans are to open 12 one- and two-bedroom apartments on the second and third floors of the commercial buildings in the Koester Block.

Holloman said this project has been more complex than some because it involves three buildings with five occupied commercial spaces on the ground floor and plenty of deferred maintenance.

In the 901 and 905

buildings, which are the western and middle buildings of the block’s three commercial structures, all abatement has been completed and debris removed. Apartments are being framed in. Mechanical and plumbing systems are roughed in.

As work moves forward on 901 and 905, similar tasks will be completed on 909. Next up for 901 and 905 will be insulation and sheetrock.

The roof has been a challenge, Holloman said, largely due to the deterioration of the parapets, the brick at the top of the building where the new roof membrane needs to be attached. Holloman said the brick was extremely soft at the top of the building, making it challenging to attach the membrane. That has been repaired.

The new roof is a commercial waterproof membrane that looks almost like a sheet of vinyl, Holloman said.

Plumbing lines were

brought in from above to minimize disruption for the commercial space on the first floor.

On the back side of the building, all overhead lines will be buried and all air-conditioning units will be located on the roof, Holloman said. Sewer lines will be rerouted.

“There will be big improvements back here,” he said.

The company’s goal is to complete all major underground and infrastructure work before winter.

Holloman said he is still working with the city on moving a water line.

Square footage of the apartments, as well as size, will vary for the one- and two-bedroom apartments. The two apartments on the third floor of 905 will be long in configuration, due to historic preservation funding rules for splitting space.

Where possible, the construction crews have saved original

features such as pocket doors and framing. The new elevator will be inserted in the shaft of a former freight elevator.

Although windows will be replaced, natural lighting will remain in several apartments, and Frontier has matched the style of replacement windows to historic photographs.

Holloman said the apartments will have good sound separation barriers to limit noise.

A waiting list for those interested in rental has begun, and his company has had a number of calls about rental opportunities. He said formal applications wouldn’t be available until about 90 days from completion, which could be next fall if all goes as planned.

In one of his most recent projects in the small town of Cottonwood Falls, where the company transformed a former school building into apartments, there has been very little turnover, he said.

Budget: County budget for 2027 approved

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unknown.

Other budget appropriations approved Monday included \$15,000 from the 2026 budget and \$15,000 in 2027 for the RSVP program.

Here’s how the 2027 mill levy is split:

- General fund — 12.745 mills, down from 13.248 mills.
- Road and bridge — 13.802 mills, up from 13.492 mills.
- Health nurse — 0.677 of a mill, down from 1.081 mills.
- Recycling/household hazardous waste — 0.307 of a mill, up from 0.304 of a mill.
- Agency on Aging — 1.520 mills, up from 1.202 mills.
- Appraiser — 1.213 mills, up from 1.209 mills.
- Noxious weed — 0.558 of a mill, up from 0.313 of a mill.
- Elections — 0.322 of a mill, up from 0.292 of a mill.
- Solid waste — 0.100 of a mill, down from

0.110 of a mill.

- Ambulance — 1.967 mills, up from 1.934 mills.

- Employee benefits — 11.792 mills, down from 12.171 mills.

The budget authority for expenses for 2027 is \$26,286,058 and the amount of property tax

the mill levy will raise is \$9,922,446. Other revenue for the budget comes from carryover, transfers, grants, fees and other sources.

The assessed valuation for 2027 is \$220,484,843, an increase from \$218,743,748 in 2026.

A mill is \$1 in tax for every \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

During a department head meeting before the budget vote, the commissioners said the 2027 budget would be tight and encouraged department heads to plan accordingly.

Farm to Table FUNDRAISER

October 10th | Filley Stone Barn

4:30 PM Silent Auction Starts

Enjoy beverages and snacks as bidding begins.
(No alcohol provided)

5:00 PM Dinner Begins

6:15 PM Silent Auction Ends

must be present to win

Tickets: Members \$25 | Non-Members \$35

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Barnyard-\$100

Includes advertising on table and 2 tickets

Farmhouse-\$250

Includes advertising on table, advertising on Facebook, and 4 tickets

Silent Auction

Canoes from our Venetian Night Fundraiser
Sports Tickets · Restaurant Gift Certificates
Dempster Memorabilia · Artwork & Quilt
Many other items

menu

- »Garlic Fennel Marinated Smoked Pork Loin
- »Sundried Tomato & Basil Sliced Baguettes
- »Corn/Steamed Green Beans w/Bacon
- »Chopped Vegetable Salad, Tossed Salad, or Broccoli Salad
- »Iced Tea & Iced Water
- »Apple & Pecan Pie for dessert

Money raised benefits the Gage County Historical Society and Museum and the Filley Stone Barn.

ADVOCATE CLASSIFIEDS PAY!

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