



ERIE FALL CLEAN-UP WEEK BEGINS TUESDAY

THE ERIE RECORD

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Board receives KASB training

By EDDIE HIBBS III
Record Publisher & Owner

With the current USD #101 Board of Education a member short, Tuesday's meeting would have been a golden opportunity for a new board member to have been seated.

Dr. Michelle Hubbard with KASB was a guest speaker and provided 55 minutes of "board training." It is not uncommon for someone from KASB to provide training for the board.

"Not one single board member should be the star of the team, but all working together," Dr. Hubbard shared.

One of the topics discussed pertained to board interaction with parents. Board member Isaiah Kephart shared he tries to tell individuals whom they should call when they are angry.

Board President Brad DeMeritt added to Kephart's statement.

"I think it is important to listen," he said. "Sometimes it is something as simple as they are not understanding something."

Board member Brian Semrad agreed with DeMeritt's

statement.

"Agree, most issues are with individuals not understanding," Semrad said.

"Some parents just need to be heard," Dr. Hubbard followed. "It is important to get them to the right person. Stay away from giving advice."

Dr. Hubbard encouraged the board members to "give no directives to staff."

"Be careful about that," she said. "The board needs to operate as a whole. New board members can disrupt the entire process. No surprises at a board meeting is a good thing."

Dr. Hubbard then reviewed the seven times a board may enter executive session, such as non-elected personnel, student matters or attorney-client privilege.

"Chaos in the board room leads to chaos in the classroom," DeMeritt added.

Eight Characteristics of an Effective Governance Team

Dr. Hubbard reviewed eight characteristics of an effective governance team. They included:

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Coach Pitts submits retirement papers

By EDDIE HIBBS III
Record Publisher & Owner

At the end of a near 3-hour meeting Tuesday evening, in the final action before adjourning, six members of the USD #101 Board of Education accepted three resignations as part of the personnel actions.

All three resignations involved personnel associated with the high school:

Kyle Carpenter resigned only one of his several positions – that of assistant track coach for the high school this spring.

Timothy Grilliot was a high school math teacher and his resignation went into immediate

effect.

Erie High School head football coach David Pitts submitted his retirement paperwork, which includes all current positions, including physical education instructor at the high school, head boys basketball coach at Galesburg Middle School, and assistant high school softball coach. Pitts' last day with the district is May 20.

The board normally operates with seven members, but the district has not received any applicants for the seat previous held by Carla Rush, who resigned her position due to health and family issues.

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60 Years of Public Education in Erie

The current school year marks the 60th year of the 101 school district. It was 1967 when two Neosho County Unified School Districts merged to become the first Consolidated Unified School District in the State of Kansas. The school district numbering system started at 200 for Unified School Districts and ran up to over 500. There have been approximately 20 similar mergers state-wide in 60 years. By being the first to consolidate, our local school became #101.

During the past 60 years, the school district has been among the larger employers in Neosho County. It has also been a major source of employees who have moved into the area. The economic impact on the area has been very large throughout all sixty years.

My personal experience with CUSD/USD #101 spans most of the period. I was a high school student at Erie High School for the first four years of the district's existence, I have spent nearly 17 ½ years on the school board, my wife taught driver's education one summer and my three daughters had a total of nearly 21 ½ years as students. A tremendous number of employees were involved during those years.

The following list of names represents employees working at Erie High School between August 1967 and May 2001. That is 25 to 60 years ago. This is far from being a complete list but possibly around half of the total for that period. The MEM-Erie Museum on the southwest corner of Fourth and Main Street has most of the yearbooks for Erie High School since the district was formed and many of the yearbooks and senior photo displays for the entire history of Erie High School. If this story, piques your interest, stop by the museum to learn more.

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Did You Know?



WILLIAM
COOK
MEM-ERIE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Homecoming Heroics



CRYSTAL MCGOWEN/For The Erie Record

Erie High School junior Quincy Brown (10) follows the block of junior Carson Grady (56) during the Red Devils' 24-0 win against Southeast Friday night.



CRYSTAL MCGOWEN/For The Erie Record

THE ERIE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR HOMECOMING COURT, from left: Justus Graff, Josie Garten, King Cooper Cleaver, Queen Maycee Baldrige, Manny Ramirez, and Kayden Holbert. Homecoming ceremonies took place prior to the start of Friday's football contest against Southeast. The Red Devils won 24-0.

National Newspaper Week

A town without a newspaper loses more than just news

By ROBB HICKS

During National Newspaper Week, we should all ask what would happen if our local newspaper suddenly disappeared.

Our community would lose more than headlines.

We would lose the public record of who voted for what, how tax dollars were spent and which promises were kept. We would lose the watchdog that asks the hard questions.

We would also lose the chronicle of daily life: obituaries, births, honor rolls, ballgames, county fairs, veterans programs, business openings, retirements and the small acts of service that hold a town together.

A newspaper is not just paper and ink. It is part of the civic fabric that holds a community together.

That is why the crisis facing local newspapers should concern everyone, not just people in the news business.

According to Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, close to 3,500 newspapers have disappeared in the United States since 2005.

In the past year alone, another 148 vanished through closures or mergers. About 50 million Americans now have limited or no access to local news. Nearly 80% of the nation's news deserts are in predominantly rural counties.

This did not happen because people stopped needing local news. It happened because the old business model broke down.

For generations, newspapers were supported by readers, advertisers and public notices. That worked when downtowns were strong, businesses were locally owned and advertising decisions were made by people who lived in town.

The local hardware store bought an ad because its owner lived here, knew the newspaper and understood that supporting local institutions was part of doing business in the community.

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TEAM 101: Keep on Truckin' EHS instructor challenges students with rare project

This fall, Erie High School teacher Justin Graff is challenging his students with an ambitious project that has reached beyond the classroom walls to engage a wide-ranging community.

Graff is challenging his students to rebuild a truck, with the goal of driving it to the Mid America Truck Show (MATS) in Louisville, KY, March 18-20, 2027. As it turns out, building a truck is also building a lot of enthusiasm in the Erie High School shop.

This project kicks off Kansas' new Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway, written by Graff himself.

The curriculum highlights Heavy Equipment Technology and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) skills. The commemorative build showcases the skills needed for these career paths and will provide Erie High School the opportunity to present these skills on a national level.

The project Graff and his students are undertaking is no small task, as the 1972 International 4070A Transtar was pulled from the weeds from Jacob Nash's property in August, and at the moment is completely stripped down in the Erie High School shop.

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Submitted photo

The 1972 International 4070A Transtar Erie High School students are rebuilding as part of Justin Graff's class.

Rooted in Community, Committed to Truth

By PATRICK WOOD
CEO Multi Media Channels

This week, newspapers across the country pause to mark National Newspaper Week. The theme this year is simple but it carries weight: rooted in community, committed to truth. Those six words describe what we have tried to do since the first issue of our first paper rolled off the press, and they describe what local journalism has always asked of the people who practice it.

A tree only grows as tall as its roots allow. The same is true of a newspaper. Ours are sunk into the towns we cover, into the school board meetings, the high school football games, the obituaries that name three generations of a family in a single paragraph, the small business openings that never make it onto a national news feed. We are not visitors passing through a community to file a story and move on. We live here. Our children go to the same schools we write about. We worship in the same churches, shop at the same hardware stores, and wait in the same lines at the post office as the readers who pick up our papers every week.

That kind of rootedness comes with a responsibility, and it is the second half of this year's theme. A community paper earns its place at the kitchen table by telling the truth, even when the truth is inconvenient, even when it concerns a neighbor, a friend, or a local official we have known for years.

Community journalism without honesty is just gossip with a masthead. The trust a reader places in a local paper is built one accurate story at a time, and it can be lost just as quickly by one story that cuts corners.

It is worth asking why independent, community owned newspapers matter so much right now. Local news has been squeezed from every direction. Larger chains have consolidated newsrooms and stripped them down to a fraction of their former size. National platforms have learned to extract value from local content without returning much of anything to the communities that produced it. In the middle of all that pressure, the small weekly paper covering a county board meeting or a Friday night game still does something no algorithm can replicate. It shows up. It asks the second question.

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