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Kansas Press Association 2026 Awards of Excellence WINNER

Inside this week's edition:

- Advance voting begins soon
- KSHSAA changes Udall's classification
- Belle Plaine Police Department Report
- Sumner County Sheriff's report
- Crossword and Sodoku puzzles
- Comics
- Weekly columns from local and national columnists

Quote of the Week:

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."
– John Adams

Send your own Quote of the Week submissions to NewsBellePlaine@gmail.com!

Today's Trivia

Which famous painting does Cameron stare at in Ferris Bueller's Day Off?

Answer on page 14

Verse of the Week:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.
—1 Timothy 2:1-2

Kansas Press Association 2024 Awards of Excellence AWARD WINNER

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See You At The Pole

Every year on the fourth Wednesday of September, people from around the world gather around their flag to pray. This year, I gathered with many students, fellow teachers, administrators, and local Christians to sing and share prayers on September 26 at Belle Plaine High School.

This first event began as an offering by a small youth group in Burleson, Texas, in 1990. Since then, it has become an annual event for not only people in Texas, but across the United States and around the world.

During a weekend youth group retreat in 1990, many students felt led by the Spirit to go pray at night at area schools. This original event was student-initiated, student-organized, and student-led. Little did they know that other students would step up and follow their lead.

After their experience, thousands of other youth groups did their own challenges. They decided to pray together every year on the 4th Wednesday in September before school. Within a year, it became a national and international event.

Praying outside of 'instructional time' gave students a legal way of praying while at school. This was protected under their constitutional right to free speech. The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed this in its "Equal Access Clubs" decision in 1990.

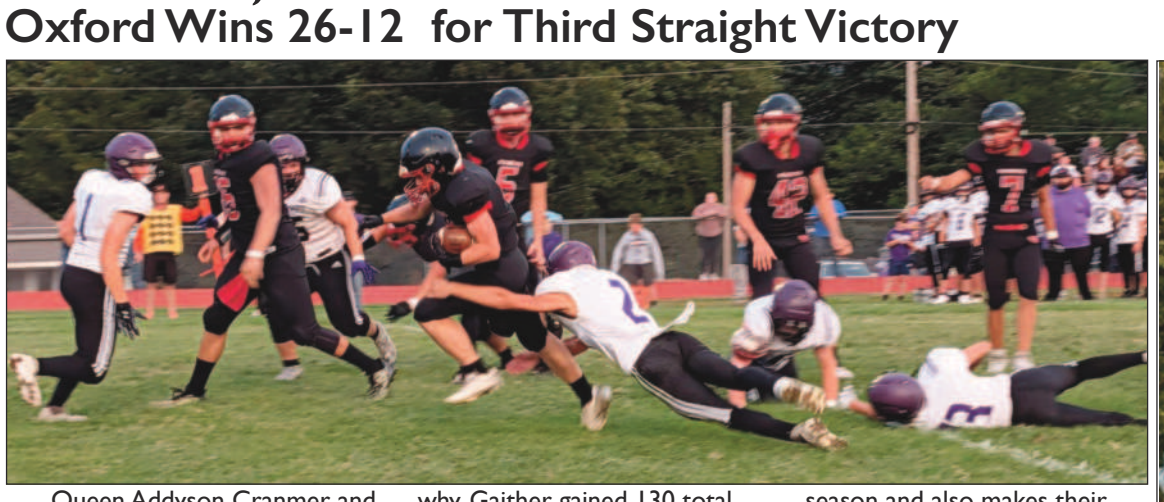
Last Wednesday, students gathered at flagpoles outside their schools to offer up their prayers. Their obedience to God grew into something that will continue.

The exact number of people who gathered to offer up their prayers at the pole this year is unknown, but the numbers grow every year. An estimated 1 million students from more than 20 countries participate each year.

Next year's annual event will be at the pole of your local schools across the world. Look forward to being there on September 22m 2027.

Cranmer, Gaither Crowned Oxford Homecoming Queen, King

Oxford Wins 26-12 for Third Straight Victory



Queen Addyson Cranmer and King Logan Gaither were crowned during halftime at Friday's Oxford vs. South Sumner game.

Oxford waltzed into their contest on Friday with two straight wins...and they left with three. They enjoyed a cozy 26-12 victory over the South Sumner [Caldwell/South Haven] Outlaws. The matchup marked the Wildcats' most dominant win of the season so far.

This one was decided up front, and Logan Gaither and Tyson Morris were the main reasons why. Gaither gained 130 total yards and three touchdowns while Morris threw for 158 yards and a pair of touchdowns on only 15 passes. Gaither also posted 77 receiving yards, his most since at least 2025.

Oxford didn't go easy on the quarterback and picked off two passes before the game was over. The picks came courtesy of Caige Benson and Dwayne Fountain.

Oxford's victory bumped their record up to 3-1. As for South Sumner [Caldwell/South Haven], their defeat was their first of the season and also makes their record 3-1.

Looking ahead, Oxford will square off against Udall at 7:00 p.m. on Friday. As for South Sumner [Caldwell/South Haven], they will be playing at home against Central at 7:00 p.m. on Friday.

The entire Oxford High School Homecoming Court included Madison Mayfield, Taleah Morris, Cade Lewellen, and Dahzael Castillo. Float winners were the Sophomores!

More photos on pages 11 & 14

City of Belle Plaine Releases Statement on Upcoming Sales Tax Vote

The City of Belle Plaine released the following on Tuesday to address the special ballot question that voters will decide on November 3.

Belle Plaine residents to consider new sales tax to relieve water rate hikes

The Belle Plaine City Council on August 19, 2026 voted unanimously to approve a new sales tax question on the November 3 election. The 1 percent sales tax, if approved by voters, would provide relief toward the cost of the water improvement project.

Based on the sales tax collection for the city street budget of $173,657.10 in 2025, if approved the new 1 percent sales tax would collect an estimated $1.74 million over a 10-year span. Sales tax collections do vary year-to-year, but historically tend to move upward. This year the City Clerk notified the Council in June that collections for 2026 could top $200,000.

By applying those dollars to the debt service for the water project already completed in the first phase of the project, the sales tax would provide an estimated $20 per month for the average Belle Plaine water customer on their monthly bill. The estimated is based on customers who use 5,000 gallons of water each month and the projected water rate increase to cover the construction and debt costs.

Relief for individual customers who do not use that much water would be lower and high-use customers could see a larger per-month-reduction from the sales tax. Phase 2 of the water project has not begun and would add to the water rate increases.

Phase 1 included the rehab of water wells, a new water treatment plant, and a new water tower. Phase 2 includes the rehab of the water distribution system.

The city continues to apply for additional grants to help cover the costs of the water project.

The current 1 percent sales tax in Belle Plaine is used for streets and will continue.

There are advantages to the sales tax, in that it utilizes purchases made in local businesses by non-residents to help carry the burden of the water projects. For example, travelers stopping at a local restaurant or convenience store would pay the sales tax. It should be noted that fuel purchases in Kansas do not include sales taxes.

This sales tax question does not have a specific sunset date. The debt service on the project is a 40-year commitment, but the tax question is written that if the city should pay off the debt earlier the sales tax would sunset. A copy of the ballot question is below:

NOTICE OF SPECIAL QUESTION ELECTION
CITY OF BELLE PLAINE, KANSAS

The City Council of the City of Belle Plaine, Kansas (the "City"), has heretofore, pursuant to a resolution duly adopted on August 19, 2026, declared it advisable to conduct a special question election relating to the imposition of a one percent (1.0%) City-wide general purpose retailers' sales tax. Notice is hereby given to the qualified electors of the City that such special question election has been called and will be held on November 3, 2026, for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of the City the following proposition:

Shall the following be adopted?

Shall a general purpose retailers' sales tax in the amount of one percent (1.0%) be levied by and in the City of Belle Plaine, Kansas, to take effect on April 1, 2027, or as soon thereafter as such tax may be levied, with the revenue from such tax to be used for general City purposes, including, but not limited to, the improvement, operation, repair, and maintenance of the City's water utility system infrastructure, and for the payment of any City bonds or loans and interest thereon that may be issued or incurred for such water utility system infrastructure; and provided that such retailers' sales tax shall expire upon the earlier of 40 years after it is first levied or the repayment of any such bonds or loans and interest thereon, all pursuant to the provisions of K.S.A. 12-187 et seq., as amended?

To vote in favor of the question submitted on this ballot, darken the oval to the left of the word "Yes." To vote against it, darken the oval to the left of the word "No."

YES
NO

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