SWKS News

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Rooster Roundup Returns To Region

By: Tyler Hook

Pheasant hunting season is underway, and hunters across Southwest Kansas have an additional opportunity to win prizes during the 13th annual Rooster Roundup. The popular hunting contest runs from November 14, 2026, through January 31, 2027, with more than 400 specially banded pheasants being released throughout the region.



Pheasant In Prairie Habitat

Organized through Wild West Country and participating communities, the contest encourages outdoor recreation while supporting local businesses. Participating communities include Scott City, Dodge City, Garden City, Montezuma, Hugoton, Jetmore, Liberal, and Ulysses. Banded pheasants are being released across eight Southwest Kansas counties, providing hunters with opportunities to participate throughout the season.

Hunters who harvest a banded pheasant can register the leg band at a designated location to receive an official Rooster Roundup hat and a community gift or gift certificate valued at a minimum of $10. Each registered band also qualifies for a grand

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New Southwest Kansas Crime Task Force

A new federal initiative aims to strengthen criminal prosecutions across rural Southwest Kansas by improving cooperation between county attorneys and federal law enforcement agencies. The Southwest Kansas Task Force, announced November 13 by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Kansas, will provide local prosecutors with additional training and resources to help identify cases eligible for federal prosecution.

The program will train participating county attorneys to serve as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys, allowing them to work more closely with federal prosecutors and law enforcement agencies. The initiative is intended to bridge gaps between local, state, and federal jurisdictions, particularly in rural communities where prosecutorial resources can be limited.

U.S. Attorney Ryan Kriegshauser said the training will allow participating attorneys to return to their communities with a better understanding of federal prosecution procedures and serve as local contacts for law enforcement. The goal is to streamline the process of identifying and referring criminal cases that may qualify for prosecution in federal court.

While specific categories of criminal cases targeted by the task force have not yet been fully outlined, a significant portion of the partnership's funding comes from the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program. The organization works to combat drug trafficking through coordination among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

The initiative represents an effort to expand federal prosecutorial resources into

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Death Notices

Larry D. Munsell, 83, died on Saturday, October 31, 2026 at Lane County Hospital in Dighton. He was born on March 26, 1943 at Ransom the son of Warren Lawrence & Anna Lena (Schmieg) Munsell.

Larry graduated from Healy High School and served in the Army National Guard. He was a lifelong farmer-stockman in Gove and Lane Counties. He was a member of Healy Methodist Church.

Graveside Service will be at 11:00 AM Monday, November 23, 2026 at White Rock Cemetery at Pendennis. Friends may call from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM Sunday November 22 at Boomhower Funeral Home in Dighton. Memorials are suggested to Healy Methodist Church in care of Boomhower Funeral Home. Condolences may be posted at www.garnandfuneralhomes.com

Jay Emerick Chase, lovingly known as "Hawk" by those who love him, left this world on November 9, 2026, probably with that shit-eating grin on his face and a joke he never got to finish. Knowing him, he's already found the nearest wood shop on the other side and is deciding which project to tackle first while Michael Ray leans in and says, "Lemme ask you a question."

Born August 3, 1954, in Guymon, Oklahoma, to Felicia and Billy Jean Chase, Jay spent over 50 years working in the oil field, where he earned calloused hands, a strong back, and a vocabulary that could peel paint. He proudly worked hard so his girls could dance and twirl and would never want for anything, and he never once let the job take the fun out of him.

Visitation will be Friday, November 13, 2026, from 2:00 PM until 8:00 PM, at Garnand Funeral Home, Ulysses, Kansas. A celebration of life will be held at Country View Baptist Church with Pastor James Berry officiating, on Saturday, November 14, 2026, at 1:00 PM. Graveside service will be at Elmhurst Cemetery in Guymon, Oklahoma, at 3:30 PM. Dress comfortably. He would have! In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you tell a dirty joke, hug your grandkids, and take the long way home on two wheels. Rest easy, Papa. Save us a spot in the shop. Memorials can be given to Operation Christmas Child in care of Garnand Funeral Home, 405 W. Grant Ave., Ulysses, Kansas 67880. Condolences may be posted at www.garnandfuneralhomes.com.

Dennis Hayzlett age 76 passed away November 8th, 2026 at Common Spirit Hospital in Garden City, Kansas surrounded by family and friends. Dennis was born on November 3rd, 1950 to Lester and Juanita (Coder) Hayzlett. He grew up with 3 siblings, Gary, Randy and Joyce.

Dennis spent the majority of his life in Lakin, Kansas and after graduation in 1969 he attended college at Fort Hays State University. Immediately after graduation he began his 31 year career at the Department of Social Services in the Child Support Enforcement Division retiring in 2005.

Graveside Services will be held at 2:30 P.M. on Saturday, November 14th, 2026, at Lakin Cemetery with Pastor Rafael Franco officiating. There is no visitation. Family suggests memorials be given to Children's Mercy Hospital, Shriners Children's Hospital and Wounded Warriors all in care of Garnand Funeral Home. Condolences may be posted at www.garnandfuneralhomes.com

Braeden John Boyd, 16, died on Saturday, November 7, 2026, in Garden City, Kansas. He was born January 16, 2010, in Garden City, the son of Jeff & Cassy (Bishop) Boyd.

Funeral Services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 14, 2026, at the First United Methodist Church in Garden City with Rev. Jim Akins officiating. The service may also be viewed on Facebook Live on the Garnand Funeral Home Facebook page. Burial will follow at Valley View Cemetery in Garden City. Friends may call from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday at Garnand Funeral Home in Garden City. The family suggest memorials given to GCHS Student Funds - Cross Country, or to the First United Methodist Church, both in care of Garnand Funeral Home, 412 N. 7th St., Garden City, Kansas 67846. Condolences may be given at garnandfuneralhomes.com.

Eugene Paul Ryan passed away peacefully on November 12, 2026, in Orem, Utah. He was born on March 11, 1928, on a farm to A. Estes and N. Mae Ryan homesteaded by his father in 1906, located in Scott County, Kansas. His early education took place in a one-room schoolhouse located nearby that he attended with his younger sister, Betty Ann.

A memorial will be held 6-8 p.m. on November 17, 2026, at Utah Valley Mortuary in Lindon, Utah.

Graveside services will be held at 10:30 a.m. CST on Friday, November 20, 2026, at the Scott County Cemetery, 1330 S Kansas Road, Scott City, Kansas.

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Thank You For Reading the 8th Edition of the SWKS News, we hope you enjoyed it and look forward to your continued patronage!
Sincerely,

GAMES

A	E	O	C	P	H	A	M	S	T	E	R
R	U	D	H	E	P	O	N	Y	C	A	R
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ANIMALS!

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Shadow
- Shepherd mix
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- Spayed
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Crew
- 1 to 1½ years old
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Is 'AI' A Great Investment Opportunity?

Courtesy of Milo Milosevich

Artificial intelligence, commonly known as AI, is quickly changing the way we live, work, and do business. From healthcare and manufacturing to agriculture and financial services, AI is finding its way into nearly every industry.

But beyond the technology itself, investors are asking an important question: Is there an opportunity to participate in this growth?

The answer may be yes, but understanding where the opportunity exists is important.

When most people think about investing in AI, they immediately think about the large technology companies developing artificial intelligence software. However, the opportunity extends well beyond the companies creating the technology.

AI requires enormous computing power, specialized computer chips, data centers, electricity, cooling systems, and supporting infrastructure. Companies involved in semiconductors, energy production, utilities, and industrial technology may also benefit from the growing demand.

For everyday investors, there are several ways to participate. You can purchase individual stocks, invest in mutual funds, or consider exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that focus on artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductors, or related technology.

Each approach has different risks. Investing in a single company can create significant exposure if that company struggles. Specialized technology funds can also be concentrated in a relatively small number of industries or companies.

It's important to remember that just because a technology is revolutionary doesn't mean every company associated with it will be a successful investment. Excitement can drive stock prices higher, sometimes beyond what future business results may justify.

As with any investment, diversification, valuation, and your personal risk tolerance matter.

AI could represent one of the most significant technological developments of our lifetime. The challenge for investors isn't simply identifying the next big thing. It's finding a sensible way to participate without putting their financial future at unnecessary risk.

The best investment opportunity isn't always finding the next winning stock. Sometimes it's building a portfolio positioned to participate in long-term growth.

For More Information or Questions: milo@hpyretirement.com

Destination Effect Workshop To Be At Elkhart

Local business owners and entrepreneurs will have an opportunity to discover new ways to attract customers and strengthen their businesses during the upcoming **Destination Effect Workshop**, hosted by Network Kansas in partnership with local economic development efforts. The event will take place at the Morton County Civic Center, located at 400 E. Orchard in Elkhart.

The workshop will feature **Jon Schallert**, a nationally recognized business consultant who specializes in helping businesses transform themselves into destinations that attract customers from both near and far. His approach focuses on identifying what makes each business unique and developing simple, achievable ideas to build upon existing strengths rather than completely reinventing operations.

According to Alexis with Morton County economic development, several local business owners have previously attended Schallert's training, including Laura Martin of Sew Loved Quilt Shop, and returned with positive feedback. Alexis also attended one of his presentations in Manhattan, Kansas, where Schallert shared real-world examples of businesses that successfully developed creative approaches to attracting customers.

The day's activities begin with check-in at 8 a.m., followed by the morning workshop from 8:30 to 11:15 a.m. After lunch, participants can attend a marketing roundtable from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., featuring an open question-and-answer session with Schallert. Individual business consultations will follow from 2 to 4 p.m. for select business owne

WORKSHOP Page 1

Business owners throughout Southwest Kansas are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to explore practical ways to strengthen their businesses and attract new customers. Additional event information is available at **https://networkkansas.com/destination-workshop/**.

Garden City Propane
1304 N. Massey Ferguson RD, Garden City, KS 67846 | (620) 276-8903

Historic Adobe Museum Prepares For Season

The holiday season is quickly approaching, and the Grant County Historic Adobe Museum is preparing to bring back a favorite community tradition with its 2026 Christmas Parade of Homes. The annual event offers residents and visitors an opportunity to tour beautifully decorated homes throughout the community while celebrating the sights and spirit of Christmas.

This year's Christmas Parade of Homes will take place Saturday, December 5, from 4 to 8 p.m., featuring five homes decorated for the holiday season. Participating homeowners include Ginger Anthony, Keric and Leilani Sullivan, Shan Meile, Walen and Nancy DeWitt, and Eddie and Jean Franco. Each home will offer visitors a unique glimpse into the creativity and holiday traditions of local residents.

Tickets are $20 per person and may be purchased through December 4 at Tate's Barbecue, Grant County Drug, The Main ARTery, and Before & Crafter. Tickets will also be available at the Grant County Historic Adobe Museum through Saturday, December 5.

In addition to the Parade of Homes, the museum will continue its traditional Christmas festivities throughout December. Santa Claus will make a special appearance on Sunday, December 6, beginning at 2 p.m., offering families an opportunity to celebrate the season with a visit from the man in red.

The festivities will continue Sunday, December 13, at 2 p.m., with an afternoon of holiday music, twinkling lights, and warm apple cider. The museum invites families and community members to enjoy the seasonal atmosphere and make a visit to the Historic Adobe Museum part of their Christmas traditions.

With decorated homes, holiday music, and festive gatherings, the Grant County Historic Adobe Museum hopes to bring the community together once again to celebrate the warmth and traditions of the Christmas season.



Rolla Gives Posthumous Diploma To Veteran

By: Phoebe Brummett

USD 217 Rolla Schools honored Vietnam veteran Thomas “Tom” Myers with an honorary diploma in a ceremony recognizing a milestone he missed after being drafted before completing high school. His daughter, Jessica “Jessie” Myers, helped make the tribute possible.

The ceremony took place Wednesday, November 11, at 2:30 p.m. Rolla alum Kylie Brummett opened the event by singing and signing the National Anthem. USD 217 Superintendent Randy Rockhold introduced the distinguished guests, including Representative Marty Long, Kansas State Department of Education Board member Jean Clifford,



Jessie Myers daughter of the late Tom Myers-Courtesy Photo

and Jessie Myers and her husband, Michael Paolini, both of whom serve in the United States Air Force.

Rockhold recognized the veterans in attendance, with special recognition for Myers’ classmate, Gerald Cowser. Clifford read a letter from her husband, who was unable to attend.

Rex Richardson, superintendent of USD 374 and a former Elkhart physical education teacher, principal, and superintendent, joined Phoebe Brummett, current USD 217 vice president, in presenting Jessie with a flag from the VFW in memory of her father. Principal Tracy Flanagan then presented her with Myers’ honorary diploma.

James Langley delivered a Veterans Day address, and Brigadier General Bill Turner sent a video message honoring Tom and his family.

The event was well attended and carefully organized by USD 217 staff. The ceremony reflected the respect and appreciation felt for Myers and the many reasons he deserved to be honored.

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‘The Moccasin Speaks’ Earns Silver

A documentary exploring one of the most significant and tragic chapters of High Plains history has earned national recognition. **“The Moccasin Speaks” received the silver medal** in the Western Film–Documentary Long Form category at the 2026 Will Rogers Medallion Awards, held Saturday, October 31, at the River Spirit Casino Resort in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The documentary tells the story behind the legend of the German Family Massacre, an event deeply connected to the history of the Western High Plains. Through historical storytelling, the production seeks to bring greater understanding to a difficult chapter of the region's past while preserving its place in the broader history of the American West.

Written by historian Deb Goodrich and filmed by Ed Lowry, the documentary was produced for the Fort Wallace Memorial Association and is based on the book by Arlene Jauken. The project represents an effort to preserve and share regional history with audiences beyond the communities where these events unfolded.



The film earned its silver medal in a competitive category that included two other notable productions. The gold medal went to **“Little House Homecoming,”** while the bronze medal was awarded to **“Kevin Costner's The West: Oregon Trails.”** The recognition places the locally focused documentary alongside productions associated with nationally recognized figures in Western entertainment and historical storytelling.

The Will Rogers Medallion Awards annually recognize outstanding achievements in Western literature, film, music, and other creative works that preserve and celebrate the history, traditions, and cultural heritage of the American West. Named in honor of the legendary Oklahoma humorist and entertainer, the awards recognize projects that help keep Western history alive for future generations.

Organizers of “The Moccasin Speaks” also expressed appreciation to the many individuals and organizations whose contributions made the production possible. Supporters included the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Wallace County Foundation, Friends of the Cottonwood Ranch, and numerous families, businesses, and individual donors throughout the region.

For the Fort Wallace Memorial Association and those involved in the production, the silver medal represents more than an award. It is recognition of the importance of preserving the stories of the High Plains, including those that are difficult to tell, and ensuring that the region's history continues to reach new generations.

Rooster

Continued from Page 1

prize drawing, with seven $500 prizes being offered. Specially marked "Bounty Birds" in the Dodge City area provide additional opportunities to win prizes.

The contest is free to enter and open to properly licensed hunters. Leg bands are color-coded by participating community and must be registered through an approved location. Hunters should present a valid hunting license when claiming prizes. Entries may also be submitted by mail with the required information.

Beyond the prizes, Rooster Roundup helps promote Southwest Kansas as a hunting destination. With approximately 185,000 acres of walk-in hunting land available throughout the region, visiting hunters provide an economic boost to local restaurants, hotels, fuel stations, and other businesses. Community gift certificates further encourage spending within participating towns.

The contest concludes January 31, 2027, with grand prize winners expected to be announced the following week. Hunters are encouraged to review the official rules and registration requirements before participating.

For complete contest details, registration locations, and prize information, visit **www.wildwestcountry.com** or contact the Dodge City Convention and Visitors Bureau at **620-225-8186**.

Take the 40-Gallon Challenge!
Small changes can make a big difference in water conservation! K-State Extension encourages residents to reduce outdoor water use by shortening irrigation cycles by just two minutes. Depending on your sprinkler system, this simple adjustment could save **40 gallons of water or more per watering cycle!** Every gallon saved helps protect our water resources for future generations.
Small changes. Big savings. Visit your local K-State Research and Extension office to take the 40-Gallon Challenge pledge and start saving water today!

Task Force

Continued from Page 1

rural Kansas communities, where geographic distances and limited staffing can create challenges for law enforcement. By establishing stronger working relationships with county attorneys, federal officials hope to improve communication and provide additional avenues for pursuing qualifying criminal cases.

The Southwest Kansas Task Force is expected to help participating agencies coordinate investigations and determine when federal prosecution may be appropriate, while allowing local prosecutors to bring their knowledge of community needs and regional criminal activity into the federal justice system.

Kansas Pearl: Who Helped Shape National History



From a Stanton County pioneer family to the national political stage, Pearl Josserand lived a century defined by determination, service, and an unwavering belief in making a difference.

By Tyler Hook

In the spring of 1952, as Republicans across the nation debated who should lead their party into the presidential election, a determined woman from Johnson, Kansas, was helping shape the course of American history. Her name was Pearl Josserand, and although she came from a small agricultural community in Southwest Kansas, her influence would eventually reach the highest office in the nation.

She would become a personal acquaintance of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, attend national political conventions, travel around the world representing American women, and earn a nickname from Eisenhower himself: **"Kansas Pearl."**

Yet behind the political accomplishments was a woman whose story began on the open plains of Stanton County, where hard work, family, faith, and determination shaped a remarkable century of life.

Pearl Winger Josserand was born November 23, 1896, in the Fletcher community, the youngest child of Stanton County pioneers John Frederick Winger and Mary Elizabeth (Diehl) Winger. Her father was a devoted Republican who proudly recalled casting his first presidential vote for General Ulysses S. Grant, a political allegiance he maintained throughout his life.

Growing up in the pioneering Winger family, Pearl inherited both an appreciation for public affairs and the determination that would become her trademark. She attended grade school at Fletcher, north of Johnson, before continuing her education at Syracuse High School. During those years, she worked to pay for her room and board.

While in high school a fierce drought dwindled the families feed supplies and Pearl along with a brother Charlie took the families cattle East to Haskell County. She would return in the summer of 1917, and fell for a young man named Orvan Emery Josserand, better known as O.E. In a family history written decades later, Pearl recalled simply that she had fallen madly in love.

Their courtship unfolded against the backdrop of World War I. O.E. entered military service in September 1917 and trained at Camp Funston before being sent overseas with the 89th Division. During a brief leave, the couple married May 18, 1918, at the Methodist parsonage in Ulysses.

While her husband served overseas, Pearl worked in Dodge City and attended business classes. She later passed a federal civil service examination, although the war ended before she began the position. When O.E. returned from Europe in May 1919, Pearl met him in Topeka and even received permission to accompany the troops aboard their train to Manhattan.

Returning to Stanton County, the newlyweds began building a life together through farming and ranching. Pearl later recalled milking cows, feeding livestock, baking bread, churning butter, making soap, and washing clothes by hand. Money was scarce, but determination was plentiful.

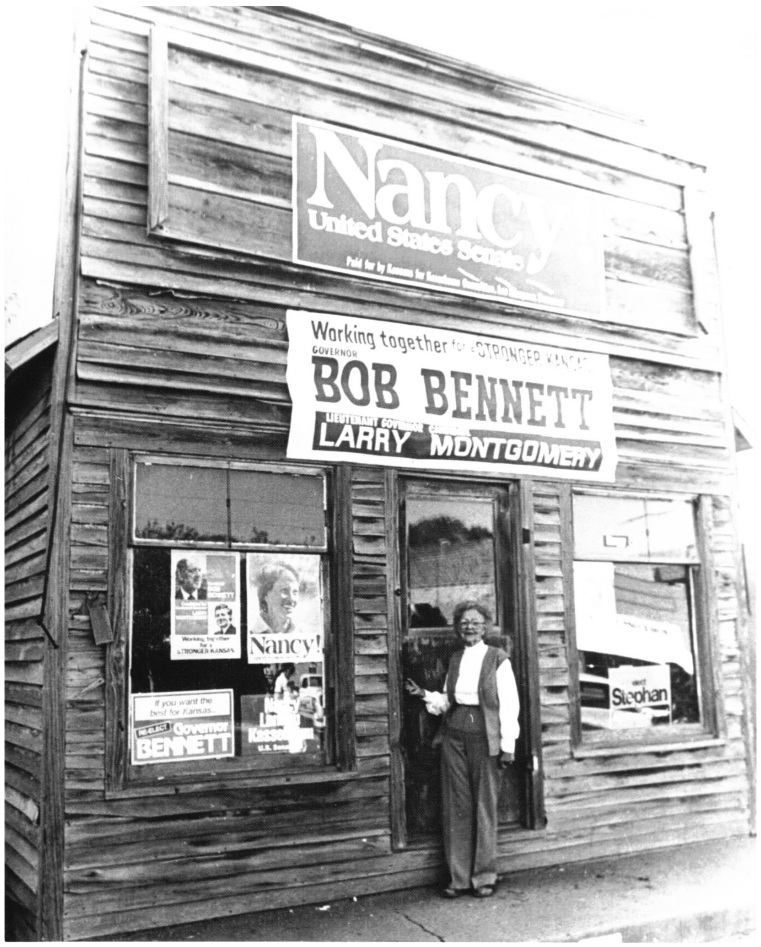
As O.E. served as Stanton County sheriff during the 1920s, Pearl took on increasing responsibilities at home and on the farm. The couple eventually moved into Johnson, where they played part in establishing a drugstore that would later become known as Emery's Drug. Pearl helped operate the business while raising their sons, Emery, Ivan, and Oliver Wendell.

O.E. would go on to serve in the Kansas House of Representatives during the 1940s, while the family's farming and cattle interests expanded. But Pearl was building a public career of her own.

In 1937, following changes that gave Kansas women equal standing with men in Republican Party affairs, Pearl became a precinct committeewoman. She subsequently served as Stanton County Republican vice chairman for five years and county chairman for approximately 25 years. Her leadership eventually carried her to the position of vice chairman of the Kansas Republican State Committee.

Her involvement placed her at the center of one of the most consequential presidential nomination contests of the twentieth century.

In 1952, Republicans were divided between supporters of Ohio Senator Robert Taft and those encouraging General



Pearl Josserand in front of Buell Scott Building in Johnson with her political posters in 1980s. Courtesy Photos

Dwight D. Eisenhower to seek the presidency. Pearl became an outspoken Eisenhower supporter, despite resistance from established party leaders.

At one Republican women's gathering, a visiting speaker suggested that if Eisenhower entered the race, the women would simply have to wait for male party officials to decide what to do.

Pearl was having none of it.

According to an account she later gave *The Wichita Eagle*, she stood and declared that if Eisenhower entered the race, Kansas women would help elect him president.

Her confidence proved well placed.

That March, newspaper accounts identified Pearl among Kansas delegates-at-large committed to Eisenhower. At the Republican National Convention in Chicago, she served on the platform committee, helping represent Kansas during the convention that nominated Eisenhower.

Her involvement did not end with the nomination. When Eisenhower returned to Kansas during the campaign, Pearl helped organize activities surrounding his homecoming to Abilene. She later recalled hosting him and his entourage at her home and speaking with him personally.

The relationship became a treasured part of her life. Eisenhower affectionately referred to her as his “Kansas Pearl,” a nickname that would follow her for decades.

In a 1987 interview, Pearl recalled sitting beside Eisenhower in his presidential suite at the Muehlebach Hotel in Kansas City. For a woman who had grown up on the plains of Stanton County, it was an extraordinary experience.

Her political career extended well beyond the Eisenhower years. She attended additional Republican national conventions, remained active in campaigns, and continued following national politics into her nineties. A 1988 newspaper profile found her still offering candid observations about presidential candidates and the changing political landscape.

Yet politics represented only one portion of Pearl's remarkable life.

She helped organize Girl Scouting in Johnson, served as a leader of the Tumbleweed Girl Scout Council, participated in the Rebekah Lodge, and was active in Business and Professional Women. She also helped establish the local Halluo Liborum Club and supported the annual Pioneer Day Celebration.



Staff photo by Mike Berry

Pearl Josserand sees similarities between the 1952 and 1988 presidential campaigns.

July 1987 Wichita Eagle

A devoted member of the Johnson United Methodist Church, she served on numerous committees and contributed to the church's building efforts. Her community involvement reflected a belief that public service extended far beyond elections and political office.

Pearl also developed an extraordinary appetite for travel. In the 1960s, she participated in an international goodwill tour sponsored by the National Federation of Republican Women, visiting countries throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Her handwritten account described visits to Paris, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, India, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan. She marveled at ancient temples, unfamiliar customs, industrial development, and the challenges facing people in other parts of the world.

The experiences broadened her perspective and strengthened her appreciation for international understanding. She later shared those observations with Republican women's organizations throughout Southwest Kansas. Even as she grew older, Pearl refused to surrender her independence or enthusiasm for life. In a family history completed in 1973, she described enjoying painting, poetry, crocheting, knitting, fashionable clothing, and driving her own automobile.

At age 75, she declared that she did not feel old and refused to be called old.

She remained true to that philosophy.

When *The Wichita Eagle* interviewed her in 1988, she was approaching her 92nd birthday and still actively following politics. Her family recalled that she set goals throughout her life, including a particularly ambitious one: reaching her 100th birthday and standing on her own.

She accomplished both.

Pearl celebrated her centennial in November 1996. According to her son O.W., she was able to rise from her wheelchair and briefly stand during the celebration, fulfilling a goal she had set for herself.

On August 13, 1997, Pearl Josserand died at the Stanton County Long Term Care Unit in Johnson at the age of 100. She was laid to rest in Stanton County Cemetery, alongside her husband, who had died in 1982.

Her century of life spanned an extraordinary transformation in American history, from the era of horse-drawn transportation and pioneer homesteads to the dawn of the modern digital age. She witnessed two world wars, the expansion of women's political participation, the Great Depression, and the rise of the United States as a global power.

More importantly, she refused to remain merely a spectator.

Pearl Josserand was a rancher's wife, mother, businesswoman, community volunteer, political organizer, international traveler, and presidential confidante. She proved that a person did not need to come from a large city or prominent background to leave a lasting mark on the world.

In one of her final reflections on life, Pearl wrote that she had never been able to reach every goal she set for herself, but remained thankful for the happiness she had experienced along the way.

Perhaps that was her greatest achievement. Not the conventions she attended, the presidents she knew, or the political battles she helped fight, but the determination to remain active, engaged, and purposeful throughout an entire century.

From the pioneer homesteads of Stanton County to the halls of presidential politics, Pearl Josserand never forgot where she came from, and she never allowed where she came from to limit how far she could go.

The Courage To Be Yourself

By: Tyler Hook

There is a peculiar tragedy in this world. We spend the first part of our lives discovering who we are, the middle trying to become who everyone expects us to be, and far too often, the final years wishing we had simply been ourselves all along.

Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, we begin trading pieces of ourselves for acceptance. We learn when to speak, when to remain silent, and which parts of our personalities are better left hidden. We become masters at reading a room, adjusting our words, and presenting whatever version of ourselves seems most likely to earn approval.

And somewhere along the way, we risk becoming strangers to the person looking back at us in the mirror.

Authenticity is more than honesty or individuality. It is knowing who you are, what you believe, and what you stand for, while having the courage to live accordingly, even when doing so comes at a cost.

It is easy to be yourself when everyone agrees with you. The real test comes when they don't.

We live in a society that encourages individuality while often punishing those who practice it. We tell children to follow their dreams, then question them when those dreams lead somewhere unfamiliar. We celebrate independent thinkers until their thoughts challenge our own. We encourage people to stand up for what they believe, provided their beliefs don't make anyone uncomfortable.

But being authentic does not mean being unwilling to change.

Some mistake authenticity for stubbornness, using "That's just who I am" to excuse poor behavior or avoid responsibility. Yet being true to yourself should never become an excuse to stop improving yourself. The person you are today should not be the final version of who you become tomorrow.

We are supposed to grow, make mistakes, question our assumptions, and occasionally discover that something we once believed with absolute certainty was wrong. There is no shame in admitting that life has taught us something new.

In fact, one of the greatest signs of authenticity is the willingness to admit when we have been wrong.

Consider how much energy we devote to worrying about what others think. The clothes we wear, the vehicles we drive, the careers we pursue, and even the company we keep. How many decisions genuinely reflect our values, and how many are made because we fear what someone might say?

How many opportunities have we passed up because we were afraid of looking foolish? How many times have we said yes when every part of us wanted to say no?

And perhaps the most difficult question of all: If nobody were watching, would you still be living the same life?

There is nothing wrong with wanting respect or acceptance. We all need a sense of belonging. But there is a tremendous difference between being loved for who you are and being accepted for who you pretend to be. One brings peace. The other demands constant performance.

I have come to believe that character is not measured by how successfully we impress others, but by how faithfully we live according to our principles when there is nothing to gain.

It is telling the truth when a lie would be easier. Keeping your word when circumstances make it inconvenient. Treating someone with dignity even when they have nothing to offer you. Standing by your convictions without belittling someone else's.

Life has a way of stripping away the things we once thought defined us. Careers change. Relationships end. Success comes and goes. The titles we carry today may mean very little tomorrow.

If your entire identity rests upon your occupation, possessions, reputation, or the opinions of others, what happens when those things disappear?

Who are you when the applause stops? Who are you when you have nothing left to prove?

Being the best version of yourself does not mean being the wealthiest, most popular, or most accomplished person in the room. It means being someone you can respect when the room is empty.

It means recognizing your shortcomings without allowing them to define you, accepting that you will make mistakes, and getting up tomorrow determined to do a little better.

You will never be everyone's favorite person. Some will misunderstand your intentions, question your decisions, or criticize the direction you choose. Others will see only a small chapter of your life and assume they know the entire story.

Let them have their opinions. You are responsible for your actions, not for controlling every perception of them.

The goal is not to become so comfortable with yourself that you refuse to grow. It is to become so secure in your values that you are no longer afraid to grow.

Perhaps that is what authenticity truly means. Not becoming the person the world expects you to be. Not stubbornly remaining the person you have always been. But having the courage to become the person you know you ought to be.

Because the greatest betrayal is not disappointing someone else's expectations. It is spending your one and only life abandoning yourself to satisfy them.

When all is said and done, the question will not be whether everyone approved of the person you became. It will be whether you can look back and say that the values you held, the choices you made, and the life you lived were genuinely your own.

After all, the world has never needed another imitation of someone else.

It needs the best, truest version of you.

A life spent seeking approval is a life spent asking permission to be yourself.

Pioneer Electric Hosts Member Forum

By: Soila Ochoa (reporter)

As electricity demands continue to grow nationwide, Pioneer Electric Cooperative is working to balance rising costs, reliable service and the changing needs of southwest Kansas communities.

These challenges were the focus of a member forum held Monday, Nov. 9, at the Grant County Civic Center in Ulysses, where cooperative leaders discussed electricity costs, infrastructure investments and the impact of large-scale energy users.

Presenters included CEO Lindsay Campbell, CFO and Executive Vice President Chantry Scott, Vice President of Engineering and Operations Clint Meier, and Vice President of Energy Services and Human Resources Melissa Morales. Board members and employees also attended.

Campbell opened the forum by explaining that Pioneer Electric is a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative serving portions of 10 southwest Kansas counties, with approximately 18,738 electric meters.

Meier addressed the challenges of maintaining reliable service while managing rising equipment and construction costs. He highlighted past winter storms, including one in 2018 that resulted in the loss of approximately 2,500 power poles.

Pioneer Electric has continued investing in infrastructure and technology, including a mobile substation and an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system. However, inflation remains a challenge, with some utility trucks now costing 30 to 40 percent more.

Campbell also discussed wholesale electricity costs, explaining that approximately 69 cents of every dollar paid on an electric bill goes toward power purchased through Sunflower Electric Power Corporation. The remaining 31 cents supports Pioneer Electric's local operations and services.

The growing demand from large-scale businesses, including data centers, was another major topic. Campbell explained that future regional transmission upgrades could affect electric rates regardless of where new businesses are located.

Campbell emphasized that Pioneer Electric does not determine which businesses move into its service territory. Those decisions rest with local communities, while the cooperative remains responsible for providing electric service.

Representatives from Sunflower Electric Power Corporation were also present to give a presentation during the forum.

For families and businesses across southwest Kansas, the forum highlighted the challenges of meeting growing energy demands while maintaining affordable rates. Pioneer Electric leaders emphasized their commitment to responsible planning, transparency and reliable service for the communities they serve.

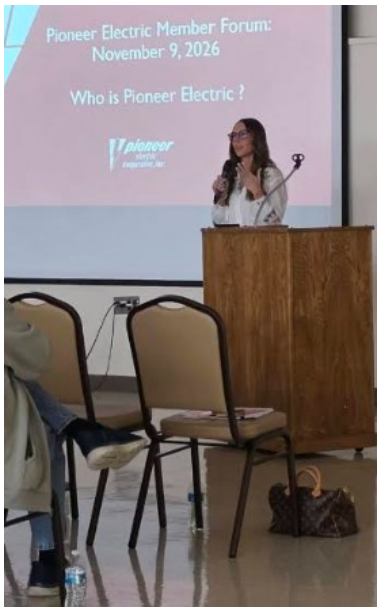


Photo C/O Soila Ochoa




C/O Lakin Grade School EB

Lakin fifth-grade students recently had the opportunity to showcase their creativity and writing skills by sharing original stories they developed to accompany wordless picture books. Students visited several community organizations, where they proudly read their stories and shared their hard work with local residents and employees. The school gave a Special appreciation goes to Kearny County Bank, Golden Plains Bank, Kearny County Library, the Kearny County Courthouse, and High Plains Retirement Village for welcoming the students and supporting this educational experience. The activity provided students with an opportunity to build confidence, practice public speaking, and connect with their community through storytelling.





Boot Hill Museum recently received grant funding from the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas to support several improvements and special projects. Miss Kitty was on hand to accept the awards, which will help fund an updated edition and reprinting of the popular *Down at the Long Branch* book in celebration of the Long Branch Variety Show's 70th anniversary in summer 2027. Additional funding will support furniture and equipment upgrades for the Varieties Theatre, kitchen, and new second-floor offices. Museum officials expressed their appreciation for the foundation's continued support in preserving local history and improving the visitor experience.



(ABOVE) IdeaTek recently joined community members in Hugoton for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Senior Center, followed by an informational meeting highlighting the benefits of fiber internet service. The company sponsored lunch for attendees, while Senior Center staff prepared a Thanksgiving-style meal for the occasion. IdeaTek representatives expressed their appreciation for the warm welcome and emphasized their commitment to becoming an active part of the communities they serve as the company continues expanding across Western Kansas.

Main ARTery
We're More Than Just a Gallery...!
103 S Main St Ulysses, KS 67880
620-424-3828
MainARteryKansas@gmail.com
facebook.com/mainarterykansas
T-F 10-5:30 Sat 10-2 Closed Mondays

COMMUNITY BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 20 - 27, 2026

FINNEY COUNTY

FRI 20

8 AM-12 PM - Garden City orchestra WKDF, Hays
4 PM - Anime Night, Finney County Library
5 PM - Air Dry Wreath Ornaments, Garden City Rec
5-7:30 PM - Clay Wreath Ornaments, Garden City Rec
5-8 PM - Mahjong, Roots Juice Co. ($5)
7 PM - Holcomb football at Andale (sub-state)
9 PM - Karaoke, Loving's Moon

SAT 21

All day - Garden City orchestra WKDF, Hays
9 AM - Sew a Leaf Pillow, MakerSpace ($30)
9:30 AM - Gameday Cheer Competition, Topeka
10 AM - Holcomb MS wrestling at Ulysses
10 AM - Coasters & Coffee, Sweet Mudd ($20)
10 AM-5 PM - Art Saturday and Open House, Garden City Arts
2 PM - Kitchen Fun, Finney County Library
3 PM - Santa meet and greet, Homestead
4:30 PM - Dungeons & Dragons, Finney County Library
6 PM - Holcomb cross-country banquet
6:30 PM - Trivia, Loving's Moon

SUN 22

2:30 PM - Sunday FunDay, Finney County Library

MON 23

No school - Holcomb
5-7 PM - Water Walking, Parrot Cove

TUE 24

4:30 PM - Basketball jamboree, Holcomb
5-8 PM - Ladies Night, Buffalo Dunes ($15)
6:30 PM - Trivia, Main Street Food & Brew
6:30 PM - Family Crafts and Adult Craft Night, library

WED 25

4:30 PM - Pokemon Club (ages 6-9), library
5-7 PM - Water Walking, Parrot Cove

FRI 27

No school - Holcomb
4 PM - Anime Night, library
7 PM - Blushing Artists, Garden City Arts ($30)
9 PM - Karaoke, Loving's Moon

GRANT COUNTY

FRI 20

10 AM - Chamber Coffee / Grant County Gives, The Creek

SAT 21

9 AM-1 PM - Blessed Bazaar, Shelton Memorial Church
9 AM-3 PM - BWM Hospital Gift Shop Christmas Open House
9:30 AM - KMS boys wrestling, Ulysses HS gym
10 AM-5 PM - Tumbleweed Bazaar, Civic Center
10 AM-3 PM - KMS girls basketball at Colby
6-10 PM - The Big Event holiday fundraiser, The Creek

SUN 22

10 AM-5 PM - Tumbleweed Bazaar, Civic Center

MON 23

5 PM - Ulysses City Council

WED 25-FRI 27

No school - Ulysses USD 214

FRI 27

Chamber Coffee - time and place TBA

HASKELL COUNTY

NOV 18-22

Satanta students at National HS Journalism Convention, Orlando

MON 23

4:30 PM - Sublette MS boys basketball at Wichita County

WED 25-FRI 27

No school - Satanta USD 507, Thanksgiving break

KEARNY COUNTY

FRI 20

Lakin football sub-state - time/place TBA
No school - Deerfield USD 216 (through Nov. 27)

SAT 21

10 AM - Lakin MS boys wrestling at Ulysses

MON 23-FRI 27

No school - Lakin USD 215, Thanksgiving break

TUE 24

5 PM - Lakin basketball jamboree, Holcomb

FRI 27

Football state playoffs - time/place TBA

MORTON COUNTY

FRI 20

No school - Rolla USD 217
Elkhart High School Mental Health Day

SAT 21

Elkhart football sub-state playoffs

MON 23

9 AM - Morton County Commission, courthouse

MON 23-FRI 27

No school - Elkhart USD 218 and Rolla USD 217

TUE 24

7 PM - Elkhart City Council, City Hall

STEVENS COUNTY

FRI 20

2 PM - Bingo, Pioneer Manor
6 PM - Gulligan's Island Christmas dinner theater, Memorial Hall (dinner 6:30)

SAT 21

2 PM - Bingo, Pioneer Manor
6 PM - Gulligan's Island Christmas, Memorial Hall
7 PM - I Play Rocky, High Plains Theatre

SUN 22

4 PM - I Play Rocky, High Plains Theatre

MON 23

8:30 AM - Stevens County Commission, courthouse
Hermes available for pickup

MON 23-FRI 27

No school - Hugoton and Moscow

TUE 24

1-3 PM - Mah-Jongg, Hugoton Library
2 PM - Bingo, Pioneer Manor
7:30 PM - Masonic Lodge No. 405
8 PM - Al-Anon, 1405 Cemetery Road
Hermes available for pickup

WED 25

Hermes office closed Nov. 25-29

THU 26

Courthouse closed
8 PM - Al-Anon, 1405 Cemetery Road

FRI 27

2 PM - Bingo, Pioneer Manor
7 PM - I Play Rocky, High Plains Theatre
Courthouse closed

SAT 28

2 PM - Bingo, Pioneer Manor
7 PM - I Play Rocky, High Plains Theatre

STANTON COUNTY

FRI 20

7:30 AM - RESIST meeting, schools
6 PM - HS boys basketball Family Fun Night

SAT 21

9:30 AM - JH boys wrestling at Ulysses

MON 23

4:30 PM - JH basketball vs. Syracuse (home)

MON 23-FRI 27

No school - Thanksgiving break

THU 26

Thanksgiving Day

FRI 27

Football state playoffs

SEWARD COUNTY

FRI 20

8 AM-7 PM - Keating Tractor Christmas Open House, Liberal

MON 23

11 AM - Holocaust resistance program, SCCC Showcase Theater (free)
5:30 PM - Evening Storytime, Liberal Memorial Library
5:30-8 PM - Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Senior Citizens Center

TUE 24

1 PM - Explorer Tots, Liberal Memorial Library
5:30 PM - Liberal City Commission, City Hall

WED 25

10 AM - Storytime, Liberal Memorial Library

HAMILTON COUNTY

FRI 20

No school - Syracuse USD 494
High school football sub-state playoffs

MON 23

5 PM - FFA Oyster Fry, Syracuse HS cafeteria
Junior high basketball - Syracuse at Stanton County

TUE 24

8 AM - Pre-K through grade 6 PUPS Assembly
2 PM - Grades 3-8 spelling bee, McCoy Auditorium

WED 25-FRI 27

No school - Thanksgiving break

FRI 27

High school football state playoffs

