CENTRAL KANSAS TIMES

Where our Communities build Kansas Stronger

Covering Dickinson County, Geary County, Morris County, Marion County, and Riley County.

Vol. 1 Edition 16 **$1.50** **Sunday , November 8, 2026**

Holland Sunflower 4-H Club Monthly Report

Life starts all over again when it gets crispy in the fall. The Holland Sunflowers started their new 4-H year off on October 18, 2026. The meeting was held at the Rural Center Elementary at 530pm with the Parents conducting the monthly meeting. The October meeting started off by doing the flag salute and 4-H pledge. The club sang, “Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Roll call was conducted with “What is your favorite candy to get when you are trick or treating?” The club had 25 members, and 2 club leaders were present. The September monthly minutes were read and approved by the club. During the meeting the club reported officers’ reports and leader report. The council reps reported that the club will sell Greenery Wreath this year. The club had no old business. For new business the club voted to purchase a greenery wreath for the Brown Memorial Home and to donate $200 for a 4-H member to attend the National Fashion Review in Texas. The club nominated Autumn Felbush to represent the club for 4-H council meetings. Installation of new officers and installation of new members ceremony was done with members in the club. All club members did achievements talks over something they accomplished last year in 4-H. The club adjourned the October monthly meeting by saying the 4-H moto. Refreshments after the meeting were ice cream Sunday bar.

Parent Melody Baetz





Our talented Railers attended the annual Washburn University High School Art Days, where they exhibited their artwork, learned new techniques in hands-on workshops, and brought home honors!

Award Winners:

Sarah – 2nd Place (Wheel-Thrown Ceramics) (Pictured Upper Left)

Kyrie – 1st Place (Mixed Media) (Pictured Above)

Autumn – 1st Place (Hand built Ceramics) (Pictured Below)

A huge shoutout to Calie, Evie, Finn, Jocelyn, and Sadie, who also had their fantastic artwork on display for the student exhibit.

(Courtesy USD 487)



National Champions: The Junction City High School JROTC Blue Jay Battalion had a historic showing at the 2026-27 National Raider Challenge in Fort Knox, Ky., capturing multiple top 10 showings, including a National Championship in One Rope Bridge. (Courtesy USD 475)



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WORSHIP GUIDE

Alida Upland Cooperative Parish
2243 3300 Ave., Junction City
11 a.m. Worship Service

Enterprise Community Church
210 W. South St., Enterprise
9 a.m. Adult Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship

First Baptist Church
201 E Hawley St., Herington
9 a.m. Connection Section Coffee & Fellowship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School for adults and children
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

First Christian Church
15 S. First St., Herington
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Grace Baptist Church
117 E. Third St., Chapman
9:45 a.m. Bible School
10:45 a.m. Worship/Service

Immanuel Lutheran Church
2201 1000 Ave., Herington
8:30 a.m. Worship
(Alternating Sundays)

Our Redeemer Lutheran
802 E. Trapp, Herington
10:30 a.m. Worship

St. John's Lutheran Church
2124 Highway 4, Herington
8:30 a.m. Worship
(Alternating Sundays)

St. Paul Lutheran Church
114 N. Eighth St., Herington
9:30 a.m. Adult Bible Class
11 a.m. Worship/Communion

St. Michael's Catholic Church
210 E. 6th St. Chapman, KS
9 a.m. Sunday Mass
Fr. Peter O'Donnell

Sutphen Mill Christian Church
3117 Paint Rd., Chapman
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Worship Service



Rev.Connie D. Wooldridge

Chapman United Methodist Church

PASTOR'S CORNER

WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND

I heard something clicking today. I'm not sure what it was but when I heard it, I remembered how the big wall clocks used to tick the seconds away. My watch also ticked and tocked. Our world sounds different than it did when I was younger. Do you remember how the old coffee pot percolated? How about the clicking of the typewriter?

I heard something recently that reminded me of the old dot matrix printer. When I mentioned it to my granddaughter, she just laughed and asked, "Is that another old person thing?"

Every generation has a list of old person things. The generations that follow have those new-fangled gadgets that make life confusing. For each generation the sounds, the gadgets, the ideas, and everything start fresh and become old news and are eventually forgotten.

You know what we don't forget? We don't forget the people who loved us. We don't forget the people that told us stories and sang us to sleep. We don't forget the people who protected us when we were frightened and supported us when we were learning.

How many times do we open our mouths and hear the things our parents and grandparents once said? We probably remember people that hurt us as well. Those aren't good memories.

No one stays on the earth forever, but we all leave something behind when we go. I believe we have a choice. We can be the sort of people that leave warm, comfortable, happy memories; or we can be the sort that leaves behind bitterness and pain.

Live well, love deeply, smile often, share generously, and be a light.



Mark Will
DCNT Columnist

THIS DAY IN THE HERINGTON TIMES

125 years ago – 1901

HERINGTON'S BUSY MILL – Never in the history of the Herington Mill & Grain Company has this institution been kept as busy supplying flour as thy are at the present time. Following is an example of the many communications that they receive from their agents: "Gentlemen: Please ship a car of flour at once and add 3,000 "Chef" to the order. We've had such a run on your flour last Saturday that we are about out now. I must say it beats anything we have had in the way of flour. – Lee's Summit, Mo." The Herington mill is kept busy grinding out their famous brands day and night and will be busy so long as freight cars can be secured to carry it to their customers.

100 years ago – 1926

GERMAN FIELD PIECE OBTAINED BY AMERICAN LEGION – The Federal Government assigned 31 captured German cannons to Kansas municipalities for memorials. Through prompt action of the Carey McLaren Post, American Legion, Herington was assigned a "Minenwerfer" (mine-thrower) for doing her part and more in the patriotic services assigned home staying folks during the war. Weighing 2750 pounds, it makes an imposing picture on its concrete foundation on North Broadway and pointed toward Germany. It was made in 1917 and shows signs of real service during the war. It has been repainted to protect it from further rust damage and will be marked with a small bronze plate, giving credit to the Legion for securing it for Herington.

75 years ago – 1951

JAYCEE HALLOWEEN PARTY – The annual Party in Herington

Halloween party sponsored by the Herington Jaycees was well attended this year by the youth and adults of the city. Despite inclement weather the Jaycees were able to give the young folks of the city a good, non-destructive evening on Halloween. The guests came in costumes and spent the evening playing games and enjoying contests in which the guests were divided into five groups and were awarded monetary prizes to the first and second place winners. The individual grand prize of a shotgun was awarded to Melvon Weber of Herington. Four boys were randomly chosen, and their parents were called to see if they had returned home before 10:30pm. All four had returned home and were each awarded $1.00.

50 years ago – 1976

RAILROAD PAYS TRIBUTE – As a "modest tribute" to Herington friends and other supporters in the 13 states served by the "ROCK", company officials have decided to publicly remember the many supporters by naming each of the 56 new GP-58 diesel locomotives presently being delivered to the line. As an example, unit No. 4322 bears the name "City of Herington" in honor of the support from Herington residents during the past 1 ½ years as the line has undergone reorganization. Local railroad buffs will remember that a passenger coach was once named for the City of Herington and is still in service on a Chicago commuter line operated by the "ROCK."

Herington Historical Society & Museum, 800 S. Broadway. Hours: 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. – markcwill1963@gmail.com

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8 a.m. ~ Coffee is on! Monday - Friday
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Come Join This Fun Bunch!
Everyday ~ 1 p.m. Cards
Puzzles and Games every day!

Wednesday, November 11: Closed Veterans Day

Wednesday, November 18: 10:30 am BINGO with Prizes (Hosted by Home Health)

Thursday, November 19: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Foot Care and Blood Pressure Checks! Leann call 785-258-6028 or 785-258-2956. (Each month on the 3rd Thursday)

Monday, November 23:
Thanksgiving Meal at the Hilltop



Thursday, November 26:
Happy Thanksgiving
Hilltop and Public Transportation CLOSED

Friday, November 27: Hilltop and Public Transportation CLOSED

For Meals on Wheels, Meals to go, or Dine-in Eating call: 785-258-2956
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Misc

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When family members make a mistake don't rub it in – rub it out.

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SUDOKU

4			2					
	1		3	6			8	
				8		5	1	
	6				9		3	
8					1			
			4	3				5
		5	1					
				7	2		5	3
		6			3			2

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER:

2	4	1	3	9	5	6	8	7
3	5	6	2	7	8	9	4	1
8	7	9	6	4	1	5	2	3
5	6	7	8	3	4	1	9	2
9	2	4	1	5	6	3	7	8
1	3	8	9	2	7	4	6	5
7	1	5	4	8	9	2	3	6
6	8	2	5	6	3	7	1	9
4	9	3	7	1	2	8	5	6

Senior Center Menus

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Monday, November 9: Chicken & Dumplings, Cole Slaw, Fruit Cobbler, Corn, Bread

Tuesday, November 10: Baked Chicken Breast, Sweet Potatoes, Brussel Sprouts, Tropical Fruit, Wheat Roll

Wednesday, November 11: Roast Beef, Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Fruit Cup, Wheat Roll



Thursday, November 12: Baked Pork Loin, Rice, Peas & Carrots,Warn Cinnamon Apples, Wheat Roll

Friday, November 13: Oven Fried Fish OR Chicken, AuGratin Potatoes, Broccoli Florets, Mandarin Oranges, Wheat Roll

Hilltop Community Center

2 South A St. • Herington • 785-258-2956

Monday, November 9: Baked Pork Chop, Rice, Peas & Carrots, Roll, Cinnamon Apples, Milk

Tuesday, November 10: Baked Chicken, Sweet Potatoes, Brussel Sprouts, Roll, Tropical Fruit, Cookie, Milk

Wednesday, November 11:



Thursday, November 12: Chicken & Noodles, Cole Slaw, Fruit Cobbler, Corn, Bread, Milk

Friday, November 13: Oven Fried Fish or Chicken, Roasted Potatoes, Broccoli, Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Milk

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SpiceUpYourLife-FunfettiShortbread
Lindsey Young

Funfetti shortbread cookies are a small treat but pack plenty of flavor from butter, sugar and the nice little crunch of sprinkles inside.

Funfetti treats are excellent for some cookie small talk
One year, Joey volunteered to help me make peppernuts.
As he helped me cut the tiny cookies, he suddenly asked, “What would happen if you just made a big peppernut?”
I was a little confused.
“I mean, it would just be a big cookie,” I said.
I could see his wheels turning.
“So, it wouldn’t taste different?”
“Well, I suppose the texture and cook time would be different, but the flavor wouldn’t change,” I told him.
“So why are we spending all this time making tiny cookies, when the bigger ones would be just as good,” he asked.
I didn’t have an answer for that one, outside of citing “tradition.”
Also, who doesn’t like eating cookies by the handful?
I thought about that conversation when I was making this week’s recipe, which features a different kind of tiny cookie.
Why are they tiny? Because it’s fun. There’s not really any other reason.
You can find the original recipe on the blog “Chelsweets” by Chelsey White at https://chelsweets.com/funfetti-shortbread-cookies/. I didn’t change anything other than using a slightly different style of sprinkles than the recipe called for.
Funfetti Shortbread Cookies
Ingredients
1 cup butter, softened
2 cups flour
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup rainbow sprinkles, divided
Directions
Add the butter, flour, powdered sugar and salt to a mixing bowl and beat for a couple minutes, until the dough comes together.
Stir in about 3 tablespoons of the sprinkles to evenly distribute them throughout the dough.
Place a large piece of plastic wrap on your countertop, and dump the dough onto it. Flatten the dough out into a rectangle about one-quarter-inch tall.
Sprinkle the rest of the sprinkles on top and press them down into the top of the dough.
Wrap the dough in the plastic wrap, and refrigerate it for at least an hour.
When you’re ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
Prepare a couple baking sheets by lining them with parchment paper, and set them aside.
Unwrap the cookie dough and cut it into about one-inch squares.

Place the squares about one inch apart on the prepared baking sheets, and bake them, one sheet at a time, for 10 to 12 minutes or until the dough is set and the edges are just slightly golden brown.
Let the cookies cool on the pan, and then slide them into an airtight container.
These were buttery and way too easy to snack on, thanks to their smaller size.
I poured these into a bowl with a scoop for a get together, and they looked super cute. If you need something fun for a charcuterie spread or a cookie/dessert table, these would fit the bill.
Just don’t think too hard about why the cookies are so small. You probably won’t find a satisfactory answer.
Spice Up Your Life is a weekly recipe column by Lindsey Young, who describes herself as an enthusiastic amateur cook and can be reached through her website at spiceupkitchen.net.

Salina Chorale Presents 2026 “Carols of Christmas” Concert – Nov. 29
WHAT: “Carols of Christmas 2026” by the Salina Chorale
WHEN: 4 p.m., Sunday, November 29, 2026
WHERE: Sacred Heart Cathedral, 118 N. 9th St. (at Iron St.), Salina, KS
COST: Adults $15; Students $10.
The Salina Chorale, under the direction of Keri Boley and with collaborative pianist Dr. Gustavo do Carmo, presents its 2026 “Carols of Christmas” concert at 4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 29, 2026, at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 118 N. 9th St. in Salina, KS. Admission: Adults $15, Students $10. With 60+ singers from the Salina Chorale and musicians, some from the Salina Symphony Orchestra, this year’s concert will feature an uplifting and varied selection of sacred, classical, and spirited holiday music. The program includes:
Act 1…approx 18 minutes
 Gloria -- by John Rutter (3 movements) -- organ, brass choir, percussion
Act 2… approx 34 minutes
 Stars – by Eriks Esevalds
 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – by Pinkzebra
 O Little Town of Bethlehem -- arranged by Julie Ann Ballard – with youth ensemble
 Silent Night -- arranged by Mac Huff – piano, guitar, bass guitar, drums
 Angels We Have Heard on High -- arranged by Rene Clausen
 The First Noel -- arranged by Dan Forrest
 We Three Kings -- arranged by David Schmidt
 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing -- arranged by Dan Forrest -- piano, organ, brass, and percussion
 Joy to the World – arranged by Mack Wilberg – piano and organ
After the concert, the audience is invited to stay and enjoy a cookie reception for them and the singers and musicians, generously provided by the gracious bakers of Sacred Heart Cathedral.
OUR DIRECTOR
Keri Boley began as director of the Salina Chorale in Fall 2024. She has taught choral music at Southeast of Saline Junior and Senior High School for 17 years. In addition to teaching choir and music appreciation classes, Boley directs SES musicals, has served as an adjunct faculty member at Kansas Wesleyan University, and works as a clinician and judge for regional honor choirs and festivals.

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MHS EMPLOYEES DONATE TO ABILENE AREA TOYS 4 TOTS

Employees of Memorial Health System (MHS) in Abilene participated in another “Jeans Day” fundraiser throughout the month of October. Employees make a donation, of at least $2, and are allowed to wear blue jeans at work. A total donation of $750 was presented to the Abilene Area Toys 4 Tots organization.

The monthly Jeans Day fundraiser is organized by the MHS Employer of Choice (EOC) council. Pictured from left are: Theresa Sheaffer and Caitlyn Leff, Abilene Area Toys 4 Tots board members; Denton Leff, Chesney Fink, Abilene Area Toys 4 Tots board member; Layton Leff, Linda Creach and Billy Hansen, Abilene Area Toys 4 Tots board members; Matilda Calvin and Joanna Baker, EOC council members.

Memorial Hospital is an Abilene Area Toys 4 Tots drop off location for new toys, games, books, and monetary donations through December 7th.

MEDICARE BASICS AND DEADLINES

Friday, November 13th, 5:30pm

201 E Helen St, Herington, KS

Rodney from K-State Extention office will be here to answer questions and help people . Light refreshments will be availabel. Please RSVP (So we know how many packets to print) By Wednesday, November 11th

785-258-4327 (TEXT OR CALL)

27th Annual Dr. Temple Food Drive Benefiting the Salina Rescue Mission

Event Locations: All Salina Dillons Stores

Dates & Times:

Friday, November 20th 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Saturday, November 21st 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

During the Food Drive, volunteers will be stationed at each Dillons location handing out grocery bags with our needs list attached. Simply fill a bag with items while you shop and return it to a volunteer as you leave the store. The Salina Rescue Mission will provide over 76,000 meals in 2026, and your support during this event helps us continue feeding the hungry and homeless in our community in the months to come. For more information, please call the Salina Rescue Mission at 785-823-2610.

Shopping List

MEAT
Turkey (Whole / Frozen)
Lunch Meat
Ham (Whole)
CANNED GOODS
Salad Dressing
Vegetables
Fruit
Peanut Butter
Jelly
DRY GOODS
Cereal
Coffee
Powdered Milk
HBA / CLEANING
Laundry Soap (Free & Clear)
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Toilet Paper
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VIEW FROM THE HILL BY SCOTT HILL

A Titanic Election

On April 4th , 1912, the most powerful passenger ship ever built was steaming from England to America when it struck an iceberg and rapidly sank. When the HMS Titanic slammed into an iceberg and went from an unsinkable ship to a wreckage on the bottom of the seabed in a few hours, there was an appalling loss of life. In a few hours yesterday, there was one of the most dramatic course corrections I have seen in our elected government. It is my sincere hope that there is not a parallel loss of economic and personal freedom. The following are my observations from a Titanic version of our political process.

1) I want to start out with a reiteration of my sincere thanks to the voters of Kansas who overwhelmingly voted to send me back to the Kansas Senate. It has been an honor to serve you, and I remind myself every day that I am humbled to serve as your elected official. The political landscape in Topeka may change but my commitment to serving the voters has not.

2) The "Trump effect" has changed in a short year from being the biggest positive influence for an election outcome to the biggest negative driver in American politics. The political pendulum that moves back and forth made as dramatic a change as I have seen in this election. Across the country candidates who cherished the endorsement of a sitting president were soundly defeated when trumping that very endorsement.

3) The makeup of the United States Congress will change dramatically. In one of the largest reversals in recent times, at least 30 House seats changed from Republican to Democrat. In the Senate a minimum of 7 seats flipped. Democrats are very close to the magical 60 number in the Senate. The first Muslim elected to the US Senate came from Michigan and a Methodist minister with anti-Biblical views was elected from Kansas. The decidedly leftist swing could have long-term detrimental effects on our economy. As I have documented numerous times in this column, the move to socialism has a negative effect on economic output and personal freedoms.

4) The Governor's race in Kansas is too close to call as I am writing this column, but we do know that the Kansas House will look dramatically different than it did last session. While Republicans still continue to have a solid majority, the super majority that allowed the legislature to override a Democrat Governor is gone from the House. It appears that around 20 seats have flipped, including some in high leadership positions. While Republicans retain three statewide offices (Treasurer, Insurance Commissioner, and Secretary of State), the incumbent Attorney General was defeated.

5) The rural/urban divide in Kansas dramatically grew. Most rural representatives who are Republican won by large margins, including those seats in central Kansas. In urban areas, however, Republican incumbents were defeated, and no seats were picked up by Republican challengers. The rural agricultural influence on the Kansas Legislature, while not shifting dramatically, is slowly eroding away.

6) The Kansas State Board of Education will remain strongly Republican. Four of the five seats were handily won by the GOP. Those candidates advocating for educational reform, including central Kansas' Alana McWilliams, won in three of the five races. The citizens of Kansas appear to be very concerned about the educational outcomes that have shown a long-term decline. The push for increasing literacy in the early primary grades as advocated by Board Member-Elect McWilliams received affirmation, as she won by a large margin.

7) The people of central Kansas once again reaffirmed their belief in fiscal restraint, limited government, and reduced taxation. Each of the Republican Representatives sharing the territory of the 24th Senate district won by decisive margins. In the 70th House District, the Democrat challenger waged a particularly negative campaign and was defeated by 68 to 32 margins.

The final results will take days to tabulate, but it is obvious that much like the Titanic, our political landscape is taking a major direction change. It is imperative that as the direction of our government changes that we do not make fundamental course corrections that could destroy the Constitutional primacy of our country. The world cannot afford to have America discarded to a seafloor junk yard in the ocean of time.

Scott Hill
State Senator



Catholic Charities

St. Michael Catholic Church
210 E 6th ST
Chapman, KS 67431
Every 4th Wednesday of the month
9am-10am

St. John Catholic Church
712 Broadway
Herington, KS 67449
Every 1st Wednesday of the month
1pm-2pm

St. Andrew Catholic Church
311 S Buckeye Ave
Abilene, KS 67410
Every 3rd Wednesday of the month

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
3599 N Field Rd
Solomon, KS 67480
Every 3rd Wednesday of the Month

Enterprise Community Church
210 S High St.
Enterprise, KS 67441
Every 4th Wednesday of the Month
10:30am till 11am

First UMC Manhattan
1710 Avery Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66503
785-539-1748
PLEASE CALL TO CONFIRM HOURS
Tue- 3rd of each month 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Westview Community Church
615 Gillespie Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502
785-537-7173
PLEASE CALL TO CONFIRM HOURS
Fri- 1st of each month 10am-11am

Ogden Community Center
220 Willow Street
Ogden, KS 66517
785-564-0071 or 785-410-6672
PLEASE CALL TO CONFIRM HOURS
Tue- 4th of each month 9:30am-10:30am

Highview Church
402 Main Street
Alta Vista, KS 66834
620-767-2844
PLEASE CALL TO CONFIRM HOURS
Tue- 4th of each month 11:30 AM 12:30 PM

K-State Extension programs target heart health, maternal wellness across Kansas

National statistics indicate the Sunflower State has much room to improve

By Pat Melgares, K-State Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kansas – A community health expert with Kansas State University's extension service says two community-based programs are helping Kansans take charge of their health while addressing cardiovascular disease and maternal health.
Elaine Johannes, Kansas Health Foundation Distinguished Professor of Community Health at K-State, said Kansas recently received a grade of 'D' for cardiovascular disease indicators, according to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2030 program.
Another national organization -- the March of Dimes -- gives the state a C-minus for preterm births.
But Johannes also says that the state is not quietly hoping the challenges will go away.
"Most Kansans know that we need to take care of ourselves," she said Johannes, noting that more than 34% of adult Kansans have been diagnosed with hypertension or experience elevated blood pressure. "We need to look at our overall health, and especially we need to look at our cardiovascular health."
K-State Extension's Hypertension Awareness and Prevention program, known as HAPp, teaches participants how to measure blood pressure accurately and develop habits that support heart health. The program is offered through local extension offices and can be delivered to workplaces, libraries, churches, 4-H clubs, senior centers and more.

During the six-week program, participants learn about nutrition, physical activity, reducing sodium intake and managing stress. Trained Extension agents also coach participants on taking blood pressure readings consistently and correctly.

A longer, four-month HAPp Signature Program provides additional support, including a blood pressure monitor, coaching and guidance on tracking readings at home. Johannes said the goal is to help participants recognize changes and communicate effectively with their health care providers.

"We're teaching agents to teach their clients and customers in HAPp how to think about the pump and hose that are inside each of us," Johannes said, referring to the heart and arteries. "And then how to know when it's not working, and more importantly, how to communicate back to our provider that, hey, we need help here."

Johannes recommends beginning with weekly blood pressure checks, ideally at the same time and under similar conditions. Once a consistent routine is established and readings remain in a healthy range, participants may be able to check less frequently, in consultation with their health care providers.

The effort is expanding into maternal health, where Kansas faces elevated risks involving preeclampsia, gestational diabetes and maternal mortality. Rural isolation, transportation barriers, limited health care providers and inadequate insurance can complicate access to care, Johannes said.

"Through partnerships with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Perinatal Community Collaborative (KPCC), K-State Extension is helping families learn about health risks during pregnancy and throughout the year after childbirth," according to Johannes.

One initiative, Baby Talk, uses educational materials from Becoming a Mom, or BAM, a nationally recognized maternal health program. Online sessions allow mothers, fathers and partners in isolated communities to participate in education with guidance from an extension agent.

Johannes said the program is becoming more popular, and some communities have even hosted watch parties at extension offices, where families gather to view educational content, learn about blood pressure monitoring and discuss nutrition and stress management.

More information on these and other programs that promote healthy living is available at local extension offices in Kansas.

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Dear Editor,

I want to give my sincerest thank you to everyone I had the privilege of speaking with during the course of a long campaign season. When I put my name to paper over a year before Election Day, my sights were set on far more than winning a House seat. As results came rolling in, it became clear that our work in rural District 70 had reached much further than I could have even imagined. I have no doubt that we made an impact on what would be a historic night across the nation.

Our campaign registered new voters, some of whom are in their 60's and cast their very first vote for Democrats. Others are freshly-turned 18, and my campaign welcomed them into a place where they felt like they belonged. People who have never followed politics are more educated on government processes, current legislation, and the impacts on their daily lives.

Lifelong Republicans boldly put my sign in their yard. People who have never given a campaign contribution donated for the first time. We created a permission structure for people to move beyond party politics, and Kansans did just that.

I received more votes than there are registered Democrats in the district, which sends a loud message that people are far more willing to cross party lines because they care more about a person's ideas than their political party. It's been my stance that Kansas is purple -- not red or blue. We saw that play out across the state as Democrats won seats nobody thought possible just 2 years ago.

When you see me, don't feel bad for me. My work was one small piece of a much bigger structure, and I'm thrilled at the final results. Kansans can breathe a sigh of relief -- we broke the Kansas House supermajority, won vital statewide races, flipped a US Senate seat, and restored checks and balances back to the state and federal government. The republicans who retained their seats should take note of the reckoning that happens when they stray from the issues that matter most. I may not have won, but I still feel like a winner. And best of all? MAGA is over.

Sincerely,
Kylie Kilmer
Abilene, KS



Special shopping event encourages the community to shop small, enjoy great deals and support local businesses

ABILENE, Kan. – Pink Friday is bringing a little extra excitement to holiday shopping, and Aksent Boutique is inviting the community to join in!

Aksent Boutique will celebrate Pink Friday on Friday, Nov. 20, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 309 N. Buckeye St. in Abilene.

Pink Friday is a nationwide shopping celebration that encourages consumers to support small businesses and shop local ahead of the holiday season. At Aksent, shoppers can look forward to a fun day of shopping, exciting deals and the opportunity to find something special while supporting a local business.

Guests can explore the latest in home décor, gifts for everyone on their holiday shopping lists and a variety of uniquely handcrafted items created by Aksent employees and the owner. These one-of-a-kind pieces offer shoppers something truly special and unique to take home.

To make the celebration even more exciting, the first 20 ladies through the door will receive a free gift. Additionally, the first 20 customers to make a purchase will receive a special gift bag filled with goodies valued at more than $200!

Community members are invited to join the celebration, take advantage of special Pink Friday deals and show their support for small businesses this holiday season. Attendees can RSVP through the event's Facebook page.

For more information, visit aksentboutique.com, message Aksent Boutique on Facebook or email aksentboutique@yahoo.com.

Aksent Boutique Pink Friday
When: Friday, Nov. 20, 2026, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Where: Aksent Boutique, 309 N. Buckeye St., Abilene, Kansas 67410
Shopping: Special Pink Friday deals, holiday gifts and unique handcrafted items
Giveaways: Free gift for the first 20 ladies and a special gift bag valued at more than $200 for the first 20 purchasers
RSVP: Facebook Event
Website: aksentboutique.com
Contact: aksentboutique@yahoo.com or Facebook message Aksent Boutique

Growing From Within: Abilene Machine Builds on a Culture Decades in the Making

Dickinson County, Kan. — When Abilene Machine introduced a new mission statement and set of core values in April 2026, the words may have been new, but much of the philosophy behind them was not.

For more than four decades, the family-owned agricultural parts company has grown from a small salvage operation along Old Highway 40 into a multifaceted business with 143 employees across 21 departments.

Along the way, generations of employees have built careers there — some beginning in entry-level positions and eventually moving into leadership.

Now, Abilene Machine is taking a more intentional approach to preserving that culture while preparing its workforce for the future.

The company's updated mission emphasizes meeting customers' needs with integrity and honesty, listening to customers and employees, and fostering growth while recognizing that "our people, families and customers are the heart of our success."

Five core values accompany it: Integrity, Driven, Team First, Coachable, and Humble & Confident.

Leadership introduced the values through department meetings held over two days in April, giving employees an opportunity to discuss what each value means and why it was selected.

Of those values, Marketing Manager Kenny Roelofsen repeatedly comes back to Team First.

"Team First is a big one for us," Roelofsen said. "Everybody has a role, and it takes all of those roles working together to make the company successful. That's part of what we wanted our mission and core values to reflect — not just what we say we are, but how we work together and how we want to continue growing."

For CEO Tom Roelofsen, maintaining the company's family-oriented culture while continuing to grow is an important part of that work.

"We want to continue growing and developing our people while keeping that family-value culture," Roelofsen said. "We're respectful that our employees have a family and a life outside of work. There are going to be school events, family events and other things they need to be there for, and we want to maintain a culture that recognizes that."

A philosophy with deep roots

That emphasis on family predates the company's newest mission statement.

Abilene Machine traces its roots to 1980, when Randy Roelofsen and Loren Engel began recycling used tractor and combine parts, providing farmers with more affordable options during difficult economic times.

The business officially became Abilene Machine in 1989 and continued expanding into new, used and remanufactured agricultural parts.

By 1990, the company had grown to approximately 50 employees.

Speaking in a story marking Abilene Machine's 40th anniversary, the late Randy Roelofsen described the philosophy he wanted to extend throughout the company.

"We think family all the way up and down the ranks. I preach that to my people," Roelofsen said at the time.

Today, that philosophy is being supported by more formal efforts to connect employees, recognize their contributions and develop future leaders.

<u>Creating connections — and listening to employees</u>

In April, Abilene Machine also rebranded an existing employee group as the Employee Connection Committee, or ECC.

The previous group had focused primarily on events and wellness initiatives. HR Manager Priscilla Abel said leadership wanted the new committee to have a broader purpose: helping lead culture change.

Employees from nearly every department were selected to bring different perspectives and ideas to the committee.

One of the ECC's first initiatives was a New Hire Mentor program. Every new employee is assigned two mentors from the committee, providing additional resources and familiar faces who can answer questions and help them become acquainted with the company — whether or not the mentors work in the same department.

<u>Other improvements are coming directly from employees.</u>

An employee in the teardown shop recently suggested creating a centralized "tool pit" where company tools could be inventoried, maintained and returned to designated locations at the end of each shift. The company is now implementing the idea.

It is a practical example of one part of Abilene Machine's new mission in action: listening to employees and using their input to improve the business.

The ECC also continues to organize activities that bring employees together. In October, five teams participated in Abilene Machine's second annual employee volleyball tournament in Solomon.

Other activities have included team-building events such as pumpkin decorating contests.

Recognizing the values in action

The company's new values are also being incorporated into employee recognition.

Through the Core Behavior Spotlight Award, employees can nominate coworkers who demonstrate the company's core values and go above and beyond in their work.

The Employee Connection Committee reviews the nominations and selects a monthly recipient.

Additional honorees are selected based on nominations over four-month periods, with an annual winner ultimately selected by the executive team.

Gabby Carnes was recently named the Period 1 Core Behavior Spotlight Award winner.

The program gives employees an opportunity to recognize those values in one another — reinforcing the Team First approach beyond individual departments or leadership roles.

Growing careers from within

The investment in employees can also be seen in the company's workforce numbers.

Abilene Machine's average employee tenure is 9.84 years, according to company HR data, and 83% of its current supervisors have been promoted from within.

Lovisa Fritts is one of the employees who has built her career alongside the company.

Fritts joined Abilene Machine in fall 2011, just six months out of college. She was initially hired to produce the company's catalog, entering product information and creating artwork for covers and filler pages.

Within her first year, she also took on product photography. As the company's product-data needs became more sophisticated, her responsibilities expanded into new-product review and data management. She later became a department coordinator and eventually moved into her current role as Catalog & Product Data Supervisor.

"I feel like I've been loyal to the company, [and] the company's been loyal to me," Fritts said.

She credits longtime manager Jay Russell with helping her learn and grow as the department evolved and said that investment has continued under Kenny Roelofsen's leadership.

"For me, my journey with Abilene Machine has been a continuous journey where I have felt the company has invested in me," Fritts said. (Cont. On pg 11)

(Cont. From Page 10)
Bryan Cochran's career provides another example.
Cochran first worked for Abilene Machine part-time while still in high school from 2002 through 2004. He moved from the warehouse into sales, eventually spending more than 15 years as a sales lead representative.
When Cochran was ready for a change in 2022, the next step didn't require leaving the company.
Abilene Machine created a new role for him as New Product Development and Forecasting Coordinator, allowing him to apply his years of company and industry knowledge in a different area. In 2025, he advanced again, becoming Purchasing Manager.
"That showed me the time and value Abilene Machine has invested in me all the years of my employment," Cochran said.
Developing the next generation Abilene Machine is also putting more structure around leadership development.

The human resources department provides monthly Leadership Development training for current supervisors and team leads. Topics include crucial conversations, delegation, building trusting teams, active listening, training others and interviewing.
For Tom Roelofsen, developing people internally is both part of the company culture and an investment in its future.
"At the end of the day, we like to see our employees grow," Roelofsen said. "Development is a goal for our people. We want people who are willing to learn, who have integrity and who understand that we're all working toward the same goal — and we want to give those people opportunities to grow with us."
That investment becomes increasingly important as the business itself continues to change. Over 46 years, Abilene Machine has evolved from a salvage operation into a company encompassing new, used and remanufactured agricultural parts, manufacturing, e-commerce, product data, warehousing and other specialized operations.
Many of those areas depend on knowledge employees develop over years on the job — making employee development, knowledge sharing and internal advancement important not only to retention, but also to the company's future.
The tools and technology may look considerably different than they did when Abilene Machine began in 1980. Its latest efforts suggest the company is equally focused on what it wants to carry forward.
More than four decades after Randy Roelofsen spoke of thinking "family all the way up and down the ranks," Abilene Machine is putting new structure around that long-held philosophy — creating opportunities for employees to be heard, recognized, developed and, like Fritts and Cochran, given room to grow.
It's one example of what makes Dickinson County Roadmarkable: businesses that don't just grow here, but create opportunities for the people who call this community home.







