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■ USD 383

District approves mill levy increase

Bethany Knipp
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The Manhattan-Ogden school board moved the district's budget forward Wednesday with a 0.04 mill levy increase from last year, a figure less than the initial proposal.

Under the newest proposal, the mill levy would be set at 52.49 mills. A mill is \$1 in tax for every \$1,000 in assessed, taxable property value. For a property owner with a home assessed at \$100,000, taxes that raise money for the district would go from \$557.18 to \$570.46, also accounting for a 2.3 percent average annual increase in home value. Previously, the proposal was to go to 53.42 mills, but that was changed after last-minute adjustments.

Board members approved a public hearing for the budget proposal scheduled at 6:20 p.m. on Aug. 20. After the board has a chance to hear from the public, the budget can be officially approved.

Some board members said they were pleased about the smaller 0.04 increase.

Board member Darell Edie said he thought director of busi-

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Enrollment numbers up at event

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Central Enrollment numbers for the Manhattan-Ogden school district this year were the highest in the event's 11-year history.

According to the numbers, 3,469 students were enrolled at Central Enrollment on July 30, which is 20 more than in 2013.

USD 383 Superintendent Bob Shannon discussed the data with the Manhattan-Ogden Board of Education at a Wednesday meeting.

The number of families who attended Central Enrollment also jumped, Shannon said. That number went from 2,168 to 2,315.

Central Enrollment was an opportunity for families to enroll their children in school, pay fees and support booster clubs.

Shannon said the event is "a great service for the parents."

"It's a lot of work. There are many aspects of it that are fun and enjoyable," Shannon said.

Several board members said they enjoyed the event. They also asked about enrolling online to reduce the expenditure of time and money and also help out staff.

"I think it's kind of time to move forward to look at some online things," board member Pat Hudgins said. "I'd like to see that happen."

She suggested opening enrollment online starting on July 1. "I like the personal touch, I think that's important for a lot of people, and I think it's time to start looking at some other ways to move forward," she said.

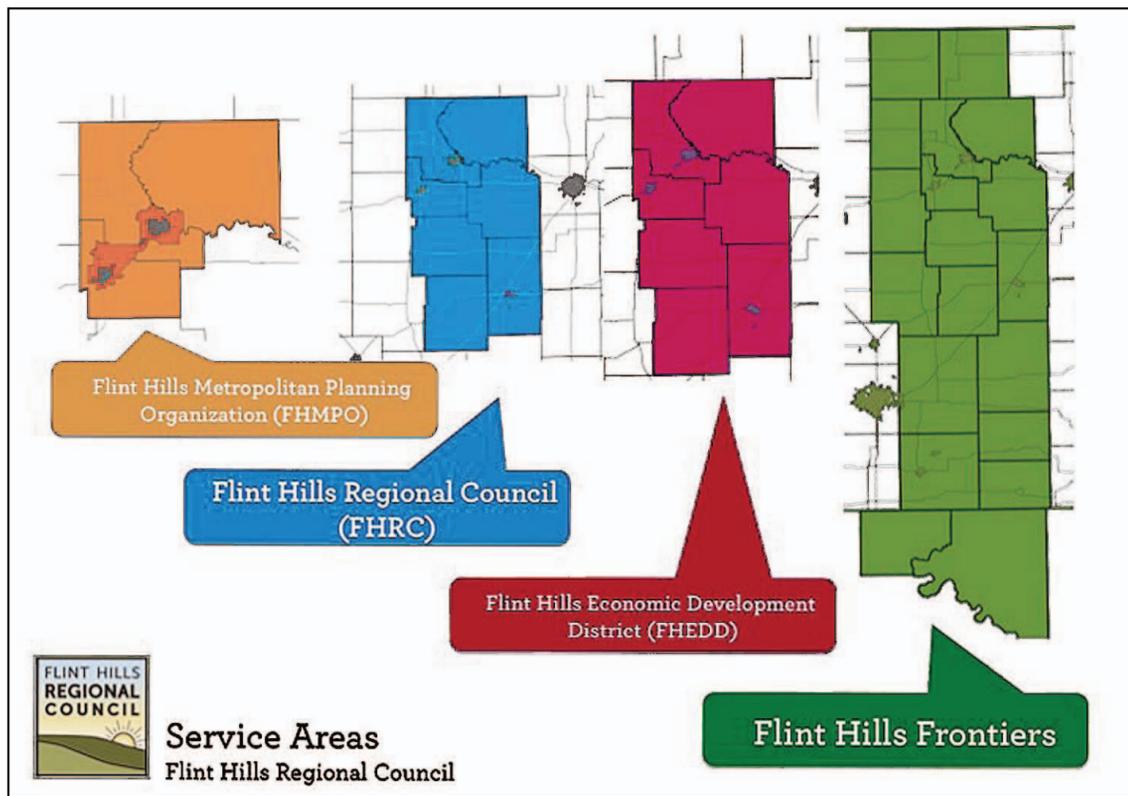
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WEATHER FORECAST

Partly sunny
LOW 67 HIGH 84



THE FLINT HILLS ARE ALIVE



Map courtesy of Flint Hills Regional Council

The Flint Hills Regional Council serves several different districts, including an economic district and a transportation district.

ONE ON ONE: Regionalism is here to stay, Stith says

Steve Cameron
Contributing writer

FORT RILEY — If you look up the word "regional" in a handy dictionary, the definition will be pretty standard.

But if you apply the same word to area governance and planning, you're going to find an organization fighting to maintain enough altitude to avoid skimming over some local tallgrass hills.

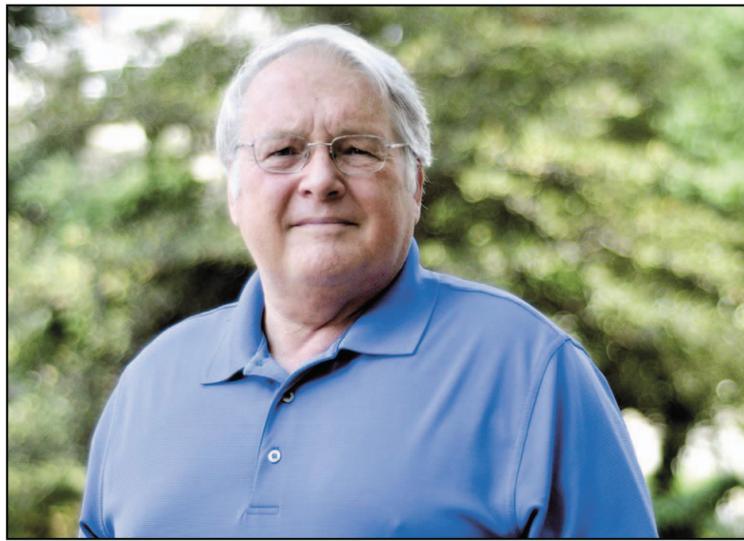
"We're not going to disappear, even though some people might get that idea," said Gary Stith, deputy director of the Flint Hills Regional Council.

"We have financial issues that we're wrestling with, because so much of our funding depends on other agencies, on grants, on various ways we can translate our value to the area into money to make it happen.

"But despite what anyone suggests, we will continue to exist."

Stith is on solid ground there, because several local services — like transportation and economic development funding — must ultimately be channeled through the FHRC.

The bigger question, especially for the seven counties and assorted communities (and universities) that have banded together to form the Flint Hills Regional Council, is whether the organization can create enough income to do the type of planning and area development work that its creators envisioned.



Staff photo by Sarah Midgorden

Gary Stith, deputy director of the Flint Hills Regional Council, said that despite the council's financial struggles, its goals remain afloat.

That concept is still struggling to stay airborne.

At a board meeting in February, Bill Clark — then the executive director of the FHRC, a former commander at Fort Riley and generally considered the man whose skills, charisma and organizational ability could lead

the council into a new era — made the admission that new funding sources had to be generated within a year.

Clark was pointing at February of 2015 because a \$2 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Develop-

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■ RILEY COUNTY

Resident encourages Lewis write-in campaign

Brady Bauman
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Less than 48 hours after Riley County Commissioner Dave Lewis found out he lost his Republican primary bid to 21-year-old K-State student Ben Wilson on Tuesday, Lewis found support in the commission chambers Thursday morning.

During the public comment segment of the commission meeting, a resident urged him

to run as a write-in candidate for November's general election.

Lewis represents District 1 in Riley County.

"I urge Dave Lewis to run a write-in campaign for the general election," said Ed Krieger, who actually



Lewis

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Russian food sanctions likely won't affect Kansas

Staff and wire reports

Kansas wheat and beef exports likely won't be affected by Russia's decision on Thursday to impose a ban on most food imports from the West.

The Associated Press reported that the unexpected sweeping move comes in retaliation for sanctions over Ukraine and will cost farmers in North America, Europe and Australia billions of dollars.

However, two of Kansas' top agricultural products should remain largely unaffected, according to organization representatives.

"It won't have any impact because we're an export competitor with Russia on wheat," said Aaron Harries, marketing director for the Kansas Wheat Commission. "They don't import any wheat from the United States."

Harries said Russia exports most of its wheat to countries in the Middle East and countries in Africa. Kansas sends the bulk of its wheat crop to South America countries, while Nigeria is also a major importer.

Russia hasn't imported beef or pork from the United States

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'Rocky Horror' and more weekend fun

Ben Hopper
Contributing writer

It's just a jump to the left...and then a few steps to the Manhattan Arts Center for the production of Richard O'Brien's "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" this weekend.

"The Rocky Horror Show" tells the story of a newly engaged couple getting caught in a storm and coming to the home of a mad transvestite scientist unveiling his new creation, a muscle man named Rocky Horror.

O'Brien's musical cult classic is directed by Penny Cullers, and is a humorous tribute to the science fiction and horror B movies of the late 1940s through early 1970s.

The production is sponsored by Debbie Nuss and Brad Fenwick, Eileen Meyer, Olivia Collins and Sisters of Sound.

Evan Tuttle portrays Frank N Furter and Tyler Woods portrays both Magenta and Usherette. The show runs 10 p.m.

Friday, 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, as well as next weekend, August 15-17.

This show is recommended for adult audiences only, and not for youth under 18 years old. Cost is \$16 for adults, \$12 for military and students over 18.

Tickets may be purchased by phone at 785-537-4420, online at www.manhattanarts.org or at the Manhattan Arts Center located at 1520 Poyntz Ave. The box office is open noon-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Manhattan Arts Center is funded in part by the City of Manhattan and Friends of MAC. Here's a look at other area events.

THURSDAY

Starving in Style featuring Monster Bow and Jade Archetype, 9 p.m. Aggie Central Station.

The Field Day Jitters, 9 p.m.

Cost: \$3. Auntie Mae's Parlor.

Comedy Night at Karnivore with Blair Kocher, 9 p.m. Karnivore, 3rd Street.

FRIDAY

Negro Spirituals Concert, 7 p.m.

Featuring LaVerne Baker and March Caudle Kidd, pianist.

First United Methodist Church.

Arts in the Park: 7 Bridges, 8 p.m. An Eagles Tribute Band. Larry Norvell Band Shell, City Park.

SATURDAY

Learn How to Bar Tend, 7-9 p.m.

Learn how to be a bartender. Learn techniques, tools and recipes. Free. The Columbian Theatre.

Scott Helmer, 7:30 p.m. Helmer is a master of reinvention and, like his music, an inspiration. His contagious, radio-friendly

blend of rock and pop infuses memorable guitar riffs, catchy sing-along choruses and lyrics that tell real stories of love, pain and starting over.

Scott has opened up for legendary acts like Heart, Eddie Money, 3 Doors Down and Big Country, and is using music as a vehicle to connect with listeners on the deepest level.

Helmer is donating his performance at the CL Hoover Opera House as part of his Support Your Cause tour, a year-long effort to help charities and non-profit organizations raise \$1 million.

Cost: \$24 adult, \$21 military and senior (65+), \$18 Student (18 and under).

To purchase tickets, call 785-238-3906 or visit jcoperahouse.org.

C.L. Hoover Opera House, Junction City.

SUNDAY

Jazz Brunch, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Bluestem Bistro.

Scott Senn, Jazz pianist, 6-8:30 p.m. dellaVoce.

Obama signs veterans' health care overhaul

Associated Press

FORT BELVOIR, Va. — Veterans may soon have easier access to government-paid health care under a bill President Barack Obama signed into law Thursday, the government's most sweeping response to date to a public uproar over systemwide problems that have rocked the Veterans Affairs Department.

With service members, lawmakers and military leaders looking on, Obama put his pen to the bill at Fort Belvoir, an Army base south of Washington, where he held up the legislation as a rare example of Republicans

and Democrats working together effectively. Denouncing delays in care for veterans as wrong and outrageous, Obama said the government would keep moving ahead with urgent reforms to ensure veterans have the care they've earned.

"This will not and cannot be the end of our effort," Obama said. "We have to make sure the VA system can keep pace with the new demands."

The \$16.3 billion measure allows the Veterans Affairs Department to hire thousands of doctors, nurses and other health professionals at the VA's nearly 1,000 hospitals and outpatient clinics nationwide.

District approves mill levy increase

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ness services, Lew Faust, did a good job with the proposal.

"I think you did a fantastic job. We have a 0.04 mill levy increase," Edie said. "I think that's awesome. I can live with that."

One concern for some board members about the proposal is that it was calculated at a 30-percent local option budget

authority, which means the board has the power to raise locally up to 30 percent of what it receives in state aid.

Thirty percent is the highest authority that can be imposed without a public vote to move higher. The authority for fiscal year 2014 was 27.6 percent.

"That gives us no wiggle room for next year," board member Curt Herrman said.

Numbers up at school enrollment event

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On a related note, district officials revealed elementary schools are full.

"This year, the elementaries are very tight," Associate Superintendent Robert Seymour said.

"At this moment we have about 240 students — elementary K-6 — above last Sept. 20's count of students," he said. The district had 3,346 K-6 students enrolled on Sept. 20, 2013, the official school enrollment count date statewide.

Seymour said a couple teaching positions that were downsized had to be brought back, and a teacher's aide would be added to help out.

There will also be little room for students to transfer buildings. The same goes for out-of-district transfers.

"Due to the tightness, we will have some folks who wanted in-district transfers to certain buildings who are not going to be able to be at that building. In that class, in that building, it's just full," he said.

School administrators are also working to boost enrollment numbers for the Manhattan Virtual Academy, the online education program for USD 383 that serves seventh through 12th graders.

As of July 30, enrollment sits at 81 students. The goal was to get about

200 students, said Brooke Blanck, the director of MVA.

This coming academic year is the first year of the program. In December of 2013, the district terminated its contract with its previous online education provider, K12 Inc.

The district decided to make its own program last winter and has since been setting it up and enrolling students.

"While we are certainly not where we want to be, we still do have time for more enrollments, and we are continuing to actually beef up our marketing efforts, so we can hopefully reach more and more students," Blanck said.

Blanck said one theory for a lack of new enrollments was that K12 is now a competitor that has marketed more nationwide as it has lost students.

Blanck said MVA was also not coming up until the third page in an online search, though the site is working its way up.

However, some board members didn't see small MVA enrollment numbers as a bad thing.

"I don't mind being small to start with," member Darell Edies said.

Board member Marcia Rozell agreed. "I'm OK with us being us being a little bit low in numbers and doing this well," she said.

Resident encourages Lewis write-in campaign

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resides in District 3. "I'm not in the 1st District, but I am interested in county government. After all, you all assess my property and collect my taxes.

"Dave's supporters thought he was a shoo-in, and only 16 percent turned out to vote. The voters in the general election need to know the difference between a business man and a 21-year-old senior college student for the management demands of the commissioner position.

"I appreciate the vigor and resilience of youth,

but the voters need to know the difference between (the two) and the records of Dave and Ben. For these reasons I urge Commissioner Lewis to run a write-in campaign for county commissioner in the general election."

While Lewis thanked Krieger for his comments, he didn't say if it was an option he was considering.

Commissioner Ron Wells agreed with Lewis' earlier comments concerning voter apathy.

"Too much apathy," Wells said.

Lewis said high taxes was a phrase he heard often.

"Regardless of what the voter turn-out was, there's a loud voice out there," he said. "That's just something to keep in mind."

"Apathy runs on so many different levels. Apathy is people that don't care, but apathy can also include people who have no clue. Every vote counts. We say it a lot. But it does."

In other items, the commission approved Assistant County Engineer Gary Rosewicz's request to seek a replacement for an aging loader at the county transfer station.

The current loader has accumulated over 11,500 hours, which Rosewicz

said is well past the 10,000-hour use for most equipment, and continuing to maintain and repair it would cost the county more in the long run.

At the moment, the loader is due for new tires and bucket repairs, which Rosewicz said would cost \$38,000. New tires, Rosewicz said, run nearly \$2,000 each.

Rosewicz said a new loader would cost approximately \$160,000.

Commissioners also approved Noxious Weed Director Dennis Peterson's request to seek a bid for a new spray truck, budgeted for \$70,000.

Russian food sanctions likely won't affect Kansas

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since before February 2013, when the country put a stop to imports due to concerns over beta agonists, a class of non-hormonal compounds fed to cattle.

In 2012, Russia imported \$589 million in United States beef and pork products, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

By imposing the ban, Russia will also likely lead to empty shelves in its cities.

The announcement shows that while President Vladimir Putin doesn't appear ready to heed Russian nationalists' calls to send troops into Ukraine, he is prepared to inflict significant

damage on his own nation in an economic war with the West.

The U.S. and the EU have accused Russia, which annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in March, of supplying arms and expertise to a pro-Moscow insurgency in eastern Ukraine, and have sanctioned individuals and companies in Russia in retaliation. Moscow denies supporting the rebels and accuses the West of blocking attempts at a political settlement by encouraging Kiev to use brutal force to crush the insurgency.

The ban, announced by a somber Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev at a tele-

vised Cabinet meeting, covers all imports of meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products from the U.S., the European Union, Australia, Canada and Norway. It will last for one year.

"Until the last moment, we hoped that our foreign colleagues would understand that sanctions lead to a deadlock and no one needs them," Medvedev said. "But they didn't, and the situation now requires us to take retaliatory measures."

That retaliation, however, could hurt Russia as much as the West. Russia depends heavily on imported foodstuffs, most of it from Europe, particularly in Moscow and other large,

prosperous cities. In 2013, the EU exported 11.8 billion euros (\$15.8 billion) in agricultural goods to Russia, while the U.S. sent \$1.3 billion in food and agricultural goods.

If the West doesn't change course, Russia may introduce restrictions on the import of planes, navy vessels, cars and other industrial products, Medvedev warned. He also said that in response to EU sanctions against Russian low-cost airline Dobrolet, Russia is also considering a ban on Western carriers flying over Russia on flights to and from Asia, which would significantly swell costs and increase flight time.

ONE ON ONE: Regionalism is here to stay, Stith says

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ment grant, the regional council's chief source of operating money, would disappear at that time.

"That is still the case," Stith said, although there have been some changes in those goals and who is pursuing them. "We have about \$749,000 left from that grant (which was allocated for planning the Flint Hills Frontiers project, an effort that stretches across 19 counties and into Oklahoma).

"But we're asking for a 90-day extension on using the funds, and we expect to get that."

So in essence, the critical time period has shifted from February to May 2015. Of course, things are not quite that simple.

For one thing, the board looked at expenses and the importance of keeping key staff in place — and when the smoke had cleared, Clark volunteered to step down.

He took a full-time job with the school district in Junction City and contributes about 10 hours or so per week advising the FHRC.

That left Stith, who wasn't even a full-time staff member, suddenly in charge of the organization's survival and then growth.

"It's funny in a way," said

Stith, who teaches at K-State and tries to limit his work with the council to 20 hours per week. "Our biggest problem is that we don't have the resources to pay for an executive director."

"It wasn't fair to ask Bill to keep doing it. As for me, I'm trying to administrate my way out of a job."

THERE ISN'T anything humorous about the battle for income, however — simply because the FHRC cannot just fizzle out and disappear into the prairie somewhere.

Various members and jurisdictions may be more enthused about the organization than others — though two counties, a city and a university have been added to its rolls (Chase and Lyon counties, the city of Emporia, and Emporia State University as a non-voting member, similar to Kansas State).

Regardless of individual opinions, the area needs the FHRC to exist.

"When the Manhattan metro area passed 50,000 in population," Stith said, "transportation plans and funding became a function that had to be operated through the federal government, rather than the state."

"There has to be an agency legally available to receive and distribute that

money. The Flint Hills Regional Transportation Administration became that agency, under our Metropolitan Planning Organization."

The MPO, by the way, is the vehicle that provides a salary for transportation planner Stephanie Watts — one of the staff members that Clark and now Stith must fight to keep.

That staff includes planner Jeff Adams; Shelley Carver, a community development manager; Unique Hiram, administrator; and Stith, who currently is "handling the day-to-day operations and trying to keep the pulse beating."

THE FINANCIAL news isn't all bad.

The council draws about \$80,000 per year in membership dues, it is entitled to 10 percent (for administrative costs) of the \$900,000 that the Department of Transportation currently allocates for regional transit, and it's applying for matching funds — up to \$100,000 per year — from the federal Economic Development Agency.

That money is earmarked for the Flint Hills Economic Development District, which almost all members see as a huge regional driver during the expected growth over the next decade.

Back in February, Clark

Staff reports

An ongoing investigation into methamphetamine, cocaine and controlled substance distribution in the Riley County area netted three arrests following drug busts on Wednesday and Thursday.

The Riley County Police Department reported Thursday morning that officers arrested Eric Lipp, 43, and Catherine Hopkins, 45, both of 2108 Mike Place, and Anita Albano, 47, 208 Riley Ave. in Ogden, after officers executed search warrants at those residences.

As a result of the busts, police seized 53.7 grams of methamphetamine, 4.8 grams of cocaine, 37 methamphetamine hydrochloride pills, \$1,716.23 in U.S. currency and a handgun.

The drugs have an estimated street value of \$6,740. Lipp was arrested for possession of methampheta-

mine with intent to distribute, conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, felon in possession of a firearm, criminal use of a weapon, possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia and interference with law enforcement.

Lipp is confined in the Riley County Jail in lieu of a \$70,000 bond.

Hopkins was arrested for possession of methamphetamine, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. She's confined in lieu of a \$5,000 bond.

Albano was arrested for possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, unlawful use of a telecommunications device and possession of a controlled substance. She's confined in lieu of a \$10,000 bond.