

The Cunningham Courier

"The only newspaper in the world that cares about Cunningham, Kansas"

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CHS 2026 Homecoming - Out of This World



Congratulations to our 2026 Homecoming Royalty: Flower girl, Huntleigh Newell, Isabella Thimesch, Blake Swope, Kyra Morgan, Logan Kinsler, Queen Grace Hageman, King Kendall Rogers, Wendy Kinsler, Sean Kostner, Crown bearer, Dean Mack

photo by Molly Morgan

Minutes from the Kingman County Commission

Chairwoman Lyon called the Board of County Commissioners meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. January 26, 2026 in the County Commissioners room at the Kingman County Courthouse. Present: Chairwoman Julie Lyon; Jack Thimesch, Commissioner; Jeff Young, Commissioner; Carol Noblit, County Clerk; Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor

Visitors: Dale Enyart; Bob Morris, Kingman Leader-Courier; Shae Brooks, Kingman Fire Chief

Online Visitors: AS; DH; Lucy; Elsa
Staff: Amanda Stucky, Field Appraiser; LaDawn Stegman, Financial Officer; Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director

Commissioner Young asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

Carol Noblit, County Clerk let the Commissioners know that Amber Hartley, County Appraiser would need to be removed from the agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve the agenda with the removal of Amber Hartley. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

Commissioner Young asked if there was any public comment.

Shae Brooks, Kingman Fire Chief asked if the Commission had discussed the active 911 from last meeting.

Commissioner Thimesch said that they would like to wait for Chairwoman Lyon to be back before any decision is made.

Jamie Smith, County Treasurer was in to discuss that her MICR printer in her office is not working properly

and will need to be replaced. Ms. Smith submitted quotes received from Century Business and Galaxie Business Equipment, Inc.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to go with Galaxie Business Equipment, Inc for the purchase of a new MICR printer and maintenance contract for \$299.00 with \$15.00 a month maintenance contract. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

Ms. Smith let the Commissioners know that Tim Elliott and herself with be attending the KCTA Annual Meeting, February 10th -13th. Ms. Smith discussed that they will be talking with a new credit card machine company.

LaDawn Stegman, Financial Officer was in to discuss stale dated checks that are over 2 years old. Commissioners would like to wait until next week.

Ms. Stegman was in to discuss the City/County EMS Fiscal Year 2025 with the Commissioners.

Mr. Ritcha clarified the wording of the City/County EMS agreement and that the agreement clearly states the City and County are paying 50/50 each.

Ms. Stegman went over the December financials with the County Commissioners.

Tonja Stamm, Courthouse Maintenance was in to discuss the radiator in the Register of Deeds office and that it is blocked with no warmth coming out.

Amanda Stucky, Field Appraiser/ Zoning Director was in with the following building permits:

Holmes, Drew & Amanda for a new home in Section 12, Township 27, Range 05W.

Holmes, Drew & Amanda for a new home in Section 12, Township 27, Range 05W.

St Rose of Lima Catholic Church

for a multi-use building in Section 10, Township 27, Range 05W.

Ms. Stucky presented the agenda for the Planning/Zoning Meeting to be held Monday, January 26, 2026.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to go into executive session at 10:12 a.m. with Amanda Stucky, Field Appraiser and Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor to discuss an individual employee's evaluation pursuant to the exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, and they will return to open session in the Board meeting room at 10:17 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

Commissioners returned to regular session at 10:17 a.m. with no action taken.

Ms. Stucky discussed that a subdivision will start the process next month in Vinita Township.

Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director was in with a permit for the following:

Haviland Telephone Inc. DBA Haviland Broadband-Fiber Optic Road Crossing-between Section 32 & 33, Township 30, Range 9W Rochester Township.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve Haviland Telephone Inc. permit. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to go into executive session at 10:30 a.m. with Charles Arensdorf, Public Works Director and Brandon Ritcha, County Counselor to discuss an individual employee's evaluation pursuant to the exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, and they will return to open session in the Board meeting room

at 10:35 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

Commissioners returned to regular session at 10:35 a.m. with no action taken.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve vacation extension for an employee. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

Mr. Arensdorf let the Commissioners know that February 9, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. for Hot Mix Overlay bid letting on NE 10th Street. (Old 54).

Mr. Arensdorf let the Commissioners know that no fuel bids were received by the 5:00 p.m. deadline last Friday.

Mr. Arensdorf discussed the Flat Ridge 4 & 5 completion of Road Agreement requirements.

Ms. Stucky was in and clarified that the Cunningham boundaries include solar and wind farms.

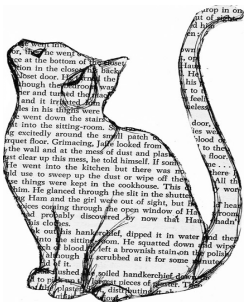
Carol Noblit, County Clerk submitted January 12, 2026, Commission Meeting minutes for approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve January 12, 2026, Commission Meeting minutes. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to approve giving authority to Jeff Young to approve the repair of the boiler in Register of Deeds Office. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.

Commissioners signed abatements and one addition.

MOTION: Commissioner Thimesch moved to adjourn the regular board meeting at 11:18 a.m. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 2-0 vote.



Meanderings

In the summer I don’t use my oven. I just don’t need to warm up the house. I eat a great deal salads and sandwiches. In the winter though, I enjoy the extra warmth and the delicious smells that come from turning on the oven.

Last week I made two of my favorite winter dishes – chicken tetrazzini and French onion soup. They were perfect for cold days.

Today I made potato soup; and with potato

soup one must have oyster crackers. Delicious!

This weekend I am thinking about making sweet and sour chicken and/or possibly spaghetti carbonara. The carbonara will depend on the price of pine nuts, which can be rather expensive, and probably more so now with the tariffs in place.

But both dishes sound wonderfully yummy right now.

**

At the bottom of page 5 is a recipe for Wacky Cake. Does anyone still bake this treat? I remember making it when I was in high school, but I can’t say I’ve made it since.

Wacky Cake is a throwback from the Depression. It doesn’t use eggs or milk, items that may have been

scarce or expensive during that era. Maybe one of these days I’ll try it again. Although, chocolate cake is not a favorite dessert. UNLESS I can make it with the German chocolate frosting like Dad made. I do love that frosting. Maybe I could just make the frosting with out the cake....

**

Well, this dog of mine named Quin. He really can’t deal with anything that isn’t ‘normal.’ If he was a person, he would be what the internet calls a “Karen”. We had the situations a couple of weeks ago with the different ‘beasts’ in the neighborhood.

Yesterday, my neighbors across the street dared to do something without getting Quin’s

approval.

It was late afternoon. He’d been outside barking at whatever dog was going through the park, or maybe just people in the park, or maybe just imagined dogs and people in the park. He finally comes running in, jumping into his chair by the window. Now I am only half aware of what is going on. Until he starts growling; but I ignored it. Then the growling got louder, then the whining started. I looked at him. “Stop that.” He stared at me. I stared at him.

He stares at the window, and howls. “Stop it!” He goes back to growling and whining. I caved.

I looked out the window where he was looking. No cows. I can’t

see anything really that would be bothering him. I went back to newspapering. He started again with the growling and the howling and the whining.

I looked again. “Oh, for the love of Pete! Are you kidding me? That’s bothering you? Seriously?”

I opened the front door, walked to the spot between my house and the Crick’s garage next door, looked back at the window to make sure Quin was watching me, and I reached down and tapped the orange flag stuck in the ground. An orange flag on a wire used for flagging something.

I went back into the house, sat down at my computer and started working on the newspaper again.

No more whining or howling or growling.

I am going to have to read him the story “The Wolf Who Cried Boy” by Bob Hartman.

Some day there is going to be a real ‘emergency’ and I won’t know to react because I’ll be ignoring his drama.

Always reading, and currently reading, "The God of the Woods" by Liz Moore, Roberta



Tallgrass and Tumbleweeds by Gaille Pike

Dear Readers,

Before we head into the tall grass here I would like to thank those of you who expressed such concern over my frozen cat. The Catcicle is alive and well and as exasperating as ever. He has not ventured back onto the ice so maybe he actually learned something. But I wouldn’t count on that all that much. I explained to him he has just eight lives left and I expect he will attempt to use up most of them.

After a brief respite we are once again dwelling in sub-freezing and sub-zero weather with wind chills usually reserved for Laplanders and Antarctic researchers. We are all taking extra care of our domestic critters and livestock, especially those who are outside pets. You know the drill—decent shelter, bedding and extra food and water. They can pretty much regulate themselves given the right environment.

But what about the 88 species of mammals that allow us to share their native habitat? Obviously they’ve figured it out but

I have often wondered just HOW? Well, here’s how...

Deer? They hunker down, just like us. Just curl up out of the wind amid a copse of trees or a depression and wait it out. They’ll adapt their usual dawn and dusk foraging routines and get out and graze when the day is at its warmest. And if blanketed by snow, they’ll use that as insulation. If all the water around them is frozen conifer needles will suffice. They’ll eat snow, too. Coyotes? No worry here. They don’t even FEEL cold until the temperature gets to -40.

Burrowing mammals like rabbits, skunk, moles, voles, foxes and badgers are quite cozy in their underground bunkers. And like all mammals their fur thickens to its fullest in polar weather. That’s why you never see fur trappers out on the Fourth of July.

Squirrels will live in tree hollows and fur-insulated nests. They’ve done their grocery shopping in previous months and don’t have to venture out much. A lot of our fauna do what many of us would like to do this time of year and that is hibernate. Woodchucks, snakes, turtles, bats and

many insects just draw the blinds and await warmer climes. Frankly I’m jealous.


And that leaves us with the birds because of all the wildlife in Kansas it is those birds who are the most active. 483 species of birds have been documented in this state and every one of them swarms my feeders the minute the world turns white. To me they seem to be the most exposed wildlife during winter. But worry not. They’ve figured it out, too. They have their own HVAC system. When you see them “fluffing” they are trapping cold air between

their feathers and their body heat warms that same air, just like a good furnace. And don’t worry if you see them shivering. It increases their heartbeat and with up to 800 beats per minute they generate a lot more heat. Just like when we do a little dance in place when we’re freezing our butts off.

So they’ll all be fine and my cats will be fine and I’ll be fine...if I could just crawl under my own blanket of snow, turn off the lights and sleep until Memorial Day.

Keep your eyes on the stars and your back to the wind.

Happy Here!



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Poems about small town life

Gravel roads are scarcer now,
Most everything is paved.
Which is to say
We drive today
On surface more behaved.

Here a person likely knows
Who lives two blocks away.
Not nearly true
For most folks who
Prefer to city stay.

Traffic jam ain’t possible.
Congestion not a chance.
Cuz where we are
A truck or car
Can easily advance.

Looking for a decent home
That’s not so steep in price?
Less mortgage, tax?
A value max?
It’s why small towns entice!



The Shopping Cart Conundrum

“The apathy and inattention of the average citizen is beyond comprehension.”

Abigail McCarthy

For most humans in modern America, we find ourselves shopping in our local grocery stores most every week. So it is with our family. Frequent trips to “the store” (in our case a big beautiful HEB) are

common. On the whole, I find that I enjoy these excursions. Wandering the aisles of a well-stocked supermarket reminds me of the many blessings of capitalism and our free-market economy (we can choose between 20 different brands of ketchup). But there is one constant and continual irritation that plagues my every shopping trip. With tongue-in-cheek, I call it the shopping cart conundrum – people and their negligent cart-driving habits.

For the most part, pedestrians in the grocery store are well behaved. They walk with normal consideration for others. But it seems to me that for many people, the minute they pull a shopping cart

from its parking stall at the end of the store, everything changes. It’s as if they put on blinders, and in spite of crowded aisles and plenty of others around them, with their boney little fingers gripping the handlebars, they drive their convenient shopping carts as if they are the only ones in the store. The everyday helter-skelter shopping scenario with people and carts going everywhere reminds me of driving in Europe. I find this somewhat aggravating and wish that we had some sort of grocery cart driver’s ed program in place to help those who are most challenged in this way. Here are the common infractions that I witness every time we shop.

Note – I am not talking about the elderly or the disabled or the mobility-cart people. When they impede the flow of supermarket traffic, the inconvenience needs to be endured with patience and empathy. The problem causers that I am talking about are the able-bodied and inconsiderate folk skimming the store in their Skechers, acting as if they own the place and are in a hurry

to prove it.

On to infractions. First, we have the cloggers, hogging the center of the aisle when other carts need to pass. Typically, this is a single shopper, but sometimes there are multiple offenders. The worst are families walking abreast, spread out and prancing like they are marching in the Rose Parade. Invariably, the cart pusher is in the middle, with feral children arrayed on either side, often with a beleaguered husband in tow. They clog the aisles like the Cosa Nostra on patrol.

To solve this problem, shoppers need only to drive their carts as they would their cars. Stay to the right as you do on the road. If stopping to procure a can of green beans or grab a head of lettuce, stay to the side so others can pass. Maybe we need to paint lines down the middle of the aisles to foster compliance and consideration.

Next, we have the non-yielding cart drivers who habitually plow through the end-of-the-aisle intersections without looking for oncoming traffic. I would argue that shoppers traversing the larger

aisles at the back, front, and middle of most stores have the right-of-way. These aisles carry more traffic and are typically found fronting the dairy, eggs, and meat sections in the back of the store and the check stands at the front. Shoppers entering these intersections should yield to oncoming traffic. Perhaps we need yellow yield signs at these supermarket intersections. This could only help.

The line-cutters are a problem as well. Often these are cart drivers pushing ahead and cutting off less aggressive and more considerate shoppers waiting to pass in blocked aisles. Line-cutters ignore others who are waiting patiently, forcing their way to the front in a race for canned chili or some other item. Sometimes these folks are simply inattentive and lacking peripheral vision as they cut the checkout lines, pushing their carts in front of others who are too polite to stop them. Other than instituting shopping cart enforcement policies and personnel to police the aisles, am not sure you can fix this one. Rude people will be rude people. Let’s just smile and live with

them.

Special mention should be given to the phone people, talking and texting with abandon, chatting with their slew-foot friends and family members instead of taking care of business and staying out of other people’s way. It’s considerate to pay attention. I am not sure that anything can be done for them, without divine intervention.

The need for dealing with shopping cart traffic issues and offenders will not go away. I’ll remind myself that bad shopping cart drivers are perhaps a blessing in disguise. As with all irritating and disagreeable persons we are forced to be around, they provide us with the continuing opportunity to respond graciously when we are most inconvenienced, hunting and gathering in the grocery store. This is probably a good thing.

In the meantime, let’s be grateful for our hard-working grocers. It is a blessing to have and enjoy well-stocked stores where we can all wander and shop. I’ll try to be patient...

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Community Bulletin Board

Thursday, February 5

JH BB Tournament
at Attica

HS Regional Scholars
Bowl at Bucklin

HS Forensics at
Medicine Lodge

Friday, February 6

2:30 p.m.

5th Grade Spelling Bee

HS BB vs South
Barber at HOME

Saturday February 7

JH BB Tournament
at Attica

Monday, February 9

JH BB Tournament at
Attica

BOE Meeting

Tuesday, February 10

9:00 a.m.

Career Technical
Education Advisory

HS BB vs Central
Christian at HOME

Wednesday,
February 11

6:00 Shop Guild



Thursday,
February 12

KAY Unit Conference

JH BB Tournament
at Attica

Friday, February 13

HS Bb at Skyline

Saturday February 14

St. Valentine's Day

Monday, February 16

Federal Holiday:
Pressidents' Day

No School

Teacher Professional
Development

Tuesday, February 17

HS BB at Stafford

Lions Club Meeting

Thursday, February 19

4:30 p.m.

U.S.D. 332 Site
Council Meets

Friday, February 20

HS BB vs Pretty
Prairie at HOME

Senior Night

Booster Club Night

Saturday, February 21

National FFA
Week begins

BOE Will Meet Monday to
Discuss Addition to CHS

Cunningham USD #332
Board of Education Special Meeting
104 W 4th St., Cunningham, KS 67035
Monday, January 12, 2026
5:30 p.m.


Work Session Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Agenda (AI)

III. Work Session with B & G Consultants

IV. Adjournment



BOE Will Meet Wednesday in
Regular Session

AGENDA
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
7:00 p.m.
104 W 4th St., Cunningham, Kansas

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Agenda (AI)

III. Guest Recognition

IV. Approval of the minutes for the January
Regular meeting & Design meetings. (AI)

V. Approval of financial reports and payment of
bills. (AI)

VI. Reports

a. Superintendent Report – Dr. Arnberger

b. Principal Report- Mr. Dunlap

c. Special Education Report

VII. Old Business

a. Strategic planning/strategic audit update

VIII. New Business

a. Executive Session- Negotiations

b. Executive Session – Personnel

c. Review 2026-2027 Calendars

IX. Adjournment

Pearce Named to President's List

Freed-Hardeman University has released the names of students who made the President’s and Dean’s Lists for the Fall 2025 semester. To be on the President’s List, a student must be full-time and have a 4.0 grade point average. Students on the Dean’s List have earned a minimum 3.4 grade point average for the semester.

Mary Pearce, of Kingman, KS, has been named to the President’s list. Mary, a Sophomore level student, is earning a degree in Kinesiology: Exercise Science.

The mission of Freed-Hardeman University is to help students develop their God-given talents for His glory by empowering them with an education that integrates Christian faith, scholarship and service. With locations in Henderson and Memphis, FHU offers associate, bachelor’s, master’s, specialist and doctoral degrees.

Kingman Historic Theatre

February 7

Don Jovi:
The Ultimate
Tribute to the
Music of Bon Jovi

Thank YOU for supporting YOUR
Kingman Historic Theatre.

Kingman Historic
Theatre

237 N. Main in Kingman
(620) 532-1253
http://www.
kingmantheatre.org/

February 6 and 8

Solo Mio

Rated PG
Showtimes

Friday at 7:30pm
Sunday at 5:30pm.


Thank YOU for supporting YOUR
Kingman Historic Theatre.

Save the Date

for the WKCEF

Scholarship Fundraiser

TRIVIA NIGHT



Saturday, March 28

Watch for more info soon!

Growing Is the Purpose: Keeping
Education First in High School
Activities

By Dr. Karissa Niehoff, Chief Executive Officer of the NFHS, and Bill Faflick, Executive Director of the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA)

High school activities is experiencing record participation. It is also experiencing unprecedented pressure. Across the country, young students are training earlier, competing year-round and navigating expectations shaped by a rapidly expanding youth sports economy. For many families, activities now feel like increasingly high stakes.

High school activities operate differently—by design. They exist within schools, alongside classrooms, guided by the same educational mission. Participation is structured to support academic success and to teach intangibles like discipline, teamwork, resilience and responsibility. Rules around eligibility, seasons and competition are not barriers to ambition; they are safeguards for students.

As expectations around winning and advancement continue to rise, we at the KSHSAA believe it is worth reaffirming the role that high school activities play in education—and why that purpose matters.

Every high school student in activities is a student first, and we see high school activities as a vital extension of the classroom. In “the last class of the day,” student-athletes develop character and integrity and learn life lessons they will carry with them long after their playing days are over.

Today’s high school students participating in activities will be tomorrow’s leaders. So, while the goal of participating in high school activities is to win, the true purpose is much greater—for students to learn and grow as people.

How? By keeping high school activities educational, competitively balanced and accessible for all students. Why? To ensure high school activities develop the whole person, not just the competitor.

Last summer, the New York Times published an article stating youth sports is now a \$40 billion industry. Private lessons, club sports, travel teams and elite competitions are costly and wildly popular.

For many student participating in activities, their activity experience is focused on becoming an elite athlete and landing a college scholarship.

But according to the NCAA, of the 8.2 million high school student-athletes in the U.S. (an all-time record), only 7% go on to play in college, and only 2% earn any type of scholarship.

Further, data from College Board’s “Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2025” report shows that the total published cost of attendance (tuition, fees, room and board) at four-year colleges now averages roughly \$31,000 per year in-state and more than \$50,000 per year out-of-state—underscoring why families feel intense pressure to secure athletic scholarships.

That’s why the purpose of high school activities must be so much more than winning, earning trophies or advancing to the next level.

Only a select few go on to play in college and even fewer get scholarships. But nearly all students participating benefit simply by, participating. They experience personal growth. They learn leadership skills. They build community and more. When activities are education-based, students’ long-term development and well-being remain the top priority above all else.

With the guiding principle of students first, the NFHS and state high school associations like the KSHSAA are committed to preserving the integrity, opportunity and educational alignment of high school activities for all students.

The purpose of high school activities—helping students learn and grow as people—is what we are here to protect and preserve for generations to come. And it is our honor to do so.

Dr. Karissa Niehoff is the Chief Executive Officer of the NFHS. Bill Faflick is the Executive Director of the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA).

Visit ProtectThePurpose.com to learn more.

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Libraries


Cunningham Public Library

Mon., Wed., Fri.
2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Tues., Thurs., Sat.
9:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Closed for Holidays
298-3163




Zenda
Public Library

Monday
8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.
Thursday:
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday:
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
620-243-5791



Kingman
Carnegie Library

Mon. & Tues. 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wed. : 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Thurs. : 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Fri. : 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sat. : 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
620-532-3061



Pratt Public Library

Mon. - Thurs.
10:00 - 7:00
Friday: 10:00 - 6:00
Saturday: 10:00 - 2:00
Closed on Sundays
(620) 672-3041

Journeying Through the Final Hours of Jesus: A Lenten Invitation to Our Community

This Lenten season, the United Methodist Churches



of Cunningham and Penalosa warmly invite our community to walk together through a powerful season of spiritual reflection, learning, and renewal as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

Our main study for Lent will be based on 24 Hours That Changed the World by Adam Hamilton, a deeply moving exploration of the final day of Jesus’ life from the Upper Room to the cross and the tomb. This seven-part study will help us better understand Christ’s sacrifice and what it means for our faith, our discipleship, and our daily lives.

Alongside this study, participants will also receive and be encouraged to use the Sanctuary for Lent 2026 devotional (the green devotional), which offers daily Scripture readings, reflections, and prayers to guide personal devotion throughout the season.

Seven-Part Lenten Bible Study Series
Begins: Sunday, February 15, 2026
Cunningham UMC: 4:00 PM
Penalosa UMC: 6:00 PM
Each session will include video teaching, group

discussion, prayer, and time for fellowship. Whether you are a longtime student of Scripture or just beginning your faith journey, this study offers a meaningful way to grow deeper during Lent.



Ash Wednesday Service
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Cunningham UMC – 6:00 PM
We will begin the Lenten journey together with the imposition of ashes, reminding us of God’s grace, our need for repentance, and the hope of new life in Christ.



Holy Week & Easter Community Gatherings
Maudy Thursday Service: April 2, 2026
A service of Holy Communion and remembrance of Jesus’ final meal with His disciples.

Easter Sunrise Service: April 5, 2026
At the Oaks Pond
Join us at sunrise as we proclaim, “Christ is risen!” in a beautiful outdoor setting.

All are welcome. You do not have to be a member of Cunningham UMC or Penalosa UMC to participate. These gatherings are open to the entire community of Penalosa, Cunningham, and surrounding areas. Bring a friend, a neighbor, or a family member and come be part of this meaningful Lenten journey.

This Lent, let us walk together through the final hours of Jesus so that we may more fully celebrate the power of His resurrection.

Rev. Mathew Musyoki
Pastor at United Methodist Churches of Cunningham and Penalosa.



A Column by Dean Marple

Sis

Holding her stomach, Sue gingerly maneuvered down the three front steps, then waddled over to the lawn chair Brett had placed under the large oak in their front yard. She gingerly lowered herself toward the chair’s bottom, using her arms for support, then dropped the final six inches with a plop. Mildly gasping for breath after her short excursion, Sue was sure of three things – the baby couldn’t come soon enough, no

woman should be pregnant in August, and her husband had no idea what he was doing.

“And you thought I’d forgot all about getting the baby seat didn’t you?” exclaimed Brett, her grinning husband. “I remembered you said we had to have one before the hospital would let us bring the kiddo home. See, I got it with a whole week to spare!” With his little boy grin and hair that no brush could control, he reminded her of the high school football player she fell in love with eight years ago. Back then she loved his willingness to jump in and try anything. However, based on what she was seeing now, may-

be that attitude wasn’t the best approach.

Holding up the box he’d just purchased, he was excited. “Look at the picture on the box, Hon. This little doozy has a five-star rating for comfort and safety. It’s the most expensive one Walmart had, so it has to be good. I’ll just pop it out of the box and stick it in the back seat.”

“Do you know what you’re doing? My sister had a heck of a time installing hers the first time.”

“Oh, come on, how hard could it be? I’ll stick it right in.”

“I could call Sis.”

“Look, just because she’s got three kids

doesn’t make her a car seat expert. I’ve got this,” and with that he tore into the box sending plastic wrap, cardboard, and instructions flying in all directions.

“Won’t you need those instructions?”

“Nah, you just grab the handle of the carrier, pick it up, and sit it down on the backseat. Then you cross the seat belt over it, and bam, there you have it. Easy peasy. I’ll give it a tug just to show you how safe it is.” Brett tugged and the little seat promptly fell on the floor.

Sue gave Brett a weak, I believe in you Babe smile, but she had her doubts as he retrieved

the seat and cinched the seat belt down as tight as he could draw it. “Here goes,” he yelled as he gave it a hard yank. The baby seat shot forward, hit the back of the seat in front of it and bounced over to the other side of the car.

“Well, damn,” was Brett’s only response.

Silently wondering if the seat would ever get installed, Sue held up the discarded instructions and then asked, “Think you need these?”

An embarrassed Brett silently accepted the instructions from Sue and started to read but stopped abruptly. “These are in Chinese! How am I supposed to read them?”

“I don’t know, but if you hadn’t waited until the last minute to get it, we wouldn’t be in this mess. Let’s call Sis.”

“No, I’ve got this. Just give me a minute. I’ll look at the pictures.”

“You can’t, you tore up the box.”

The next 15 minutes were spent with Brett shoving, yanking, and beating on the seat as the amount of cursing grew by the minute. Finally, an exasperated Brett mumbled something.

“What did you say?”

More mumbles.

Hon, I can’t hear you. What did you say?”

“CALL SIS.”

Sis had the car seat installed in two minutes.

Giving Opportunities in our Community

4C Day Care Leave a donation with the Methodist Church.

West Kingman County Education Foundation
Use your Dillon's Card! to donte contact Shawna Sterneker

Hands of Hope (contact any church)

Cunningham Alumni Scholarship Fund
(send checks to the West Kingman County Education Foundation)

Cunningham Community Center (leave donation at the bank)

Lions' Club

Cunningham Museum (to donate contact Alan Albers or Mike McGovney)

Cunningham Public Library (to donate, contact Debi Dunlap)

Cunningham EMS (to donate, contact Monte Rose or Kathy Albers)

Mark 8:36 NIV
What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?
quote submitted by Alan Albers

Check the Blessing Box east of the Methodist Church.
Anyone can give or take from the Blessing Box at any time.

Free Groceries at the Cunningham Methodist Church
2 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays

Catholic Churches

Sacred Heart, Cunningham Saturday 4:00 p.m.	St. John, Zenda Sunday 10:00 a.m.
St. Leo Sunday 8:30 p.m.	St. Peter Willowdale Saturday 5:30 p.m.

Father Daryl Befort 316-706-1627 620-246-5370

Lutheran Churches

First Sunday of the month service is at St. John; third Sunday of the month service is at Trinity

St. John, Nashville 620-246-5220 Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m. Worship Service 10 a.m.	Trinity, Medicine Lodge 620- 886-3397 Sunday School & Bible Class 8:45 a.m. Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
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Pastor vacancy until further notice.

Church of Christ

Penalosa
Sunday 11:00 a.m.

First Christian Church Cunningham

Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
Jr High Youth Group 4:00 p.m. Sunday
Sr High Youth Group 7:30 p.m. Sunday
Wednesday Prayer Service 7:00 p.m.
Pastor Mike McGovney 620-770-9507

United Methodist Church

Penalosa Worship 9:15 a.m. Pastor Mathew Ndambuki Musyoki 620-298-2090	Cunningham Worship 10:45 a.m.
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Zenda Methodist Church

Worship 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School: Children 8:30 a.m. Adults 10:00 a.m.
Pastor J L Nichols 620-243-6953

YEARS AGO IN

The Cunningham Clipper

W. A. Bradley / William Bradley

1961

February 9, 1961 - The Cunningham Women’s Society of Christian Service held their regular monthly meeting last Thursday afternoon, entertaining ladies from the other Cunningham churches on Guest Day.

President Mrs. S. T. Kincheloe welcomed the members and guests with a tribute to “Women,” after which Mrs. Sidney Dillinger gave the devotionals, and Mrs. Nell Mann sang “The Lord’s Prayer,” accompanied by Mrs. Iona Shafer.

A skit, “The Twelve Fruits,” was presented by a group of ladies followed by a lecture on “Morocco” by Mrs. Marvin Turpin of Salina, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Boen of Cunningham. Mrs. Turpin, who lived in Morocco when her husband was stationed there with the United States Air Force, told many interesting facts and stories about the country and its people, and showed a wonderful collection of colored slides.

The hostesses, Mrs. Frank Cain Jr., Mrs. Luther Walker, Mrs. Zola Pearson, Mrs. Boen, Mrs. Ralph Huston, Mrs. Merle Cales, Mrs. Laverna Bradley, and Mrs. Lloyd Murphey, served refreshments to 80 members and guests and 10 children.

Three more basketball games remain on the Cunningham Wildcats 1960-1961 schedule before the Class B District tournament to be held at Partridge, February 21-24.

The last home game will be played tomorrow night (Friday, February 10), when Cunningham meets Fairfield North (Plevna-Abbyville).

This is the annual homecoming game for Cunningham, and half-time ceremonies of the first team game will feature the crowning of the 1960-1961 basketball queen. Candidates for queen are LaDean Cooley, Janet Graves, Kathy Meyers, Helen Mertens, and Mary Zrubek.

Following the game, alumni and students of Cunningham Rural High School are invited to attend a homecoming dance in the high school recreation room.

The Wildcats will play two out-of-town games next week. The Wildcats will meet Anthony, currently leaders of the Southern Kansas League, at Anthony next Tuesday night, February 14, and next Friday night, February 18, Cunningham will play at Preston.

Seven teams are entered in the Class B District Tournament at Partridge. Besides Cunningham, the other teams are Partridge, Mr. Hope, Cheney, Pretty Prairie, St. Teresa’s of Hutchinson, and Arlington.

1966

February 10, 1966 - Pat Baber, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Baber, a senior in Cunningham Rural High School, was crowned “Basketball Queen of 1966” between the first and second team games with Preston here at the high school’s annual basketball homecoming game last Friday night.

Pat was crowned by Team Captain Jim Cain. Her attendants were Teresa Rose, Jean Brady, Donna Lacy, and Shirley Lubbers. Their escorts were Tom Jarmer, Dennis Raney, Kenny Kerschen, and Ron Murphey. Anita Piepmeier was the flower girl, and Scotty Elliott served as crown bearer. The high school band, under the direction of Instrumental Supervisor Barry Price, provided music for the crowning ceremony.

A large crowd attended the annual homecoming dance in the high school recreation room following the games.

The Cunningham Wildcats won their sixth Ninnescah League victory here last Friday night when they bombed Preston, 109 to 61.

The victory was double-sweet, coming at the annual homecoming game, and it gave the Wildcats a two-game lead in the race for the league championship. Cunningham is atop the standings with a 6-1 record, with Partridge, Fairfield, and Alden tied for second with 4-3 marks; Sylvia is fifth at 3-4, and winless Preston trails the field with an 0-7 record.

Cunningham put on an awesome offensive attack as they rolled over Preston, racking up 24 points in the first quarter, 34 in the second quarter, 19 in the third period, and finishing with 32 points in the final quarter. Ron Murphey led the scoring with 28 points, as five Cunningham players scored in double figures.

1971

February 11, 1971 - Two men were burned, one seriously, in a fire in a service station at the west edge of Cunningham, Tuesday, shortly before noon.

Jim McCune, operator of McCune’s APCO, and Dave Ellison of Preston, a truck driver for the Cairo Co-op Equity Exchange, were rushed to the Pratt County Hospital in Pratt by the Pratt County Ambulance Service. Reports Wednesday morning said McCune is in satisfactory condition with burns on his face and hands, but that Ellison’s condition is serious, with badly burned hands and upper body burns.

The fire reportedly started while the two men were working on a frozen gas-line filter on the Co-op truck, parked in the station’s west bay, and with the roll-up door open. A spark ignited some gas under the truck. Ellison, who was under the truck, managed to roll out and went out of the building through the front entrance with his clothing afire. McCune escaped through the rear door, and went to Ellison’s aid, helping to extin-

guish the fire on his clothing by rolling in the snow.

The fire engulfed the west bay, and spread to the east bay, where a truck, belonging to the Wegerer-Kincheloe Impl. Co., and loaded with about \$25,000 in parts, caught fire.

The Cunningham Volunteer Fire Department was summoned, and both trucks went to the fire scene. Quick action by firemen prevented the blaze from spreading to the east office area of the station. A Halliburton Oil Company water truck came from Pratt, and the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department also came with their fire truck.

The fire was quickly under control, and Raney’s truck Service was summoned to pull the burning trucks from the building. To aid in fighting the fire, Highway 54 traffic was re-routed around the fire scene, and gas, telephone, and electric service was cut off to the immediate area.

Mrs. Irene Ellis, owner of the building, expressed her grateful thanks to firemen for their quick action, and said re-construction would begin as soon as possible on the building.

The annual Cunningham High School Basketball Homecoming will be held tomorrow night (Friday) in the school gym-auditorium when the Wildcats host the Mullinville Tigers.

The 1971 Basketball King and Queen will be crowned in ceremonies between the “B” and “A” games.

The king candidates are Bill Ogden, Ronnie Park, Mike Schrant, Steve Albers, and Dean Simon.

The queen candidates are Kathy McCune, Jill Rose, Marsha Hansen, Mary Albers, and Cathy Simon.

A dance for the high school students, alumni, and friends will be held in the school gym-auditorium following the games. Music will be provided by a local group, “The Zygote.”

YEARS AGO IN

The Cunningham Clipper

Publisher: Charles G. Barnes

Editor: Nancy Briggeman

Reporter: Marie Ann Mantooth

1976

February 5, 1976 – Patricia A Holcomb has been named Cunningham High School’s 1975-76 Betty Crocker Family Leader of Tomorrow. Patricia won the honor by competing with other seniors in the written knowledge and attitude examination on De. 2. She will receive a certificate from General Mills, sponsor of the annual educational scholarship program and becomes eligible for state an national honors.

The Fourth Graders and their teacher, Mrs. Almond, invited the Second Graders to a Kansas Day program on Friday. The children enjoyed seeing films about Kansas birds, Kansas industries, and Kansas history.

Third Grade: Edwin Park celebrated his birthday Monday at school. He was crowned King for the Day. Treats were handed out to his classmates and his teacher.

In art we are making individual valentine mail boxes to place the Valentines before our Valentine party.

The Nashville-Zenda Thunderbird girls took third place honors in the GGPL Boys and girls Basketball Tournament by stunning the Mullinville Tigers 48-37.

Mary Vierthaler led the Thunderbirds in scoring with 19 points followed by Janet Blasi with 11 tallys.

Sheri Rader and Lou Jean Harding shared high point honors for the Tigers as each hit for eight points on the evening. They were assisted by teammate La Deanna Farris with five.

YEARS AGO IN

The Cunningham Clipper

Publisher: Charles G. Barnes

Editor: Florine Kampling

1981

February 5, 1981 – “Time to Run,” a film that is a mixture of problems and solutions, will be shown at Cunningham High School Gym on Wednesday, Feb. 11. The feature, filmed in Eastmancolor by World Wide Pictures, will be shown once beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Filmed on location in the Southern California area, “Time to Run” stars Ed Nelson, Randall Carver, Brbara Sigel, Joan Winnill, and Gordon Rigsby. Nelson plays Warren Cole, a hard driving success-oriented industrial and scientific engineer who because of over-involvement with his work, has failed to communicate with his wife Fran, played by Joan Winnill, or their son Feff, played by screen new come Randal Carner.

“Tiem to Run” allows the viewer to become involved on any one or more o f the three different levels. Viewed purely as entertainment, it’s the suspenseful story of Jeff’s attempts at sabotage in the nuclear generating plant conceived, designed and managed by his father. Jeff strongly feels that the plant is a threat to the environment, and he puts his feeling in action.

Melisha Lori Hageman and her mother, Rose Ann Hageman, were the honorees of a layette shower at the home of Mrs. George Kampling Saturday evening in the Kampling home. Additional hostesses were Mary Albers, Marilyn Vierthaler, Janet Ford, and Debbie Thimesch.

Gayla Golden has pre-enrolled and has been accepted in a Fashion Merchandising course at Brown Mackie College, Salina, beginning with the fall term.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bainum flew to DeSoto where Mrs. Bainum stayed and spent a week with her daughter and family, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Eitel. Lori, small granddaughter, had surgery; Mrs. Bainum helped care for her and the family. Bill returned for her Saturday evening. Enroute home on Sunday, they visited Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bigley of Wichita.

Howard Sidney, Dean of Academic Affairs at the State University of New York, Agricultural and Technical Collee at Cobleskill, has announced the names of students who achieved honors during the fall semester. Included on the Dean’s list was David Thayer Colucci, son of Mr. and Ms. James Colucci, Cunningham.

1986

February 6, 1986 – Members of the Cunningham Lions Club hosted their annual ladies night and social with the Nashville-Zenda Lions Club on Tuesday, February 4.

A catered meal was enjoyed by 83members, wives and guests.

The Cunningham High School Main Street Singers provided a delightful program for the enjoyment of everyone attending.

Joe Strong of Nashville was awarded an honorary membership in the Iowa State fan club for his support of their basketball team.

The remainder of the evening was spent visiting among the guests.

Outstanding academic performance during the Fall Semester 1985 earned scholastic honors for the 162 Hutchinson Community College students.

Sharon K. Simon and Genelle E. Westerman, both of Nashville are listed on the President’s Honor Roll.

Donna K. Adelhardt, also of Nashville is on the Dean’s Honor Roll.

Leroy Kampling, Shirley Kampling and Mary Parsons were the honorees at a birthday dinner and party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy A. Kampling, Sunday. Present were George and Shirley Kampling and Kyle; Mary Parsons, Lindsay and Brent, Bob and Joy Kampling, Kathy Koster, and Leroy and Florine Kampling. Cake and ice cream were enjoyed in the afternoon.

The Cunningham 4-H club met Monday, February 3, at the Community Center. The 4-H members were told about a soup supper to be held by the junior leaders.

Stephen Petz gave a project talk on rockets. Misty Piehler showed her sticker collection for Show and Tell. Mike Hansen and Pat Lubbers gave a demonstration on parliamentary procedure.

Kim Huffman led the recreation and refreshments were served by the Kerschen and Zimmerman families.

Museum Winter Hours

Saturday:

Morning 10:00 - 12:00

Afternoon 1:00 - 3:00

For guided tours call

Mike McGovney 620-770-9507

Joe Sterneker 620-243-2534

Alan Albers 620-243-2553

READERS' PRIZE RECIPE

Chocolate Wacky Cake

1½ cups sifted cake flour	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup sugar	1 tablespoon vinegar
½ teaspoon salt	5 tablespoons shortening,
1 teaspoon baking powder	melted
1 teaspoon baking soda	1 cup lukewarm water
3 tablespoons cocoa	

Sift flour again with sugar, salt, baking powder, baking soda and cocoa. Put into an ungreased 10x10-inch pan. Make three “wells” in ingredients. Into one “well” pour vanilla, Into the second pour vinegar and into the third pour shortening. Over all pour 1 cup lukewarm water. Stir to blend. Bake in moderate oven, 350 deg. F., for 30 minutes. (This old favorite is an often requested recipe these days.—E.A.).

“This cake recipe is ideal for busy mothers. It’s easy to mix, inexpensive and tasty,” writes Mrs. E. Tucker, 2850

JH Lady Wildcat Use a Dominate 3rd Quarter to Take Down Norwich and Claim the Regular Season League Title

On Thursday, January 29, 2026, the Cunningham JH girls traveled to Norwich for an HOPL basketball game which featured the only two undefeated teams remaining in the league. Both teams struggled to get off shots early as Norwich would lead 3-2 after the first quarter. In the second quarter Norwich would stretch their lead out to 9-2, but the Lady Cats would

score the final six points of the period to close to within one, 8-9. After halftime the Lady Wildcats would cut down on their turnovers and would turn the six-point run to end the first half into a 20-point run by outscoring Norwich 14-0 in the third quarter and led 22-9 heading into the fourth quarter. Norwich would score six points in the fourth and the Wildcats would score eight, six of those coming from the free-throw line, as they would make 6 of 8 in the quarter to ice the game away and remain undefeated by beating Norwich by the score of 30-15. The win clinched the number one seed for the Lady Wildcats in league

tournament, as their league record stands at 8-0 and their overall record at 12-0. Scoring for the Lady Cats vs. Norwich: Alyssa Osner 6, Leah Rogers 10, Vaughn Preisser 6. In the B-team game Cunningham trailed 8-9 at the half and came away with a 23-18 win. This was the final b-team game of the season the b-team girls finished with a 7-3 record. Scoring for the B-team Lady Cats vs. Norwich: Parker Miller 6, Jessica Dittmer 2, Willow Preisser 2, AnnMarie Kerschen 5, Jalynn McGuire 3, Elsie Ruckle 4. -Coach Ricke

Wildcat Scorers

Leah Rogers	10
Carly McGuire	6
Alyssa Osner	6
Vaughn Preisser	6
Lux Thimesch	2



Carly McGuire



Molly Morgan photo



Lux Thimesch



Leah Rogers



Mackley Glenn



Vaughn Preisser

Wildcats Rout Norwich Eagles

The Cats traveled to Norwich to face off against the Norwich Eagles on Thursday, January 29. In recent memory this has been somewhat of a rivalry against a top league foe. Not this year! Although understrength with injury and the flu bug, the Cats still piled up the points. Transition was a key early as they pushed

the ball well. In the half court the boys did a great job as usual moving the ball and hitting the open shots. It seemed that the boys got hot from the outside as the game progressed with multiple players hitting shots from behind the 3pt line. That has not been consistent this season, but with the tournament nearing it is a

welcome sight. The reserves wrapped up the game against the Eagles Starting unit, winning by 20. Cooper led the team in rebounds with 5 and Brody pulled down 3. Cooper also led the team in assists with 4. Multiple players tallied one steal apiece. Coach McGuire

Score	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Cunningham	16	15	16	0	47
Norwich	5	8	7	7	27

Wildcat Scorers

Brody Halerson	13
Cooper Neufeld	12
Grady Smyth	12
Jace Oldham	6
Landen Hageman	4



Grady Smyth



Brody Halderson



Cooper Neufeld

Molly Morgan photo

JH Lady Wildcats Defeat Burrton to Claim HOPL Regular Season Championship

On Monday, February 2, 2026, the Cunningham JH Lady Wildcats played their final regular season game of the season prior to the league tournament against the Burrton Chargers and came away with a 38-6 win to cap off the regular season with an undefeated record of 9-0 in the Heart of the Plains League and a 13-0 record overall. The Lady Cats led 19-0 at the half and outscored the Chargers 19-6 in the second half to claim the victory and the outright championship. The regular season championship is the first for the Lady Wildcats since 2017. The Wildcats will go into the HOPL tournament at the number one seed and will play on Saturday, February 7, at Attica, time and opponent to be determined.

Wildcat Scorers

Leah Rogers	6
Lux Thimesch	6
Mackley Glenn	6
Alyssa Osner	6
Vaughn Preisser	4
Carly McGuire	3
AnnMarie Kerschen	5
Jalynn McGuire	2



Wildcats Charge Past Burrton

The junior high Wildcats wrapped up their 2025-2026 regular season with a home tilt vs the Burrton Chargers. Our boys are bigger, faster, older, and stronger, and played like it. We put up 23 points in the first quarter alone without running a press. Six players scored in the 1st quarter, as the team continues to share the ball well. This is the healthiest we've been for weeks and

they are rounding into shape just in time for the HOPL Tournament starting Saturday. The varsity was not happy about sitting out quarters, but with a huge lead the reserves took the court in the second half and played pretty even with the Chargers. Brody led in rebounds again, pulling down ten. Ten rebounds is significant, especially when accomplished in a half! Jax was second with 4 rebounds. Several boys were equal with steals and assists.

Wildcat Scorers

Jace Oldham	8
Cooper Neufeld	6
Brody Halderson	6
Landon Green	4
Bryce Simon	3
Casyn Miller	2
Grady Smyth	2
Brody Henning	2
Gage Dunn	2
Landen Hageman	1

Score	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Cunningham	23	11	2	0	36
Norwich	3	0	2	2	7

Wildcats vs. Bulldogs



Larry
Heatherman



Logan Kinsler



Stephen
Kerschen



Macy
Neufeld



Andi Young



Kyra Morgan



Skyler
Thimesch

photos by Molly Morgan



Liam McGuire


First Powerlifting
Meet of the Season



Whitney Mead



Kyra Morgan



Fort Hays State University Fall 2025 Dean’s Honor Roll

HAYS, Kan. (January 27, 2026) - Fort Hays State University has named 2,066 students to the Dean’s Honor Roll for the fall 2025 semester.

The Dean’s Honor Roll includes undergraduate students only. To be eligible, students must have completed 12 or more credit hours and earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.60 for the semester. Full-time on-campus and online students are eligible.

Lane Halderson
Cheryl Hensley
Nathan Sterneker
William Wegerer



SCTelcom is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-27 school year.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Scan the QR code for eligibility requirements and to complete the online application.



CONTACT US:

877-723-6875
sctelcom.net





Pratt County Commission Minutes

The Pratt County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, January 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. in the Commissioner Room, 1st floor of the Courthouse. The following members were present: Thomas W. Jones III, Rick Shriver, Morgan Trinkle, Cescha Hoffman, County Clerk and Mark Graber, IT Director.

Road Department Rock purchase request and Snow Removal Update

Motion to accept bid from Cornejo Materials for white stone chip seal at \$48.10/ton and gray screenings at \$34.60/ton

made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Jones; motion carried 3-0.

Doug Freund, reported snow removal has been ongoing since Friday. Doug expressed appreciation to the board for approving insulation improvements to the back half of the shop. During recent zero-degree temperatures, the insulation has made a significant improvement.

Consideration of Courthouse Water Heater Bid

Motion to approve quote from InteGreen in the amount of \$1,450 to replace the hot water heater for the courthouse made by Commissioner Jones; seconded by

Commissioner Shriver; motion carried 3-0.

Hope Center Update

Pamela Ford, Mike McGovney and Scott Powell with the Hope Center, presented an update on operations and background information on the Center. They are funded by 14 churches, the county, city and a few other donors. In 2025 there were 704 assistance transactions and \$104,144.98 distributed in assistance. Additional community support efforts include paying off outstanding school lunch balances for both school districts, supporting a lice clinic, maintaining a medical loan closet, operating a food pantry and distributing paper goods

and household necessities. In 2025 they distributed 78% more food than in previous years, indicating increased food insecurity. Agape Health Clinic served just over 60 patients and produced over \$125,000 in community healthcare savings. Agape is grant funded and recent funding cuts have significantly impacted financials. Pamela, Mike and Scott thanked the commissioners for their support and commissioners expressed appreciation for all the services the Hope Center provides.

Family Planning Grant

Darcie Van Der Vyver, Pratt County Health Department, provided

a follow up regarding the Family Planning grant application process. Darcie asked for approval in moving forward with becoming the parent agency for the Family Planning Grant. Commissioners agreed to move forward. Once the contract is finalized, it will be brought back to the board for review and approval.

Consideration of Planning Board Bylaws

BJ Hayes, Zoning Director, Presented updated bylaws for the Planning Board

Motion to approve updated Planning Board bylaws made by Commissioner Shriver; seconded by Commissioner Jones;

motion carried 3-0.

Commissioners thanked BJ for his live updates on the weather.

Appraiser Update

DJ McMurray, updated the commissioners on a resignation in the Appraisers Department. A job advertisement will be placed to begin the hiring process.

Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of January 20, 2026.

Commissioners unanimously approved the vouchers for January 26, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Spotlight on Amie Brunkow

by Rick McNary

Amie Brunkow of Alta Vista doesn't set out to shatter stereotypes on purpose, but she does.

"I grew up as a military brat and had never even been on a farm," Amie says. "But in 2017, my husband at the time who had grown up on a hobby farm, purchased 160 acres and started our own farm. I loved the idea of growing all our own food whether it was plants or animals, so we had chickens, ducks, goats, lambs, beef and a garden. We were getting ready to take our cattle to a local locker for processing and that's when I began to understand how difficult some processors were to work with."

She holds a B.S in biochemistry from Washburn University and had intents of obtaining her Ph.D. in biochemistry at Kansas State University when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in her mid 20s.

"I had suspected something at the time, but the doctors on the military base said I was too



young for breast cancer," Amie says. "I then went to an off-site doctor and discovered it was already advanced."

Amie began her battle with breast cancer that went in remission but was diagnosed with BIA-Lymphoma in 2018 and again underwent treatment until she was again in remission.

As any cancer survivor knows, remission does not mean the end. Due to the extensive and aggressive treatment required by the nature of her cancer, she continues to live with nerve damage and a chronic blood disorder; living with physical consequences that remain part of her daily life.

Beyond the physical,

there is an emotional burden that many survivors carry quietly: persistent anxiety, fear of recurrence and the awareness that health is never guaranteed.

"Cancer permanently alters how a person views time, risk and possibility," she says.

For her, that shift created a deep understanding that life is too short to accept "no" without question or to silence the dreams that feel impossible.

"I learned not to be afraid," Amie says. "I go after the things I want with no fear of failing, which I need as a business owner."

Her love of the science, of meat production

turned into a desire to own a small locker. The almost 75-year-old iconic Alta Vista Locker was for sale and she ran headlong into the stereotype she would soon shatter: Women don't own meat lockers.

"When I called the realtor, he first asked who I worked for," Amie chuckles. "The realtor replied, 'But you're a girl.' I knew it was going to be uphill from there on out."

Amie scheduled a walk through, looked at the books, then approached a local bank.

"Even with 40 percent down and a detailed business plan, they said I didn't have the qualifications," Amie says. "I asked if it was because I was a woman and the guy stammered about it being too risky. So, I went to another bank owned by a woman, and she said it was the best-looking business plan she had ever seen."

"Since I did not have a good experience with meat lockers on the farmer side, I purposed to create a culture in which the processor and farmer worked together."

Amie's commitment

to providing the highest quality of processing as well as stellar customer service through education and communication has provided her business with continued success. She recently achieved USDA certification as a federally approved processing facility, no easy feat for anyone, but she was undaunted.

She's also unique in that she live-streams her processing an animal. You can follow her "Butcher with the Braid" social media at

Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and go to her website here: <https://altavistameatco.com/>

This quote on her Facebook page captures her spirit and spunk:

Mother told her to find a knight.

Instead, she forged a sword and lived peacefully among the knights.

Note: Amie is part of our celebration of the Year of Women Farmers and Ranchers, 2026. Kansas Farm Bureau



Wheat Quality and Flour Milling: Lessons

from Brian Walker

Just six weeks after finishing high school, Brian Walker wasn't aiming for a high-powered job. He worked full-time at a gas station, living week to week, until a surprise phone call changed his path.

That call brought him to a flour mill and into an industry most people only think about when they buy bread. On a recent episode of the Wheat's On Your Mind podcast, Walker talked with host Aaron Harries and Kansas Wheat CEO Justin Gilpin about the key moments in his 45-

year milling career and what the wheat industry is really like.

Walker's first job at Seaboard Allied Milling in Kansas City, Missouri, had an official title, assistant quality control manager, but the labor was hard and hands-on. He managed sample cans, moved samples through the lab and learned how wheat quality could affect everything from flour performance to baking consistency.

The schedule was even tougher than the work itself. Walker said he had to be there whenever the mill was running, even on weekends. In his first weeks, the mill shipped flour overseas in 140-pound jute bags and Walker worked six

straight weeks without a day off, earning \$4 an hour.

The job was demanding, but it gave Walker a close look at the wheat supply chain. Early on, he learned about crop surveys, wheat types and baking tests, building the skills that later took him to a 20-week course at the American Institute of Baking in Manhattan.

As Walker moved through jobs at Seaboard, Cargill, Ardent Mills, and Miller Milling, he watched the industry change through consolidation. He saw the early 1980s as a turning point, when more companies were bought out and competition became more strategic.

The changes went be-

yond new owners. Walker explained that consolidation also changed how people talked about crop quality. Millers used to meet and share information, but that became less common.

"All the millers would come openly talk about the crop, talk about the quality, where the issues were, where the opportunities were," Walker said. "By the time 85, 86 rolled around... it became clear that... the work that you did on the crop, you kept to yourself and you used that as a competitive edge for your company."

As the baking industry modernized, Walker said the pace and pressure increased. Big commercial bakeries ran longer

and faster, needing more consistent wheat. At the same time, bakers started using new ingredients, moving away from potassium bromate to such as enzymes, which changed how they kept dough strong and loaves high quality.

These pressures affected farmers, too. Walker said that better wheat varieties, disease control, and new breeding tools helped the industry keep milling quality steady, especially as food safety issues like fusarium head blight and vomitoxin became bigger concerns.

Now living in Minnesota, Walker is still active in the wheat industry. He works with the National Wheat

Foundation, stays involved with the Wheat Quality Council, and consults for U.S. Wheat Associates, which keeps him connected to both American farmers and flour customers around the world.

At the end of the episode, Walker shared the most important lesson since his early days in the mill: show up, work hard, and stay involved.

"You got to be willing to work. And you need to work hard," Walker said. "Be involved... it's a people business."

To learn more, listen to the full episode of Wheat's On Your Mind at wheatsonyourmind.com.

"In a basic agricultural society, it's easy enough to swap five chickens for a new dress or to pay a schoolteacher with a goat and three sacks of rice. Barter works less well in a more advanced economy. The logistical challenges of using chickens to buy books on Amazon.com would be formidable."

— Charles Wheelan, Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science

"Land is important everywhere, all kinds of land. But you have lived in cities. There you cannot sense the importance of agricultural land, its the real wealth. Each of these squares and hexagrams could be worth lakhs."

— Upamanyu Chatterjee, English, August: An Indian Story

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Items Needed at KCHS

The pets at Kingman County Humane Society are in need of the following items:
13-gal. kitchen trash bags
dry cat and kitten food
clumping cat litter
canned dog food
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disposable gloves (large)

The items can be brought to KCHS at 811 East C Avenue in Kingman
Monetary donations can be sent to KCHS
P.O. Box 103
Kingman KS 67068





Brooke Mills and Casey Renner show some of the plants they used in their "Houseplant Rehab" program at the Cunningham Public Library.

(courtesy photo from CPL)

KCHS Pets Ready for Adoption

Twinkie

Sponsored by Kathy and Alan Albers



Twinkie is an older, gentle lady at 12 years of age, who can be adopted for \$40.00. She's been at the shelter since November 10th, and would love to spend her remaining years in a loving and comfortable home with a special person.
"I might be a little on the older side but, I still have a lot of life in me. I like to talk, be petted, and I get along with other cats. Everyone said I am a pretty cat. Please come in and meet me. You never know you might fall in love with me."

Waverly

Sponsored by Baker Accounting



Waverly is a four-year-old Boxer/Black Lab mix with special needs.
She weighs about 50 pounds and can be adopted for \$150.00
She's been at the shelter since December 10, and while she does like people, she should be an only dog.
"Meet Waverly, a beautiful dog with a heart of gold. At first, Waverly might come off as shy, but don't let that fool you-she is one of the friendliest dogs you'll ever meet once she gets to know you. With a little patience and lots of love, Waverly quickly warms up and becomes an affectionate and loyal companion. She thrives in a calm and nurturing environment where she can feel safe and loved. Waverly enjoys quiet walks, gentle petting, and simply being by your side. If you're looking for a loving and devoted friend, Waverly is the perfect match for you. Adopt Waverly today and let her light up your life with her gentle spirit and endless affection. PS: Waverly loves to play outside in the water hose! Yay Summer Fun!"

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Bus: 620-532-3179
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Seth Thibault, OD
Andrew W. Piester, OD

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Pratt, Kansas 67124
620-672-5934
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. M - F

604 N. Walnut
Medicine Lodge, Kansas 67104
620-886-3222
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Seth Thibault, OD
Andrew W. Piester, OD
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Kingman, KS 67068
620-532-3154
1-800-371-3154
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Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Friday

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Advertising Opportunity

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Trash Talk


The Cunningham Burn Site is locked. A \$50.00 deposit is required to obtain a key at City Hall. Your deposit is cheerfully refunded when you return the key.

Trash and recycling schedules are available at City Hall.
If you have large, bulky items for pick up (i.e. appliances or furniture) please call Nisly at 620-662-6561. They pick up bulky items once a month. This service is included in your trash bill with the city! No extra charge!

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Public Notice

Published in The Cunningham Courier on Thursday, February 5, 2026 (1t)

To All Customers of Zenda Telephone Company, Inc.

The Public Service Commission of Kansas designated Zenda Telephone Company, Inc. The "Eligible Telecommunications Carrier" for its service area for universal service purposes. The goal of universal service is to provide all citizens access to essential telecommunications services.

Zenda Telephone Company, Inc. provides single party residence (with unlimited local Usage) and business service for rates which range from \$19.00 for residential customers and \$22.00 per month for business customers. This includes access to:

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Use of these services may result in added charges.

In addition, Zenda Telephone Company, Inc. provides one copy of its annual local Directory without charge upon request.

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Zenda Telephone Company, Inc. offers qualified customers Lifeline Service. If you are a Low Income customer you may qualify for Zenda Telephone Company's Lifeline Program. This means you may receive a monthly discount for your basic phone charges. This service also includes a discount for line connection charges and free toll blocking for qualifying customers.

Zenda Telephone Company provides broadband internet services for rates which begin at \$54.95 per month for 25 mbps download and 3 mbps upload. Additional speeds and prices available.

Please call Zenda Telephone Company at 620-243-5531 if you have any questions.

B-29 Museum

is open on Sundays from 2:00 to 4:00 pm
Pratt Army Airfield – 82 Curran Road
Visit them on Facebook at www.prairie-bombers.org for more information. If you would like to visit the museum at another time call 672-8321,
672-2444 or 620-797-2919 to schedule an appointment!



Thanks for
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The Courier on
February 16th

The Cunningham Courier
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Cunningham, KS 67035

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Marjorie Kramer

Marjorie Kramer, nee Allbritten, left us in her sleep in the early morning of December 26, 2025, 58 years to the day after her marriage to Rudolph

Kramer who preceded her in death by two months.

She was born in Harrisburg, PA 80 years ago and grew up in Kansas City, attending Shawnee Mission East HS.



Marjorie completed an A.A. degree at Christian College in Columbia, MO in June ‘65, married Rudolph (8 months before his discharge from the Navy) in ‘67 and completed a B.A. in Education at UMKC in January of ‘68.

Although she received teaching certificates for Kansas and Missouri in March of ‘68, being a selfless mother to two challenging sons probably precluded a teaching career (at least in the classroom). Instead she used her teaching abilities and limitless patience shepherding clients through the complexities of home purchases as a real estate agent while raising her family in Kansas City.

Marjorie’s father, Frank Allbritten Jr, had deep roots in Cunningham, and she returned here regularly so her own children could visit their grandparents and other relatives and enjoy welcome respites from life in the city.

She spent her last two decades traveling north and south on the Oregon coast from her home during retirement in Florence, OR.

She was an extraordinarily caring person, never forgetting a birthday, an incomparable mother and devoted daughter to her own parents during their decline and passing in Cunningham.

Her ashes along with Rudolph’s will be interred at Maud cemetery later this year. She is survived by two sisters, her sons and one grandchild.

Bill Johnson

William G. “Bill” Johnson, 72, died Jan. 27, 2026 at his home.

He was born Sept. 5, 1953, in Denver, Colorado, the son of Jack G. and Eva M. Williamson Johnson. A resident of Kingman most of his life, he was the retired City of Kingman Waste Water Treatment manager.



Bill was a member of the Kingman Methodist Church, the Patriot Guard, the American Legion Riders and formerly taught Hunter’s Education classes.

In August of 1978, he married Connie Simons at Kingman. Other survivors include sons Seth G. Johnson and Jacob Wayne Johnson with his wife Julie; daughter Brittney Marie Johnson; brother Bruce; and grandchildren Isabelle and Jack William Johnson. He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Chris Heminway.

Memorial services were held, Friday, January 30, 2026, at the Kingman Methodist Church.

Memorial contributions have been suggested to the Kingman Methodist Church or the Kingman County Humane Society, both sent in care of Livingston Funeral Home, 1830 N. Main, Kingman KS 67068.

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Agustín Balbuena

Agustin M. Balbuena, 64, died Feb. 1, 2026, at his home.

He was born June 28, 1961, in Mexico the son of Cirilo Benito Balbuena Vargas and Oliva Martinez. A longtime resident of the Kingman community, he was a former painter at Neville Built Trailers and was the owner of Taqueria Balbuena Taco Truck.



Agustin was a member of the St. Patrick Catholic Church, Kingman.

On Feb. 14, 1996, he married Esmeralda Arroyo. Other survivors include daughters Oliva Balbuena, Marily Arroyo Balbuena and Rocio Balbuena; sister Susana Balbuena Martinez; and grandchildren Oscar Ezequiel Castro, Daleiza Castro and Aslan Miguel Robertson Balbuena.

The family will receive friends from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026, at the Livingston Funeral Home, Kingman. Parish rosary will be 10:00 a.m., Monday, Feb. 9, 2026, at the St. Patrick Catholic Church and followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:30 a.m. Burial will be in the Walnut Hill Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Kingman County Humane Society and sent to the Livingston Funeral Home, 1830 N. Main, Kingman KS 67068.

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Joanne Ziegler

Joanne Estelle Ziegler, 83, died Jan. 13, 2026 at Henderson, Nevada.

She was born Feb. 22, 1942, at Norwich, Kansas, the daughter of Thomas J. and Agnes S. Wallace Lowery. A longtime resident of Kingman County, she retired from the banking industry.



On Sept. 25, 1982, she married Carl Ziegler.

Other survivors include daughter Diana Thornton and her husband Andy; son Brian; and two grandchildren Emily and Jenna. She was preceded in death by her twin sister Joyce Reida; and brothers Leon and Darwin.

The family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday, Feb. 6, 2026, at the Livingston Funeral Home, Kingman. Graveside services will be 11:00 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026, at the Walnut Hill Cemetery.

Memorials are suggested to the Kingman County Humane Society and may be mailed to the Livingston Funeral Home, 1830 N. Main, Kingman KS 67068.

Take your child to the LIBRARY day



February 7th

Sew on a Button

New Date!!

February 7th 10am

with Eileen Crick



Book Folding Hearts

Wednesday, February 11th 5 pm

with Jana Theis



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February 16th 5pm

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