

The Bel Aire Breeze

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JANUARY 2012

Complimentary copy

School boundary 'supposal' splits Bel Aire

By Matt Heilman

Kechi isn't the only city keeping a watchful eye on the process of establishing new school district boundaries for next year.

At its Dec. 20 meeting, the Bel Aire City Council discussed concerns with what is proposed for the new Wichita schools that are supposed to open next year in Bel Aire. The current boundary

proposal, or "supposal" as its being called, essentially has Bel Aire cut in two. Elementary students living north of 45th Street are proposed to attend the new K-8 school at 53rd North and Woodlawn. Elementary students living south of 45th are proposed to stay at Gammon Elementary in northeast Wichita.

Similarly, middle school students in Bel Aire living north of 45th

would go to the new K-8, while students south of 45th would stay at Stucky Middle School near 45th and Hillside. Bel Aire's new high school is proposed to be the new home of Wichita's Northeast Magnet High School.

On Dec. 20, Bel Aire Mayor Harold Smith discussed how, about three months ago, the council passed a resolution that was sent to the Wichita

school board, formally requesting that all of Bel Aire's students have the option to attend the city's new schools.

"We can make this recommendation again, but first it would be helpful if we could hear from some of the parents on what they think," Smith said. "For all we know, they may be satisfied to continue at Gammon."

Council member Moe Terrebonne said the school boundary issue was

a concern, but wondered what the council's role would be in projecting the wants of the city. The council seemed to agree that what the parents want for their children is most important and the message parents convey to the school board will likely carry more weight than requests from the council.

See BOUNDARY, Page 6

Farewell 2011

Year could be a launching point to bright future

By The Breeze staff

In Bel Aire, 2011 was a fresh start. A troubled economy still rears its ugly head in the city, but 2011 gave Bel Aire reasons to be optimistic.

Hope is alive for development and business expansion to turn the city's fortunes for the better. A tax hike and budget cuts didn't sit well with several residents, but the city was on more solid ground in 2011 than in 2010. Most signs point toward better days ahead for Bel Aire. From debt management to commitments from developers, 2011 could someday be seen as a launching point for prosperity in the city. Here's a look at the past 12 months.

January

A Southern California-based alternative energy firm announced plans to build a facility in the first phase of Bel Aire's Tierra Verde development near Webb Road along 47th North. At Tierra Verde, the Energy Tunnel planned to develop alternative energy generators. To this point, no one has moved into Tierra Verde, but the needed infrastructure is in place.

Mayor Harold Smith introduced a debt-management plan that seeks to make Bel Aire debt-free by 2036. Assuming land sales go as projected, the plan called for a 3-mill

property tax increase for land payments in each of the next two years with a consistent commitment to land payments from 2013 until the loan on the debt of about \$18 million is paid off.

Sedgwick County District 1 Commissioner Dave Unruh took the oath of office to serve his third term on the county commission. The representative of northeast Sedgwick County, including Bel Aire and Kechi, thanked his wife and supporters for helping him secure another term.

February

The Bel Aire council took formal action to move forward with a grant-seeking opportunity with Kechi. The council approved pursuing a \$25,000 grant with the Community Capacity Building Grant Program through the Kansas Department of Commerce. The purpose of the grant is to pay a third-party consultant to help Bel Aire and Kechi identify where they can increase efficiencies and save costs by pooling resources where possible.

The body of a man found buried in a shallow grave on Feb. 2 in the backyard of a southeast Wichita home was identified as a former Bel Aire officer with the city's police department. Sean "Chris" Putnam, 41, served Bel Aire for five months in 2004.

Developer Gene Vitarelli

See 2011, Page 5



Developer shares plans for Coliseum property

By Matt Heilman

It appears there is a future for Britt Brown Arena. While the facility at the Kansas Coliseum Complex will likely never host another concert or hockey game, it could play a valuable role in improving the local economy. Specifically, if plans from developer Johnny Stevens work out like he hopes, Park City could see a significant benefit.

At its Dec. 27 meeting, the Park

City council heard from Stevens, who about two months ago, announced that he had made an offer to buy the coliseum complex and lease Britt Brown to the National Institute of Aviation Research. On Dec. 27, the council unanimously approved a resolution determining the advisability of issuing industrial revenue bonds for the purpose of financing the acquisition, construction and equipping of a commercial facility to be located at the Kansas Coliseum property.

In a nutshell, the council agreed to issue industrial revenue bonds for Stevens to fix up Britt Brown Arena and lease it out if he meets certain conditions. The key condition is that Park City must annex Britt Brown Arena and the 155 acres Stevens plans to purchase on the north half of the coliseum property, including the Kansas Pavilions.

The Sedgwick County Commission earlier this year pledged to keep the Kansas Pavilions open to host

events through 2016. It's unknown what will happen with the pavilions past that point.

Currently, Stevens said he only has plans for the arena. Stevens' plans call for Britt Brown to serve as a testing facility for NIAR. Work at the facility would include stress testing and certification of new aircraft, as well as re-certification of aircraft "past their age limit," Stevens said.

On the "conservative side," he said 40 employees could work at the

former arena if the deal for NIAR to lease the facility works out.

"It would be a world-class facility," Stevens said.

Stevens said he's been talking with NIAR but has yet to finalize a deal. Park City Administrator Jack Whitson said tax abatements provided by the city will be determined by who operates at Britt Brown Arena, how much is invested in the property and how many employees the facility will bring in.

Goals for area cities reachable in 2012

While much was accomplished in 2011 in the communities in north Sedgwick County, we begin the New Year with much left to be done.

Here's a look at what we would like to see happen in 2012 in Valley Center, Park City, Bel Aire and Kechi.

Valley Center

Street and stormwater infrastructure improvements should be the focus of city government in 2012. The city council gave tentative approval last month to a 2012-13 capital improvement plan that included the reconstruction of much of North Meridian from Fifth Street to the north city limits. The council will review cost estimates and specifications at a later meeting. The project is much needed. While it's not cheap, we trust it will be done right. It's an investment in the future of the city.

The city also has laid some of the groundwork for future stormwater drainage improvements, purchasing property south of Ford (77th North) to construct a detention pond that would hold water from Meridian and other areas of the city. The city council this summer discussed the possibility of a sales tax to fund street and underground drainage systems to direct the water to the pond. While we're not sure a sales tax is the answer, we would like to hear more discussion on the project, keeping the issue on the front burner.

Though not truly related to infrastructure, the city also should decide what it will do with the directional signs that were supposed to be installed three years ago. The signs' lettering was too small to be read by motorists, so the city just kept them in storage until council member Al Hobson asked about them in early 2011. In April, city officials said the small letters could be replaced by larger ones. However, nothing has happened with the signs. This situation needs to be resolved.

Park City

In Park City, city leaders should be commended for their continued efforts to spur growth without burdening taxpayers. We're looking for 2012 to be a year full of positive change for Park City. We're hoping the new Murphy Tractor facility and planned warehouse expansion of Air Capital Delivery and Warehouse CEO Lou Robelli will bolster the local economy even more than is anticipated.

We hope that the city will have more chances than ever to welcome new visitors in 2012 and leave a positive impact that improves the city's reputation. In the year ahead, we'd like to see residential growth and continued support for local businesses, big and small.

Bel Aire

In Bel Aire, city leaders continue to be optimistic in their uphill climb against debt. The city is progressing in baby steps. While inching forward is better than falling backwards, we're hoping 2012 can provide Bel Aire with opportunities to make leaps and bounds.

We hope the Wichita school district boundary issue works in the city's favor to draw more interest in the local housing market. We hope that more tangible progress can be made in the city's industrial park and the Tierra Verde development near 47th North and Webb Road. Last year, we said we hoped to see construction in Tierra Verde. The infrastructure is in place, but in 2012, we hope to see walls go up.

Kechi

In Kechi, the city continues to battle for recognition. With a population of about 2,000 people, county and state governments sometimes overlook the needs of Kechi. We applaud Kechi leaders for speaking up for their city.

Like in Bel Aire, we're hoping that the Wichita school district boundary issue works out in the city's favor to draw interest in available new homes. We hope to see collaboration efforts with Bel Aire and strategic planning efforts start to pay off for Kechi and we hope to see more residents take the time to weigh in on city issues to guide the city council.

— The Bel Aire Breeze

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There has been some concern about the increase in our real estate taxes. I will try to explain the reason for our current tax levy. The bad news is that we have a difficult financial situation. The good news is that we are working our way out of it.

All of this started with a decision made by the city eight or nine years ago. It was decided to purchase land so that it could be annexed into the city thereby allowing the city to continue growing.

Unfortunately, the resale of the land did not develop as expected. We remain obligated to making payments on the large loan that was needed to buy the land. Since then, it has been very difficult for the city to produce a balanced budget each year as required by state law.

This year, as we worked on the 2012 budget, it became obvious that we would need to raise taxes or reduce city expenses so that we would have sufficient funds to make the land debt payments. In the end, we did both. Taxes were increased by 6.8 mills, which provided \$306,000. In addition, operating expenses were reduced \$500,000, which was

20 percent of the general fund budget used to run the city.

The important question is where do we go from here. We believe we can carry the land debt without any additional increases in our real estate tax. This will require a reasonable



Mayor's corner

By Harold Smith

amount of land sales but not to the same extent as in prior years.

We have made some changes in the residential land we are selling. We believe this will make us more competitive in the new home market. Also, we have some very good people helping us with a plan to develop and market an industrial park. This will be on the 800 acres east of Webb Road and is being promoted as a regional effort to diversify the local economy.

We have considered and will continue to consider any ideas that come to our attention. We are gaining some momentum and will do everything we can to increase the momentum on selling land. Last, but not least, the national economy will some day improve. Many of us believe that there is a lot of investment money waiting for a more favorable business climate.

We are still several years away from lowering the real estate tax but that day will come as the land debt is paid down.

CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS

Christ Lutheran Church

Contemporary guitar service with communion each Sunday at 8:30 a.m. Traditional service with communion first and third Sunday at 11. Sunday school for all ages at 9:45 a.m.

The church is located at 5356 N. Hillside (53rd North and Hillside) across from Heights High School.

Find the church online at www.christ-lutheran.org; e-mail office@clc.kscoxmail.com. Call the office at 744-1242 for more information.

Church of the Resurrection

Church of the Resurrection (Roman Catholic) is located at 4910 N. Woodlawn in Bel Aire.

Masses for the Lord's Day are 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday. Weekday Masses are 8 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; also at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Resurrection Catholic School has students from preschool through eighth grade.

The parish/school website is www.resurrectionwichita.com. Phone number is 744-2776. Rev. James F. Weldon is the pastor.

Community Bible Chapel

The church is located at 4551 Auburn, south of 45th North between Oliver and Woodlawn, in Bel Aire.

Worship service and breaking of the bread are at 9 a.m., with Bible study and Sunday school at 10:30 on Sundays.

Wednesday prayer and Bible study are at 7 p.m.

For more information, call Melvan Adair at 744-7091.

Crossroads Friends Church

Crossroads Friends Church

meets at Stucky Middle School (east from 45th North and Hillside) at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday.

The church has Crossroads Kids and Crossroads Cribs ministry areas, as well as contemporary music, relevant Bible teaching and a laid-back, friendly atmosphere.

Pastor is Jeff Mullen.

Call the church office at 361-0407 or visit it online at www.crossroadswichita.com.

Fairmount United Church of Christ

The church welcomes a new minister, Rev. Larry Young.

Visit the newly renovated building at 1605 Fairmount in Wichita (one block south and one block east of Hillside and 17th North).

Sunday worship is at 10:30 a.m. which includes Children's Church. Sunday School begins at 9:30.

For more information, call 682-1597 or visit at www.fairmountucc.org.

Gospel Assembly Church

Located at 4230 N. Oliver in Bel Aire, service times are 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday. Bible study is 7 p.m. Monday. Prayer service is 7 p.m. Tuesday. Praise and worship is 7 p.m. Wednesday. Phone number is 744-1502.

Rev. Gary D. Green is the pastor.

Greenwich United Methodist Church

Sunday worship service is at 9 a.m. Fellowship and coffee following the service.

Pastor Natalie can be reached at 773-2300 or 744-0203.

Pastor Natalie is at the church from 5:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays.

Visit the church online at Greenwichsumc.org.

The church is located about a

mile south of K-254 on Greenwich Road.

Kechi United Methodist Church

Located at 4533 E. 61st North in Kechi, the Rev. Guy E. Rendoff is the pastor. Church phone number is 744-1221, its website is www.kechiumc.org and its e-mail address is kechiumc@sbcglobal.net.

Sunday praise band and worship are at 9:03 a.m. Sunday school is at 10. Worship is at 11.

Wednesday evening worship services from 7 to 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. There is music, prayer time, come and go communion and a short sermon. Child care is provided.

Park City Church of the Nazarene

Sunday school for all ages is at 9:30 a.m. Worship and children's church are at 10:45. Wednesday Bible study for adults begins with sandwiches and chips at 6:15 p.m.

The church is located at 2100 E. 61st North in Park City.

Pine Valley Christian Church

The church is located at 5620 E. 21st North. Sunday school is at 9 a.m. with worship at 10:15. For more information call 685-2421.

Risen Savior Church — Missouri Synod

Sunday School and Bible Class meet at 9:15 a.m.

There is communion every first and third Sunday

Wednesday evening ministries are from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday evening adult praise choir rehearsal is from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The church is located at 6770 E. 34th North in Wichita. The phone number is 683-5538. The

School boundary

The most recent proposal for the new elementary school puts the school boundary through the middle of Bel Aire. Those north of 45th would go to the new school in Bel Aire and those south of 45th would continue going to Gammon.

An article in the Eagle said the school board is also considering using the new high school in Bel Aire as a magnet school.

I don't believe the final decision has been made but they are keeping us informed on their current thinking.

Back when the school board started looking at the boundary issue, Bel Aire let them know that it was our desire to have all of Bel Aire students going to the new schools in Bel Aire. We thought it was important, in small cities, for all of the families to go to the same school.

We can make this recommendation again. It would help to hear from some of the parents on what they think. They may be satisfied to continue at Gammon. Our next step is to ask for a meeting with our school board representative to discuss this issue, express our thoughts and to understand what they are thinking.

fax number is 683-5536. www.risensavior.net

University United Methodist Church

The church is located across from the Wichita State University campus at 21st and Yale.

Sunday activities include adult and youth educational classes at 9:15 a.m., traditional service at 10:30 and youth group activities from 4 to 6 p.m.

E-mail uumc2220@uumc.net; phone 686-6765. Rev. Charles Claycomb is the pastor.

Send your church's upcoming events and service times to legals@arkvalleynews.com or call 755-0821.



Laura Broadfoot

Heights High senior competes in Miss Teen

By Matt Heilman

Wichita Heights High School senior and Bel Aire resident Laura Broadfoot isn't a stranger to competition, but she was introduced to a whole new world Dec. 9 through 11 at the Scottish Rite Temple in Wichita when she was one of about 50 contestants in the Miss Teen Kansas competition.

Broadfoot had never been in any pageant-style contest. She was encouraged to apply for the contest by counselors at her school and said she had fun competing for scholarship money, even though the contest was "nerve wracking."

"I was really nervous, and I'd never done it before," she said. "All these girls are psycho about this."

Broadfoot, 17, said she only had two months to prepare for the contest and had to raise \$1,000, which she was able to do with help from local sponsors. She said the most difficult parts of the contest were the interview session and having one day to learn an opening dance routine.

Broadfoot finished just out of the top 10 in the Miss Teen Kansas contest, which she described as "tons of fun."

Next year, the varsity volleyball standout is signed to play for Neosho County Community College. After college, she said she'd like to be a kindergarten teacher.

Resident input emphasized with collaboration efforts

By Matt Heilman

A steering committee had its chance to discuss collaboration between Bel Aire and Kechi.

Now, it's time for residents to weigh in.

In November, the steering committee, consisting primarily of civic group members from Bel Aire and Kechi, held its first meeting. The group's objective was to give Professional Engineering Consultants (PEC) guidance on what collaboration opportunities are worth looking into and which ones shouldn't be discussed any further. But resident input is essential, city leaders have said.

On Dec. 12, the cities hosted a public input meeting where the goal was to give residents their first real chance to weigh in on the collaborative efforts. Using a live keypad poll, participants were able to anonymously say whether they agreed with some of the steering committee's recommendations with the push of a button.

Unfortunately, there were only a few participants who weren't city leaders or steering committee members.

Out of 20 participants, most seemed to agree that the steering

committee is on the right track, but it's hard to get a real pulse on the communities since about half of the participants are part of the steering committee.

Collaboration with human resources, financing and accounting was the most split with only 55 percent of the participants agreeing those areas were worth exploring further.

Possible collaboration with planning and zoning was also split, with 60 percent agreeing it was worth looking into, 25 percent disagreeing and 15 percent neutral.

The participants showed the most support for further exploration of shared recreation facilities and economic development. To get a better gauge of how residents who haven't been able to attend the meetings feel, PEC's Scott Dunakey said he planned to offer a wider range of opinions with questions on the survey and make it available online.

This March, Bel Aire and Kechi learned that they won a joint, \$30,000 grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce that paid for PEC as a third-party consultant to study each city individually and return with recommendations on where resources can be pooled for

better efficiency and potential cost savings.

Dunakey said his group looked at common and unique services for each city and "threw everything at the wall."

"Now it's up to you to see what sticks," he told the steering committee on Nov. 21.

The committee seems to agree that "what sticks" will ultimately be up to residents and employees of each city.

But the group did its part to help Dunakey and PEC begin to pin down where to aim their focus. While the committee opposed combining police forces or full-time city employees, it seems to agree that opportunities to improve record-keeping or share space for evidence could be possible, depending on the needs of each department.

The group also seems to agree that opportunities to share some equipment, contracts for IT services, and recreation facilities are worth looking into.

Perhaps the best opportunity for collaboration is with economic development, especially as it relates to the development along the K-254 corridor where Kechi and Bel Aire's borders meet.



City of Bel Aire



NOTES FROM CITY HALL

Bel Aire City Council meetings now available on website

Did you miss a recent Bel Aire City Council meeting? There is no need to worry; recent Bel Aire City Council meetings are now available on the website! Simply visit the City of Bel Aire website, www.belaireks.gov, and click on "Council Meeting Video Archives" on the homepage. From there you will be able to view recent meetings and stay up-to-date with what is happening in the community.

CITY OF BEL AIRE CONTACTS

City Council		Central Park Pool	744-7331
Mayor Harold Smith	744-2650	Parks Department	744-8609
Dr. Gary Breault	744-0560	Police • Emergency	911
Peggy O'Donnell	744-0250	• Non-emergency	744-6000
Moe Terrebbonne	744-2747	Animal Control (Sedgwick County)	660-7070
David Austin	744-7188	Public Works	744-2888
Dave Sly	204-5574	Water/Sewer Emergency (after 5 p.m.)	761-6972 or 761-6973
City Hall		Utility Billing	744-2451, ext. 132
Ty Lasher, City Manager	744-2451, ext. 217	Trash (Waste Connections)	838-4920
Recreation Department	744-2700	Hazardous Waste (Sedgwick County)	660-7464

Remain informed...remain engaged. Keep up with City news and events at www.belaireks.gov, Bel Aire Channel 7, or follow us on Twitter (@BelAireKS).

Deadline for February: Friday, Jan. 19

Bel Aire Breeze

Bel Aire Recreation

5251 E. 48th North • www.belaireks.gov • 744-2700
Mon., Tue., & Thur. 8-8 • Wed. & Fri. 8-7 • Sat. 9-3

For more information on these or any Bel Aire Recreation Programs call 744-2700.

2012 BOYS BASKETBALL (ages 5-11)

Practices are underway and games begin on Jan. 7th. The registration deadline has passed but limited openings are available. Late registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. A \$5 late fee is charged to all sign-ups after the deadline.

SENIOR AEROBICS

The senior aerobics class meets on Wednesdays from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. at the Bel Aire Recreation Center. Seniors can join at any time!

DAZZLING DANCERS (ages 4 & up)

These recreational youth classes will focus on ballet and jazz dance. Pre-registration is required. Classes will meet on Tuesday evenings beginning Tues, February 7th.

COED INDOOR SOCCER (ages 4-11)

Games will be played on Saturdays beginning March 3. Practices will be set up by coaches on weeknights beginning the week of February 27th. The registration deadline is February 4th. A \$5 late fee will be charged to all sign-ups after the deadline.

ZUMBA

Zumba is a Latin-inspired, dance-fitness class that incorporates Latin and international music and dance movements, creating a dynamic,

exciting, exhilarating, and effective fitness system. Classes are held on Mondays & Thursdays from 6:00-7:00 pm. Teens & adults can join at any time!

TAEKWONDO (ages 5 & up)

Classes meet on Monday & Friday from 5:00-6:00 pm or Tuesday & Thursday from 7:10-8:10 pm. These are great classes for beginners to black belts.

YOGA

Classes are held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:10-7:10 pm. Participants need to provide their own yoga mat. Adults can join at any time!

FITNESS CENTER (ages 16 & up)

The Fitness Center consists of elliptical cross trainers, treadmills, recumbent bike, multi-station weight machine, and free-weights. There is no charge for pass holders, or it is available with the purchase of a daily pass.

HELP WANTED Rec Center Attendant, Part-time, M-F mornings. Duties include cleaning, maintenance, & customer service. Apply 5251 E 48th N. eoe.

For more information on these or any Bel Aire Recreation Programs call 744-2700.

Bel Aire Senior Center

All events are held at the Bel Aire Senior Center located at City Hall located at 7651 East Central Park Ave. unless otherwise noted.

ALL SENIORS 55+ are cordially invited to all events listed below. The Senior Center and Library area is open from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday excluding holidays. The library has a wide selection of library books to check out at no cost nor time restraints, along with two computers available for study or research. Remember any senior can belong or attend to more than one senior center/club in Sedgwick County.

For any information about Bel Aire Senior Center activity or calendar of events,

Contact Senior Director Rick Eberhard
Office 316.744.2451 Ext. 121 - Fax 316.744.3739 - Cell 316.734.7530
E-Mail: reberhard@belaireks.gov

Weekly Events:

Senior Good Walking Program - Wednesdays @ 8 AM at Bel Aire Recreation Center (inside & climate controlled environment)

Senior Low Impact Aerobic Exercises - Wednesdays @ 9 AM at Bel Aire Recreation Center

Senior Oil Painting Classes - Thursdays @ 1 PM @ Senior Center (Cost - paid to instructor)

TOPS Club Weigh In's - Tuesdays @ 9 AM @ Senior Center

TOPS Weekly Meeting - @ 9:30 AM Program and Business Meeting @ Senior Center

Senior Bridge Games - Tuesdays @ 1 PM @ Senior Center

For more information about events about the Bel Aire Senior Center or to sign up for electronic senior news/events contact Senior Director Rick Eberhard

Office Telephone: 316.744.2451 Ext. 121 - Fax 316.744.3739 or Cell 316.734.7530 or E-Mail reberhard@belaireks.gov

For any possible cancellations due to inclement winter weather conditions, contact the Senior Director Rick Eberhard at his office 744-2451 Ext. 121 or his Cell Phone 316-734-7530 for confirmation.

Jan. 2 - The regular Potluck Dinner and monthly meeting have been CANCELED and rescheduled/postponed until Monday - February 6th due to the holiday plus there will be NO Men's Coffee & Fellowship at City Hall due to the holiday. City Hall and the Senior Center will also be CLOSED.

Jan. 3 @ 9:30 AM - TOPS weekly meeting with special presentation: "Food Safety Tips for 2012 along with 10 Tips for a Great Plate". Public is invited

Jan. 3 @ 1 PM - Senior Bridge Games

Jan. 6 @ 10 AM - NEW starting time!!! "Get-to-Know Coffee" at Senior Center. Complimentary coffee is provided.

Jan. 9 - Men's Coffee and Fellowship in Senior Center @ 10 AM

Jan. 9 - Central Park Home Owner's Association Board Meeting @ 7 PM in Senior Center

Jan. 11 @ 10 AM - Senior Volunteer Librarian's Workshop Morning in the Senior Center

Jan. 13 @ 11:30 AM - New Lunch-N-Learn event with a Rep. April Leason from The Regent Vibrant Retirement Living complex. Light lunch and drinks provided. NO "Senior Fun Night" scheduled for tonight.

Jan. 14 @ 10 AM - Bel Aire Senior Red Hats Society Meeting - Call New President Anita Culp @ 744-2840 or e-mail anita.culp@att.net for time and details

Jan. 16 - City Hall and Senior Center are CLOSED for Martin Luther King Jr. holiday - No Men's Fellowship or coffee

Jan. 17 @ 10 AM - TOPS Club #1105 Weekly Meeting at Senior Center with special presentation

Jan. 20 @ 10 AM - "Get to Know Coffee" at Senior Center

Jan. 20 @ 1 PM - Family & Consumer Science PDG Committee Lunch and meeting in Senior Center. (By invitation)

Jan. 22 @ 3 PM - Health Meeting in Senior Center

Jan. 23 @ 10 AM - Men's Fellowship and Coffee in the Senior Center

Jan. 23 @ 2 to 6:00 PM - Bel Aire Community Blood Drive at City Hall - Visit www.redcrossblood.org or call 316-744-2451 Ext. 121 to schedule your appointment or send e-mail to reberhard@belaireks.gov

Jan. 23 @ 7:00 PM - Tree Board Meeting at 7 PM

Jan. 24 @ 9:30 AM - TOPS Meeting with Lisa Friesen-Extension Agent, Special Speaker from the Extension Office discussing benefits of Vitamin D

Jan. 25 @ 7 PM - Senior Bunko Games in the Senior Center

Jan. 27th @ 11:30 AM - Lunch-N-Learn with Stacey Foley-Reed of Wichita's Home Health Care Agency @ Senior Center. Light lunch and drinks provided. NO Senior Pitch Party scheduled for tonight scheduled

Plan your 2012 Vacation with Collette Vacations and the Bel Aire Senior Center: Drop by and pick up your NEW 2012 "San Francisco Getaway" featuring Monterey & Sonoma Valley scheduled for March 19-23, 2012 and or get the packet for "Islands of New England" for 8 days from September 21 - 28, 2012. The New England package includes Rhode Island, Boston, Mass., Martha's Vineyard in Cape Cod and Nantucket etc. If you cannot come by and pick up the 2012 travel packets/brochures, they can be mailed to you. Sign up soon!!!!!!

The Get-to-Know Coffee times on Friday morning will be changing the starting time to 10:00 AM on Fridays in January due to winter weather.

On the Fridays we host a Lunch and Learn event there will be no Get-to-Know Coffee scheduled.

New Senior Participation Forms with Emergency Contact and other information will be needed from each senior for 2012. Please complete a new form and return to the Senior Director or to his office.

Bel Aire Senior Club

Activities are held at 4551 N. Auburn unless otherwise noted. Those 55-plus are welcome to participate. For information on programs and services for seniors, contact Vicki Shepard, Tri-City Senior Director, at 744-1199. The club is self-governed and activities benefit all participating seniors.

Free computer class Monday 10:00 AM Park City Senior Center
Free Line Dance lessons Wednesday 2:30 PM Park City Senior Center
Square Dance Lessons and Dancing 6:30 PM every Thursday
(except 3rd Thursday of the month) Park City Senior Center
Dances—Saturdays 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 5th Saturday of each month At Park City Senior Center.
Call Vicki at 744-1199 for details

Saturday, Dec. 31, 7:00 PM -

New Year's Eve Open House at Smith's Home

Tuesday January 3, 8:30 AM - Cracker Barrel

Monday, January 9, 10:00 - Board Meeting

11:30 - Lunch at Bob & Luigi's

Wednesday January 18, 10:00 AM - Men's Coffee at Braums

Wednesday January 18, 2:00 PM - Ladies Tea/Coffee at Braums

Monday January 23, 6:00 PM - Christmas Dinner

Hosts:

Program: David Austin with Envision

For information on senior activities or resources contact
Tri-City Senior Director Vicki Shepard at 744-1199



POLICE REPORTS

Dec. 20 — Officer McCaslin checked on two juveniles walking in the area of 5500 E. 37th North. The juveniles said that the bus driver did not see them at the bus stop and left without them. They were attempting to walk to Earhart Elementary School. Officer transported the juveniles to school.

Dec. 19 — Officer McCaslin responded to the report of a suspicious character walking in the area of 4500 N. Woodlawn with a red cloth wrapped around his face. Officer contacted the person. He said he was walking to the north branch YMCA and covered his face due to the weather conditions.

Dec. 17 — Officer McCaslin responded to a non-injury accident at Woodlawn and Perryton. A person was issued a citation for inattentive driving.

Dec. 17 — Officer Medlin responded to the report of an unknown person throwing a rock onto a deck at 4563 N. Rushwood. There was no damage to the residence.

Dec. 17 — Officer Steele conducted a traffic stop at 5200 N. Woodlawn. A person was issued a citation for speeding and no driver's license in possession.

Dec. 16 — Officer McCaslin assisted Sedgwick County Sheriff's Fire Department and EMS at 4150 N. Auburn.

Dec. 16 — Officer McCaslin took the report of larceny at 5500 N. Lycee. Several items were taken from a construction site.

Dec. 16 — Officer Hutton assisted EMS at 4358 N. Mission.

Dec. 16 — Officer Foxx assisted Sedgwick County Fire Department at 6700 E. 45th North.

Dec. 15 — Officer Swanson responded to an accident at 53rd North and Oliver. A person was issued citations for no driver's license and running a stop sign.

Dec. 15 — Officer Foxx conducted a traffic stop at 4400 N. Woodlawn. A person was issued citations.

Dec. 15 — Officer Steele transported Christopher J. Coonrod, who was arrested on a Bel Aire Municipal Court bench warrant and a Pratt County Sheriff's Office warrant, to the Sedgwick County jail.

Dec. 15 — Officer Foxx responded to an assault. A person said that while attending a party at 8510 E. 29th North in Wichita, a friend was assaulted by a known male. While trying to stop the assault, the reporting party was also assaulted. The host of the party said she was also assaulted by the known person. Wichita police were notified.

Dec. 14 — Officer Steele received

a phone call at the station from a person who said that she determined that the unusual phone calls she had been receiving were from her son who is working in Hong Kong.

Dec. 14 — Officer Foxx responded to the report of a possible shooting that occurred on the eastside. A person was reportedly on the way to his ex-wife's residence in Kechi and was threatening suicide. The person was located at Mt. Vernon and Chautauqua.

Dec. 13 — Lt. Griggs responded to the report of burglary at 215 Comanche in Kechi. A person entered a business and took tools.

Dec. 13 — Lt. Griggs assisted EMS at 4914 E. 48th North.

Dec. 13 — Officer Foxx responded to a disturbance at 4257 N. Janesville. A known person was at the residence and the resident did not want her there. The person was transported to her mother's residence in Kechi.

Dec. 12 — Officer McCaslin responded to a barking dog complaint at 5319 E. 39th North. Officer could not contact the dog owner.

Dec. 12 — Officer McCaslin responded to the report of a person receiving unwanted calls at 6340 Danbury.

Dec. 12 — Officer Toomey responded to the report of domestic violence at Perryton and Woodlawn. Officer located a female walking in the 3900 block of North Woodlawn. The person said she was involved with a verbal disagreement with her daughter and walked away. She was given a ride to her parked car.

Dec. 12 — Officer Steele responded to the report of burglary at 3821 N. Hillcrest. Someone removed property from business trailers.

Dec. 11 — Officer Toomey discovered a trash dump behind the high school construction site at 9800 E. 53rd North. Officer later discovered that the same trash dump report was made on Dec. 9.

Dec. 11 — Officer Steele discovered a vehicle that partially rolled into the street at 3835 N. Hillcrest. Officer contacted a person and told them that the vehicle was in the street but probably did not constitute a significant hazard if it was not immediately attended to.

Dec. 10 — Officer McCaslin assisted EMS at 4551 N. Rushwood Court.

Dec. 10 — Officer McCaslin responded to an audible alarm at 6216 E. Danbury. The front door to the residence was open. Kechi police assisted with checking the residence. Officers did not locate anyone or see any signs

of forced entry or theft. A keyholder arrived and confirmed that nothing was missing.

Dec. 10 — Officer McCaslin assisted Wichita police in the 6100 block of Danbury.

Dec. 10 — Officer Medlin was contacted by a person at the station who wanted to make an abuse report. The person said his daughter was abused. El Dorado police said that a report needed to be made in Bel Aire. After checking the address, officer realized it was in Wichita and turned the information over to the Wichita Police Department North Station.

Dec. 10 — Officer Steele found a person at the station who indicated he had an outstanding bench warrant through Bel Aire Municipal Court. The bench warrant had not been entered into the system. The person was given a court date.

Dec. 10 — Officer Foxx responded to an audible alarm at 3835 N. Hillcrest. Officer found an unsecured door. The building was checked. No sign of forced entry or theft were found.

Dec. 10 — Officer Foxx responded to the request to assist Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office with a car stop at 7900 E. K-96.

Dec. 10 — Officer Foxx conducted a traffic stop at 3800 N. Parkwood. Mandy K. Hawn was arrested on a charge of DUI.

Dec. 9 — Officer Hutton discovered a trash dump at the new high school construction site at 5550 N. Lycee.

Dec. 9 — Officer Foxx responded to the report of an unknown accident involving a vehicle blocking the lane at 4900 E. K-254. Officer located the vehicle, which was unoccupied. Both of the driver's side wheels were flat and the driver's side door air bags were deployed. Officer contacted the owner who was unaware of the vehicle's condition or location. He was unable to contact his son who had possession of the vehicle.

Dec. 8 — Officer Swanson responded to the report of a suspicious character at 5550 N. Lycee. Officer contacted an employee of the construction company who said a person driving a vehicle with an Oklahoma tag wanted scrap metal and building supplies for a school project but refused to show any school identification or driver's license information. The vehicle was later identified as a rental vehicle.

Dec. 8 — Officer Swanson responded to the request to assist Wichita police in the 4800 block of East 44th Circle. Officers located a minor in possession of a semi-automatic firearm.

The firearm was located and found to be reported stolen from Goddard.

Dec. 8 — Officer Medlin responded to the report of suspicious characters at 5331 E. 49th Court. The calling party said three unknown males were entering an empty residence. Officers contacted the people. They were there to clean and winterize the property and change the locks.

Dec. 7 — Officer Swanson spoke with a person at the station who said she found a wallet in the 4300 block of North Rushwood a week earlier. The person attempted to locate the owner of the wallet and was unable to. Officer located the owner of the wallet who said she was out of town until Dec. 12 and would pick up the wallet when she arrived back into town.

Dec. 7 — Officer Medlin assisted Bel Aire Court by transporting a person to the Sedgwick County Jail on a court commitment order.

Dec. 6 — Lt. Griggs took the report of an unknown person entering a classroom at 4910 N. Woodlawn and taking a purse. The person was confronted and left the building.

Dec. 6 — Officer McCaslin assisted EMS at 5525 Falcon.

Dec. 6 — Officer Swanson responded to the request to check the welfare of a person at 4251 N. Woodlawn Drive.

Dec. 5 — Officer McCaslin responded to the report of a suspicious character at 6126 Edinburg. A person reported an unknown person opening the fuel door and loosening the gas cap of a vehicle. There was no fuel missing.

Dec. 5 — Officer McCaslin was contacted by a person who reported his dog missing.

Dec. 5 — Officer Swanson assisted a citizen at 4251 N. Woodlawn Drive.

Dec. 5 — Officer Steele responded to the request to check a residence at 4351 N. Rushwood Court. Officer contacted the resident. Everything was OK.

Dec. 4 — Officer McCaslin took the report of a runaway in the 6100 block of Danbury.

Dec. 4 — Officer McCaslin was contacted by a person who wanted to report that his dog was missing.

Dec. 4 — Officer Wallender responded to an accident at 45th North and Woodlawn. A person was issued citations.

Dec. 4 — Officer Steele checked a business at 5500 E. 45th North.

Dec. 4 — Officer Steele checked a business at 6254 E. 37th North.

Dec. 3 — Officer McCaslin responded to the report of a person receiving unwanted phone calls at 3952 N. Edgemoor.

Dec. 3 — Officer McCaslin assisted EMS at 6024 Danbury.

Dec. 3 — Officer Medlin responded to the report that a person who was reported a runaway had returned home and was no longer a runaway in the 6100 block of Danbury.

Dec. 3 — Officer Steele checked a business at 6254 E. 37th North.

Dec. 2 — Officer McCaslin responded to the report of a burglary at 4451 N. Edgemoor Court. A person was evicted from the property and when he returned to retrieve his belongings they were missing. Officer contacted the property manager and was informed that the items were taken for money owed. The property manager faxed an inventory of the property. The person was informed that it is a civil issue.

Dec. 2 — Officer Steele checked a business at 6254 E. 37th North and found a business door unsecured. Officer contacted an employee who responded to the business.

Dec. 2 — Officers Steele and Foxx searched a construction site at 5550 N. Lycee after Officer Foxx found a door open. Officers did not find any signs of suspicious activity.

Dec. 1 — Officer McCaslin was contacted by a person who found an

organizer at 45th North and Hillcrest. Officer contacted the owner of the organizer and returned to organizer to the owner.

Dec. 1 — Officer Swanson found large piles of leaves on the side of the road at 9800 E. 53rd North. Officer located a person driving a truck with another person in the rear of the truck throwing leaves out. The person was issued a uniform criminal complaint.

Dec. 1 — Officer Foxx conducted a traffic stop at 5100 N. Webb. A person was issued citations.

Dec. 1 — Officer Foxx responded to the report of a suicidal person. Officer contacted the person who was intoxicated and asleep. Officer did not notice any signs of emotional problems.

Dec. 1 — Officer Foxx conducted a traffic stop at 4300 N. Woodlawn. A person was issued citations.

Dec. 1 — Officer Steele checked a business at 5500 E. 45th North.

Dec. 1 — Officer Steele checked a business at 6254 E. 37th North.

Dec. 1 — Officer Steele checked a business at 4910 N. Woodlawn.

Dec. 1 — Officer Steele checked a business at 4900 N. Woodlawn.

Nov. 29 — Lt. Griggs took the report of larceny at 6300 E. 37th North. A person attempted to retrieve keys from a drop box with a large magnet. The magnet became stuck in the drop box and the person attempted to pry open the locking mechanism.

Nov. 29 — Lt. Griggs took possession of a firearm that was turned in by an employee at 6300 E. 37th North. The firearm was located in a rental vehicle in Wichita. The firearm was not reported stolen.

Nov. 29 — Officer Swanson responded to a disturbance at 6700 E. 45th North. A fired employee was refusing to leave the premises and was being loud and using profanity. When the person was told that police were contacted, she left the premises.

Nov. 29 — Officer Swanson responded to an alarm at 4237 N. Eagle Lake Drive. The residence was searched and found secure.

HIGHLIGHTS Stolen gun recovered in Bel Aire home

By Matt Heilman

A stolen firearm was located in a Bel Aire boy's room Dec. 8 after police were informed the minor might be in possession of a semi-automatic weapon. A Bel Aire police report said several pictures on the Internet showed a juvenile male inside the minor's room in the 4800 block of East 44th Street Court with a gun to his head. The juvenile said the gun belonged to the Bel Aire minor and was real.

Police were given permission by the minor's father to check the room where the firearm, later determined to be a 9-mm pistol, was found. The firearm

was determined to be stolen out of Goddard.

Bel Aire police assisted Wichita police on the case.

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DEATHS

BRUCE TERRELL

Bruce R. Terrell Sr., 64, died Dec. 14, 2011.

He was preceded in death

by wife, Connie; parents, Zirla and Don Terrell; sister, Sharon Tebben.

Survivors include his children, Bruce Jr. (Holly) Terrell of



Terrell

Bel Aire, Tracey (Ben) Voegeli of Valley Center, Brian (Eve) Terrell of Bel Aire; sisters, Sandi Jacobs (Gary Carlson) of Minneapolis, Mary Hetherington (Mike) of St. Cloud, Minn.; brother, Brad (Jody) Terrell of Dallas; grandchildren, Brandon, Dylan, Zachary, Emily, Olivia, Julia, Gage, Madison, Megan, Macie and Griff.

A celebration of life was Dec. 19 at Downing & Lahey Mortuary East Chapel.

Memorial contributions to Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice, 313 S. Market, Wichita, KS 67202.

Downing & Lahey Mortuary had charge.

SHARON BOYD

Sharon Kay (Crow) Boyd of Bel Aire, 71, died Dec. 15, 2011.

She was born in Wichita to William O. Crow and Elsie (Shirman) Crow. She graduated from North High School and later worked as an administrative assistant at LSI Logic until retirement.



Boyd

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ozeal and Elsie Crow.

Survivors include her husband, Verle "Pete" Boyd; chil-

dren, Kelly (Marshall) Dilsaver of Wichita, Tracy (Richard) Lassiter of Wilson, and Chris (Sharla) Boyd of Bel Aire; grandchildren, Whit Taylor, Brandon Cook, Dakota Dilsaver and Gabriel Boyd; brother, Brad Crow; and sister, Toni Collins.

Services were Dec. 20 at the First United Methodist Church, Valley Center.

Memorials designated to the Victory in the Valley, 3755 E. Douglas, Wichita, KS 67218, and Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice, 313 S. Market, Wichita, KS 67202.

Baker Funeral Home of Valley Center had charge.

CLARENCE BIGGS

Clarence Arthur "Art" Biggs, 93, of Wichita, formerly of Eureka, died Dec. 21, 2011, at Sterling House of Tallgrass

in Wichita.

He was born on Aug. 8, 1918, in Greenwood County, the son of Clarence Arthur Sr. and Carolyn Rose "Carrie" (Chambers) Biggs. He was raised in Eureka and attended local schools. In 1943, he joined the U.S. Coast Guard. On Oct. 4, 1970, he married June Sutherland in Wichita. He worked for the Safeway in Eureka and worked up to manager. In 1946, he was promoted to manager of several Safeway bakeries, including Eureka, Newton, Augusta and Wichita, where he remained until his retirement in 1983. He was a member of the Woodland Southern Baptist Church of Wichita.

He was preceded in death by his wife, June, on Oct. 31, 1977; son, Norman; and three sisters, Leta Hillman, Elsie Hillman and Evelyn Stockwell.

Survivors include his son and daughter-in-law, Dennis and Cindy Biggs of Bel Aire; daughter-in-law, Sandy; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews; and his primary caregiver, niece, Joyce Hillman.

Graveside services were Dec. 27 at Greenwood Cemetery in Eureka.

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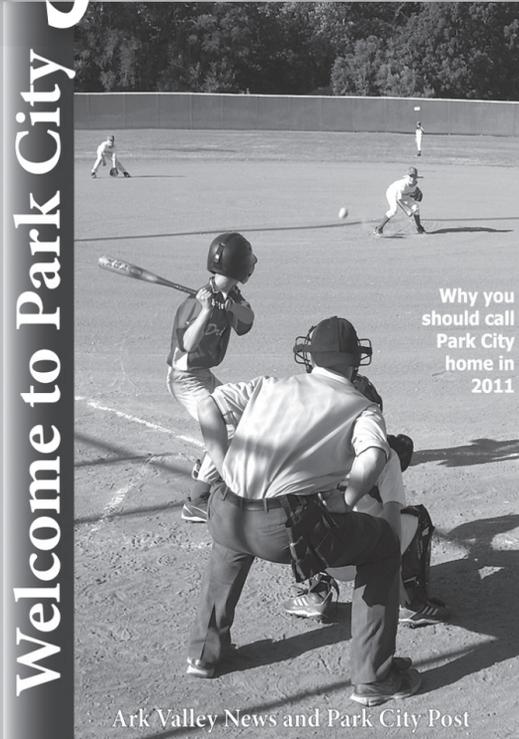
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Ark Valley News and Park City Post

2011

Continued from Page 1

discussed plans for a new subdivision south of Bel Aire's new high school at the northeast corner of 53rd North and Rock Road. Vitarelli said the subdivision, called Rock Spring, is expected to take up about 65 acres and consist primarily of starter homes in the \$130,000 to \$150,000 range with some multi-family homes consisting of duplexes.

March

At its March 15 meeting, the city council approved a special marketing incentive that includes a promotion to provide free water and sewer service to new homeowners in Central Park for up to six months, or a maximum of \$2,000. City Manager Ty Lasher said J.P. Weigand was on board to offer the incentive to new homebuyers in Central Park for homes sold through May 31.

The Sunrise Christian Academy boys' basketball team capped its season with a 24-4 record and a bronze bracket championship of the National Association of Christian Athletes Tournament in Dayton, Tenn. Wichita Heights also had a solid winter sports season with the boys' and girls' basketball, bowling and wrestling teams winning Class 6A state titles. The state championship in boys' basketball was the third in a row for the Falcons.

April

Challenger Moe Terrebonne won a seat on the city council, replacing Carolyn Marlier, who lost a bid for a fourth term in the April 5 general election. Incumbent Dave Sly retained his seat, winning a second term on the council.

Michael O'Donnell, son of Bel Aire council member Peggy O'Donnell, won a seat on the Wichita City Council. Michael O'Donnell said he was able to win the election despite being outspent 2-1 by his opponent. He received endorsements from former congressman Todd Tiahrt and former Wichita Mayor Bob Knight.

May

In recognition of its 30th anniversary, the city unveiled a monument and buried a time capsule on a median just east of City Hall. Items buried in the time capsule included a Bel Aire Police Department badge, several pictures, a map of the city, medals from the city's rec center, business cards, 30th anniversary coins, the guestbook from a December celebration for the city's 30th birthday, a cookbook from the senior center, a coffee cup with the city's logo, DVDs, CDs and a few

editions of the Bel Aire Breeze.

Students at Stucky Middle School competed in the National Team America Rocketry Challenge May 12 in The Plains, Va. The national competition that showed off students' engineering and mechanical prowess pitted Stucky students against some of the brightest high school minds in the country. The students built rockets to specs that had to reach an altitude of 750 feet and takeoff and land within a small window of time.

Bel Aire resident Keith Ehrlich completed a landscaping project on his front yard called "xeriscaping." The process includes landscaping with plants that require little or no water. Ehrlich said he'd see a return on the investment for the project within a few years.

June

American Legion riders honored Sgt. Thomas Bohall, who was killed in Afghanistan in late May. On June 5, the legion riders presented Bohall's mother, Lorna Geist, with a plaque, challenge coin, certificate and embroidered flag outside her Bel Aire home. About 70 Legion riders participated in the ceremony to honor Bohall.

On June 18, the city held the first of its two scheduled town hall budget meetings. Residents responded by filling the conference room on the first floor of City Hall. Mayor Harold Smith, City Manager Ty Lasher, finance director Michelle Meyer and four council members were on hand to hear the input. At the meeting, some residents said they were willing to pay more to keep city services intact, while others had ideas for trimming the city's spending plan.

Two months after losing her bid for a fourth term on the city council, Carolyn Marlier died. The longtime Bel Aire resident lost her fight to cancer June 20. On June 21, a somber city council discussed what Marlier meant to Bel Aire. "Carolyn loved this city and was committed to making it an even better community," Mayor Harold Smith said.

July

The city council approved a letter of support for a 148-unit market-based apartment complex northwest of City Hall. City Manager Ty Lasher said the residential units, proposed for about 18 acres, would likely resemble townhouses more than typical apartments. He said the units would be in a gated community with its own pool, workout area and garages. The letter of support signed by the council didn't tie the city into any contracts. It just stated the council supported plans for the complex that has yet to break

ground.

Six people escaped uninjured from an early morning July 4 house fire in the 4500 block of North Eagle Lake Drive. Sedgwick County Deputy Fire Marshal Clint Reed said the fire started about 4 a.m. on the outside of the structure when one of the occupants woke up to a smoke alarm and discovered the back side of the house was on fire.

August

The city council put its signature on a 2012 budget that called for a property tax increase of 6.839 mills. The tax increase was accompanied by about \$745,000 in cuts, including more than \$300,000 to the police department, where three full-time officers, two part-timers and a full-time administrative assistant lost their jobs.

More than \$100,000 worth of copper was stolen from a trailer at the site of the new K-8 school in Bel Aire on Aug. 1. Bel Aire Police Chief John Daily said at least one suspect got into the trailer at the site near 53rd North and Woodlawn by cutting a hole in the side of the trailer and unloading the copper.

Council member David Austin completed a bike ride of more than 200 miles from Clay Center to a small town north of Kansas City, Mo., on one stretch of the cross-country journey mapped out to raise money for the Fuller Center for Housing, a non-profit Christian ministry that works "to eliminate poverty housing conditions throughout the world." Austin rode the more than 200 miles over four days.

September

Bel Aire was named the most affluent city in the Wichita area, according to a database compiled on a blog affiliated with the Wichita Business Journal. The ranking is based on factors such as median household income, home values and education. With a population of 6,694, Bel Aire has a median

household income of \$80,723. The median house value is \$146,000.

Sunrise Christian Academy junior quarterback Zach Howell broke a state passing record with 579 passing yards in the Buffaloes' Sept. 2 win over Christ Preparatory Academy in Kansas City, Mo. Howell and a couple of wide receivers went on to break a few season state records.

October

In step with marketing efforts, the city council unanimously approved incentives to run from Oct. 4 through May 1, spanning the Fall and Spring Parades of Homes. The council approved incentives for builders, realtors and new and existing homebuyers, with the goal of making every realtor in the area aware of the incentives. For new homebuyers, the council approved offering a list of three incentives, including free water and sewer for up to six months, or up to a certain dollar amount.

Bel Aire resident and Elvis entertainer Marshall Matthews played a free concert for about an hour in front of a crowd gathered on the lawn of City Hall. As Elvis, Matthews has performed across the country over the last four years and has earned the title of "The No. 1 Elvis Tribute Artist in the Midwest."

November

Following Wichita's lead, the city decided to impose its own jail fees. Currently, Sedgwick County charges cities \$2.09 per prisoner per hour at the jail. Now, those arrested in Bel Aire will be charged what the county does, plus an administrative fee that will be added to regular court charges.

Bel Aire landowner Kevin Arnel and the city reached an agreement that appeared to be a win-win situation for both sides. Arnel owns acreage in the city with utilities near planned commercial and residential development. Arnel said he owns the

land as an investment and isn't interested in being a developer. In exchange for Arnel's 62 acres near the planned Rock Spring housing development near 53rd and Rock Road and 23 acres along 53rd and Webb near railroad tracks at the city's proposed industrial park, Bel Aire agreed to give Arnel about 80 acres north of 53rd and Webb. Arnel said he approved of the land swap in part because he was able to exchange two tracts of land for one large tract.

on the land near 53rd North and Webb Road. A couple of council members said they were curious about what could be underground in the industrial park, but the council did not approve of the lease option, deciding that possible drilling could deter marketing efforts to sell the land for development.

A second "supposal" on Wichita school district boundaries for next year has Bel Aire students split. Elementary school students living north of 45th Street are projected to attend the city's new K-8 school next year, while students living south of 45th are projected to remain at Gammon Elementary in northeast Wichita. Similarly, middle school students living north of 45th are projected to attend the new K-8 school, while students living south of 45th are projected to remain at Stucky Middle School near 45th and Hillside. Under the second "supposal," Bel Aire's new high school is projected to serve as the new home for Wichita's Northeast Magnet High School.

December

At a Dec. 6 council meeting, City Manager Ty Lasher announced that a Wichita-based company that searches and drills for oil and mineral rights had approached him a few weeks earlier. Representatives of the company, J. Fred Hambright Inc., voiced interest in leasing some of Bel Aire's land in the proposed industrial park with a lease option. The option for three years proposed \$2,500 for J. Fred Hambright to conduct a seismic inspection

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Blindness fails to deny independence

By Matt Heilman

Bel Aire resident and city council member David Austin can see. But he knows and works with a lot of people who can't.

Austin is the public relations director for Envision, a Wichita-based non-profit organization that is the second-largest employer of blind people in the United States.

As part of the job, Austin organizes and participates in events to educate the public on blindness and promote Envision, which provides employment, job training and vision rehabilitation service to blind or low-vision individuals.

Accompanied by a blind colleague who has maintained his independence with help from Envision, Austin visited a group of Abilene Elementary third-graders on Dec. 16, the latest stop on a string of school visits where the goal is to educate children about blindness and how to treat people with the disability.

Austin began by asking students if they thought that someone who is blind is capable of working a regular job.

"No," the students responded.

Austin and his colleague, 20-year-old Wichita State University student Estin Talavera, spent about an hour proving the students wrong. Before showing students how Talavera



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Representing Envision, blind college student Estin Talavera shows Abilene Elementary third-grader Reagan Birmingham how he uses his cane and dog.

maintains his independence through braille, a guide dog and adaptive technologies, Austin had the students repeat a statement that highlights the mission of Envision.

"There's something that we're going to repeat. And I want you to learn it, remember it today, I want you to remember it tomorrow and for the rest of your lives," Austin said. "... Repeat after me, 'People who are blind can do anything you and I can do. They just do it differently.'"

With a laugh Austin and Talavera pointed out one obvious exception.

"I wouldn't get in a car if Estin was driving," Austin said. Talavera lost his vision when

he was 7 months old. A babysitter caused the blindness by shaking him to wake him up.

Since he lost his vision before he can remember anything, Talavera associates colors with his other senses. For example, he associates the taste of chocolate or the feel of dirt with the color brown.

Talavera showed Abilene students how he's able to read braille and the different ways he's able to get around. Talavera can use his cane or a friend with vision to guide him. He also has a guide dog, a black, 3-year-old Labrador retriever named Chester.

When Chester wears his harness, he knows it's time to work for his owner. He's careful to

guide Talavera and isn't easily distracted.

However, when Talavera took off Chester's harness for the students on Dec. 16, the dog turned into a typical young pet, wagging his tail with excitement and enjoying a belly rub. Like with any person at a job, Talavera said Chester deserves a break after a long workday.

To work with Envision, complete his schoolwork and get around campus, Talavera showed students some of the technology that has given him independence.

Besides being able to read and write using a machine called a braille note, he's able to use his laptop with a screen reader. He's able to cook and clean in his dorm room with other adaptive aids provided by Envision.

Among the gadgets at his disposal is a liquid level indicator, which whistles when liquid in a cup reaches a desired mark.

On his phone, Talavera even has an app that is able to distinguish different types of bills out of his wallet. He fielded a few tough questions from Abilene students, including whether it was "weird" to not be able to see.

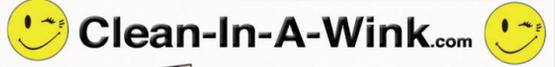
Talavera said that for him, not being able to see is normal because he doesn't remember having sight. At Wichita State Talavera is a sophomore majoring in general studies with an emphasis on communication

sciences and disorders.

Besides educating elementary students, Talavera works at the Envision clinic and rehabilitation center to help others who are blind learn to adapt as well as he has.

There are all kinds of adaptive aids for people who are blind to be independent," Austin said.

To learn more about Envision, visit the agency's website at www.envisionus.com.

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City denies seismic study of undeveloped land

By Matt Heilman

It worked for Jed Clampett, but Bel Aire isn't likely to experience the same stroke of luck. At least for now, the risk of letting a company drill for oil doesn't validate a potential reward. So decided the city council at its Dec. 6 meeting.

At the meeting, City Manager Ty Lasher announced that he was approached a few weeks earlier by a Wichita-based company that searches and drills for oil and mineral rights. Representatives from the company, J. Fred Hambright Inc., voiced interest in leasing some of Bel Aire's land with an option. Lasher said the company had its eyes set on "a good

portion" of Bel Aire's proposed industrial park east of Webb Road just south of 53rd North and also at the southwest corner of 53rd and Webb.

The lease option for three years proposed \$2,500 for J. Fred Hambright to conduct a seismic inspection on the land. If they found oil and drilled, the proposed agreement called for the City of Bel Aire to receive one-eighth of the proceeds. Lasher said there weren't any indications one way or the other whether the undeveloped acreage could be sitting on black gold.

With plans for marketing the land and reaping the benefits of development, the city staff recommended that the council

not approve a lease agreement with J. Fred Hambright.

Lasher said representatives from John T. Arnold and Associates, who are helping Bel Aire with their marketing efforts on property east of Webb, were "adamant" against the lease.

Lasher said if J. Fred Hambright decided to drill on the property, it could deter developers and even if the company struck oil, there's no guarantee the city would reap enough of a benefit to justify the risk of losing potential developers.

Lasher said approving the lease would allow J. Fred Hambright to dig wells on city property and stay on the land until they no longer had a use for the wells. Council member David Austin said the lease offer was interesting and could be worth looking into further in

the future, but for now agreed that the proposal "sounds like it could be a lot more headache" than it's worth.

Council member Moe Terrebonne also said he was "curious" to know what could be underground on undeveloped city property, but agreed with the rest of the council that the city's focus should remain on the push for development, especially with some of the buzz that marketing efforts are beginning to generate.

The lease offer from J. Fred Hambright was denied 4-0 with council member Peggy O'Donnell absent from the Dec. 6 meeting.

Boundary

Continued from Page 1

Lasher pointed out that the second boundary proposal called for less of Bel Aire's elementary student population to attend the new K-8 school than the first proposal. But he said there may be several parents who would prefer to keep their kids at Gammon.

He said before the council made any push to the school board one way or another, parent feedback is needed. Lasher said he made a couple of requests to USD 259 Superintendent John Allison, but didn't receive any feedback on the requests.

He asked that a representative of the Bel Aire council

have a chance to sit on the steering committee organized to help establish the boundaries. The request and the resolution that was passed by the council at the beginning of the process haven't elicited a response.

The council discussed a plan to set up a meeting for parents at City Hall, but more importantly, the group agreed it was important for the school board to hear from Bel Aire parents. The council also recommended discussing the issue with school board member Lynn Rogers, who represents Bel Aire on the board.

Four public input meetings have been scheduled for Jan. 11, 12, 18 and 19. Feedback is also being accepted on a survey available on the district's website, www.usd259.com.

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