

Parsons Sun



DOYLE GLASS CO., LLC
"Give us your next break!"
620-421-4780
3410 Grand • Parsons, KS

Weekend, Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 9-10, 2021

www.parsonssun.com

@ParsonsSun

@theparsonssun

\$1

Neosho County Commission rescinds bonus

By Greg Lower
The Chanute Tribune

ERIE — Neosho County commissioners rescinded their pay raise and bonuses after heated discussion at a special meeting Thursday afternoon.

The vote to rescind the \$10,000 bonus passed with brief discussion after a 10-minute recess to cool off.

A motion by Commissioner Paul Westhoff to raise commissioner salary to \$23,000 from \$18,000 died for lack of a second.

The commission met with Human Resources Director Jim Meier, Treasurer Sydney Ball and County Attorney Linus Thuston, who said he had asked for an investigation and believed the payments might have been unlawful.

The special meeting was called to clarify the motion made at the final meeting of 2020 on Dec. 30. Commissioners said they intended the funds to be processed by payroll and come from the general fund, rather than payments from the Neosho Ridge Wind project's payments in lieu of taxes. Commissioner Gail Klaassen voted against the raise and bonus at the Dec. 30 meeting.

But two checks were issued for the bonus, for \$10,000 gross, including deductions for taxes and other items. A pay stub was issued Tuesday in error, another was issued Wednesday, but both payments were canceled. And then one for commissioners' salaries was issued this week.

Commissioner David Orr sparred with Meier over the timeline of email messages and with Thuston over his role as county attorney.

Orr said Thuston is in charge of criminal prosecution, but County Counselor Seth Jones handles civil business.

"You have no validity," Orr said.

At one point he asked if Thuston was there to serve papers. "Not today," Thuston said.

"Goodbye," Orr replied.

Orr said Thuston was upset with him over Orr's opposition to payments made to an employee in the county attorney's office.

Commissioners also discussed whether the budget line item

See BONUS, Page 10.

DEATHS

Obituaries or notices for the following people can be found on Page 2 in today's Sun:

- Vivian Metcalf
- Donald Raymond
- Ramona De Cow
- Velma Carnahan

FUNERALS

RAMONA DE COW, 68, of Edna, service at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home, Parsons.

VIVIAN METCALF, 79, of Parsons, service at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home.

DONALDRAYMOND, 85, of Park City, service at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home, Parsons.

NONA SANDERS, 89, of St. Paul, service at 10:30 a.m. Monday at Pierce-Carson-Wall Funeral Home, Erie.

MATT BARKER, 60, of Parsons, family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday at Carson-Wall Funeral Home.

GENE CARLTON, 75, of Altamont, service at 1 p.m. Monday at Western Way Cowboy Church, Altamont.

RODNEY WARREN, 33, of Parsons, service at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Carson-Wall Funeral Home.

DEAN FOUTS, 63, of rural Mound Valley, graveside service at about 3 p.m. Saturday at Mound Valley Cemetery.

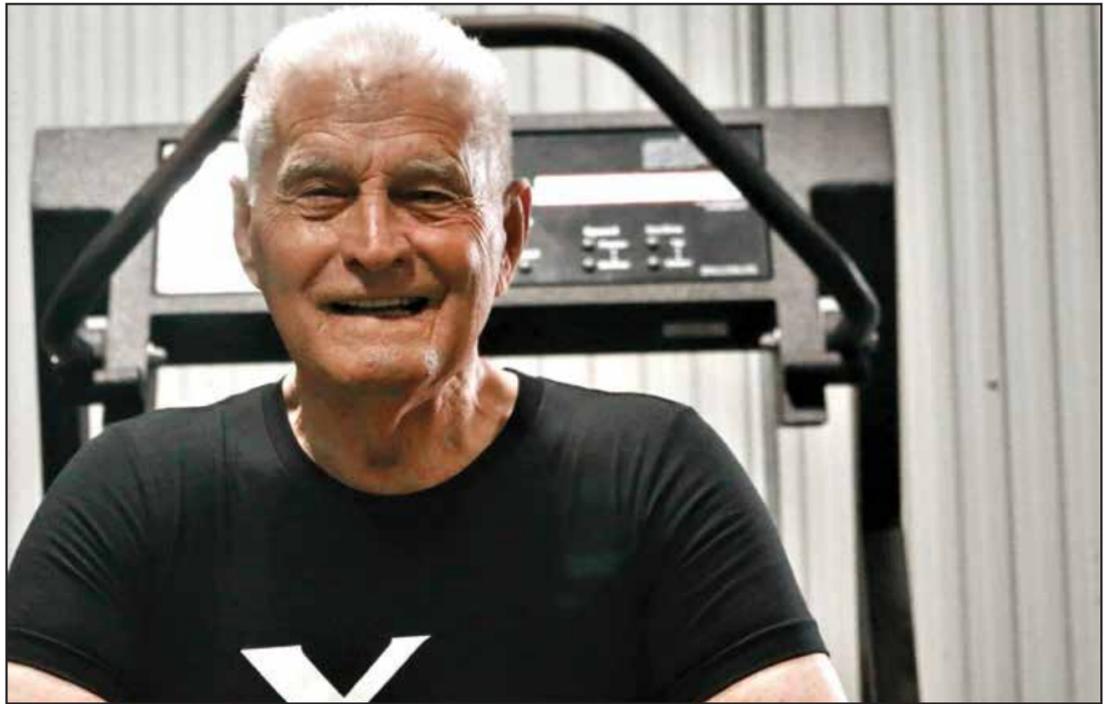
RITA SCHMOKER, 91, of Tulsa, service at 1 p.m. Saturday at Mother of God Catholic Church, Oswego.

NOLA FISHER, 98, of Parsons, service at 3 p.m. May 29 at Memorial Lawn Cemetery patio.

THIS ISSUE:
Volume 149; Issue 145
10 Pages; 1 Section

Kansas Newspapers LLC

Still going strong at 81



Courtesy photo

Jimm Ites of Cedar Falls, Iowa, continues to powerlift and run track as an 81-year-old senior Olympian. Ites was in Parsons recently to visit his son, Terry Ites.

Senior Olympian found his fountain of youth

By Colleen Williamson
cwilliamson@parsonssun.com

As a youth, once a week Jimm Ites and his family left their farm and went to town to do their shopping.

An avid reader, Ites found himself drawn to the magazine store.

"I read an interview they did with Joe Lewis (world heavyweight boxing champion from 1937 to 1949), and what he said stuck with me and he got me started training," Ites said. "He said 'Never stop training. Work your heart and lungs hard twice a week and keep your legs and back strong.' That just kind of did something to me, and the next day I started putting pipes up in the trees and I started doing pull-ups and running down the road and back and forth. That's how it started."

And it has never ended, despite Ites now being 81 years old.

"I've never stopped. I went to my first track meet on the island of Guam in 1958. The following year I was sent to Taiwan. The communists were trying to take over some of their islands. I took judo there and I was in judo competitions.

"To me, this is my personal thing. I don't just exercise. I train to go somewhere to a competition. Today, I'm a senior Olympian. I do powerlifting and I do track and field. I'm a sprinter," he said during a Christmas visit to Parsons to visit his son, Terry Ites.

He's gone to Arizona every February for years to participate in track and field and powerlifting. Competitions in Greeley Colorado, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Peoria, Illinois, Iowa

and Las Vegas have drawn him in.

"In track and field, I wasn't always a winner, but I've gotten tons of gold medals from that and powerlifting," he said.

He has held the Iowa state record for older men, bench pressing 374 pounds, and held the senior men's state record in Iowa for deadlifting 500 pounds.

In 2020, there were no competitions to go to because of the pandemic, so Ites has created his own competitions.

"My message for people is not just to lift heavy weights, but to change their mind about health and the human belief system. In my world, in my belief system, it is the key to perfect health and increased strength, but you've got to understand the dynamics

See STRONG, Page 10.

LCC in final push of campaign

By Colleen Williamson
cwilliamson@parsonssun.com

The Labette Community College Foundation's Pathways to the Future Capital Campaign is down to the wire on its fundraising to renovate and expand the college's athletic facilities to meet the needs of students and better serve the community.

LCC Foundation Executive Director Lindi Forbes said Friday the college needs only \$40,000 more to meet the requirements of a Mabee Challenge Grant that would provide the campaign \$500,000 and hit the final goal of \$5,729,900.

"This is the final push. The Mabee Grant has a deadline of this next Thursday, Jan. 14," Forbes said. "To ensure we get that \$500,000 grant, we need to raise \$40,000 more. ... We've been working really hard and so many people have stepped up and given generous donations and now we need help to cross the finish line.

"I know that sounds like a lot of money, but from everything that's happened and all that's been given and accomplished, I really believe it's doable. It's just less than a week away."

To date, the college has raised more than \$5.6 million

See CAMPAIGN, Page 2.

Parsons man gets probation in drug case

By The Sun Staff
news@parsonssun.com

A Parsons man took advantage of long delays in his criminal case to get the help he needed that ended up convincing a Labette County judge to give him probation rather than prison on Friday.

Eli J. Hunter, 47, pleaded guilty in October in Labette County District Court to three counts of distribution of methamphetamine, all felonies, and one count of possession with intent to distribute meth. He pleaded to other counts related to using a phone to arrange drug sales and possession of an illegal shotgun, the barrel for which was less than 18 inches long, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

A preliminary hearing took place in June 2018. Witnesses included a KBI senior special agent and a confidential informant who bought meth from Hunter.

KBI agent Shawn Campiti worked with Parsons police and the Labette County sheriff in the investigation that used a local man who agreed to buy drugs from Hunter and perhaps others in exchange for Parsons Municipal Court charges

being dropped.

At the buy, officers monitored a broadcast of the buy (the informant wore a voice transmitter, or a "wire") to ensure the informant's safety. The buys occurred on May 26, 2017, May 30, 2017, and June 8, 2017, all at Hunter's house. The first two buys cost the KBI \$90 each for which the informant was to receive half of an eight-ball of meth, or 1.75 grams. He received 0.76 of a gram the first time and 1.3 grams the second. The third buy was for an eight ball and a half, or 5.25 grams, or two eight balls, or 7 grams, and the informant received \$340 in buy money and only received 4.92 grams of product.

After the investigation concluded, authorities received a search warrant for Hunter's home. The warrant was served Aug. 4, 2017, and authorities found 1.73 grams of meth, drug paraphernalia and a sawed-off shotgun, which is illegal to possess.

Hunter faced a minimum of eight years in prison in the case, which was filed in 2017. His attorney, David Markham, pointed out that he worked through different defense strategies for his client that took extra time.

But the time was to Hunter's benefit as Hunter has done well on bond supervision and he decided he needed drug treatment. Hunter worked to successfully complete outpatient treatment through Labette Center for Mental Health Services. The time has given Hunter a new outlook on life, Markham said. Hunter has also taken responsibility for the crimes and regrets his involvement in them, he said. Markham recommended that Judge Steve Stockard sentence his client to 98 months in prison on the primary offense, making the remaining terms concurrent to it, and then place his client on probation.

Labette County Attorney Stephen Jones agreed with the recommendation for probation rather than prison as part of the plea.

Markham called two witnesses to support his request for probation, Hunter's substance abuse counselor and Hunter's mother.

Mark Gardner of Labette Center for Mental Health Services testified that Hunter began outpatient therapy in December 2019 and completed treatment in November. Hunter attended 27 sessions. Gardner worked on coping skills with Hunter,

determined Hunter's triggers for drug use and taught him how to combat that and cravings. Gardner also guided Hunter on how to rebuild his support system with his family.

Hunter's mother, Lee-Ann Hunter, testified about a strained relationship she and her husband had with her son for some time. She knew he was going through something, tried to help but didn't know how. In the last two years, she noticed a change in him. He took more pride in his home, started refinishing furniture to make money and started treatment with Gardner. He now has focus and clarity. His granddaughter lives in Pennsylvania and will undergo medical treatments and Hunter would like to be able to travel there to be there for her.

This past Christmas was one of the best since her son was a teenager, his mother testified. He was present and engaged in family activities, she said.

Hunter's goal is to see his daughter and grandchildren and live in Pennsylvania, if given the chance at probation.

See CASE, Page 10.



Fever & COVID-19 Testing Clinic

Monday—Friday: 10am * 2pm * 6pm
Saturday: 12pm * Sunday: 3pm

Appointment Required:
620-820-5230

Labette Health

