

Harvey County 2023 Highlights and Accomplishments

January

- Designated INTRUST Bank as the official depository for public funds.
- Designated The Newton Kansan as the official County newspaper.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing participation in the Rural Opportunity Zone Student Loan Repayment Program.
- Adopted a resolution formally establishing the Quad-County Coordinating Committee.
- Approved a resolution ordering and authorizing the county counselor to initiate and conduct a tax foreclosure action.
- Commissioner George A. “Chip” Westfall retired after serving on the Harvey County Commission for 16 years.
- Becky Reimer was sworn in as the Harvey County commissioner for District One.
- Completed reorganization of the county commission, with Commissioner Randy Hague as chairperson.
- Voted to add the Pledge of Allegiance to future County Commission meeting agendas.
- The seventh annual MLK Day of Service project was held by the Department on Aging.
- Approved an agreement with McGrath Human Resources Group to complete a job description revision project for Harvey County.
- Approved updates to the user fees for Harvey County Parks.
- Approved a resolution creating an invocation policy and procedure for County Commission meetings.

February

- Presented 2022 Kansas Association of Counties service awards to 13 county employees.
- Received and approved the 2022 sheriff’s office forfeiture report.
- Approved a resolution implementing a temporary, six-month moratorium on commercial renewable energy project development.
- Approved acceptance of the public dedications for the Gray Gables South Subdivision plat.
- Approved the addition of an assistant county attorney position for the attorney’s office.
- Approved a conditional use permit for Tower Associates, LLC at 6853 S. Willow Lake Rd.
- Approved a conditional use permit for Tower Associates, LLC at 2838 S. River Park Rd.
- Approved a sponsorship for the fourth annual Harvey County Safety Fair.
- Approved a real estate purchase agreement amendment with Prairie View, Inc.
- Received the 2022 year-end financial report.

March

- Applied for Kansas Department of Health and Environment grants for the Harvey County Health Department.
- Adopted a resolution approving revisions to the county parks regulations.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing the issuance of trespass warnings on county parks.
- Received a \$10,000 donation from the R. Michael Rhoades Foundation for the Harvey County West Park shower house project.
- Approved a proclamation in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

- Approved a second real estate purchase agreement amendment with Prairie View, Inc.
- Approved a conditional use permit for Scorpius Industries, LLC at 8501 N. West St.
- Held a budget hearing and approved amending the 2023 Harvey County budget for the purchase of a new transportation vehicle.
- Denied a zoning change request for Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. at 8399 SE 84th St.
- Closed on the purchase of the Pine Street Health Services building at 215 S. Pine St. in Newton.

April

- Approved a proclamation in recognition of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.
- Entered into an agreement for the Kansas Department of Transportation's 2023 Federal Funds Exchange Program.
- Adopted a resolution requesting the vacation of certain roads and alley located in the east portion of the Patterson town site plat.
- Approved a proclamation for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- Received and approved the Noxious Weed annual report.
- Conducted the annual exemption review for the Budde Enterprises, Inc. tax abatement.
- Approved the 2022 township annual reports.
- Approved a consulting agreement with McCully and Associates for appraisal services.
- Reappointed Dr. Colin Windham as the Ninth District coroner, through Jan. 10, 2027.

May

- Approved a proclamation for Treatment Court Month.
- Approved a proclamation for National Police Week.
- Approved a proclamation for National Bike Month.
- Approved a proclamation for Public Service Recognition Week.
- Received the first quarter financial report.
- Approved a grant application for the Kansas Governor's Local Safety and Security Equipment grant program to add an additional 800 MHz simulcast radio site at Harvey County East Park.
- Received a presentation and report from Schaefer Architecture on the updated Harvey County Courthouse space study.
- Approved a construction project to make temporary modifications to Courtroom Four for the District Court.
- Received a Risk Management Excellence Award from KCAMP, along with a premium rebate check of \$5,828.21.
- Approved a memorandum of agreement to supplement the Kansas Logistics Park Development Agreement with the City of Newton, for a potential land sale to Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad, LLC.
- Adopted a resolution ordering the vacation of certain roads and alley located in the east portion of the Patterson town site plat.
- Adopted a resolution declaring the intent to grant a tax exemption for Scorpius Industries, LLC for a new facility located at 8501 N. West Rd.

- Conducted 2023 budget hearings.

June

- Conducted 2023 budget hearings.
- Received presentation of the 2022 financial audit from Lindburg Vogel Pierce Faris, which included no budget law violations. The County’s alternative compliance examination engagement results were also reviewed.
- Awarded a bid to Klaver Construction for the 2023 RCB replacement project.
- Approved a letter of support and a \$250,000 commitment for IdeaTek’s Lasting Infrastructure and Network Connection grant application.
- Approved the Harvey County Courthouse space study report produced by Schaefer Architecture.
- Received a presentation from STAND about their youth activities and programs.
- Approved a donation of up to \$2,500 for Harvey County Habitat for Humanity.
- Approved a grant request for the Women, Infants, and Children program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the KDHE.

July

- Approved partnering with the City of Newton for a Safe Streets and Roads for All action planning grant.
- Held the annual budget work session to review the proposed 2024 budget.
- Approved a grant request for the Transforming Public Health in Kansas by Strengthening Our Workforce program through the KDHE.
- Conducted the vote canvass for the City of Burrton special election.
- Approved a proclamation for Pretrial, Probation, Parole, and Supervision Week.
- Received a presentation from Schaefer Architecture on the block diagram study for the Courthouse and Pine Street facilities.
- Approved the Harvey County Department on Aging applying for five Older Americans Act grants through the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging.
- Approved an allocation of \$6,000 from the special alcohol and drug program fund to provide funding for the STAND program in Harvey County.

August

- Approved a resolution extending the temporary moratorium on commercial renewable energy project development until Dec. 5, 2023.
- Approved the Department on Aging accepting American Rescue Plan Act-OAA grant funding for area senior center projects.
- Approved a construction and demolition landfill permit modification application for the expansion of the middle cell of the construction and demolition landfill.
- Approved the 2025 Healthy Harvey Wellness program.
- Received the second quarter financial report.
- Approved a conditional use permit for David and Tina Leifer’s short-term rental at 5428 N. Grace Hill Rd.
- Approved applying for an Emergency Management Performance Grant from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management.

- Approved a contract with Turn Key Health Clinics for the medical services program at the Harvey County Detention Center.
- Approved an increase to the Detention Center housing fee for State of Kansas inmates from \$60 to \$85 per day.
- Conducted a revenue neutral rate hearing and budget hearing for the 2024 Harvey County budget.
- Adopted a resolution exceeding the revenue neutral rate for the 2024 Harvey County budget.
- Approved the 2023 update to the Central Kansas Regional Solid Waste Authority management plan.
- Approved a contract with Consolidated Management Company for the food services program at the Detention Center.

September

- Approved applying for a Rural Hospital Innovation Grant in partnership with NMC Health.
- Adopted the 2024 budget and 2024-2028 capital improvement plan.
- Received an award letter for bridge project E-30.7, which was selected to receive funding through KDOT's Off-System Bridge Program for up to \$950,000.
- Approved the purchase of a prestressed concrete structure for the replacement of a shower house at West Park.
- Received confirmation that the KDHE awarded the Health Department a grant totaling \$130,000, over two years, for drug-endangered children programs, including mental health first aid classes and a Heart-2-Heart childcare bag program.
- Harvey County RSVP completed its annual 9/11 Day of Service project, collecting 1,083 pounds of goods for The Salvation Army.
- Approved an agreement with Hutton Construction to make structural repairs to the Harvey County Road and Bridge building.
- Approved an agreement with Goldberg Group Architects, LLC to provide a facility assessment, space needs assessment and remodel design for the Detention Center.

October

- Approved a conditional use permit for Sam and Sheila Schmidt's short-term rental at 2100 N. East Lake Rd.
- Approved a conditional use permit for Skyward Land Services/Tillman Infrastructure for a cell phone tower at 534 N. Prairie Lake Rd.
- Hosted an employee in-service day for County employees on Columbus Day.
- Approved a change order agreement with TK Elevator Corporation to replace the hydraulic jack in the east Courthouse elevator.
- Approved a conditional use permit for Byron and Susan Schrag's event center at 1734 SE 96th St.
- Approved a conditional use permit for David and Amanda Balzer's short-term rental at 6306 E. First St.
- Approved recertification of Harvey County Transportation's Title VI documents.
- Approved applying for the RSVP AmeriCorps Senior Grant program.
- Received the third quarter financial report.

November

- Conducted the vote canvass for the city/school general election.
- Adopted a resolution amending the Harvey County Unified Development Code Section 16.14 Commercial Renewable Energy Project.
- Approved the Health Department applying for a Blue Cross Blue Shield Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant.
- Approved the KDOT State Fiscal Year 2025 Public Transportation Grant application.
- Approved 2024 Emergency Medical Service Grant funding and a memorandum of understanding for the 2024 grants to Burrton Consolidated Fire District No. 5, Hesston Fire/EMS, and Halstead Fire/EMS.
- Approved continuing a contract with The Newton Kansan for the 2024 publication of legal notices.
- Approved the Computer Information Concepts annual peopleware agreement renewal for maintenance and enhancements.
- Approved modifications to the County's longevity pay program, providing an annual longevity payment of \$25 per year for all employees who have worked for the County for at least one full year as of Dec. 31.

December

- Held the annual employee Christmas dinner at The Porch.
- Presented longevity awards to 19 employees with between five and 35 years of service.
- Approved a development agreement with Flint Hills Industries, Inc. and the City of Newton for the expansion of Hillsboro Industries in Newton.
- Approved a conditional use permit for Brad Dopps and Brad Raymond's short-term rental at 2005 S. Sand Hill Rd.
- Approved a grant application to the Asbury Park Foundation for the County's transportation program.
- Approved a grant agreement with the KDHE for a \$1.1 million Rural Hospital Innovation grant for NMC Health to renovate their emergency department to allow for the addition of three behavioral health rooms, a dedicated behavioral health nurse station and a reconfigured admission area.
- Approved an agreement with MCCi, LLC – GovBuilt for the replacement of the Harvey County website.
- Held a budget hearing and approved amending the 2023 Harvey County budget.
- Approved a contract with the Harvey County legal services panel.
- Approved increasing the court appointed attorney rate from \$70 per hour to \$100 per hour.

Harvey County Departmental Highlights and Accomplishments

Administration

- Finalized the purchase of the Pine Street building, completed repairs to the Pine Street building roof and parking lot, and finalized the Harvey County Courthouse space study to determine which departments will be relocating to the Pine Street building.
- Completed reports for the American Rescue Plan Act funding.
- Began a job description update project with McGrath Human Resources Group.
- Enrolled 38 new employees, offered four EMPAC training sessions to employees, provided monthly risk management online trainings to employees, and facilitated 34 media releases.
- Received positive audit and single audit results, and adopted a 2024 budget that maintains reliable, timely services for our citizens and includes a responsible, forward-thinking general fund balance.

Aging

- The department provided more than 3,000 Harvey County citizens with information and resources via in-person and over-the-phone visits in 2023. We distributed 141 Farmers Market Bucks booklets to citizens. We assisted 92 citizens with Medicare open enrollment counseling, identifying \$53,672 in potential total medication savings, and assisted with 102 new Medicare and Social Security benefit enrollments.
- We worked to strengthen and bring Older Americans Act American Rescue Plan Act funding to the Harvey County senior centers to help with modernization projects and sustain the environments of each center. We also assisted two senior centers in securing The National Council on Aging's vaccination grants for \$10,000 to use in the centers.
- RSVP has increased the volunteer hours given to the community to 10,466. Special projects – the Martin Luther King and 9/11 events – collected 2,588 pounds of food, valued at \$3,883, which was donated to the Salvation Army food bank.
- Interurban Transportation successfully secured additional grant funds for the Find-A-Way program, providing no-cost rides for medical, pharmacy, grocery store trips, and social service agencies for low-income individuals living in Harvey County.
- Department outreach through the As We Age newsletter now reaches 606 unduplicated homes in Harvey County by emailing or mailing four (4) publications in 2023. Social media posts on Facebook and Twitter in 2023 have yielded 11,569 reaches, and in-person presentations and health and safety fairs generated an additional 679 citizen contacts.

Appraiser

- Revalued real estate, personal property, and oil and gas.
- McCully and Associates, our mass appraisal consultant, launched Kansas Analytics to assist Harvey County with our property valuations.
- Held personal property and real estate hearings with individuals appealing their values.
- Provided training and instruction for field staff, so they can value properties and hold hearings.

Attorney's Office

- Successfully transitioned to a new integrated case management system.

- Obtained convictions and prison sentences in six child sex crime cases.
- Collaborated with defense and court partners during the state court's security incident to ensure continued progress in all pending cases.

Clerk/Election Office

- Planned and implemented successful special election for the City of Burrton in July, and the city/school general election in November.
- Continued revamping procedures, processes and training materials related to usage of the new Clear Ballot election equipment.
- Continued implementing requirements of "Truth in Taxation" legislation (SB 13), including calculating and distributing revenue neutral rates and assisting entities with compliance. Prepared and mailed 22,081 "Truth in Taxation" notices of estimated taxes.
- Rick Piepho, County Clerk and Election Officer, graduated from the CERA program to be designated as a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator from the National Association of Election Officials (commonly known as the Election Center).

Communications

- We are nearly complete with the revamp of our emergency medical dispatch protocols. Initial training is complete, and the rewrite is underway to where we should be able to start using new protocols in early 2024.
- Five members of our team went through the National Emergency Number Association's Communications Center Supervisor course. Harvey County hosted two classes due to the high demand for the training. Our assistant director also completed NENA's Center Manager course.
- As of December 27, the total number of computer-aided dispatch calls totaled 66,412, an increase of 16.5 percent over 2022.
- As of December 27, the total phone calls received by Communications was 68,603, a decrease of 8.1 percent over 2022.

District Court

- Graduated two individuals from the Harvey County Drug Court program.
- Court Services implemented Tyler Technologies case management supervision program for offenders.
- Completed construction of modified walkway in the main courtroom and completed the chair replacement project in the main courtroom (gallery and jury chairs).
- The first full-time magistrate judge, Joe Uhlman, was sworn in on Jan. 17.
- Modified an existing conference room into a courtroom to accommodate the new magistrate judge position, which created a fourth judge in the county.

Emergency Management

- Developed and incorporated framework for County-wide standardized approach to active shooter response protocols for four local school districts (USDs) and two colleges and assimilated processes into the Harvey County Emergency Operations Center. This framework better established the role clarity between the impacted USD/college and all responding partners, identified capability and resource gaps, and developed a methodology

by which USDs and colleges throughout Harvey County jointly agreed to provide staff and support to an impacted school during an active shooter event. Emergency Management is now meeting with each of the four USDs and two colleges on an every-other month basis individually.

- Further operationalized the strategic Harvey County Emergency Operations Plan by creating multiple mission-specific tactical checklists. These checklists include an EOC Manager's Checklist, HAZMAT Checklist, Mass Casualty Incident Checklist, Train Derailment Checklist, Severe Weather Checklist, Logistics Resource Request and Tracking Checklist, and an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation Guideline.
- Enhanced EOC effectiveness by incorporating four methods of communication that enable concurrent in-field, in-EOC, and remote mission coordination and communication simultaneously. These communications methods are an EOC-centric email address, dedicated EOC radio channel, dedicated conference call line, and Zoom with Meeting Owl audio/video capability.
- Improved community preparedness and resilience by partnering with local officials to identify critical prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery plans and considerations. Developed and presented two presentations to the Harvey County Council of Governments representing all seven Harvey County municipalities and Harvey County. The first presentation focused on preparedness/resilience best practices while the second provided a Continuity of Operations (COOP)/Continuity of Government (COG) tabletop exercise.
- Built and sustained partnerships by teaming with diverse community groups, local school districts, colleges, long-term care and health providers, civic organizations, first responders, and volunteer agencies. One example was building and facilitating five tabletop exercises with all-hazards partners, USDs, and long-term care facilities.

Health

- Through the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation's Pathways to a Healthy Kansas funding, the Healthy Harvey Coalition coordinated with six partners (city, healthcare, education, non-profits) and were awarded \$145,200. An additional award of \$50,000 is anticipated, for a total of \$195,200 coming into the county.
- Completed environmental scan of four Newton parks, which later proved instrumental in the city commission passing the Tobacco-Free Parks ordinance, set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2024.
- Coordinated preparedness exercises with long-term care facilities and school partners.
- With numerous and diverse partners, completed the 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment, which identified four health priorities and developed into a three-year Community Health Improvement Plan (2023-2026).
- Increased participating clients by 57, an 11% increase, for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

Information Technology

- Set up and installed 88 new computers.
- Retired four servers from our network.
- Installed five new virtual servers on our network.

- Implemented new, enhanced security measures for our network and all users, including multi-factor authentication.
- Maintained 73 printers, 33 virtual servers, four physical servers, seven switches, and two networked-attached storage units.

Maintenance

- Worked to ensure all facilities are kept clean, in good condition, and in compliance with Kansas Department of Labor safety requirements.
- Began providing maintenance for the newly acquired Pine Street facility.
- Removed snow and maintained grounds as necessary.
- Worked with departments on their facility maintenance and improvement projects.

Noxious Weed

- Treated 726.4 private acres, 528.3 county acres and 1,482.2 township acres - totaling 2,736.9 acres.
- Applied bare ground treatments for the Sheriff's Office outdoor shooting range, Communications' tower sites, and the Harvey County fairgrounds.
- Replaced both overhead doors on the Noxious Weed building.
- Upgraded from barrels to shuttles for bulk 2,4-D amine.
- Acquired a high-noise headset for the portable county radio, for utilization during brush removal operations.

Parks

- Received approval for the West Park shower house replacement project. The old shower house has been demolished and construction of the new shower house has begun.
- New docks were purchased and installed at West Park.
- Hosted the annual Trappers Rendezvous at West Park.
- Officially opened the Pet Swim Park at East Park.
- Successfully navigated a continued blue-green algae concern at East Park.

Planning, Zoning, and Environmental

- The Planning and Zoning Office issued 83 building permits (15 for residences), 28 sewer permits, 39 well permits and completed 25 mortgage inspections as of Dec. 1.
- The Planning Commission has held 11 public hearings for conditional use permits. This exceeded the average of four conditional use permits per year, resulting in an increase in revenue for this line item of \$2,300 over the budgeted estimate.
- After months of research and discussion, the Planning Commission revised the renewable energy regulations that were adopted in November.
- Fourteen meetings were held for the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Appeals. This is above average. Both 2022 and 2023 have been busy years for the Planning Commission, with 2022 having 13 meetings.

Register of Deeds

- As of Dec. 18, the office has processed over 4,300 documents. All of the documents were recorded and processed during a one business day turnaround.

- Started the process to streamline the office by transferring older documents to CIC to assist the community and researchers with a more convenient way to retrieve information.

Road and Bridge

- Replacement of bridge E-30.6.
- Replacement of bridge G-22.5.
- Completed county-wide culvert inspections.
- Rehabilitated or replaced three structures just under bridge length.
- Completed overlay of South Halstead Road and East First Street, totaling 14.5 miles.

Sheriff's Office

- The Investigations Division/Criminal Interdiction Unit (CIU) was instrumental in solving a homicide investigation after a man was found dead at Harvey County East Lake. The Investigations Division worked tirelessly over the span of three days. The Investigations Division/CIU were able to identify a suspect and worked jointly with the Reno County Sheriff's Office and the Hutchinson Police Department to locate the suspect and make an arrest.
- Completed a remodel of the Sheriff's Office garage, including epoxy floor, lighting, and storage shelves.
- Developed a comprehensive Field Training Program and completed training for field training deputies. This program will better train our recruit deputies to be more effective and provide exceptional service to the citizens of Harvey County.
- Partnered with an outside expert to develop a leadership academy for all Harvey County deputies. The Sheriff's Office Leadership Academy kicked off in the fall and will continue to the fall of 2026. This academy will teach the foundational principles of effective leadership and develop leaders within our office.
- Selected Goldberg Group Architects to complete a facility assessment of the Harvey County Detention Center.

Solid Waste

- Passed all State of Kansas inspections.
- Completed Soil Management Plan.
- Achieved having zero work-related injuries.
- Continued service agreements with SCS Engineers.
- Transitioned the Solid Waste fee assessment program from the Administration department to the Solid Waste department.

Treasurer's Office

- Assigned numbers to the assistants' windows for better flow of customers and organization.
- Cross-trained all employees to process property tax payments and vehicle transactions.
- Reviewed daily processes to improve efficiency.
- Reorganized the office to allow for more open employee seating, allowing everyone to have improved visibility of their surroundings.
- Implemented an online appointment system in all three departments for more convenient, efficient customer service.