

The Bel Aire Breeze

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Complimentary copy

Council proposes tax hike and cuts

Spending plan for 2012 is a compromise, leaders say

By Matt Heilman

Bel Aire's 2012 budget wasn't passed at the council's July 19 meeting, but a ceiling on how much residents will pay to the city was approved. After a July 11 workshop and time apart to consider the budget, the council approved publishing a proposed 2012 budget that calls for a property tax mill levy increase of

6.839 mills.

This means that in 2012, Bel Aire residents will pay a maximum of 45.889 mills to the city, up from the 2011 mark of 39.05 mills. If the mill levy of 45.889 sticks when the final budget is approved on Aug. 16, the owner of a \$100,000 house in Bel Aire can expect to pay the city \$79 more in 2012 than they did in 2011, or an increase of about \$6.58 per

month.

In arguably the most difficult budget season in Bel Aire's history, the council has worked to compromise.

Residents were outspoken in support of city services, but nobody wants a tax increase, at least admittedly. The city's financial woes haven't gone anywhere and the council hasn't been oblivious to the fact that they aren't likely to win any

popularity contests when the 2012 budget season ends.

"Nobody's happy with us," council member Dave Sly said at the July 19 meeting. "This is one of the worst times of the year to make folks happy."

After two town hall meetings in June, the resident feedback contin-

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Housing market stagnant



Matt Heilman

In Bel Aire's Central Park Development, the city serves as its own developer. To this point, marketing efforts have generated interest, but not much in the way of actual home sales.

As new home sales lag, cities carry improvements

By Matt Heilman

Some day, cities in north Sedgwick County will continue to grow. Unemployment rates will consistently drop and the housing market will rebound.

Unfortunately, some day isn't today. "It's just dead out there," Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher said of the housing market in several area cities.

He said lower home costs have people interested in buying homes, but they're often unable to do so. Even in a strong economy, homeowners want to sell their homes for top dollar and then catch a bar-

gain on an upgrade.

With a struggling economy, this isn't usually feasible, Lasher said.

"People are interested, they just can't sell their homes," he said.

Passersby see what's on the market in new developments throughout the Wichita area and talk about how someday they'd like to buy a new home.

Unfortunately, the "someday" plans don't help the present situation for developers or cities. And it's putting a strain on some city governments.

Cities pay for improvements in new housing developments, including roads,

streets and water and sewer line installations. The improvements are usually funded by cities in the long term through bonds.

Through the course of 10 to 20 years, new homeowners reimburse the cities for the improvements through special assessments. From the time the improvements are in place, there's a two-year window before the first bond payment is due.

If a new home isn't built and occupied after two years, the developer is supposed to pay the special assessments until a

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School year right around the corner

By The Breeze staff

The lazy days of summer are numbered for area students. Wichita public school students in sixth and ninth grades have to go back to school Aug. 16. Everyone else in kindergarten through 12th grades in the Wichita school district can look forward to the first day of school on Aug. 17.

At Sunrise Christian Academy, there's a staggered start. Middle school students in sixth through eighth grades go back to school Aug. 17, followed by high school students Aug. 18 and elementary school students on Aug. 19.

Council supports complex in Central Park

Townhomes possible near City Hall

By Matt Heilman

Someday, the City of Bel Aire hopes to see commercial property in the Central Park development to help establish a downtown business district for Bel Aire. With the hopes of a future transition from residential to commercial properties in Central Park, the Bel Aire City Council approved a letter of support for a 148-unit, market-based apartment complex just northwest of City Hall.

Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher said the residential units, proposed for about 18 acres, would likely resemble townhomes more than typical apartments. He said the units would be in a gated community with its own pool, workout area and garages.

Lasher said the letter of support signed by the council doesn't tie the city into any contracts. It just states that the council is supportive of the plans for the complex, proposed by Curlew Construction out of Hendersonville, Tenn.

Echo Hills closing dates come and go

By Matt Heilman

Proposed closing dates have come and gone, and the Echo Hills Golf Club is still open. Plans are still in place for the 80-acre golf course to be transformed into commercial lots, but there's not a set-in-stone timetable for the project.

Over the past 18 months,

there have been a few false starts on the projected closing date of the golf course, most recently reported in The Ark Valley News as July 5 from information presented at a May 5 Park City council meeting.

At that meeting, the council heard some of the initial plans for the commercial development, which will consist of lots

in varying sizes meant for retail stores and restaurants. Development engineer Phil Meyer with the Baughman Company said no tenants had committed to build on the property yet, but plans called for the golf course to close by July 5.

That didn't happen. In the

See GOLF, Page 4



Echo Hills Golf Club, near 53rd North and I-135, is still open despite previous plans that said the course would close by July 5.

Matt Heilman



Webster defines a compromise as “an amicable agreement to settle differences.”

The council did a good job this year in finding a compromise for a very difficult budget. An old joke says that a good compromise is a decision that nobody likes. This year there was no way to please everybody or even anybody.

The council has approved an initial budget for publication in The Ark Valley News.

At the Aug. 2 council meeting, there will be a public hearing on this budget. The final approval of the budget will be at the Aug. 16 council meeting.

We were considering a possible 13-mill increase in the mill levy. We ended up with a 6.8 mill increase for 2012. This will leave Bel Aire’s total mill levy in the middle of other small cities in the area. The smaller mill levy was made possible by budgeting \$280,000 from land sales to help make the interest pay-



Mayor's corner

By Harold Smith

ment on the land debt. This will, of course, lower the amount of land sale money available for paying down the land debt. The volume, timing and price of future land sales will determine if additional tax increases will become necessary in the future.

Since future land sales are unknown, a lower mill levy increase in 2012 makes some sense. There is a reasonable chance that an additional increase in the mill levy, to support the land business, will never be needed. Another consideration was the national economy; 2012

may not be the best year for a 13-mill increase.

The staff identified \$1 million in possible reductions in city services. The council accepted \$545,000 of these reductions. The rec center will stay but at a reduced budget and with increased fees.

For 2012, we will continue with fire service from the county. There is still a question on how Wichita can offer this service at 7.5 mills below what the county charges Bel Aire citizens for fire service. Another question is if the county’s charge to Bel Aire is appropriate when 60 percent of the calls to this station come from Wichita. The Bel Aire-Kechi committee on lowering costs may look at the possibility of a combined fire service for the two cities. At this time, who will provide our fire service in the future is still an open question.

Again, this is a compromise budget. I thank the council and the staff for taking on this challenge and trying to find the best answer available to the city.

Housing

Continued from Page 1

home is sold on the lot. However, in Sedgwick County, developers don’t have to rush to make payments.

At the June 22 Park City council meeting, the governing body discussed the 2012 budget and the strain of more than \$600,000 in delinquent special assessments.

“It’s with these vacant lots that they’re not paying and when you figure (\$2,000) or \$3,000 a lot per year, it doesn’t take very many lots to get ya,” Park City Administrator Jack Whitson said.

Park City Attorney Doug Moshier said the county doesn’t take action on delinquent special assessments for three years and it can take another 18 months for foreclosure proceedings to conclude with a sheriff’s sale where the property is auctioned.

When developers are unable to pay for the special assessments, cities are left to find other ways to make their bond payments. The impact per lot is minimal, but the numbers can add up quickly in a town like Park City where there are more vacant lots than occupied homes in a few developments.

Along with fewer home sales, Whitson said property values aren’t going up and Park City has seen an increase in delinquent property taxes. This year, seven new homes were sold in the city through May 26, down from 15 sold through the first five months of 2010.

Mike Crow, real estate broker with Wichita’s Jay Russell Communities, said there are signs of improvement and his company has been able to keep up on specials in its developments throughout the Wichita area, including Park City’s High Ridge near 69th North and Hydraulic.

Crow sees the job market slowly recovering and has seen an increase in the number of qualified potential homebuyers in the area. Unfortunately, tighter regulations with national banks make it difficult for qualified homebuyers to receive financing, Crow said.

He said in today’s climate, local banks are often more likely to give loans than the large national banks, the opposite of what you’d expect in a stable economy.

Crow said he’s written 15 contracts in High Ridge this year, but has only sold seven homes.

“I’m getting buyers, but the



Matt Heilman

Several homes in Central Park sit within a quarter mile of the new USD 259 K-8 school in Bel Aire. While it’s assumed residents in Central Park will fall within district boundaries for the new USD 259 schools in Bel Aire, the city can’t use the nearby schools for home marketing efforts until the boundaries become official with an announcement that was expected in late July.

problem is they can’t get approved,” Crow said. “We’re just trying to figure out how to get the buyer approved.”

Crow spoke for developers throughout the area when he said “there’s just not much you can do with things out of your control.”

Even if there’s not much improvement in the short term, for the next two or three years, Park City should have the option to handle some of its financial burden with reserve funds to avoid raising taxes. However, Whitson said he doesn’t know what will happen if the economy doesn’t make a significant turn for the better in the next few years when reserves might not be available.

“Somewhere along the line, the rubber’s gonna meet the road,” he said.

In Kechi, the “rubber met the road” two years ago when the city raised its property taxes by 10 mills. In 2009, the city was saddled with about \$150,000 in unpaid special assessments. That number has been nearly cut in half to about \$77,000, still a concern for Kechi, but not one that is likely to impact taxpayers in 2012, in large part due to money carried over from the steep tax hike passed two years ago.

“I think it’s gotten a whole lot better than two years ago,” Kechi Mayor Bob Jackson said. “Two years ago, it was really nasty.”

The development with the most building left to do for Kechi is Rock Pointe near K-254 and Rock Road. Currently, the three homes built in the 99-lot development are occupied on a lease-to-own basis.

In an effort to alleviate the burden of special assessments and increase Kechi’s tax base, the city has taken an active role to market new homes. Kechi has organized a pair of home tours with stops at Rock Pointe and the Northwoods additions and has approved and advertised incentives with utility credits to help its own cause.

“We try to get interest in those developments. The last thing I want as a city administrator is someone saying, ‘You didn’t help us out,’” Kechi City Administrator Mark Tallman said. “Not one of the developers in Kechi can say, ‘You didn’t help us.’”

The City of Bel Aire is even more involved than Kechi in home marketing efforts and is fortunate in that delinquent special assessments only amount to about \$10,000 even though the city didn’t see any new home sales this year through May. A big reason for the lower delinquency rate is that the city is its own developer in the large Central Park development that includes a few housing additions as well as the Bel Aire City Hall and police department properties.

With Bel Aire as its own developer in Central Park, Lasher said the city is essentially reimbursing itself for improvements throughout the development. However, the intent is to sell the homes as soon as possible and to start collecting from new residents.

“That’s the whole idea for special assessments is that the homeowner pays for the improvements, not the city,” Lasher said.

Altogether, there is about \$500,000 in special assessments in

Central Park, most of which the city has managed to keep up with, he said.

“When we own (lots in Central Park), we know they’re getting paid,” Lasher said.

Lasher said there are also requirements in place for the new Rock Springs development near 53rd North and Rock Road. On about 70 acres near the new USD 259 high school, developer Gene Vitarelli plans to build starter homes and duplexes.

“He’s going to bring in a letter of credit for 35 percent of the cost of the improvements,” Lasher said. “The reason we do that is so that in those situations where the developer doesn’t pay, then we can start pulling on that letter of credit to make those payments.”

Of the four communities covered by The Ark Valley News, Valley Center appears to be in the best shape on the house market front, even though home sales are down. Valley Center City Clerk Christine Polian said special assessment delinquencies in the city run about two to three percent, which means that 97 to 98 percent of specials are accounted for.

“At this rate, we’re not concerned,” Polian said.

However, the goal of every city is to grow and expand its tax base. When home sales plummet, so can assessed valuations. There’s optimism in the area with new schools and a slowly improving job market, but there’s no way to fast forward through the current challenges.

“This is just medicine you have to swallow,” Tallman said.

Cities should hold line on taxes

Cities in north Sedgwick County are getting set to approve city operating budgets for 2012 and some upcoming decisions aren’t likely to please everyone. City councils have a lot of work ahead of them, prioritizing what they’d like to see done in 2012 and finding a way to complete the projects considered most important without burdening taxpayers. Passing a budget is rarely easy and the current economy doesn’t help, although there are signs of improvement.

While city leaders are cautiously optimistic for the future, potential good fortune down the road doesn’t play into next year’s spending plans.

We encourage cities to do what they can to limit the tax burdens on their residents.

In Valley Center, the council has avoided raising property taxes to support the city’s budget over the past few years. Unfortunately, that has become more difficult every year.

The city is faced with rising costs and stagnant valuation. No one is building in Valley Center these days, at least not much.

The council has its work cut out for it. Recently, council members made infrastructure — stormwater, water, sewer and roads — its top priority for 2012. Improving infrastructure is an expensive endeavor. The city should spend as aggressively as it can on these types of projects while maintaining the integrity of other important services.

The council has floated the idea of a sales tax to tackle some of the big-ticket items. That could be a good alternative. To accomplish big-time infrastructure improvements without an alternative source of revenue, the city would have to increase property taxes dramatically or piecemeal the projects over several years.

In Park City, the council has been blessed with enough reserve funds to avoid tax increases for the past couple of years.

In a brainstorming session at a special meeting in late May, the council came up with about 30 short- and long-term priorities for the city. Chief among them were infrastructure improvements and continued economic development.

We hope to see the city find a way to complete drainage projects in 2012 and to see increased home sales to help ease the burden of delinquent special assessments.

Over the past couple of years, no Wichita-area city has been challenged more than Bel Aire.

Unfortunately, a tax hike might be unavoidable in the city’s 2012 budget. As has been the case for the last few years, the city’s No. 1 priority is selling land to eat into the approximate \$18.2 million debt.

We encourage city leaders to continue embracing feedback from the taxpayers with the understanding that they’re not likely going to please everyone with next year’s budget.

In large part due to an unpopular decision in 2009, Kechi is on better financial ground today. We can appreciate that the city is prepared for worst-case scenarios, but we encourage the council not to ignore the possibility of lowering the mill levy in 2012 if it determines it’s feasible and won’t negatively impact residents with a future tax hike. In the short term, Kechi has prioritized cleanup efforts on residential and commercial properties, which should help with long-term goals of business attraction and retention.

Overall, we’re like most residents. We don’t want to see tax increases, but we understand they’re not always avoidable.

We know not everyone will be happy when 2012 budgets are finalized in August. We just hope that by this time next year, some of the optimism for the future starts to come to fruition.

— The Bel Aire Breeze

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City of Bel Aire



NOTES FROM CITY HALL

National Night Out
Tuesday, August 2, 2011
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Sedgwick County Fire Station #37
4343 N. Woodlawn
Bel Aire, KS

**Free hot dogs, chips and drinks,
along with prizes, balloons, games,
moonwalks and a fun time for all!**

Bel Aire Recreation

5251 E. 48th North • www.belairesks.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.

X-BOX CONNECT

A new X-Box Connect gaming system is now available for use at the Rec Center thanks to donations from the Bel Aire Lions Club, Sam's Club, and the Bel Aire Senior Center. The virtual video game is available during scheduled times for members and day fee users.

COED OUTDOOR SOCCER

Soccer is for boys and girls ages 4-11. Games will be played on Saturdays from September 10 - October 22. Practices will be set up by the coaches for one night a week starting the week of August 29. The registration deadline for Residents is August 5, and Non-Residents may sign up beginning August 6 as space allows.

COED FLAG FOOTBALL

Bel Aire will again be teaming up with the Valley Center Recreation Commission for flag football. Practices will be held at the respective home location with games being played at both sites. Flag Football is for boys and girls in 3rd - 6th grade. Games will be played on Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday evenings or Saturday mornings. Practices will be set up by the coaches for weeknights starting the week of August 29. The registration deadline for Residents is August 12, and Non-Residents may sign up beginning August 13 as space allows.

MAXIMIZE BASKETBALL CAMP

Bel Aire Recreation has partnered with Brent Atwater, a former collegiate player and coach, to bring you several basketball clinics and camps throughout the year. Atwater's programs stress the fundamentals of basketball which make them perfect for kids of all ages and skill levels. The last camp before school starts will be for boys and girls ages 5-12 and will run from August 8 - August 11. The camp will be from 1:00 - 4:00 pm and cost \$50.

DAZZLING DANCERS

These recreational classes will focus on ballet and jazz dance. Class attire includes: comfortable clothing, dance slippers, and a hair tie. The class will meet on Tuesdays from September 13 - November 1. The participants will show off what they have learned at a

recital on November 4. Ages 4-6 will meet from 6:00 - 6:50 and ages 7 & up will meet from 7:00 - 8:00. Pre-registration is required.

MARVELOUS MODELS

This beginner class for ages 5-10 will focus on how to model your own clothes and walk the "runway," with an emphasis on self-confidence and having fun! Participants will meet on Thursdays from 7:05 - 8:00 p.m. beginning September 15. On November 3 there will be a mini fashion show for parents, grandparents, friends, and family to come and enjoy.

ZUMBA

ZUMBA is at the Bel Aire Recreation Center! This 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. A ZUMBA class known as a ZUMBA Fitness-Party combines fast and slow rhythms that tone and sculpt the body using an aerobic/fitness approach to achieve a unique blended balance of cardio and muscle-toning benefits. Classes are held on Mondays and Thursdays from 6:00-7:00 pm. You can join at any time!

TAEKWONDO

We are accepting registrations for 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. You will need to provide your own yoga mat.

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.

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

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

NEW Dances 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month with Kenny Pruitt Band
for information call 755-9849

Tuesday August 2, 8:30 AM Breakfast at Copper Oven
Monday August 8, 10:00 AM Board Meeting

11:30 AM Lunch at Famous Daves

Tuesday August 17, 10:00 AM Men's Coffee at Braums

Wednesday August 17, 2:00 PM Ladies Tea/Coffee at Braums

Monday August 22, 6:00 PM Covered Dish Dinner

Hosts: To be Announced

Program: Mathews will bring an owl and eagle

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

CITY OF BEL AIRE CONTACTS

City Council

Mayor Harold Smith 744-2650
Dr. Gary Breault 744-0560
Peggy O'Donnell 744-0250
Moe Terrebonne 744-2747
David Austin 744-7188
Dave Sly 204-5574

City Hall

Ty Lasher, City Manager 744-2451, ext. 217
Recreation Department 744-2700

Central Park Pool 744-7331
Parks Department 744-8609
Police • Emergency 911
• Non-emergency 744-6000
Animal Control (Sedgwick County) 660-7070
Public Works 744-2888
Water/Sewer Emergency (after 5 p.m.)
761-6972 or 761-6973
Utility Billing 744-2451, ext. 132
Trash (Waste Connections) 838-4920
Hazardous Waste (Sedgwick County) 660-7464

Budget Information

August 2 — Public Hearing at the Bel Aire City Hall, 7 p.m.

August 8 — Public hearing at the Bel Aire City Hall, 7 p.m.

**August 16 — Bel Aire City Council Meeting, budget adoption, at
the Bel Aire City Hall, 7 p.m.**

**Deadline for September
Bel Aire Breeze
Friday, August 19**

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@belairesks.gov

Weekly Events:

Men's Fellowship & Coffee – On Monday @ 9 AM

TOPS Club Meetings & Educational Programs – On Tuesday @ 10 AM (Visitors are welcome anytime!)

Chair Exercises – On Tuesday Morning @ 10:30 AM

Senior Bridge Club Games – On Tuesday @ 1 PM

Senior Aerobic Class – On Wednesday @ 9 AM @ Bel Aire Rec. Center 5251 E. 48th St. North

Senior Oil Painting Class – On Thursday @ 1 PM (Cost)

Weekly Senior Breakfast – On Friday @ 9 AM @ Braum's Ice Cream Store – 3641 North Rock Rd., Wichita

**Be watching for more details and sign up today for weekly electronic news and events by contacting
Sr. Director Rick Eberhard @ reberhard@belairesks.gov**

August 1st – 6:30 PM – Monthly Potluck Dinner and Program "Senior Hobby Night". Everyone is asked to please bring a large covered food dish to share and your own table service for supper? "Senior Hobby Night" will be the featured program for the evening. Any person Over 55 is invited to bring items to set up a table display to showcase their favorite hobby. Notify the Senior Director in advance if you want some free table space for your display? Each presenter will be given (limited) time during the program to explain the items you have showcased for the evening. (Set up your display early at 6 PM.)

August 2nd – 5:30-7:30 PM – "National Night Out" with members of the Bel Aire Police Department – Free hot dogs and prizes at Sedgwick County Fire St. 37 at 4343 North Woodlawn in Bel Aire.

August 3rd – 1 PM – Special Presentation in Senior Center by Extension Office Agent on "T-Shirt Quilt" lecture. Learn how to make a quilt from re-purposed t-shirts. Public is always invited.

August 5th – 9 AM – Friday Morning Senior Breakfast for area seniors at Braum's Ice Cream Store 3641 North Rock Rd. – Come join the fellowship and fun?

August 9th – A Senior Spelling Bee from 9:30 a.m. to noon at 600 N. Greenwich road in Wichita. (316)682-0504. There will be a \$5 fee.

August 11th – 10 AM – Computer Class with Instructor Brian Tracy – What do I need to know about Computers? NO Cost for a 2 hr. class.

August 12th – 9 AM – "Breakfast & Learn" in Senior Center with Simone Khan, RN, BSN with special presentation "Why Patient Advocacy". Refreshments will be served.

August 12th – 7 PM – "Senior Fun Night", bring your favorite card or board games from home to share with others and some finger food or snacks. Complimentary drinks provided.

August 13th – Senior Red Hats Society event – call 744-0217 for special location and details.

August 15th – 1 PM – Special Presentation in Senior Center by Extension Office Agent on "The Beauty and History of Buttons" lecture. Public is invited.

August 15th – 7 PM – Central Park HOA monthly meeting in Senior Center.

August 16th – 10 AM – Weekly Senior TOPS Club meeting with special speaker Denise Dias, Agent for Sedgwick Co. Extension Office with a presentation on "Cut the Clutter".

August 17th – 12 Noon to 6 PM – BEL AIRE Community Wide Blood Drive for the American Red Cross Blood Services Division in the Community Room at City Hall. Donors are Welcomed! Please visit www.redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment and or contact the Senior Director's Office at 744-2451 Ext. 121 or e-mail: reberhard@belairesks.gov.

August 20th – 5:00 PM – "Dinner with Friends" Event. Meet at Senior Center to car pool to Montana Mike's Steak House in Newton, KS.

August 24th – 7 PM – "Senior Bunko Night" in Senior Center.

August 26th – 9 AM – Special "Breakfast & Learn Event" in the Senior Center with Conni Mansaw, Caregiver Coordinator for the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging and SG. CO. Department of Aging discussing "Caregivers Need Care Too" – which will include self care tips for the caregiver. Refreshments will be served.

August 26th – 6 PM – "Senior (light) Fellowship Supper" in Senior Center – RSVP to Senior Director in Advance – Cost \$6.00 per person

August 26th – 7 PM – "Senior Pitch Night" – come enjoy playing 10 point pitch games until 10 PM. Bring finger food or snacks to share with others. Complimentary coffee and ice tea or lemonade will be served.

Special Events Coming Up in September at the Bel Aire Senior Center:

September is "National Senior Center Month"

2011 National Theme: It Happens at My Center, My Life, My Time, My Way!

Bel Aire "Senior Travel Night" for 2012 with Collette Vacations

On Tuesday evening – September 13th @ 6:30 PM

-Medicare A to Z Seminar-

Wednesday – September 14th @ 6:30 PM in the Community Room @ City Hall – Call 660-0127 to Register

Senior Gala on September 21, 2011 @ The Cottillion in West Wichita \$5.00 Gala Admission and then plan to enjoy the CPAAA Annual

Senior EXPO 2011 on September 22, 2011 – Theme "Age of Aquarius"

Botanica - The Wichita Gardens, Exploration Place, Wichita Art Museum & Old Cowtown Museum (Shuttle buses will transport people in between locations)

Golf

Continued from Page 1

late morning hours of July 5, Echo Hills was busy with a group of golfers trying to get a round in before the afternoon heat set in.

Echo Hills owner Bert Henderson confirmed that plans are still in the works for commercial property to replace the course, but he can't say when. Henderson, who bought the course in 1972, said he turns 80 this month and is finally ready to retire after nearly 40 years in the golf business and about 56 years as a businessman in Park City.

"It's time to find something else to do," he said.

At a May 31 special meeting, the Park City council approved the plat for the Echo Hills commercial property.

For now, however, Henderson said the course is open for business while final paperwork and "legal stuff" gets worked out with the commercial development plans.

Henderson said he didn't know any details about the holdup, and didn't want to speculate on when the course might close.

Until further notice, it's business as usual.

Henderson's daughter and course manager Cheryl Greiving indicated she and fellow staff members at Echo Hills had grown tired of the reports that put dates on the closing. She said the staff has fielded "hundreds" of calls over the last several months about how much longer Echo Hills will be open.

"We have, I think, done a decent job of telling our regular customers that we were not going to close on July 5, so that the people who play out here regularly knew we were still going to be open," Greiving said.

On the morning of July 5, she said she was pleased with the turnout, "despite the news and the paper."

One of those regulars is Park City's Dale Vannover who said he's played at Echo Hills so long he can't remember when he started.

On July 5, Vannover shot a morning round with Paul Golden, who said he's golfed at Echo Hills for 28 years.

Vannover and Golden said they played about two rounds per week at Echo Hills and will be sad to see



Golfer Aileen Jones lines up a put toward the end of her July 5 round at Echo Hills. Jones said she's played at the course since 1987.

Matt Heilman

July 5, Aileen Jones finished a round in a group of four that included Greiving. Jones said she's played at Echo Hills since 1987 and planned to keep playing until the course's closing is official.

Developer Mike Loveland bought the Echo Hills property in October after more than a year's worth of rumors about the plans to

convert the golf course to commercial space.

Loveland wasn't available to comment about the project. Until the final plat was approved for the commercial development, Loveland was vague on what he had in mind for Echo Hills.

And now, even with a sense of what size of buildings can be expected on the lots, its unknown what businesses will find a home on the 80 acres near 53rd North and I-135.

When Echo Hills does finally close, Henderson and Greiving said there's a lot they'll miss about the family business, especially the customers.

"After doing this for seven days a week for 40 years, you get attached," Henderson said.

And until further notice, he'll stay attached because Echo Hills Golf Club is open for business.



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it end. Once Echo Hills does close, Golden said he wasn't sure what he will do.

"(Vannover's) gonna retire and I may too, I don't know," Golden said.

If he keeps golfing, Golden said he'd likely play at Braeburn Golf Course in northeast Wichita.

Golden and Vannover said they like playing Echo Hills because the course doesn't have many sand traps and the staff has done well to maintain the course and treat the golfers well.

"They're right on top of everything," Vannover said. Also out on the course

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Deadline for September Breeze: August 19

Bel Aire Breeze

HIGHLIGHTS

Councilman begins bike ride

In May, Bel Aire City Council member Dave Austin was featured in The Breeze when he announced his intentions to take part in a personal challenge for a selfless cause. He was set to complete the challenge by the

end of July.

On July 19, Austin completed the first 43 miles of a 303-mile bike ride from Clay Center to Moberly, Mo.

The route Austin planned to ride is just 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 throughout the world.”

The man who founded the Fuller Center, Millard Fuller, was a close friend with Austin’s father, John Austin.

Dave Austin said he’d try to keep his blog updated on the adventure that was set to last about one week. His blog can be read at www.davidcaustin.com.

com.

For more information on the Fuller Center for Housing or the ministry’s fundraising bike ride, visit www.fullercenter.org/bikeadventure.

— Matt Heilman

No one hurt in house fire

Six occupants were able to escape safely from an early morning July 4 house fire in the 4500 block of North Eagle Lake Drive in Bel Aire. 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 on fire. Reed said the occupant then alerted children in the home and helped them escape safely. He said the fire caused about \$70,000 in damages to the structure and contents of the home.

Reed said the investigation

had yet to determine a cause for the fire.

— Matt Heilman

Spring honors at K-State

K-State announced spring semester honors. K-State semester honors are awarded to students who earned a 3.75 grade point average or higher for the semester. Students had to be enrolled in at least 12 semester hours of graded course work.

Local students who received semester honors from Bel Aire are: Karen Amanda Akao, Elizabeth Erickson and Mary E. Halverson.

Students who graduated summa cum laude from K-State for having an academic average of 3.95 or higher; 111 students graduated magna cum laude for an academic average of 3.85 to 3.949; and 115 students graduated cum laude for an academic average of 3.750 to 3.848. Local students who

received graduation honors from Bel Aire are: Elizabeth Erickson, summa cum laude with a bachelor of science degree in human nutrition; and Elizabeth Erickson, summa cum laude with a bachelor of science degree in dietetics.

— The Breeze staff

City to observe Night Out

Bel Aire will observe National Night Out from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Aug. 2 with a family event at the Sedgwick County Fire Station 37, 4343 N. Woodlawn in Bel Aire.

There will be free hot dogs, chips, drinks, prizes, balloons, games, a dunk tank and moonwalks.

National Night Out is a community-police event meant to increase awareness about police programs in the community, Neighborhood Watch and other anti-crime efforts.

— The Breeze staff

DEATHS

THOMAS NELSON

Thomas Lee Nelson, 74, died July 23, 2011.

Survivors include his wife, Deanna of the home; daughters, Tammy M. Nelson of Bel Aire, Tailinda M. Nelson of Wichita; sons and daughters-in-law, Thomas L. Jr. and Norma of Anchorage, Alaska, Timothy L. and Tracey of South Riding, Va., Theodore L. and Hilary of Woodlands, Texas; 18 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren.

Services were June 28 at Church of Living God in Wichita.

Jackson Mortuary had charge.

IRENE DITTMER

Irene Rose Dittmer, 86, died July 3, 2011.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Henry.

Rosary was July 5 funeral Mass was July 7, both at Church of the Resurrection.

Survivors include son and daughter-in-law, Henry and

Terri of Berthoud, Colo.; daughters and sons-in-law, Mary and Jim Covington of Wichita, Nancy and Rick Carnahan of Olathe, Karolyn and Greg Dittmer-Hurt of Clearwater, KS, Teresa and Nolan Grimes of Bel Aire, Margaret and Dave Cozart of Colo.; 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Donations may be made to Dementia Caregiver Resources Inc.

Downing and Lahey East Mortuary had charge.

Budget

Continued from Page 1

used at the council’s July 5 meeting. For the second meeting in a row, resident Jared Hamburg addressed the council. At the June 21 council meeting, Hamburg asked the council to avoid a tax increase, reminding them that personal budgets are tightened with spiked costs in necessities, including gasoline and groceries.

On July 5, Hamburg said he understood that a tax hike to some degree was likely inevitable with the city’s land debt, but he offered a couple pieces of advice for council members to consider as they seek a compromise between protecting city services and minimizing a tax impact on residents.

First, Hamburg recommended that the council establish an ordinance saying that the city won’t invest in anymore real estate purchases.

Mayor Harold Smith said the ordinance was “an interesting idea” and assured Hamburg that the current council wasn’t interested in

adding to its land debt.

Hamburg said establishing an ordinance against further land purchases would be a good public relations move for the current council, with a published record carrying more weight than a verbal agreement.

Hamburg also recommended that if the council has to raise taxes, they set a sunset clause on the increase, assuring that residents won’t have to expect higher tax rates each year or pay more than is needed once the city gets on better financial ground.

Smith and the council thanked Hamburg for his input before economic advisory board member Ken Lee addressed the council. Lee said that for the city to overcome another budget season and put another dent in its debt load, a mill levy increase would likely be a necessity.

Taking a big-picture look, he said the city should “bite the bullet” and figure out what it needs to do to start tackling the debt instead of seeking solutions to put it off. Like Hamburg, he agreed that a sunset clause should be set with a tax increase.

In its attempt to satisfy the best interest of the city and its taxpayers,

the council approved publishing a proposed budget that calls for a few deep cuts along with a property tax increase, but was able to save all of its city services.

With the 6.839-mill increase, the proposed budget will allow the rec center to stay open and will keep Sedgwick County as the city’s fire protection.

The budget also called for \$280,000 in land sales to keep going toward revenue instead of paying off the principal on approximately \$18.2 million in land debt.

At the July 11 workshop, Bel Aire City Manager Ty Lasher introduced a budget that called for all land sales to go toward paying off the principal on the debt. Doing so would have raised the mill-levy in that budget proposal by 12 mills.

Mayor Harold Smith and the city’s economic advisory board have discussed the importance of paying off the principal on the land debt, but understand that residents don’t want to be saddled with paying off all of the interest on the debt. So, the council felt it would be in the best interest of the city to take more time to pay off the debt if need be, in order to lessen the blow of rais-

ing property taxes.

While Bel Aire residents expecting the worst might be able to breathe a sigh of relief knowing they won’t see more than a 6.839-mill increase in 2012, the proposed budget comes with a cost separate from residents’ wallets.

The budget calls for \$745,000 in cuts to operating expenses for the city. This means layoffs. The proposed cuts include \$308,000 to the Bel Aire Police Department, which would mean three full-time officers and a full-time administrative assistant could lose their jobs.

A few other proposed cuts on the list include the elimination of reserves, a part-time administrative position with the city, a full-time position in the parks department and a \$21,000 decrease in the rec center budget, which would likely be offset by fee increases.

Between now and Aug. 16, the council has the option to lower the mill levy in the proposed budget, but it can’t raise it.

While the proposed cuts are unfortunate, council member Gary Breault said he was pleased that the council was able to reach a point where residents won’t have to

pay as much in taxes as originally projected.

Council member Moe Terrebonne didn’t oppose publishing the budget that proposes a 6.839-mill increase, but he had a suggestion. Looking at the proposed \$2,000 cut to the Bel Aire Senior Center budget, he thought it’d be fair for the city’s senior club, a separate entity, to share the burden.

He proposed including a \$500 cut to the senior club. Breault said the ideal situation would be for the Bel Aire Senior Center and the city’s senior club to find a way to save costs by sharing more resources.

Council member Dave Sly recommended approving the publishing of the budget that called for the 6.839-mill increase and looking at potential smaller cuts, including Terrebonne’s proposal, in the next couple of weeks.

The proposed budget approved for publication July 19 was to appear in the July 28 Ark Valley News. Following the publication, the council will host a public hearing Aug. 2 prior to its regularly scheduled meeting.

A final budget workshop is set for 6:30 p.m. Aug. 8.

CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS

Christ Lutheran Church

Sunday contemporary guitar service with communion is at 8:45. Traditional service with communion first and third Sunday is at 10:30. Adult classes are at 9:45 a.m. There is no children’s Sunday School during the summer.

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.ksoxmail.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 (1 block south and 1 block east of Hillside and 17th N.).

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 7:30 to 8 p.m. in the sanctuary. There is music, prayer time, come and go communion and a short sermon. Child care is provided.

For more information, call 744-1242 or visit www.kechiumc.org.

Wednesday evening worship services from 7:30 to 8 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.

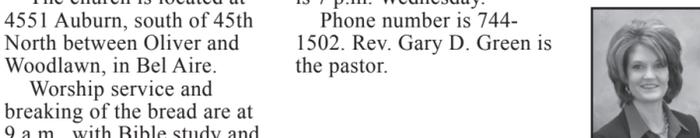
Pine Valley Christian Church

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.

True Life Church

True Life Church meets at Circle Greenwich Elementary (just north of K-96 on Greenwich Road). Coffee, juice and donuts are served early Sundays. There are activities with the TLC Kids Zone from children from birth through fifth grade. True Life Church has gospel-centered contemporary music and biblical messages delivered by Norm Duncan.

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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.org.

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net; phone 686-6765. Rev. Phil Shull is the pastor.

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Missionary overcomes trials

Bel Aire resident is still teaching the Bible

By Matt Heilman

Rachel Entz has seen the world and overcome the odds. The 77-year-old Indiana native married a man from Kansas 51 years ago and today resides in Bel Aire. Rachel's husband, Lewis Entz, died in December of 2008, leaving behind a lot of cherished memories.

Rachel met Lewis, a rancher's son who grew up in southeast Harvey County, in the mid-1950s at Grace College and Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Ind.

Lewis was studying to be a missionary at the seminary, while Rachel served as a nurse at the school where she was also a student.

Rachel didn't have much time for a social life. On top of her schoolwork and nursing responsibilities at the school, she worked four nights per week at a local hospital to pay for her tuition.

One day amidst her usual, busy routine, Lewis approached her and asked her out on a date. Rachel said her future husband was walking as the leader of the missionary prayer band the first time she saw him.

"When I saw him, I said to myself, 'Ooh, that's my Don Juan,'" Rachel said. "But then I never thought about it again. And then a couple weeks later, he came and sat beside me and asked me for a date."

With her hectic schedule, Rachel took a rain check, but the date wasn't held off forever. In June of 1957, she and Lewis were married.

Rachel said she had a double wedding with her sister, who also married a man from the Grace College



Matt Heilman

Rachel Entz at her home in Bel Aire with photographs of her husband, Lewis Entz.

seminary.

About a year before their wedding day, the Entzes encountered adversity.

In 1956, Lewis, who had earned a degree from Illinois' Wheaton College prior to attending seminary in Indiana, took a job as a radio engineer for RCA in New York City. During this time, Rachel moved to Philadelphia to attend Philadelphia College of the Bible.

It was in Philadelphia that Rachel said she "made a big boo-boo" in her life. While taking a full course load in nursing, she attended night school three nights per week and was the charge nurse of the hospital at the University of Pennsylvania four nights per week.

"I slept like three hours per night, four at the very best, ever," Rachel said. "I burnt my candle on both ends

and I ended up in the hospital where I was a nurse."

She was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a debilitating muscular disease.

"It looked like everything was going to come to an end because I felt, with a diagnosis like that, and as much handicap I had with it at first, that I had to release my husband from our engagement," Rachel said.

She said she felt it wasn't fair to keep Lewis from taking his first mission trip to Africa.

"I didn't want to, but I felt in decency, I had to," Rachel said.

Lewis didn't want to break off the engagement. Rachel went home and rested for six months before the couple was married. Rachel said her husband told her the Lord

brought them together and they should be ready to take on whatever the Lord gave them.

"Well, (he) gave us 51 and a half years of marriage," Rachel said.

Together, they traveled to Southeast Asia, Africa and South America on mission

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trips and had four children, two of which live in the Wichita area. With her disease, Rachel said she was told she wasn't likely to have children.

She also wasn't likely to experience a prolonged time of remission from multiple sclerosis. The disease has been in remission for 35 years.

"I've been in remission ever since I went to South Korea in 1976," Rachel said. "Most people don't get that kind of luck, but the good Lord saw to it that I went in to remission and it's still in remission."

Rachel lived in South Korea for six years and learned to speak the language fluently. When her family returned to the United States, the Entzes lived in a small California town called Cupertino, a suburb of San Jose.

The nearby town of Mountain View was known for having the second best climate in the world, Rachel said.

In California, Lewis continued his broadcasting career as an engineer for the Far East Broadcasting

Company, which is an international radio network that airs Christian programs in many languages throughout the world.

Rachel said her husband's work allowed their international ministry to continue after completing his missionary work.

"He reached millions of people through his lifetime," Rachel said.

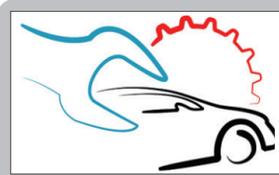
In retirement, the Entzes moved back closer to Lewis' roots in Kansas, finding their home in Bel Aire in 1996. Along with her four children, Rachel has 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

She also has six siblings who are still alive, ranging in age from 76 to 90.

Rachel keeps busy by teaching Bible lessons to children in her neighborhood and teaches a women's Bible class at her church. She also attends events at the Bel Aire Senior Center when she has the time.

On top of it all, Rachel is a cancer survivor, overcoming a chronic leukemia diagnosis 23 years ago.

"I'm still here and I'm still teaching the Bible," she said.



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