

## City of Sedalia building plan for brighter future

By Chris Howell  
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

The past year was big for progress at the City of Sedalia, Interim City Administrator Matt Wirt told the Democrat.

“We not only had a lot of stuff going on, of course,” Wirt said. “But it was a big planning year, so we did a lot of things, but next year is going to be a lot of the implementation of our planning.”

The City of Sedalia made many infrastructure improvements and crews laid over 20,000 tons of asphalt on Sedalia streets and alleys, poured 125 blocks of concrete sidewalks, trimmed 2,000 trees and finalized contracts on the North Central Sidewalk Project.

“We have eight stormwater improvement projects that are out,” Wirt said. “Two have been completed, one is in process with an additional five to go. They are to eliminate a lot of the flooding problems that we’ve had in different areas on Broadway and 16th Street.”

Wirt listed major accomplishments across several departments.

“Prairie Hollow, we got that incorporated into city services for that growth,” Wirt said, “Sedalia Parks and Recreation is putting the finishing touches on Liberty Park Stadium, that’s



The Sedalia Animal Shelter reunited 149 lost pets, had 381 adoptions and their big project is trying to get low cost spay and neuters for shelter pets and rescues by hiring a dedicated veterinarian at the shelter. The idea for a vet ranked high in FY2025 budget work sessions and looks likely to be funded. PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

kind of their crown jewel.”

Wirt quickly touched on some of the other great work at Parks and Rec

“They added 25 new displays, planted over 100 trees, Centennial Park bridge repairs, upgraded their disc-golf course, added swim lessons,” Wirt said.

“Since you’ve already had police and fire, the Sedalia Animal Shelter listed that they reunited 149 lost pets, had 381 adoptions

and their big project is trying to get low-cost spay and neuters for the shelter pets and rescues.”

Money to hire a dedicated veterinarian at the shelter ranked high in Fiscal 2025 budget work sessions and looks likely to be funded.

“The North Central sewer plant project, the engineering has gone into that, and we’ll have the facility plan done in March, hope to break ground,

cross our fingers, this fall,”

Wirt said. “That’s a large, large project.”

Upgrades at the sanitation department such as three new trucks now help empty over 14,000 carts and over nine million lbs. of trash.

“Then we expanded the compost facility’s offerings of new products, sales and delivery,” Wirt said.

Wirt only accepted the po-

sition as Interim City Administrator Dec. 18, 2024, but told the Democrat Sedalia’s strong foundation for continued improvements will ensure a safer, more efficient and better-connected community for years to come.

“There was a lot of things that we moved from the dream stage to engineering stage and done, the planning, done,” Wirt said. “The design or whatever was needed, and we got the contracts out there. There will be a lot of construction in Sedalia next year. Not only our construction, but there’s a lot of exciting projects coming that are privately funded.”

Wirt said he had just attended a planning meeting for one of the biggest projects to ever come to East Sedalia.

“The new campus of the aquatics facility, the bowling alley, the fire station and the fire training headquarters,” Wirt said. “Those are things that we hope to break ground for this year, those projects needed time to plan and design, and there was a lot of that done in 2024.”

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.

### More City Progress:

Sedalia Police C5  
Sedalia Fire C6  
Parks and Rec D1  
Liberty Park Stadium D3

## Pettis County Jail now flush with cash for improvements by housing federal inmates



The first year of an intergovernmental agreement with the US Marshals is complete and around federal 100 detainees are now being housed at the jail.

PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

By Chris Howell  
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

Progress at the Pettis County Jail has been a continuous trend over the last year, and Sheriff Brad Anders is most pleased with changes to inmate healthcare.

“First and foremost, we have a new medical contract for the safety of the inmates, the corrections officers and all personnel back there,” Anders said. “That gives us two full-time nurses, so seven days a week we have nurses here for 12 hours a day.”

A full-time mental health professional came on board last summer, and Anders said he has been quite impressed.

“She is just phenomenal,” Anders said. “She has a huge heart and a great passion for the mental well-being of everybody here, so that has been a great advancement.”

See **JAIL**, Page C7

## Sedalia Pettis County Economic Development boasts growth

By Chris Howell  
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

When Sedalia Pettis County Economic Development’s Director

Jessica Craig delivered her annual report to the City Council last month, she noted much progress during 2024, and it was a community-wide effort.

“Economic development is such a team sport,” Craig said. “We appreciate the City being part of that team. Did you know in the last eight years we’ve created over 1,000 new jobs, 10,45 new jobs here in the community, that’s profound for a community of our size.”

Craig noted perhaps more important than those new jobs was retaining Sedalia’s economic existing development base.

“If you are creating new jobs but losing existing positions, you’re just kind of spinning your wheels,” Craig said. “So, 1,763 retained jobs, over \$420 million capital investment. This is new equipment being commissioned, these are new buildings being built, existing buildings being expanded.”

Experts estimate each dollar



Impact Signs Awnings Wraps Inc. opened their new headquarters at 100 Curry Drive in the Thompson Meadows Industrial Park in Sept. 2024. Impact’s new \$10 million facility is 52,000 square feet and sits on a 5.5 acre development. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

invested in manufacturing in the community changes hands seven times.

“If you do the math, with that \$424 million capital investment that definitely has a ripple effect here throughout our community and our entire region with an average salary of \$46,674 great family supporting positions with fantastic benefits,” Craig said.

Economic Development Sedalia

Pettis County also supports businesses and helps grow companies that don’t necessarily have a local economic impact of a local customer base.

“We want to create new wealth, we want to bring new money to the community,” Craig said. “So more gas stations are built, more grocery stores are built, more restaurants are built.”

See **GROWTH**, Page C7

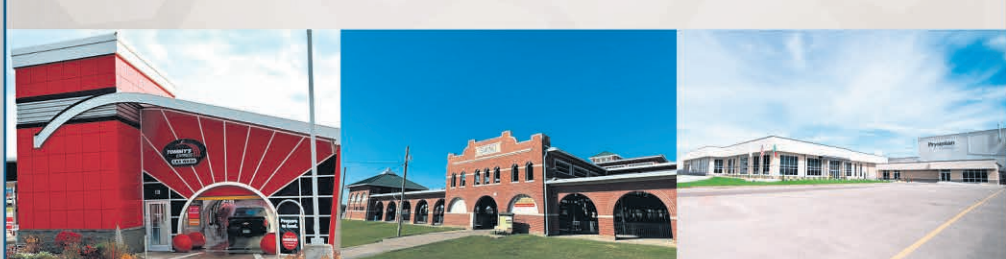
DESIGN-BUILD

ROOFING SERVICES

GENERAL CONTRACTING

MAINTENANCE SERVICES

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



septagon.com

660.827.5955

SEPTAGON  
CONSTRUCTION

# State Fair Community College

## sees \$60 million in expansions

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney

faithb@sedaliademocrat.com

Over the past three years, State Fair Community College, which serves 14 counties, has seen expansions in several areas.

SFCC President Dr. Brent Bates said the college has seen an “aggressive amount” of growth in several areas. More than \$60 million of capital projects have been completed, are in progress, or are on the “drawing board.”

“A lot of these projects are very important projects,” Bates said. “It helps our ability to serve our community. They are providing programming that our community needs. That’s the exciting thing about it. Part of the key point is that we’ve done all that without raising taxes.”

He added that SFCC’s been “aggressive” about raising money privately and applying for and receiving public funds when possible.

“Our team is very aggressive and effective,” Bates said. “The taxpayer should be pleased with that.”

One of two large “center-pieces” SFCC is completing is the Steve and Karen Ellebracht Ag & Mechanics Building, a 66,000-square-foot facility. The facility will house new programming in Ag mechanics and precision agriculture and program expansion in automotive technology. The building will also offer expansion in diesel technology and house the college’s commercial driving academy.

The building, which is almost finished, is located on the western side of the SFCC campus.

“We expect to have classes in the facility in the fall of 2025,” Bates said. “Our automotive program has high school (the CTC high school program) and college automotive training. And then the Ag programs will be brand new programs. It’s a beautiful



State Fair Community College is building a 198-bed, three-story student residence hall that will be available in the fall of 2025. Once the facility is complete, students who currently must find apartments will be able to live on campus. PHOTOS COURTESY OF STATE FAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Also being constructed at State Fair Community College is the Steve and Karen Ellebracht Ag & Mechanics Building, a 66,000-square-foot facility. The facility will house new programs in ag mechanics and precision agriculture and expand automotive technology programs.

facility. There’s a lot of space to accommodate new technology.”

Bates said the college is also finishing a 198-bed residence hall, which will open in the fall of 2025.

“This is a three-story residence hall,” Bates said. “It will be suite rooms. So, there will be two rooms on each side of a living

area.”

The building was designed locally by Roberts Rollings Architects LLC.

“We have had strong demand for a residence space on campus,” Bates said. “So much so, that we’ve had to lease apartments across the street. This will bring those students back onto cam-

pus. It will be a great asset to our campus.”

This year, the college also completed and opened a new HVAC Lab.

“That program was in a space in the Fielding Building that was vacated by the welding program,” Bates said. “That program was full in its first semester in the fall of ‘24. There’s a strong demand for HVAC technicians. We have a new industrial automation facility next to that lab. It’s industrial robotics and automation. It’s a state-of-the-art lab that features the latest in industrial robotics technology. It’s used for automation in manufacturing — it has a wide variety of uses.”

A newly started project is the Advance Health Sciences Center.

“We have a building on campus that’s had several different functions over the years,” Bates said. “It started out as a Student Union ... and for a couple of decades, it was the Melita Daycare Center. And most recently, it’s been an automotive lab and our eSports Arena. That building is being renovated right now and will house our dental hygiene program.”

The program and occupational therapy program will move from the Multipurpose Center to the renovated building.

“The final project that’s on the board is in the planning stage,” Bates said. “We are going to be removing some trees for that project, an outdoor athletic facility. That is in the area of the current soccer fields, which are to the west,” he added. “We’re building a new all-weather soccer field, softball field, baseball field, and track and field. It will be artificial turf.”

Bates said the college is currently raising money for the project and hopes to open it as soon as possible. The SFCC fundraising team includes all of the staff and is anchored by the SFCC Foundation, led by Executive Director Mary Treuner.

“She has done an amazing job working with our community to raise funds for these projects, which are central to our community’s success,” Bates said.

He noted the college is also trying to expand its programming.

“Our niche is hands-on learning,” Bates said. “Hands-on technical programming. We have a strong industrial base here in town. So, supporting that industrial base is important to us. Our key is listening to what our community needs and then figuring out how to make it happen.”

Bates added the “key part” of listening to the community is getting out of the office.

“Being involved in the community, service organizations, (and) attending events,” Bates said. “Purposely reaching out to communities and asking what they need.”

Bates said the college attracts many students from Mid-Missouri who enroll in SFCC’s specialty programs.

“They are high-quality programs, and people know they will get good jobs after the training,” Bates said. “So, people come from all over. That’s part of the reason for the residence hall expansion.”

SFCC has also added nursing and surgical technology programs at its Clinton, Henry County satellite campus. A new behavioral health technician program will open at SFCC in the fall in Sedalia.

Bates noted that in the fall of 2024, SFCC was the fastest-growing community college in the state and the second fastest in all of higher education.

“The only college or university in the state that was growing faster than us is Lincoln University,” Bates said. “And curiously enough, we have a new partnership with Lincoln University, and we’ve opened a campus on their campus in Jefferson City.”

Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at faithb@sedaliademocrat.com.



An aerial view shows both facilities: the student residence hall on the right and the Steve and Karen Ellebracht Ag & Mechanics Building on the left. Both buildings are being built on the west side of the State Fair Community College campus.

**IF YOUR ROOF IS NOT METAL,**  
**it's your own**  
**ASPHALT**  
**660-619-7948**

**NEVER ROOF AGAIN!**

**MONA'S RED BARN CAFE**  
 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 6:30 am to 2:00 pm. Sunday 11:00 am to 2:00 pm  
 112 North Main St., Green Ridge. 65332  
 (660) 527-3206

**Open Face Prime Rib Saturday**  
**FRESH Fried Chicken or Smoked Pork Chop Dinner Sunday**

# Sedalia 200 schools being upgraded

## due to continued taxpayer support

By Chris Howell  
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

The Sedalia School District 200 school administration has had so many notable accomplishments recently, Superintendent of Schools Todd Fraley had to take a breath before listing them all.

“Wow, yeah, a lot is right,” Fraley said. “We have a lot of irons in the fire. It kind of started with the replacement of the roof at Horace Mann Elementary. The original roof was over 100 years old and that was quite an undertaking.”

Crews removed the original clay tiles, replaced the rotting membranes underneath and re-fitted the tiles back into position.

“We were able to reuse that whole roof system that was on the top,” Fraley said. “Not bad for 100 years of usage. Speaking of roofs we move over to the Junior High, the old Smith-Cotton High School, again another 100-year-old roof that got replaced this year.”

Roofers moved from that project to the gymnasium annex building and are currently replacing that.

“That’s another big project,” Fraley said. “We also have a partial roof replacement going on at the Sedalia Middle School right now, so we’re doing that in sections.”

Another century-old school, Washington Elementary, is also getting attention to its roof.

“I don’t know if they build them like they used to, as the old saying goes, but you want to maintain them,” Fraley said. “Any homeowner knows if you don’t have good roof on your house the rest of its going to deteriorate quickly.”

Playground flooring at elementary schools is a matter of safety, maintenance and inclusion.

“We were replacing underneath the playground equipment with an artificial turf surface for years,” Fraley said. “We’ve gotten by using mulch, which is dirty; it gets tracked in the buildings, taken home with kids, it’s not as safe, it’s not good when it rains



Members of the Smith-Cotton Tiger Pride marching band marched up Ohio Avenue for Homecoming in 2024. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

and it’s wet, it’s nasty and moldy.” Rather than replacing mulch year after year the whole flooring system was upgraded in a trial at one area elementary school.

“At Heber Hunt we replaced that and made an all-inclusive playground that was wheelchair accessible, even to the equipment,” Fraley said. “We just took that lead and this past year and we moved on to Horace Mann and the Washington school.”

Next summer Sedalia Middle School, Parkview and Skyline will also see similar schoolyard improvements.

“Those playgrounds will have a nice new turf surface,” Fraley said, “it’s rubberized underneath and meets the specifications for safety. It’s an incredible undertaking.”

Because of the high foot traffic nearby, both humans and roving animals, the Junior High, Horace Mann and Washington will also soon receive new security fencing.

“The middle school gymnasium and the old pool were renovated last year, they got a whole new facelift and we’re moving into phase two at the middle school,” Fraley said. “They’re going through the classrooms, putting in new LED lighting, replacing the drop ceilings and in those rooms fresh paint, remodel the bathrooms and freshen them up a lot.”

Rebuilt roofs, remodeled bathrooms and overall infrastructure improvements are signs Sedalia 200 is on the right path.

“I feel like we’re catching up,” Fraley said. “As a district we haven’t always been in a financial place to do that.”

He thanked the voters for passing funding for the new high school and making sure that revenue source was permanent.

“That expanded our ability greatly to take on some of these projects,” Fraley said. “A lot of that money flows into our capital projects fund. It’s exciting, it’s things that have needed to be done for a long time and we’re making progress.”

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.



Whittier High School graduate Olivia Fante-Hession receives her diploma from Sedalia School District Superintendent Dr. Todd Fraley on May 10, 2024. FILE PHOTO BY FAITH BEMISS-MCKINNEY | DEMOCRAT

For More Sedalia 200 improvements, see D4

**Tyson Foods™**

**We feed the world like family**

Thank you to all of Missouri’s farmers for your hard work and dedication

**Now Hiring. Visit [tysonfoods.com/careers](https://tysonfoods.com/careers) to apply**

# Bothwell Regional Health Center

sees positive strides in several areas

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney  
faithb@sedaliademocrat.com

**B**othwell Regional Health Center is moving forward with a three-pronged approach.

Bothwell's CEO, Lori Wightman, noted that looking back at the hospital's last year, three areas are essential: growth, focus, and financial recovery. She added that the hospital's access to provider recruitment has increased.

**New physicians come on board**

"In the last year we have brought on 25 new physicians or advance practice providers," Wightman said. "So, that's a lot of people to be onboard. One of our amazing recruitments was Dr. (Christopher) Dallo in dermatology. It's especially poignant since Dr. Blume just passed."

She added that she didn't think it would be possible for a dermatologist to set up a practice in Sedalia since most of them prefer to practice in larger cities.

"But Dr. Dallo was looking for a smaller community," Wightman said. "All of the 25 who joined us last year were impressed with how large our medical staff is, how many specialties there are, and how many family medicine physicians we have. They liked the culture, which were all



Bothwell Regional Hospital is gaining ground financially, seeing a successful recruitment of new doctors and an overhaul of its emergency department. PHOTO BY FAITH BEMISS | DEMOCRAT

key recruitments. "(Dallo) was looking for a community like this and realized one existed in Sedalia."

The hospital purchased the building owned by Dr. Elmer Van Dyke, and Dallo and neurologist Dr. Jonathan Beary moved into it. The building is now called Bothwell Specialty Services, at 3131 Brianna Blvd.

Two of Bothwell's internal medicine doc-

tors, Kenneth Azan and William Woolery, retired recently. Wightman said internal medicine doctors are difficult to find.

"We were very happy to find Dr. (Michael) Yuhas, who is at the end of his career ... and he wanted a clinic-based practice," Wightman said. "We are currently in discussions with four more physicians in family medicine and OB. We have recruitment needs

because of retirements in the future in orthopedics at some point. And in three or so years in general surgery, so we're always recruiting."

Bothwell is also in talks with Dr. Logan Fluty, 27, who was in the Medical Explorer Program and wants to return home to Sedalia as an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) doctor.

"He has signed and is coming back," Wightman said. "But he has three more years of residency in ENT. So, that will be great."

She added the Bothwell-University of Missouri Rural Family Medicine Residency Program is advancing well.

"This Family Medicine Residency Program continues to be the highlight since we started it," Wightman said. "This is the first year that we are completely full."

Two residents are in each class, and the first two will graduate in June. Wightman said doctors Levi Harris and Brittany Pendergraft have set a "high bar" in the program. The three-year program is the only one of its kind in Missouri.

"We provided an experience that made our two residents competitive enough to be accepted into a Fellowship, which is a testament to the quality and breadth of the education they receive here," Wightman said.

**Bothwell's emergency department reorganized**

Wightman said that the hospital's focus this last year has been on the emergency department.

"We are not blind to the issues that we've had in our emergency department, in terms of wait times, and people that have a serious, urgent medical need, who have been asked to wait in the waiting room," Wightman said. "That went to the top of the list. Patient safety is our sole focus. "And the emergency department needed immediate action."

To correct the issues, the hospital brought in new leadership and is hiring new physicians.

They are also increasing the number of ED-boarded physicians.

"I'll say the biggest improvement has been the new triage system," Wightman said. "It's called Provider in Triage or PIT, which means we've placed a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant in a new physical area of the emergency department."

The medical team in the triage area quickly performs a medical screening exam to identify the seriousness of the patient's medical needs. In the emergency department, R.N.s also periodically go out to check on and evaluate patients in the waiting room.

Wightman said that before the improvements, 8 to 10% of the people who came to the ER left before being seen. Since the implementation of the PIT system, this has dropped to 1%. The state average in Missouri is 3%.

"I'm hoping people will have an open mind and be open to trying us again," Wightman said. "We have failed our patients in some ways in our emergency room — and we realize that."

She added the Bothwell ED sees 24,000 patients a year. There should be one bed for 1,000 visits.

"We really should have 24 beds, and we have 17," Wightman said.

**Financial recovery is stable**

A third aspect of improvement at Bothwell is its financial recovery over the last few years.

"We continue to work our way out of a major hole left behind by COVID," Wightman said "We made a conscious decision during the height of COVID that we would fully staff our ICU. We have nine beds, which meant that we had a lot of traveling nurses."

During COVID-19 the rate for an ICU nurse was \$200 to \$250 an hour. The nurse didn't receive all of that amount; the agency that sent them received a portion. The cost for Bothwell was several million dollars.

"I thought, if we're

going to go down, we're going to go down providing care to our community," Wightman said.

During COVID-19 the hospital cared for local patients and people from Springfield and Kansas City.

Wightman added that Bothwell currently has positive financials, but they did have to dig the hospital out of a "huge hole."

"The biggest change in our financial picture was qualifying the Federal 340B Drug Pricing Program," Wightman said. "In essence, it allows you to purchase outpatient drugs at a discounted rate. The largest expenditures were for our cancer patients, our cancer clinic. We are on track this year to save \$8 million in our purchase of outpatient drugs."

She added that Bothwell is spending \$8 million less on medications this year than it did the previous year, which is a savings of \$150,000 a week.

"There is no way that we could have reduced expenses to that extent without closing the cancer center," Wightman said. "Or closing a department. There's no way you can take out that much expense. You must qualify for this program every year. And it's based on the percentage of Medicaid and self-pay patients that you provide care to."

The hospital doesn't receive the medication for free but for a 25% discount.

"The hospitals are not the ones making money in healthcare," Wightman said. "It's the pharmacy benefit managers and the pharmaceutical companies. We are certainly committed to being here another 94 years. So that's why it's very important that we continue to keep our eye on the ball of being financially solvent, and we are also committed to remaining independent and under local leadership."

Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at faithb@sedaliademocrat.com.

**Show Me Overhead Door**  
WE OPEN DOORS

**Garage Doors • Operators  
Parts • Service**  
**660-975-9900**  
showmeohd@gmail.com  
www.showmeohd.com • Knob Noster, MO.

# Sedalia Police Department

## continues to grow through technology

By Chris Howell  
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

A chunk of the Sedalia Police Department's progress for 2024 surrounded technology advancement.

"We definitely made a made a lot of advances on the technology side of some of the things we've been doing," SPD Chief David Woolery said. "Which have really come into play and helped our productivity and effectiveness."

But with so many helpful crime-fighting gadgets available, Woolery said they are only tools to use while practicing the fundamentals of good police work.

"The basic principles still apply on investigative procedures and things like that,"

Woolery said. "But as the world gets more advanced and technology gets more advanced it's definitely good to try and stay on the cutting edge."

Innovative ideas like using drones as first responders could happen in the next few years. Police departments and fire departments can both quickly deploy inexpensive drones to quickly respond to emergencies.

"It looks like a very viable program, especially for the startup cost," Woolery said. "Especially in relation to the amount of time we can have eyes on that scene and know what's going on, which helps through the entire investigation."

A promising bit of software that accompanies the drones

as first responders is called Dispatch 911.

"It's a program where we can hear 911 calls as they come in," Woolery said. "As a communications officer is taking that 911 call, officers can hear that and if it's something that a drone needs to respond to, before that call is even dispatched our pilots can have drones en route."

Dispatch 911 software can be loaded on patrol car computers as well, and soon police cars may be racing to emergencies much more quickly.

"If I'm four blocks from where that emergency is happening, I can theoretically be on scene before that call even gets dispatched," Woolery said. "A lot of cooperation with the Pettis County Joint Communication Center to get that into place, but a lot of advantages and some excellent potential."

In-service training occurs twice a year and the spring session will begin soon.

"The City of Sedalia definitely invests in our training and our training unit," Woolery said. "We have officers in Iowa at training right now and we go all over to bring back the best training we can for the folks here."

SPD instituted license plate readers last year which are paying huge dividends on criminal investigations, and in one case helped save a wayward old man from Indiana who had gotten way off track.

"He was driving home, but he had dementia and he ended up in Sedalia, it took 12 hours to make that trip," Woolery said. "There was a silver alert on his vehicle, our license plate readers picked that up and the officers were able to intercept



Amy Woolery pinned the chief's badge on her husband David Apr. 1, 2025. Since then the department has been delving further into technology-assisted police work. PHOTOS BY CHRIS HOWELL | SEDALIA DEMOCRAT



A proposed plan to house drones atop Sedalia fire stations has been proposed in a joint venture with SPD and SFD. The Drones as First Responders program (DFR) is currently being used in Chula Vista, California with great success. SPD Drone Unit pilots Cmdr. Mike Elwood and Detective Nick Camirand display an SPD drone Dec. 4, 2024.

him, get him stopped, bring him down to the station and basically keep him with us until his family could drive from Indiana to get him."

License plate readers in another state helped apprehend suspects in a recent Sedalia ATM theft and Woolery has high hopes for the surveillance system.

When former Police Chief Matt Wirt took a job as Assistant City Administrator, Wool-

ery was in line for a promotion to Chief. On April 1, 2024, Woolery's wife Amy pinned the Sedalia Police Chief's badge to his chest.

"I was kind of the number two guy before," Woolery said, "becoming the number one guy, I knew there was a difference, but it's hard to realize the scope of that difference until you're in the chief's seat."

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.



# Sumner Insurance

## A Full-Service Independent Agency

  
 Caleb Sumner

  
 Casey Sumner

  
Sarah Albin

  
Michael Bauer

  
Samuel Beaher

  
Brenda Bottcher

  
Emily Burgoon

  
Debbie Cormican

  
Elaine Day

  
Wilma Hicks

  
Jon Hill

  
Laramey Johnson

  
Joan Johnston

  
Drew Lusk

  
Luke Rehmer

  
Hannah Schuck

  
Madeline Sumner

  
Matthew Sumner

  
Diana Surface

  
Kim Tagtmeyer

  
Scott Venable

  
Katie Vollmer



Voted Sedalia's Leading Insurance Agency & Agent  
Multiple Years Strong: 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021



Trusted Choice

INDEPENDENT INSURANCE AGENTS

FREE TO DO WHATS RIGHT FOR YOU:™

(660) 827-4598

- Annuities, IRAs, & Rollovers
- ATV/UTV/RV/Boat/Cycle
- Business & Commercial
- Health & Life Insurance
- Auto, Home, Farm, & Renters
- Medicare Plans & Products
- Notary Services
- Retirement Solutions
- Social Security Planning
- Umbrella Policies

Main Office: 2300 W. Broadway Blvd, Sedalia  
Satellite Office: 120 S. Maple St, Cole Camp

www.sumnerinsurance.com

& Much More

Always Free Quotes!

# Sedalia Fire Department

## elevates resources in 2024

By Chris Howell  
chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

The Sedalia Fire Department provided public education while also upgrading to better serve the community in 2024.

“Last year was a big year for us,” SFD Chief Matt Irwin said. “We ran just under 2,900 calls which is the most that we’ve run since we’ve counted calls. 58 of those calls were house fires, those were working fires and weren’t necessarily completely burnt down.”

Programs to help residents be alerted to small fires with free smoke detectors have been popular.

SFD educational programs are also teaching local students how to survive house fires.

“We’re hoping to lower that number and we’re ramping up our smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector program,” Irwin said. “All fires don’t start off big so we’re hoping to be able to get people notified, have smaller fires and help us out, so we’re not fighting a lot of big house fires.”

Insurance premiums in Sedalia may be lower soon due to dedicated work by SFD to reduce response times.

“The fire department received its ISO Class 2 certification last year which was huge for us,” Irwin said. “We’ve been working on that for several years with our training and pre-plans. It was a very big accomplishment for us and we’re hoping to build off that and continue with our pre-planning, inspections, water flowing and all those things.”

Squad trucks are new for the department and SFD now has two of the customized four-person vehicles.

Squads save wear and tear on the big fire trucks and now respond to most of Sedalia’s medical calls.

“We got our first squad last year to start running medical calls,” Irwin said. “That squad is in service, we just got our second squad last week and they’re putting the equipment on it as we speak to try to get that in service. Now we’ll be able to put more people out flushing hydrants, we’ll be able to do more in a day than we have been, so that’s one of the initiatives that we’re trying to push.”

The new squads have allowed for the hiring of six new employees, bringing the total number of fire firefighters and administration staff to 49.



Sedalia Fire engineers Cody Reynolds and Matt Kowalski work at readying SFD’s second squad truck that arrived in 2024. The squad trucks respond to medical calls and auto accidents and save wear and tear on the larger fire trucks. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

The additions increase from the previous 39 firefighters assigned to fire suppression to 45.

“We’re going to go to 15 people per shift working a 12 minimum staffing,” Irwin said. “So, we’re very excited about that. The more firefighters we have on scene the easier it is to fight fire, the easier it is to protect ourselves, the easier it is to do searches, Having two additional people on staff to go to those fires is tremendous, it’s a game-changer.”

One of the biggest initiatives brought to Sedalia City Council this year was the proposed implementation of the Opticon system.

“Opticon is basically a transmitter we put on all of our staff vehicles, our fire engines and the Police Department will have them on all their squad vehicles,” Irwin said. “What it does is if we’re responding with lights and sirens anywhere it preempts the traffic lights, it gives us a green light and everybody else a red light.”

That clears the direction of traffic flow in the intersection and allows emergency

“

*The more firefighters we have on scene the easier it is to fight fire, the easier it is to protect ourselves, the easier it is to do searches...*”

— Matt Irwin  
Sedalia Fire Department Chief

vehicles to go through without having to push vehicles against the red light.

“It’s very dangerous for us, it’s very dangerous for the general public to try to enter an intersection against a red light and somebody else has a green light,” Irwin said. “So it will help us to get across town and get through the city rather easily and safely.”

The Opticon system is costly, and Irwin hopes the line item is approved in the FY2025 budget.

and all of that done for the year,” Irwin said.

Frigid temperatures make firefighting miserable, meaning testing and training suffer in the winter.

“The guys are really excited and can’t wait for it to warm up,” Irwin said. “Nobody likes cold weather you can’t go out and flow water. The engines have water on them, so you don’t want to send them out to businesses and just let them sit outside so we wait for the warmer months to do that.”

Plans are in place for facility improvements. The Central Fire Station on Hancock Avenue is outdated, too small and needs to be replaced.

“We have plans in place, and we’ve contracted an architect,” Irwin said. “We’ve got building plans and site layouts and this week and we’re going through construction manager portfolios to pick a construction manager to build that fire station.”

Irwin said groundbreaking for the new fire station could begin within months.

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.

YOUR HOME. YOUR DREAMS.  
YOUR BANK.

YOUR SEDALIA  
COMMUNITY BANK!

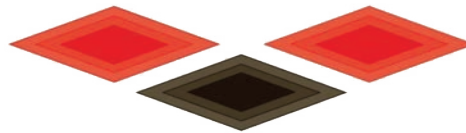


1601 S. Limit Ave.  
SEDALIA  
660-827-5520

Warrenton | Wentzville | Foristell | Columbia | Hermann | Smithton  
WWW.THEMISSOURIBANK.COM  
Member FDIC | Equal Housing Lender

Providing high quality concrete to  
Missouri for more than 60 years.

FCS  
FISCHER CONCRETE SERVICES



(660) 826-3122  
(800) 352-1517

2300 Clinton Road • Sedalia

# Progress

## JAIL

From Page C1

The first year of an intergovernmental agreement with the U.S. Marshals is complete and around 100 federal detainees are now being housed at the jail.

“With the capital improvements in the jail we’ve received a grant from DHS last year,” Anders said. “We had to get a lot of new equipment in the jail; in the kitchen, new laundry machines and those are huge. We were running 20+ year old equipment and it was time for it to be replaced.”

The laundry equipment was purchased through a grant from the Department of Homeland Security. There is also new equipment in the kitchen, including a suitable oven for warming inmate meals.

“We’ve continued to upgrade our cameras to get rid of any blind spots anywhere in that jail,” Anders said. “We do make it a point not to rely on cameras as a means to check on the welfare of the detainees, so we have been using the new system that did come around last year called Cadmus.”

The system recognizes inmates when it sees them and can make sure an inmate is okay when performing jail checks, which happen multiple

times per day.

“We have added more beds to the jail,” Anders said. “We were reaching maximum capacity in the jail, previously it was a 220-bed facility, and we were hovering just a little under 200.”

Adding a third bunk in the cells will add around 100 more beds and Anders said that’s work that will start saving Pettis County money immediately.

“That’s still in progress, there’s a few more pods to do,” Anders said. “But that’s something that will improve our ability to serve and detain without having to pay out-of-county housing for other detainees while it does generate revenue it saves money.”

Anders has upgraded his leadership training by now sending Sheriff’s Office supervisors to advanced FBI-led supervisory training.

“It’s not conjoined with the FBI, but it started out with the FBI having their Academy,” Anders said. “They broke it down for law enforcement agents with the supervisors, so they go through a week-long course through them. It’s a tier program of 1-2 and 3, we started sending our supervisors through that now myself when my Lieutenant had completed the trilogy and the major also.”

*Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.*

## GROWTH

From Page C1

Our area has a wide base of companies making products sold across the world, making Pettis County unique in Missouri.

“You’re not going to find a community that has the diversity of products that are made here,” Craig said. “We should all be very proud of that. Prysmian Group announced their \$45.5 million expansion. They chose to expand here in Sedalia and Pettis County. 115,000 square feet new construction is currently complete, and they are commissioning their new equipment as we speak and have added 60 new jobs and retained 215 jobs.”

City Electric Supply launched a new regional facility on Main Street in Sedalia’s downtown

with a \$1.5 million capital investment that will add 10 new jobs.

“Which I think is fantastic,” Craig said. “We helped them host their open house in August of 2024.”

Impact Signs had the Grand Opening of their new headquarters in on the west side of Sedalia Sept. 2024 with 60,000 square feet of expanded space, over 5.5 acres in the industrial park and \$10 million capital investment.

“Ditzfeld Transfer built their new headquarter facility on north Oak Grove Lane,” Craig said. “\$1.1 million capital investment in their new building and their new lay-down yard. Two new jobs and 60 retained jobs.”

Simcoat Inc. provides epoxy coating solutions to the rebar manufactured at nearby Nucor.

“That has that ripple effect from Nucor,” Craig said. “They have completed construction on

their 67,000-square foot building, added 35 new jobs, an \$18 million capital investment and they are currently ramping up and hiring so if anybody is looking for a fantastic high-paying job, they have some.”

Economic Development makes sure they are taking care of the existing businesses, and every year hosts the Manufacturer’s Milestone banquet just to say thanks and celebrate milestones 5 years to 70 years in business.

“Mid-States Specialty Eggs - 15 years, Impact Signs - 25 years, Printlynx - 40 years, Gardner Denver - 45 years, WireCo, also 45 years, Pepsi 85 years, and Heartland 105 years,” Craig said. “Those existing businesses are keeping to the grind, creating jobs and creating capital investment.”

*Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.*



Interim city manager Matt Wirt speaks at the podium during a budget planning session Saturday, Jan. 11. Commander Adam Hendrick and SPD chief David Woolery were ready to answer council questions regarding their FY2025 budget requests. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT



# SEPTAGON CONSTRUCTION

DESIGN-BUILD

ROOFING SERVICES

GENERAL CONTRACTING

MAINTENANCE SERVICES

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



septagon.com



660.827.5955

# 2025 Progress EDITION

1868

Proudly serving Sedalia and surrounding communities for 157 years!

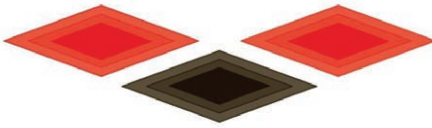
## SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

111 W. Fourth Street • 660-826-1000  
SedaliaDemocrat.com

1955

## FCS

FISCHER CONCRETE SERVICES



Since 1955

2300 Clinton Road  
Sedalia, MO 65301  
Office: (660) 826-3122  
(800) 352-1517

1998

**Local TREE Service**  
Beauty • Safety • Accessibility

**FREE Estimates**

**M-C TREE**  
Licensed & Insured  
660-473-4650

**10% OFF**  
Military & Seniors



1999



## M&R MONUMENT CO.

ESTABLISHED IN 1999

At M&R Monument, we sell, design & install memorials of all types with Mike's personal guarantee that you will get the highest quality workmanship at reasonable prices.

Monuments • Markers • Mausoleums  
**660-826-7700**

3/4 Mile West of Hwy. 65 on B Hwy. • Green Ridge Road • Sedalia  
www.mandmonument.com

1880

## McLaughlin

FUNERAL CHAPEL

Since 1880

660.826.8000

519 South Ohio, Downtown Sedalia

www.mclaughlinfuneralchapel.com

1957

## A & B Auto Trim Inc.

Antiques, Classics, Trucks, Boats, Aircraft, Autos

660-826-1957

1500 S. Ohio Sedalia, MO 65301



Mike



Paul Jr.



Family owned and operated since 1957

2005

**RE/MAX**  
of Sedalia

660-287-6167  
660-826-9911

**Billie Barnes**

1435 Thompson Blvd • www.BillieBarnes.com



1918

## HECKART Funeral Home

660-826-1750  
903 S. Ohio Ave. • Sedalia, MO 65301



1961

**PREUITT INSURANCE**  
YOUR SHIELD AGAINST UNCERTAINTY  
622 South Ohio  
In Historic Downtown Sedalia  
660-826-6262 | PREUITT-INS.COM



HOME • AUTO • RECREATIONAL • COMMERCIAL

FARM • LIFE • HEALTH • MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS

2008

**ADVANCED FENCE AND RAIL LLC**  
660-596-1366

IRON • VINYL • WOOD  
CHAIN LINK  
CUSTOM DECKS • STAINING  
CUSTOM HANDRAILING

"I can do all things thru Christ who strengthens me." Phil 4:13

1940

## SEPTAGON CONSTRUCTION

- DESIGN-BUILD
- ROOFING SERVICES
- GENERAL CONTRACTING
- MAINTENANCE SERVICES
- CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



septagon.com 660.827.5955

1975



JOHNNY BAKER  
OWNER  
660-287-5380



BROCK SIMON  
SALES MANAGER/FINANCE  
MANAGER  
660-619-3134

2120 EAST BROADWAY  
SEDALIA, MO 65301

WWW.BAKERSCARCORRALINC.COM

2014

**Wilson Diesel**

Diesel Performance & Repair

Power Stroke  
Cummins  
Duramax

1415 W 32nd St. Sedalia, MO 65301 • Monday - Friday 8am-5pm



1946

## STATE FAIR SPIRITS

FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1946



BEER • WINE • LIQUOR  
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

1419 S. LIMIT AVE. • SEDALIA  
660.826.1232

1977

Your 24/7 Towing Service  
**Don's Truck Towing & Truck Wash, Inc.**



With two locations to serve you. We can handle it!  
4735 S. Limit Ave., Sedalia, MO      27220, 116th Trl., Marshall, MO  
GPS: N 38.669161      GPS: N 38.955489  
W -93.249686      W -93.176629

www.donstrucktowing.com (660) 827-2970

2020

**J&T GUTTERING**  
660-620-9708

SERVING CENTRAL MISSOURI  
SEAMLESS GUTTERING  
20 COLORS AVAILABLE  
LEAF GUARD • REPAIRS  
QUALITY WORK  
GUARANTEED

JON MILLER  
KNOB NOSTER, MO  
THOMAS MILLER

Established 2020



*A year of community progression!  
Building a community together!*

# SEDALIA DEMOCRAT

# Progress

RECREATION. ENTERTAINMENT. STATE.

# 2025

## Missouri State Fair on track with arena, other projects

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney  
faithhb@sedaliademocrat.com

The Missouri State Fair is moving along with several projects this year, including the construction of the Governor Michael L. Parson Arena.

MSF Director Jason Moore said in February that the arena project is on track and should be completed in the spring of 2026. The enclosed arena will be 150,00 square feet and contain 8,000 fixed seats with a floor size of 150 by 275 feet.

“Even with some of the weather we’ve had over the past couple of months, we were far enough ahead of schedule when the weather hit that we’re still right on track,” Moore said. “I believe a portion of the steel package is set to arrive sometime in February. We’ll start seeing some steel go up in the air pretty quick. There are no big changes on that. We’re just excited to see it progress and looking forward to where it’s taking us in the future.”

Moore said the arena’s size will allow the MSF to host larger livestock, equine and rodeo events.

“It’s fully climatized; we’ll be able to use it year around,” Moore said. “Which is certainly a plus.”

He added that the MSF thought it only fitting to name the arena after former Governor Mike Parson because “he led the charge” in getting the arena project through state legislation through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds.

Besides the arena’s construction, several other significant projects are underway for the Fairgrounds.

“One of them internally that we’re super excited about that the public may not notice is a new maintenance shop,” Moore said. “Our maintenance facilities have been spread out into six different departments in four to five different buildings. It’s going



Then-Governor Mike Parson, then-Lietenant Governor Mike Kehoe and others broke ground on the newly named Governor Michael L. Parson Arena on Aug. 15, 2024, at the Missouri State Fairgrounds. The arena is slated to open in 2026. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

to give us the opportunity to get all departments in one building, and free up some space in the body of the grounds. Hopefully, we can turn it into some entertainment and expanded camping. It gives us the opportunity and versatility moving forward to get these one-hundred-year-old buildings torn down and get these guys into a nice shop.”

He added that the fairgrounds are also revamping the grandstand area.

“We’ve got a restroom remodel going on along with electrical upgrades,” Moore said. “Both lighting in the grandstand itself, and probably later this fall, we’ll start the second phase, which will upgrade the power at the grandstand stage.”

See FAIR, Page D7



Progress on the Michael L. Parson Arena project on the Missouri State Fairgrounds is on track, with steel for the building to be delivered in February. The arena is slated to open in 2026. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE MISSOURI STATE FAIRGROUNDS

## New bowling alley to open in 2026

By Jack Denebeim  
jackd@sedaliademocrat.com

The path to Sedalia’s new bowling alley is well in the works.

Memory Lanes, a project donated to the city by Sue Heckart but will be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department, is expected to be ready for play in the fall of 2026 and will be located on East Broadway along with the new aquatic facility.

The bowling alley is named after Heckart’s late parents, Del and Stella.

Parks and Rec Director Amy Epple said the Department will be pushing hard on the bowling alley project as soon as the updates at Liberty Park Stadium are complete.

“I was hoping that stadium project would be done so we could start on the bowling alley,” Epple said. “But that’ll be the next thing that we’re really pushing hard on. We look to see the bowling alley open in the fall of 2026, so that’ll bring a whole different sport to Sedalia that’s been missing for a long time.”

Epple said the Parks and Rec



Sue Heckart, left, and Sedalia Parks and Recreation Director Amy Epple announce a new bowling center named Memory Lanes to be built on the east side of Sedalia in a March 18, 2025, announcement at the Heckart Community Center. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

Department will share some schematic designs for the facility at its next board meeting in March.

“We’re excited for that,” Epple

said. “We’re excited to show the public what it’s going to look like on the outside and on the inside and how it’s all working together

with the new aquatic facility.”

The bowling alley is expected to have 16 lanes.

Epple said the bowling alley will

also feature an esports room to give the Department’s esports program a home.

See BOWLING, Page D7

# Sedalia Convention & Visitor's Bureau

## sees much growth in tourism

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney

faithb@sedaliademocrat.com

Over the last year of 2024, Sedalia and Pettis County's tourism impact has grown through various events and festivals.

Carolyn Crooker, the executive director of the Sedalia Convention & Visitor's Bureau, said 2024 was good for tourism in Pettis County. She added that the October 2024 International Airstream Rally, hosted on the Missouri State Fairgrounds, was a huge success. The last time the Airstream Rally took place in Sedalia was 2015.

"This event helped increase revenue of over 2.5 million dollars," Crookes said. "Gas stations in the month of October showed an increase of \$158,000. With over 1,300 Airstream rigs driving in and out it is a no-brainer to figure fuel would be up, but the hotels also reported an increase of \$113,000.

"Therefore, the Rally drew more than people sleeping on the campgrounds," she continued. "Nor did they cook all their meals in their home on wheels as the full-service restaurants reported sales up \$138,000 this October. The Tourism tax codes were up 24% in October 2024 compared to October 2023."

Crooker added that the Airstream Rally usually doesn't return to a place twice, but it decided to come back to Sedalia because of the accommodations at the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

"Our Fairgrounds has so many RV hookups that it makes it ideal," Crookes said. "And plus, all of the amenities that they have there with the buildings where they can have their meetings. It makes almost like a little city; they can have their own little city."

She also explained that the Department of Revenue catalogs revenue with 158 different NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes. Tourism uses 45 of these codes, but not all communities use all 45 codes; Pettis County uses 16.

"The admission charges and entry fees to the State Fair are exempt from state sales tax so those sales won't show up in Pettis County NAICS," she



In October 2024, 2,500 people were expected in Sedalia during the Airstream Club International Rally along with around 1,300 Airstream motorhomes and trailers — making it the biggest Airstream Rally in over 15 years. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

noted.

Pettis County's most significant month of sales was August 2024.

"So, we are getting sales tax on things other than lodging, food, or admission to the fair," Crooker said. "For the state as a whole, June is the biggest month of the year in terms of NAICS sales; however, for us in Sedalia, it's up in August by \$257,357.72 from the next highest month, which is December with Christmas shopping."

"This reflects the Fair benefits Sedalia by thousands of dollars," she continued. "In addition, the breakout for Sedalia's transient guest tax reports 156% higher in August than the next highest month (June)."

Crooker added being able to see the impact of different events is important.

"You can only track that when they're here," she noted.

The CVB is now working with the Red Power Round-Up, which will be held at the Missouri State Fairgrounds from June 25-28.

"That is the International Harvester Collector's Worldwide (Rally)," Crookes said. "And

between 15,000 to 25,000 people are expected in Sedalia during that period. I remember when they were here last. I was out there with my information table, and a man and his son came. The son was about 12 years old."

Crooker said they told her they had flown into Kansas City from Colorado and then took the Amtrak to Sedalia to visit the Red Power Round-Up.

"I remember he was so excited," Crookes said of the father. "He wanted his son to come and see a tractor like his grandfather had. So, they traveled from Colorado to Sedalia just to come to that so he could see that antique tractor. It is a big deal."

The Sedalia Area Chamber of Commerce is also sponsoring the 2025 Goat Expo, which will take place May 28-31 at the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

"The first time they had it was last year," Crooker said.

She added the Expo in 2024 brought in a lot of people.

"They showed an increase in the hotels, and I'm sure the restaurants and everything else," Crooker said.

Sedalia will also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Pettis County Courthouse this year on Saturday, May 10.

"They are making plans and will have a celebration," Crooker said. "They (the anniversary committee) want to do fireworks to synchronized music."

"And they will have free hot dogs on the lawn of the courthouse," she added. "There will be tours, and the commissioners will give talks."

She added the anniversary committee is extending invitations to various groups on the Fairgrounds to come downtown and celebrate with everyone on May 10. During that weekend, on the Fairgrounds there will be a horse show, dog show and a rabbit show all taking place.

"They want to make

sure they are welcome to come down," Crooker noted.

The annual Big BAM (Bike Across Missouri) Cyclists will return in Sedalia in June and October.

"Part of them, tent camp in our beautiful Liberty Park," Crooker noted. "But others of them stay in hotels."

"The Hotel Bothell is their host hotel," Crookes said. "They have their live music party at Hotel Bothell. We also provide shuttles downtown so that they can get to the hotel. And they eat downtown."

Crooker noted the annual Scott Joplin International Ragtime Festival will return in May. She added the 2024 Festival was the largest since it began in 1974.

"The Scott Joplin Festival belongs to Sedalia," Crooker said. "The people that come to that absolutely love it here. Last year, it was the biggest that it's ever been. Of course, it was an anniversary year."

Crooker said Shelley Rounds, who works for the CVB and is the manager for the Scott Joplin Festival, went to the West Coast to promote the event. Crooker added that the festival is beginning to attract a younger crowd.

"Last year I saw more younger performers," Crookes said. "The people who do come to that, it is like a reunion — they just love it they love Sedalia."

The Sedalia Area Chamber Balloon Festival will not be held in 2025, but will return in 2026.

Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at [faithb@sedaliademocrat.com](mailto:faithb@sedaliademocrat.com).



On May 30, 2024, Miss Maybell and Charlie Judkins entertain in the Stark Tent during the first full day of the Scott Joplin International Ragtime Festival. The festival will return this year from May 28-31. FILE PHOTO BY FAITH BEMISS-MCKINNEY | DEMOCRAT



In 2022, Liberty Park waived tent-camping restrictions for the Big BAM cyclists. Dozens of tents shone in the moonlight just prior to a soaking rain. BAM will return to Sedalia this year in June and October. FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF ELTON BUTLER

# Liberty Park Stadium

## updates experiencing delays

By Jack Denebeim  
jackd@sedaliademocrat.com

**B**aseball and snow just don't mix. Construction for the updates at Liberty Park Stadium have stalled due to inclement weather in recent weeks, causing the stadium's reopening to be pushed back from March 1 to at least mid-March.

"It's killing us," Parks and Recreation Director Amy Epple said Tuesday, Feb. 18. "I hate to say it, but it is. It's hurting us a lot."

The weather delays come after the project was already delayed in the late fall when laying down the field's new turf was paused because a soil study found the outfield's soil was too compact.

The results of the soil study also took a long time to be relayed back to the Parks Department.

"That really put us behind in late October and then in November and December," Epple said. "Getting all that information back took longer than we were expecting and hoping for, and once we got the ball rolling again, the weather hit us. There's nothing we can do to control that. So, we are just hoping that we get some warmer, sunnier days."

Nevertheless, Epple said she estimates the updates are about 50-55% complete with the next major portion being the new turf.

"There's a lot of things we can't do until the turf is done," Epple said. "That's a huge piece of it, and really, once that gets down, two or three weeks and everything else will be completed. The fence is another big part of it."

Epple said the updates inside the stadium are almost totally finished, such as renovations to the stadium's bathrooms, plumbing and heating. A new roof and new gutters have



Construction for the updates at Liberty Park Stadium have paused due to winter weather. PHOTO BY JACK DENEBEIM | DEMOCRAT

been installed as well.

The new seating will be installed soon, too. Once that part is complete, Epple said the Parks Department will be doing a campaign where people can purchase a seat and dedicate it in memory of a loved one.

The parking lot will not be paved until after the summer.

"I want to stress that these are updates," Epple said. "They are not going to take away from the character of the facility or anything like that."

In total, the project costs about

\$2.7 million with \$1.3 million of it being paid through a grant from the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Local Asset Development Grant Program. The grant matched the city's funds for the project.

Epple said she thinks all the updates will allow baseball at Liberty Park Stadium to be played year-round, weather depending.

"More games, more showcases, more tournaments and everything else we can be doing," Epple said.

State Fair Community College baseball, which plays its home

games at Liberty Park Stadium, began its home schedule on Sunday, Feb. 23. However, due to the updates, the Roadrunners will play their home games at the new baseball facility on the campus of Smith-Cotton High School until the project is complete.

Epple said the hope is for State Fair to play games at Liberty Park Stadium starting in mid-March. Some Kaysinger Conference teams will play games at Liberty Park Stadium this spring as well.

Epple said it's been rewarding for her to play a part in the stadium's makeover.

um's makeover.

"Baseball is the sport that I love," Epple said. "When I applied for this position 17 years ago, I checked out the facility and my dad would tell me that he played there when he was in junior college and just give me all these stories. It's really a jewel to the community. I mean, there's no place like it, and for us to be making improvements and updates so players are still playing there in 50 years, it's nice and rewarding to be a piece of that."

Sports editor Jack Denebeim can be reached at 660-530-0142.



Travelers infielder Josh Hagle, now a freshman at State Fair Community College, slides into home during the first game of the doubleheader against Fike Post 499 Wednesday, June 26, at Liberty Park Stadium. Hagle scored two runs across both games. FILE PHOTOS BY JACK DENEBEIM | DEMOCRAT



Bombers shortstop Sam Paule awaits a pitch during the game against the St. Joseph Mustangs at Liberty Park Stadium Tuesday, June 18.



Nate Bartlett pitches the ball during the Sedalia Bombers' home opener against Jefferson City on May 30, 2024 at Liberty Park Stadium. Bartlett pitched five hitless innings and struck out seven batters.



# PREUITT

INSURANCE

YOUR SHIELD AGAINST UNCERTAINTY

Since 1961

660-826-6262 | PREUITT-INS.COM

622 South Ohio, P.O. Box 188 Sedalia, MO

In Historic Downtown Sedalia

HOME • AUTO • RECREATIONAL • COMMERCIAL • LIFE • HEALTH • MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT



# Smith-Cotton athletic complex

## expansion nearing completion

By Jack Denebeim  
jackd@sedaliademocrat.com

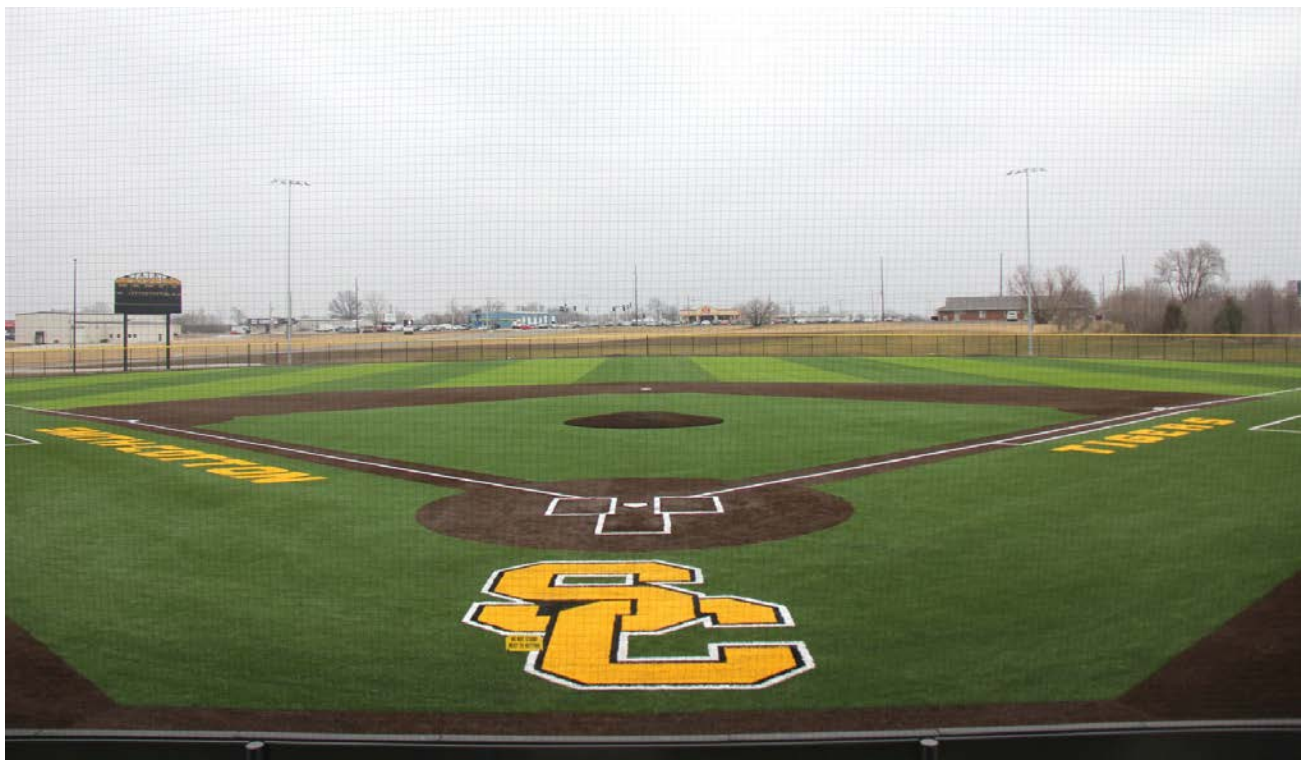
The dream that started more than a decade ago is nearing its fruition.

Aside from a few things to button up, the Jennie Jaynes Activities Complex expansion at Smith-Cotton High School is close to completion, bringing a new baseball facility, a new softball facility, a new soccer facility, new tennis courts and new football practice fields to the school.

"I'd say we are about 97%, 98% [complete]," Sedalia 200 Superintendent Todd Fraley said Tuesday, Feb. 18. "We're ecstatic about it. I think all our coaches, players and parents, you know, I've not heard anything but positives. I'm sure there are some naysayers out there in the woods, but I think for the most part people understand that this really enhances our school system and our community."

Fraley said the only remaining projects involve adding fencing in between the football practice fields and Tiger Stadium, and making some adjustments to the bleachers.

Snow storms and cold weather have slowed any construction down in recent weeks, but Fraley said once the area thaws



The new baseball field as part of the Jennie Jaynes Activities Complex expansion at Smith-Cotton High School. PHOTOS BY JACK DENEBEIM | DEMOCRAT

out it should only be a matter of days for the expansion to be totally complete.

The expansion also dealt with rain delays over the summer that caused construction to miss about 35 days.

"Byrne & Jones, they were able to play catch up pretty quick," Fraley said of the expansion's construction firm. "They would pull in additional crews and resources to speed up the project and get us back on schedule...It's been everything. We've been tickled to death to have Byrne & Jones and how they've handled this project. Their owners, their site foreman, they all real-



Freshman Bella Blackaby hits a home run during the first game at Smith-Cotton High School's new softball facility on Sept. 20.

ly take ownership of a project and that company has the ideals of we're not going to make something unless we

can put our names on it and be proud to show it off...Now, Smith-Cotton High School has one of the best complexes and facilities in the state of Missouri."

The expansion officially broke ground on April 1, 2024 and cost about \$11 million.

The project was funded with the help of voters' approval to turn a temporary tax levy into a permanent tax levy in April 2023. The exten-

sion removed the sunset on the tax levy, which now generates about \$3.5 million per year for the school district.

Along with the new facilities for baseball, softball, soccer and tennis, Tiger Stadium's turf was replaced and jump pits for long jump, triple jump and pole vault were relocated near the new practice field. A new javelin runway was also created.

Marching band will

practice on the new football practice fields as well.

Softball and girls tennis competed in their new facilities this past fall.

Smith-Cotton baseball is scheduled to host the S-C Jamboree on March 19. Girls soccer will host its jamboree on March 15, while boys tennis hosts Knob Noster in a match on March 24.

"It's a matter of pride," Fraley said. "The Parks Department has been a great friend to the school district for many, many years, but having that on campus now, the kids take greater ownership of it. It's like, 'Hey, that's ours.' We're not borrowing it. We are not just using it. This is our home. That instills a sense of pride amongst the participants that's unrivaled from the past."

Fraley said the expansion won't just be a benefit to the school, but also to the community as a whole because it will bring more people to Sedalia.

"We want to attract good folks to Sedalia and to Sedalia 200," Fraley said. "We will be able to host events on site, including youth events and youth tournaments that go beyond the scope of high school and junior high activities. That brings people to town, brings people to our community and helps develop our programs further. It's going to be a while before we see the true impact that is brought, but I think we are very much looking forward to the fact that we've got as good of facilities as anyone around."

Sports editor Jack Denebeim can be reached at 660-530-0142.



Junior Citlalli Nava loads up to hit the ball during the Smith-Cotton Invitational Tournament on the new tennis courts at Smith-Cotton High School on Friday, Sept. 27.



Prairie Land Realty

Giving you nationwide reach, with local expertise!

3202 W 16th St  
Sedalia, MO 65301  
660-851-5456

CELEBRATING  
100  
1925 YEARS 2025  
A CENTURY OF INNOVATION

EBBY NORMAN

pro-velo  
cycle sport

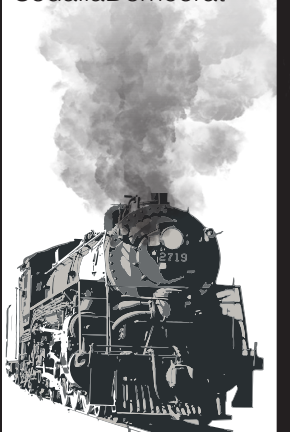


SPECIALIZED

530 E. 5th Street • Sedalia, MO  
660.826.3322 • www.pro-velo.com

Like the Sedalia Democrat on Facebook

facebook.com/SedaliaDemocrat



# Missouri Farm Bureau partners with Mizzou on Center for Rural Energy Security

**A** new University of Missouri research center will tackle the intersection of energy security, food security, and private property rights.

In December, Missouri Farm Bureau (MOFB) announced its support for the Center for Rural Energy Security (CRES) at Mizzou.

The center aims to be a nationally recognized leader on rural energy issues. Researchers at the center will place special focus on the implications that federal and state energy policies have on agriculture, rural communities, and property rights.

“One of the missions of our Foundation is to invest in critical research,” said MOFB President Garrett Hawkins. “At this crossroads we face as a nation, I can think of no better investment than one to address the issue of our time: the intersection of energy security, food security, and property rights.”

To support the effort, MOFB has committed funds from the MOFB Foundation for Agriculture to jump-start the first-of-its-kind center to focus specifically on the impact of energy policies on rural communities.

Productive farm ground is being taken out of production agriculture as more wind and solar projects come online. Energy produced by these structures is primarily sent to urban areas while providing little if any benefit to local residents.

“Federal energy policy is coming at a cost to the rural landscape, small towns, and

local agriculture production,” Hawkins explained, “and, until now, we’ve had nowhere to turn for policy and economic analysis in this space.”

The CRES will be the first university-affiliated energy policy research institute in the country to focus exclusively on energy policy and technology innovation for agriculture, rural communities, and rural economic development.

“The Center for Rural Energy Security is a groundbreaking, interdisciplinary collaboration to better understand and advance the energy needs of rural communities in Missouri and around the country,” University of Missouri President Mun Choi said. “Our world-class experts will work alongside partners statewide to strengthen rural economies and support Missouri’s top economic driver: agriculture. I deeply appreciate President Garrett Hawkins and Missouri Farm Bureau for their visionary leadership of this important initiative.”

At Mizzou, the new center will be a partnership between the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) and the College of Arts and Science.

“I am pleased to be part of this unique partnership, bringing together the experts in rural energy policy from across our great state,” Christopher Daubert, vice chancellor and dean of CAFNR, said. We are at an important moment in determining how the future of energy in our country affects rural communities, and at the University of Missouri we are always looking ahead to challenges facing



Missouri Farm Bureau President Garrett Hawkins shakes hands with University of Missouri President Mun Choi during the 2024 MOFB Annual Meeting on Dec. 9, 2024, at Osage Beach.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MISSOURI FARM BUREAU

our state to see how we can address them head-on.”

“We are proud to partner with the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the Missouri Farm Bureau in using our

collective strengths to support agriculture and rural communities through energy policy,” Cooper Drury, dean of the College of Arts and Science, said. “Energy is a critical issue for communities, so we will

leverage our strengths in policy analysis and our partnership with the Missouri Farm Bureau to help ensure a bright future for Missourians.”

*Release courtesy of the Missouri Farm Bureau.*

## EXPERTS AT ACCESS

When you have good access to health care, you are more likely to receive preventive care and early treatment for health problems. At Bothwell, we’re committed to growing our medical team so you have more health care choices close to home.

Since 2024, we have added these physicians and advanced practice providers (certified nurse midwives, nurse practitioners and physician assistants) to our medical team.



Cancer Care

Dr. Lara Briseño Kenney



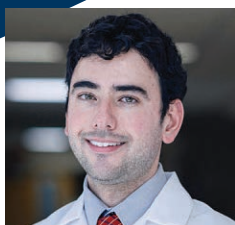
Cancer Care

Dr. Kristen Strasser



Cancer Care

Dr. Michael Trendle



Dermatology\*

Dr. Christopher Dallo



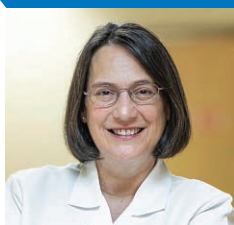
Emergency Care

Jackson Rodgers, PA



Employee Health

Mindy Vesperman, NP



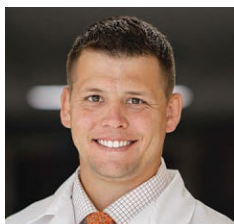
ENT Care

Liz Kessler, NP



Family Medicine

Stacey Dobbs, FNP-BC



Family Medicine with Obstetrics

Dr. Gabriel Dudley  
Resident Physician



Family Medicine

Dr. Kimetha Fairchild



Family and Sports Medicine

Dr. Dalton Lohsandt



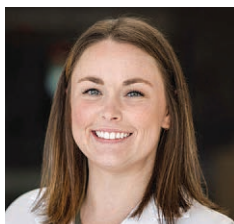
Family Medicine

Kayla Mather, NP



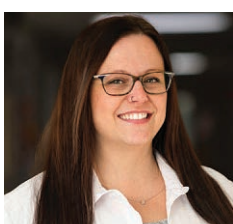
Family Medicine and OMT Care

Dr. Eduard Rasputkov



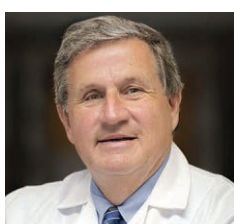
Family Medicine with Obstetrics

Dr. Jamie Spears  
Resident Physician



Hospital Care

La'Chelle Moore, DNP



Internal Medicine

Dr. Michael Yuhas



Walk In Care^ / Employee Wellness

Connie Berglund, NP



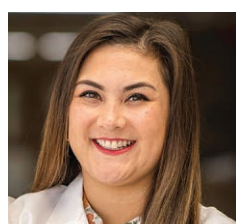
Walk In Care^

April Ream, NP



Women's Health

Peggy Van Dyke, NP



Women's Health and OB/GYN

Cassie Caedo, DNP, CNM



Women's Health and OB/GYN

Dr. Dallas Thompson

**NOT PICTURED**

Emergency Care: Dr. Nathan George  
Hospital Care: Dr. Patricia Cox and Dr. Laura Hoppe  
Walk In Care: Dr. Stephanie Schirding  
Women's Health and OB/GYN: Dr. Donald Peghee, Jr.

From the Emergency Department to the hospital to outpatient clinics, we're on the move for your health.

For appointments, call Centralized Scheduling at 660.829.8888 and learn more at brhc.org.

\*Requires a referral from a primary care provider ^No appointment required for walk-in care

GET WELL. STAY WELL. BOTHWELL.

# DNR offers landowners a guide for stream management

**A** new online resource from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources offers information to landowners on best practices and methods for stream management. Developed in coordination with the Missouri Farm Bureau, "A Landowner's Guide to Stream Management" details strategies for preventing eroding banks, property loss, excessive gravel and other challenges.

"This guide is designed to

empower landowners and give them a greater sense of independence when addressing their streams," said Noah Cadwell of the department's Waters Resources Center. "The guide includes necessary regulatory information and the most effective stream management strategies. It will assist landowners in overcoming some common challenges that come from living by a stream while maintaining the stream's ecosystem."

Cadwell said the depart-

ment developed the guide in response to concerns from farmers and landowners who face growing property loss stemming from past riparian corridor damages and historical land use changes. More than a year in the making, the guide includes information provided by experts from the department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as from other agencies and organizations.

"This guide is designed to clarify the fundamentals of stream regulation for landown-

ers and to explain what options may be available for different situations," Cadwell said. "Our hope is by making this information more accessible and transparent, landowners will feel more comfortable considering projects benefiting their streambanks. This guide also provides information for obtaining technical assistance and financial support for landowners who are considering taking on larger projects."

A Landowner's Guide to Stream Management provides

information on permitting needs and processes but is not intended to be a resource for regulatory guidance. Landowners need to read the applicable permits and consider consulting the proper regulatory agency before beginning stream work.

The new guide is available at [dnr.mo.gov/document-search/landowners-guide-stream-management-pub3085](https://dnr.mo.gov/document-search/landowners-guide-stream-management-pub3085).

Release courtesy of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

## UCM embraces technological advancements in education

By Joe Andrews

joea@warrensburgstarjournal.com

**T**he University of Central Missouri continues to innovate as technology, workforce needs and student needs evolve.

UCM's new Bachelor of Science Degree in Data Science, undergraduate minor in data science and Master of Science Degree in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence is just a small part of the initiative.

"We've been a little more judicious in terms of adding new academic programs in the last few years," University of Central Missouri President Roger Best said. "That's just recognizing that we have over 100 programs already. We serve a wide range of student interests already through our programs. We want to be careful that when we bring on a new program, that it makes sense from the standpoint of the needs of the state of Missouri, the demand from our students and the demand from the industry potentially."

The program combines aspects of artificial intelligence, machine learning and data science.

According to Lightcast, a labor market analysis company, data science jobs in Missouri have grown 3.9% in the last two years, and are on track to increase by 10.2% before 2032.

Lightcast indicates there are 97,045 people employed in the data science field in Missouri.

"One thing I want to highlight that I think is going to become very critical for not only the university, but also the state of Missouri is our data science program," Best said. "If you think about data science, data science is a fairly generic term. If you start looking at the context of the curriculum, anymore everybody has heard of artificial intelligence, everybody knows what the term means to some extent, but not the technicalities behind it."

UCM's data science program provides students with the resources to design AI systems, as well as the usage standpoint.

Understanding the usage of AI also translates to several of UCM's academic programs across the board.

"For us, it's two folds," Best said. "How can we use artificial



Gina Fairheart, instructor of Design and Drafting Technology, works with UCM students as they use a virtual reality program during class. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI

intelligence tools in our classrooms, in our classrooms, in our courses, to affect learning? The flip is, how do we educate students on how to use artificial tools in their own professions? Our faculty are working very diligently on implementing those into our curriculum as well."

AI is not the only technological tool UCM is innovating with.

"If you look at the progress we're making there, the how we educate students is changing dramatically," Best said. "Students learn differently and that's not just what we normally call modality. Modality is are you in person, are you online, are you in some mix of that? We have these nice terms that we capture the modality. But in reality, how you really learn, we know so much about that. We know that what we call immersive experiences, are those types of learning environments where you learn better?"

Otherwise known as virtual reality, immersive experiences use multi-media components to bring users into a physical environment.

"We started down this path with virtual reality and augmented reality several years ago now, bringing on a new lab over in Lee's Summit [at the Missouri Innovation Campus]," Best said. "We have a lab here on campus, which a lot of people think of it in terms of the game goggles, right? You put on the goggles and

you're inside this virtual road. But, it's unbelievable the scope of the learning environment you can create within a virtual world. You're in an augmented world."

The technology has long been used within UCM's Aviation program at Skyhaven Airport. Before students even get into a real cockpit, they use simulators to get comfortable with their environment.

Similar augmented reality tech is also being used in many other programs at UCM, including fashion merchandising.

"A lot of the hands-on touch learning that individuals do today is starting to happen in virtual worlds," Best said. "Instead of having to buy highly expensive equipment to have you touch, feel and play with, and move things around and practice on, you can now do that virtually to get started."

Best said the new tools are all about continuing to innovate as education keeps up with technological advances.

"If you think about the onboarding of the internet, how that transformed, how we educate students versus the pre-2000, how did we educate students versus now? The internet had a lot to do with that and the computer technology behind that. With AI tools, with virtual reality tools and the speed that they're being developed, it's not going to take 20 to 30 years to move as far as the internet moved us in that length of time and rate. In 10 years, we're going to move very far, very fast. That's all of Higher Education. But, we're trying to be leaders in that spectrum and make sure we are staying on top of that."

### Highlighting Facility Upgrades

The Humphreys Building, located in the center of campus, continues to have an overhaul.

The structure was initially two separate standalone buildings in the 1900s. In the 1960s, a connected section was added to make the two buildings into one.

Scheduled for completion in February 2026, the renovated space will feature offices, classrooms, labs, e-sports and collaboration spaces.

The project cost is \$39.9 million.

"It's a very substantial renovation," Best said. "The renovation will look somewhat the same on the outside, but the inside will be completely different ... We're right in the middle of that and making good progress on that."

2024 saw the completion of the renovation of the former Lovinger Gymnasium, which now houses the Hough Counseling Center.

Space next to the counseling center was also renovated into conference rooms.

"It's education counseling and involved in the education of our students who want to become counselors," Best said. "That's a better than a million-dollar project that was donor-funded. It really transformed the gym that was Lovinger into education space. We have new counseling rooms that meet the requirements for two-way observation. They're used in educational purposes, for educational purposes, but also are actual counseling sessions that happen behind certified counselors, student trainees and clients."

In the athletics spectrum, UCM opened the Harbert Collegiate Golf Center in May 2024. The space, located at Mules National Golf Club, provides offices for coaches, as well as lounge space for student-athletes.

UCM also renovated the Terry Noland Football Office Complex.

Outside of physical upgrades in the public eye, several HVAC updates have also taken place across campus within the last year.

"It's always challenging to make that kind of investment in the behind-the-walls stuff," Best said. "If it doesn't work right, suddenly people wonder what's going on. We have an older physical plant, and our HVAC systems are older as well. We've

been trying to modernize those and put them in place. Those are things that people won't necessarily see, but they'll eventually feel and appreciate because they work appropriately."

### Planning Ahead

On the main campus front, UCM's top priority is creating a welcome center on campus. The project is pending funding.

UCM also has long-term plans to renovate Yeater Hall. That item is in the planning process as the University analyzes its options for what will be a complete overhaul of the current structure.

"Yeater's been closed for quite a number of years now, and the biggest challenge for Yeater is that when it was designed, it was not designed with central heat and air in mind. There's no way to retrofit it appropriately with central heating and air. We would do a major reconstruction on the Yeater Residence Hall in order to create a more modern facility that accommodates modern living for our students."

Upcoming projects on the athletic front include a new locker room for Mules wrestling and Jennies volleyball.

UCM's not-so-distant plans also include the TR Gaines Building, which will see upgrades to classrooms, lab space, offices and bathrooms.

That project will make way for the cohabitation of the Construction Management and Safety Science programs.

"We received a gift from the Sunderland Foundation about a year ago, and also funding from the State of Missouri through the Mo Excels Program ... We're going to bring on modern safety science and construction management lab spaces in addition to redoing some classrooms, offices and bathrooms there. What the board approved in the fall was not the full scope. We still have a little more to do in terms of scope, but they approved almost \$3 million worth of reconstruction in those spaces in order to modernize the facilities."

### Enrollment Update

According to the University's Spring 2025 census, 12,871 students are enrolled this spring.

The number includes 8,152 undergraduate students and 4,629 graduate students.

In Fall 2024, UCM saw a 73.8% retention rate for first-year full-time students.

64% of the student body is from the state of Missouri. Since 2020, UCM has seen a 29% increase in its enrollment.

UCM currently has direct connect partnerships with students from State Fair Community College in Sedalia, North Central Missouri College in Trenton and Jefferson College in Hillsboro.

UCM saw a 15.4% increase in new student transfers in Fall 2024.

94% of the school's graduates are employed or continuing their education after six months.

Joe Andrews can be reached at 660-747-8123.



A University of Central Missouri student uses a virtual reality headset while in a Civil and Architectural Design Technology class.

# Progress

## BOWLING

From Page D1

“Our esports is really growing,” Epple said. “Fastwyre worked with us and kind of helped us with some sponsorship to help us be able to grow it more, but it’s one of our sports that easily has 200 kids in it. They don’t always come every time, but it is a group of athletes that we wouldn’t have been hitting before. So, it’s exciting to see that.”

Along with esports, the Parks and Rec Department is also looking to make a home for pickle-

ball athletes.

Epple said the Park Board is looking to convert one or two of the tennis courts at Liberty Park into pickleball courts within the next budget year.

“We have pickleball courts, but they’re actually played on tennis courts,” Epple said. “These will actually be pickleball courts.”

*Sports editor Jack Denebeim can be reached at 660-530-0142.*



Tanya Oliferchuk, Julian Oliferchuk, Yuliya Limanskiy, Philip Limanskiy, Barry Henderson, Julie Kondratyuk, Donna Beykirch and Mila Shevchenko enjoy friendly competition playing pickleball at the Heckart Community Center on Wednesday, Jan. 29. FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

## FAIR

From Page D1

The fairgrounds will also see the third phase of a stormwater inflow and infiltration project this year.

“We’re hoping it to be the final stage,” Moore said. “We started phase one and worked in partnership with the City of Sedalia back in 2009. This will hopefully finish up a lot of the inflow issues that the fairgrounds had seen. It’s a one-hundred-year-old facility — things were tied to things they shouldn’t have been underground, and we’re working to correct those issues. Hopefully, the completion of this will get us there.”

The public will also see continued work on the MSF cattle barns. Moore noted that work would begin in approximately two months, as well as work on the 4-H building.

“Then obviously, the State Fair is coming up in August,” Moore said. “It’s going to be here before you know it. There’s snow on the ground, but it will be 100 degrees before too long. We are super excited for the new theme. Our marketing team did an outstanding job again this year with the ‘Step on In’ theme for the Fair from August 7th through the 17th. So, keep an eye

on the website.”

He noted that MSF concert announcements are already beginning, and livestock entries will go live in the spring.

“We’re ready to roll,” Moore said.

Funding is also in place to upgrade the MSF’s camping facilities, adding 600 to 700 new campsites.

Hopefully, we’ll have that contract this spring or summer,” Moore said. “So, you won’t see those for the 2025 Fair, but hopefully in some future Fairs. That’s a large project. It’s taking over about 30 acres of our property.”

The funds for the project are general revenue funds allocated through the state legislation for capital improvement.

“The campgrounds themselves were part of the ARPA Funding that the state received a few years ago,” Moore said. “We’ve got a pretty good design in place; we need to make sure everything is finalized and then (begin) the bidding process. With projects like that, where equipment is not always setting readily on the shelves, we’ll learn more as the bids go through. “But keep your eyes open; you will see some changes on the fairgrounds in the next few years.”

*Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at faithb@sedaliademocrat.com.*

Find past news, sports & Classifieds on our website



**SEDALIA DEMOCRAT**

Check out our E-Editions!

# ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

20,000 customers served monthly

More than \$250,000 given back to our community in 2024

Over 1,300 hours volunteered by our employees annually

80+ community events supported yearly

Proudly serving our community since 1883.



# Central Bank

Strong roots. Endless possibilities.™

MEMBER FDIC

# Benton County 2025 Area Event Calendar

**MARCH**  
**14-15-Spring Benton County Boutique Crawl** – Local home décor and apparel boutiques join forces to bring you a fabulous 2 days of shopping and great prizes!

**APRIL**  
**19-Lincoln Easter Egg Hunt**  
**19-Warsaw Easter Egg Hunt**  
**23-27-Warsaw City Wide Garage Sales**  
**26-Benton County Wine Stroll** – The Benton County Wine Stroll will include winery/brewery/distillery vendors offering samples and the opportunity to purchase their products. Food trucks/stands will provide a variety of choices for purchase. Live music will be provided.

**MAY**  
**1-3-Lincoln City Wide Garage Sale**  
**17-Warsaw Outdoor Expo** – Join us for all things Outdoor! Boating, RV, Hunting, and Fishing Vendors. Classes and demonstrations. Outdoor Fun vendors and activities, corn hole tournament, pickle ball. Saturday Singing Competition. Beer and Wine Garden and more!  
**18-Cole Camp Picnic & Pickin in the Park** – Check out this unique event encompassing the small-town friendly feel of Cole Camp at their Picnic and live bluegrass music, food and jam session in Ezekial Williams Park.

**JUNE**  
**6-7-Cole Camp City Wide Garage Sale**  
**7- Cole Camp Car Cruise, Taste Tour** – Antique and classic cars will be displayed downtown, and

wine tasting tour – lots to do for the entire family!  
**7-Benton County Artsfest (Warsaw)** – Experience the Arts in Benton County with local artists, makers and performers! Art competition (cash prizes), artisan demos, hands-on projects, handmade items, live performances and more!  
**6-8-Warsaw Jubilee Days** – This family-friendly festival makes Warsaw come to life and will include a carnival, live music, contests, turtle races, car show, craft tents, parade, 5K run, and more!

**JULY**  
**5-Drake Harbor Fireworks** – Mark your calendars for this one-of-a-kind spectacular fireworks show overlooking the Osage Arm of Lake of the Ozarks at Drake Harbor!  
**4-Lincoln Fireworks** – Mark your calendars for this one-of-a-kind spectacular fireworks show in Lincoln!  
**5-Lincoln Fourth of July Events**  
**5-Cole Camp Jaycees MSTPA Sanctioned Truck & Tractor Pull**  
**26-Cole Camp Zucchini Races** – You heard it right! Come down and race your zucchini or enter it for best decorated for prizes or be a spectator. Where else can you see zucchini's on wheels?

**AUGUST**  
**2 – Smokin' Hot Harborfest** – Don't miss this unique event in beautiful Drake Harbor! Live music, beer garden, food trucks, water ski show and more!  
**30-31-Benton County Rodeo** – MRA and URA Sanctioned Rodeo with saddle bronc riding, steer wrestling, cowgirl's barrel race, bareback bronc, calf roping, bull riding, mutton busting, contest ages 4-7, break away roping, team roping, sheep scramble for kids 10 years and younger and more!

**SEPTEMBER**  
**4-6-Cole Camp Fair** – This fair has the most unbelievable floats in MO – must-see! Carnival rides, food vendors, contests, competitions, car show, 5K, and much more!  
**13-Lincoln Fly-In** – "Fly-in" to the last of the remaining grass roots airstrips in MO and have a bite to eat, chat with the pilots and enjoy all of the unique planes that come in.  
**13-Lincoln Fall Market/Balloon Glow/Strongman Competition** – Activities include a Farmer Strongman Competition, Pie Auction, Pumpkin Growing Contest, Live Music & Beer Garden all day, Hot Air Balloon Glow, Dinner and Rides, Beer Garden with The Groove Pilots following the Balloon Glow!  
**18-20-Mozarkite Rock and Gem Show (Lincoln)**  
**27-Cole Camp Oktoberfest** – Live German music, food and traditional festivities held in Downtown Cole Camp!  
**27-Antique Farm Show (Cole Camp)** – They have apple cider press, apple butter, churned butter,


beekeeper, blacksmith, wheat threshing & straw baling, sugar cane & molasses press, corn meal, sawmill, Grandma Kitchen Museum.

**OCTOBER**  
**18-19-Warsaw Heritage Day** – Over 200 handmade craft booths, food vendors, live music and more!  
**18-19-Kaysinger Heritage Days** – Live demonstrations at this working 1800's pioneer village with log cabins, a General Store, tradesman, craftsman  
**24-Cole Camp Haunted House at RiOak**  
**25-Cole Camp Pumpkin Fest** – This unique Halloween event includes a Spirit Stroll, pumpkin carving contest, spooky scavenger hunt, haunted house, food vendors, 5K Zombie Run & Walk, food trucks and more!  
**31-Warsaw Halloween Hoopla** – A big safe Halloween experience downtown Warsaw. Businesses set up cover about 6 blocks. Main and Van Buren. Booths open at 6 pm. Costume Contest by Creative Palette.  
**31-Lincoln Frightfully Fun Family Night** – Join us at the big city park in Lincoln for Halloween activities and a trunk or treat for the whole family!

**NOVEMBER**  
**14-15-Benton County Boutique Crawl** – Shop small-town boutiques, home décor and specialty shops with specials and fun things to do and get entered into drawings for cash prizes!  
**22-Cole Camp Christbaumfest** – Over 50 quality crafters, music, Santa and Mrs. Claus and more.


**DECEMBER**  
**5-Cole Camp Christkindlmarket** – This is a family-friendly event featuring shopping in stores, hot apple cider, food trucks, pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus, wagon and carriage rides, carolers, living windows and more!  
**7-Cole Camp German Christmas Concert** – Community Concert choir of mixed voices performing songs in German.  
**5-6-Kaysinger Christmas** – Visit the pioneer village decorated for Christmas! Stroll the candle lit trails between the historical buildings and duck inside to warm your mittens by an open fire. Immerse yourself in an 1800's style Christmas with warm food, cider, and hot chocolate for the kid in all of us.  
**13-Lincoln Christmas Parade, Craft Fair & Soup & Chili Supper** – Enjoy the spirit of the season with the Christmas Parade on Main Street, Craft Fair at the Lincoln School and the Benton County 4-H/FFA Youth Fair will be hosting a Free Will Donation Chili/Soup Dinner in the school Cafeteria.  
**13-Hallmark Christmas in Warsaw** – Breakfast with Santa, Children's craft projects, food trucks and holiday market, live nativity scene, horse drawn carriage rides.

It's YOUR Business...  
*Shelter It!*



We offer a variety of options and would be glad to help you select the policy that fits YOUR business needs!

**Thaney Brockman**  
 102 S. Maple St. – Cole Camp  
 660-668-4488



AUTO • HOME • LIFE We're your Shield. We're your Shelter.  
 ShelterInsurance.com

**FOX FUNERAL HOME**  
*Dedicated to making a difficult time easier*



We offer traditional funeral services, as well as cremation services and monuments.

302 East Butterfield Trail P.O. Box 37  
 Cole Camp, Missouri 65325  
 (660) 668-4425  
 www.foxfuneralhomecolecampmo.com

*The Hotel*  
**BELLVIEW**  
 • Antiques, Vintage & More •



Open Wed. thru Sat. 10am to 5pm  
 4 Vendors, plus 1 trendy fashion boutique, offering vintage relics & clothes, collectibles, antiques plus lots of unique gift ideas  
 Follow and Like us on Facebook

**660-619-1052**  
 109 E. Butterfield Trail  
 Cole Camp, MO

**COLE CAMP PHARMACY**



- Mail Service Available
- Most Insurance Accepted
- Friendly Helpful Staff

**PHONE** 660-668-4646  
**Hours** Mon. - Fri. 9 am - 5 pm  
 Sat. 9 am - 12 pm

**Visit us at our new location!**  
 512 W. Main  
 Cole Camp, MO 65325



**CFB**  
**CITIZENS-FARMERS BANK**  
 Member FDIC

**Cole Camp**  
 121 E Main St.  
 Cole Camp, MO 65325  
 (660) 668-4416

**Stover**  
 606 W Fourth St.  
 Stover, MO 65078  
 (573) 377-4272

*Mid Motrends*  
**TRENDS**  
 Clothing, Shoes, Handbags, Accessories & More

Visit us in Cole Camp!  
 103 E Main Street

Now Also Located in  
 The Charming Market !!  
 233 W Main Street, Warsaw

Open Thursday - Saturday  
 9am - 4pm

www.midmotrends.com




**FRIENDLY AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT MEDICARE, ANNUITIES, HEALTH CARE, LIFE INSURANCE, & MUCH MORE!**



**KELLY INSURANCE GROUP**  
 ESTABLISHED IN 2005

119 N Maple Street - P.O. Box C Cole Camp, MO 65325  
 Toll Free: (800) 921-3995  
 Fax: (660) 668-7709  
 office@paulkellyinsurance.com