



SCHS grapplers open season with three gold medalists, second place at Hoxie tournament
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Additional types of vehicles okay for city streets

The types of vehicles that will be allowed on the streets of Scott City has grown with the city council’s adoption of an ordinance on Monday that permits work-site utility vehicles and micro utility trucks.

Until Monday’s meeting, micro utility trucks were allowed on streets within the city as long as the vehicles were modified with safety equipment (turn signals, tail lights, horn, mirror, etc.).

The new ordinance, which is now in effect, also includes all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and work site utility vehicles that meet similar safety guidelines.

City Administrator Brad Pendergast noted that a growing number of cities were modifying their ordinances to make it legal for similar vehicles to operate on their streets.

Pendergast said he didn’t hear from anyone who has expressed problems with the change. Likewise, Police Chief David Post said he doesn’t see a problem with the change.

(See VEHICLES on page two)

Court may make final decision on dangerous dogs

A revision to the dangerous dog ordinance under consideration by the Scott City Council would put more responsibility on the courts for determining if a dog meets that standard.

Under the existing ordinance, a police officer has the authority to determine if a dog is “potentially dangerous.” Police Chief David Post has an issue with that designation “because every dog can be potentially dangerous.” He has no problem with taking that determination out of the officer’s hands and having it decided in municipal court.

Currently, the public service officer (PSO) has sole determination as to whether a dog is dangerous.

According to City Administrator Brad Pendergast, his research has not found another city that has a two-tiered system of “dangerous” and “potentially dangerous” dogs. In addition, he points out this is the only time a decision is made by a police officer that doesn’t go before a judge.

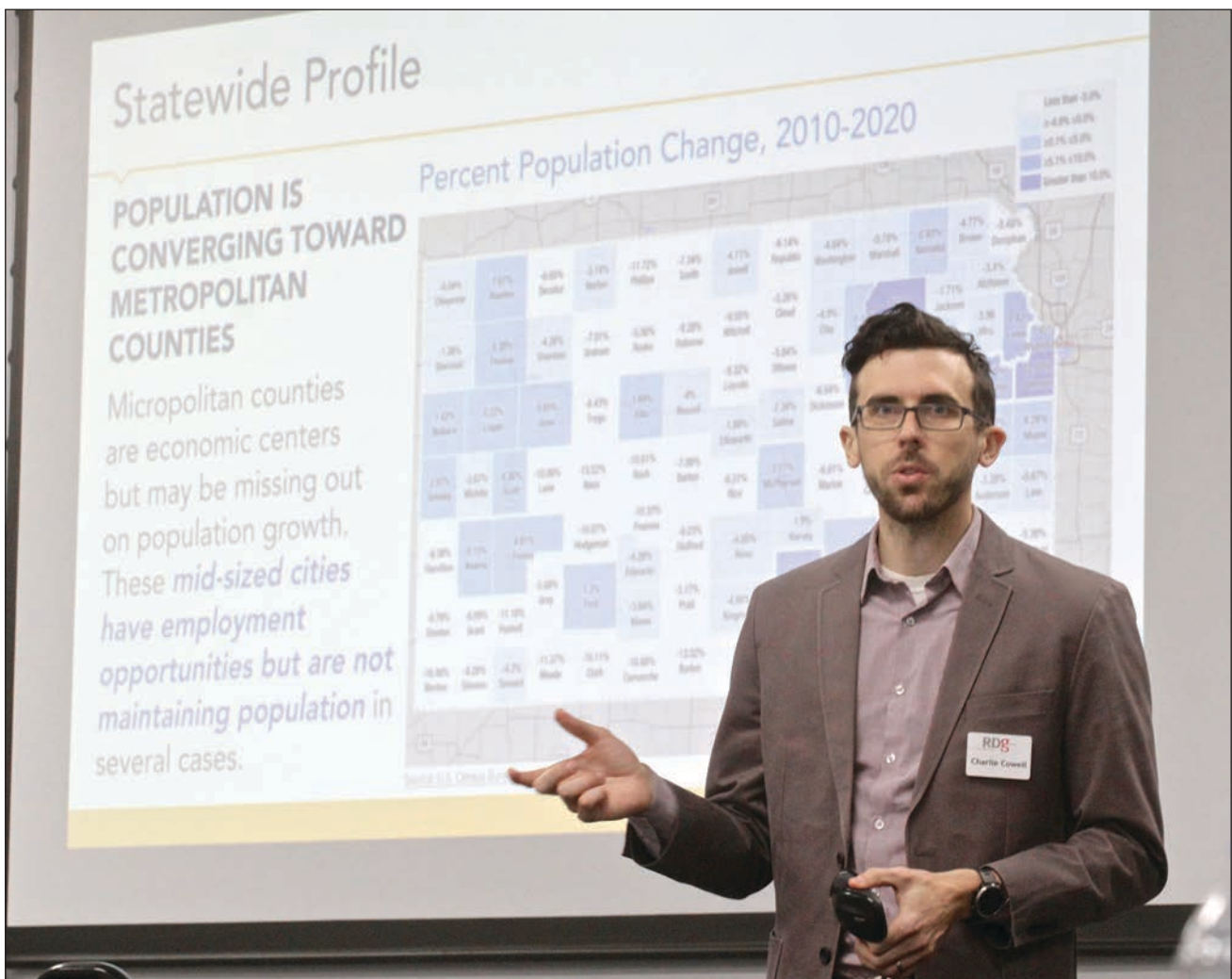
The current ordinance allows a dog’s owner(s) to file an appeal before the city council to make a final decision on whether a dog should be considered dangerous.

City Attorney Becky Faurot cautioned the council that if these decisions are made by a judge the level of evidence as to whether a dog is dangerous would need to be higher than is currently required.

“Sometimes the evidence won’t always be there,” she noted.

Faurot says it may not always be possible to prove beyond doubt in court that a dog should be considered dangerous.

(See COURT on page two)



Charlie Cowell, a representative with RDG Planning and Design, presents some of the findings of a statewide housing study when meeting with elected officials and others from the area during a stop in Scott City on Wednesday.

(Record Photo)

More senior housing among options offered during tour

Local grant opportunities, tax credits and renovation of dilapidated housing are some of the ideas being promoted to help address the shortage of housing across Kansas.

Representatives with a consulting firm hired by the state to provide specific data about housing needs were in Scott City on Wednesday to present some findings from their study and to hear from community members.

One point of emphasis was the need to expand the scope of housing options within communities, according to Charlie Cowell, a representative with RDG Planning and Design, the Omaha, Nebr., firm contracted by the state to do the statewide study.

“Kansans are aging, just like every other state across the Midwest, but they prefer to age in place,” says Cowell, meaning that many aren’t ready to enter nursing homes.

However, many of them would like housing that is smaller and

less maintenance than where they are currently living.

Scott City, for example, has begun to address this need with the senior housing development in the Eastridge Addition. This type of development tends to open up more opportunities for home buyers to get into housing that is affordable.

Amy Haase, also with RDG Planning, pointed out that it’s nearly impossible to find quality

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Governor puts focus on need for affordable housing

The fact there is a housing shortage across the state isn’t news to any economic development director, potential home owner, someone wanting to rent or among home builders.

Gov. Laura Kelly believes the state is taking an important step towards addressing the housing crisis with the unveiling of a study this week which identifies longstanding issues, but also looks at solutions.

“This report identifies specifics - what type of housing we’re short

of and what that looks like for each region across the state,” she says. “This study allows us to develop a plan of action based on real data rather than intuition.”

One reason for the study, says the governor, is to help identify what role the state needs to play in solving this problem.

“Addressing the housing shortage at the local level is not practical,” she emphasizes. “Smaller communities don’t have the resources. Instead, we have to be a good partner, just as we’ve part-

nered with communities while experiencing incredible economic growth over the last two years.”

Kelly acknowledges there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution, but it’s essential for local communities to pursue projects that fit their specific needs.

For example, in a number of communities there is a huge amount of potential living space located on the second floor over retail businesses.

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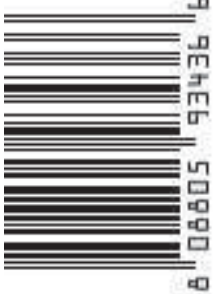


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Governor

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“This is space that’s not being used, except for perhaps storage,” she notes. “This can be transformed into living space. We’re seeing this happen across more communities. There is a lot of unused space in downtown areas that creates more blight than anything.”

At the same time, it adds value to property which builds the local tax base.

The governor says that in response to requests from communities and home developers, the state modified qualifications for participation in Rural Housing Incentive Districts (RHID). The program provides long-term property tax relief for housing development.

Originally, the program was specific to single-family housing, but it has been expanded to include the development of other living units.

There are also plans to offer incentives for the renovation of vacant, dilapidated homes that dot many communities, in addition to new home construction.

Rural Incentives

Rural communities cannot be overlooked in this process, Kelly emphasizes.

“The available housing in these areas is depressed because developers don’t see a financial benefit. The state can make it worth their time to build or renovate through tax incentives or other subsidies,” she says. “Without incentives, we’re not going to get home developers into rural areas and that’s where we have a critical need.”

When it comes to affordability, the phrase “middle income” gets tossed around frequently

in an effort to target a specific group of potential homeowners.

In the extensive report put together by RDG Planning & Design, an Omaha-based consulting firm, at the top of the list was “prioritize middle income housing.” Again, says Kelly, what’s considered middle income is defined by each community.

“Middle income in Scott City looks very different from middle income in Leawood. It will be dependent on where we’re talking about, but now we have that data for our communities,” she says.

And while this particular study and statewide tour have put the focus on housing, Kelly acknowledges that the issue can’t be addressed without also talking about other related needs such as childcare and workforce shortages.

“We’re working currently on each of these issues,” she said.

The governor says that even as this study has been taking place her administration has also had ongoing conversations with home developers. Given the state’s improved financial situation and the flow of additional federal dollars to states, Kelly is hopeful that Kansans can begin seeing tangible results as early as this spring.

“This administration has shown that we can move quickly on things which can seemingly take forever, like transportation,” says Kelly. “We were able to get shovels in the ground and finish some projects as much as two years ahead of schedule.”

“I’m optimistic that we can move just as quickly on the housing issue.”

Senior

(continued from page one)

ity new construction for less than \$200,000, and that \$225,000 to \$250,000 is a more common price point across the region.

“That’s why it’s important to free up homes that are less expensive, perhaps in the \$180,000 range, especially for first-time buyers,” Haase says. “These are the homes that can become available if older residents have someplace else they can move into.”

State Rep. Jim Minnix of Scott City agreed that this would seem to be a viable option for many towns.

“There are a lot of small communities that would like to provide a place for young people to move into when they return,” he said. “We can open up some housing if there’s a place for older people to live and that’s affordable.”

Communities can take steps to help create home ownership or construction opportunities through voter initiated bonds that

would create a pool of money to be invested in housing, the purchase of lots, or other programs.

“There’s been a lot of interest in a housing Extension officer who understands the programs that already exist and can assist communities in connecting with the right agencies to gain resources, or simply create more awareness of these opportunities,” said Haase.

“The number of times that we’ve heard this mentioned on this tour has surprised me.”

Appraisal Values

However, there’s an obstacle that may be much harder for some communities to overcome when it comes to new construction.

The RDG study discovered that in many counties a newly constructed home is often appraised at less than it cost to build. Even though Scott County isn’t facing that dilemma, at

least one individual at the meeting noted that appraised value was only one factor that discouraged an investment in new construction.

“Building costs are at least double here what they are in other states and property taxes are higher,” said Bryan Kough. “What’s the incentive to build?”

He said it’s usually more attractive to renovate an existing home than to build new.

“In order for there to be an incentive to build, taxes will have to drop dramatically,” he said.

Renovation of existing homes has to be part of the solution. According to the study, a vast majority of the housing stock across the state - particularly in rural areas - was built in the 1950s and 1960s. Cowell said the oldest housing stock appears to be located in central Kansas.

“That’s going to lead to a greater need for com-

munities to look at rehabilitation or demolition,” he said.

‘Stressed’ Renters

Another finding in the study is that a far greater number of individuals living in rental units are “financially stressed” compared to those who are home owners.

Generally speaking, said Haase, those are going to be lower income individuals.

As a rule of thumb, when an individual’s mortgage payments or rent exceed 30% of their income, they are considered “cost burdened.”

One goal of the study, and the recent tour, is to create a checklist of ideas that can be presented to state legislators during the next session that begins in January.

“There needs to be a focus on what programs the state can move forward with during the upcoming year,” he said.



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In Acts 15:1, some taught that Gentiles needed to be circumcised. While circumcision is an Old Testament practice, it is not a New Testament one. In fact, the remainder of chapter 15 and several other New Testament books teach just the opposite. It turns out the teachers of Acts 15:1 didn't hear correctly, and they didn't verify what they misheard. It went over about as well as dipping cats.

I doubt many today would advocate for religious circumcision of Christians, but there are other teachings that are touted as coming from the New Testament that just aren't supported by the text.

How do we ensure we are not guilty of mishearing the Bible? We start with the text. Then we determine what the text meant to the original readers. Finally, we apply that teaching to our own lives. It is difficult work, but failing to be careful with Scripture is as valuable as owning dripping dipped cats.

Would you like to sit down over an open Bible and see what the text of the Bible actually says? Drop me a note or drop by on Sunday morning at 9:45 or 10:30!

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