



THE TOWANDA HERALD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TOWANDA, KS

Volume 3, Issue 3

May 2026



NEXT STEPS

Circle Recreation Commission expands offerings with T-Bird Training Center

TOWANDA - Circle Recreation Commission is adding new amenities to downtown as the organization opens a gym and training facility in its building at 301 Main Street.

USD 375 residents are invited to check out the training center during an open house 5:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, May 19, and the facility will open to the public June 1.

The training center provides two rooms for training, including a cardio room with treadmills, a stair master, and recumbent bikes, as well as a weight room with a variety of

weights and equipment such as squat racks, benches, a functional trainer and a variety of dumbbells.

CRC is a public organization providing recreation opportunities in USD 375 and gym membership fees are set with this in mind. Memberships are \$20 per month for an individual or \$35 per family.

Memberships provide 24/7 unsupervised access to the workout facilities via a door code or Face ID, and cameras throughout help protect the facility and provide a safe workout environment.



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Towanda Community,
Last month, during a special City Council meeting on April 22, I asked Council Members to share what they are hearing as the community's greatest priorities for the City's budget.

Council members mentioned several key concerns, including the condition of Towanda's streets, continued water loss in the aging system, code enforcement around town, and public safety.

Broadly summarized, these all boil down to taking care of what we have as a community.

Next week, City Council members will finalize language and specifics for a sales tax ballot question that will appear on Towanda voters' August ballots.

The Council has identified streets and sidewalks and police services as two key community needs where additional funding is necessary to take care of what we have.

While some efforts, such as the sales tax question and water system design, are well under way, other opportunities are just opening up.



One place where the community can make a difference is providing input about public safety needs at two upcoming conversations scheduled in mid-May to discuss law enforcement and storm shelters.

The community also can make a difference by reporting code violations through the online portal provided by our code enforcement service so that we can address issues promptly

I look forward to hearing the community's vision around how to take care of what we have, and then to taking steps to achieve this vision.

Sincerely,
Sarah Gooding
City Administrator

Community input needed on public safety conversations

The City is seeking feedback from the community regarding public safety needs, including potentially developing a police department and the future of storm shelter operations.

Two feedback events will take place in May, including an event from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 16 and also 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, May 18. Both events will take place in the Council Room at City Hall.

Mayor Mike Hayes is ex-

ploring the possibility and potential costs of beginning a police department, and the City would like to know more about community members' priorities for law enforcement services, as well as whether the community is willing to pay for enhanced services.

The City also is no longer providing storm shelter services, but is exploring other options. Come learn more about storm shelter operations and consider being part of the solution.

Code violation reporting online

April showers not only bring May flowers, but also weeds, tall grass, and brush.

Neighbors or community members concerned about overgrown lawns, inoperable vehicles, trash and junk accumulation, dangerous structures, or other code enforcement issues, may report these issues directly to the City's Code Enforcement service, Pierce Code Compliance. The link for reporting nuisances

and violations can be found at <https://us.cloudpermit.com/gov/map/US-KS71125> or by scanning the QR code below.



The Towanda Herald is a publication of the City of Towanda, Kansas

110 S. 3rd • P.O. Box 160, Towanda, KS 67144
316-536-2243 (Office)

Business Hours

9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday -Thursday
9 a.m. to 12 noon Friday

Find us at:

www.cityoftowanda.com
facebook.com/TowandaKS

Governing Body

Mayor
Mike Hayes

City Council Members

Jennifer Watkins - President
Chris Hunt
Angel Ramsey
Drew Shaults
Kit Williams

City Staff

City Administrator Sarah Gooding
administrator@cityoftowanda.com

Deputy City Clerk Cami Jones
clerk@cityoftowanda.com

Zoning/Code Enforcement Lisa Long
zoning@cityoftowanda.com

Public Works Foreman Rylan Rose
super@cityoftowanda.com

Butler County residents invited to Flood Map Open House

Local, state and federal officials are working to reduce the effects of severe weather and natural disasters. On May 6, 2026, the Kansas Department of Agriculture – Division of Water Resources (DWR), in collaboration with FEMA, will hold an in-person Open House at the El Dorado Civic Center 201 E Central El Dorado KS. . At this event, the DWR and FEMA will answer residents' questions about flood risk and flood insurance and have draft flood risk data available to view.

Residents are invited to attend the Open House, or can view draft flood risk information at <https://gis2.kda.ks.gov/gis/butler/>.

Experts at the Open House will teach residents about flood risk and flood insurance. They can also explain floodplain develop-

ment regulations and the mapping process. Residents can meet with experts one-on-one to look at their own addresses on the new maps. They will learn about their specific risk. They will also learn ways to help prevent flood loss.

Once in effect, the maps will inform flood insurance rates and local floodplain management rules adopted under the [National Flood Insurance Program](#). FEMA urges public officials to use the maps to help plan and prepare communities to quickly respond to and recover from future events.

Property owners, realtors, lenders and insurance agents will benefit from this chance to learn more about flood risk and hazard mitigation.

For questions please contact Joanna Rohlf at (785) 221-3809.

Health Matters

Health Matters is a newly formed group meeting at the Towanda Library once a month on Saturday to share health topics of interest. Join us for the next meeting Saturday, May 9, at 10 a.m. to discuss all things allergies! Please direct any questions

Community Dinner

The Towanda Community Church will feature burgers and hot dogs, baked beans, chips and dessert at its monthly Community Dinner at 5-6 p.m., Wednesday, May 13. All are welcome to attend the free meal, which is provided by the church the second Wednesday of each month.



Towanda Community Church

Second Wednesday each Month 5-6 p.m.

Everyone is Welcome!

Towanda Battery Co.



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Friends of the Library

Friends of the Library (FOTL) held its annual meeting on April 13.

At that meeting, FOTL elected officers and signed its updated constitution and by-laws.

\$5

DONATIONS WELCOME

walking
TACOS

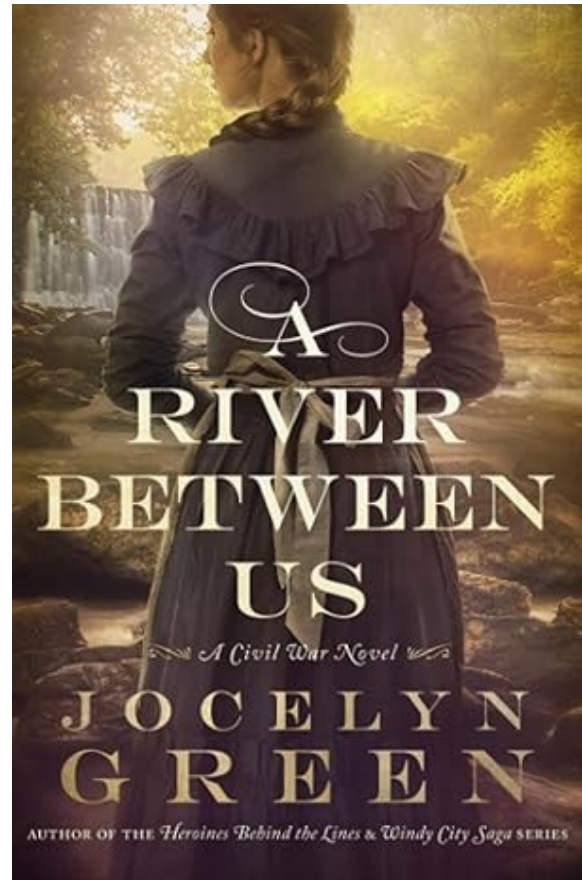
Get ready for the tastiest day of the week!
Join us Friday, May 15 for a flavor explosion that will make your taste buds dance.

FRIDAY MAY 15
315 MAIN
TOWANDA COMMUNITY BUILDING
11AM - 2PM

SPONSORED BY TOWANDA FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
TO SUPPORT KIDS' COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Book Club

The May 27 book club will feature *A River Between Us* by Jocelyn Green. Civil war era story of displacement of cotton mill workers after Sherman's march through the South and a Yankee who wins the heart of a Southern girl.



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Towanda Public Library

Hello Everyone!

We have officially entered our busy season here at the library.



We are finalizing prep work for our Summer Reading Program: “Unearth a Story”, giving tours to the different grades and classes at the elementary school, and prepping for the “End of School/Summer Kick-off” event!

As soon as we lock down a date for the kick-off, we will announce it on our social media and have it on our websites. The Summer Reading Program will take place from June 1- July 12.

We will have different events and activities on Wednesdays. Parents can sign the kiddos up starting at our kick-off event through the first 2 weeks of the program.

We will have prizes and goodies to give away the more time that is spent reading, and we will have a pool party for any kids that reach their reading goal at the end!

Towanda Hometown Action Commission

Two members of the commission met at the Towanda Area Historical Museum on April 16. We were short on numbers due to the birth of a baby and some illness. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 21 at 6:30 pm at the Towanda Area Historical Museum.

We are still firming up a list of project ideas for 2026 such as a refurbish of the Swimming Pool Park.

Adopt A Pot downtown will be going again this year.

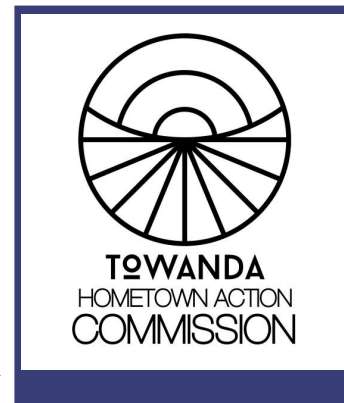
Rushing Water Car Show

- Hometown Action is helping host a first ever, Rushing Water Car Show Sept. 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., followed by the BBQ and Street Dance Fundraiser for the BCFD 11 Towanda Fire Rescue. Be watching The Herald for details in the days to come.

Farmer’s Market- The commission is in the beginning stages of exploring a Farmers’ Market. We are learning the legalities and logistics of hosting such an event, but are hoping to have a midweek, evening market soon.

As projects are firming up, we will be notifying the community so there will be plenty of opportunities to become involved and volunteer.

If you would like to be a part of making Towanda a more beautiful and better place to live please let us know at towanda-hometown@gmail.com or add your thoughts to our Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction/?ref=share&mibextid=NSMWBT>



CHAIR YOGA

EVERY TUESDAY @ 2:15 PM



CLASSES ARE HELD AT THE TOWANDA COMMUNITY CENTER. CALL OR TEXT JO SMITH @ (316) 650-6405 FOR MORE DETAILS.

Upcoming Events:

- NO Sew Crafty in May!!!!**
- May 15-16: Towanda Garage Sale Days**
- May 15: Friends of the Library “Walking tacos” Fundraiser at the Wilbur Wiens Community Building**
- May 16: Towanda Fire Auxiliary Biscuits and Gravy Fundraiser at the Fire Station 7-10 am**
- May 16-17: NEW-Towanda Area Historical Museum Open 1-5 p.m.**
- May 21: Towanda Hometown Action Commission Meeting 6:30pm**

Towanda Hometown Action Commission

The museum is open and is expanding its hours beginning in May!!

Our current open times are the first weekend of the month, Saturday and Sunday from 1 pm to 5 pm., and every Tuesday from 10 am to noon.

As of May, we will be adding the 3rd weekend of the month on Saturday and Sunday, 1-5 pm!!

This year we are focused on completion of the Tornado of 1892 exhibit, expanding our current displays, completing some maintenance projects, beginning a refurb of the blacksmith area in the back, and hosting the public for tours or community events.



Sadly, someone thought they needed our anvil from the old blacksmith area and took it in the last few weeks. If you took it or know who did, please return it. It had been donated to the museum by a local family and was to be a part of a working smithy some time in the future.

The fire escape is currently being scraped for painting as one of the outside maintenance and beautification efforts.

If you would like to volunteer at the museum, please contact us, or come on down during open hours to see how you can join in the preservation of our town's history.



Towanda Scouting - Troop 232

Troop 232 adventures included the trail and mines

Did you know that Towanda has Scouts?

It's been a season of adventure for the scouts of Troop 232. In February, the Troop headed west to Hutchinson, Kansas, for a unique "underground" experience at Strataca.

Exploring the salt mines 650 feet below the earth provided a firsthand look at Kansas history and earning their Mining in Society and Geology merit badges.

The momentum continued into Spring Break, as the scouts traveled to Broken Bow, Oklahoma. The trip was a classic scouting experience filled with hiking and camping under the stars.

The scouts also tried their hand at mining, sharpening their outdoor skills while enjoying the scenic Oklahoma landscape.

These trips are more than just fun—they build the leadership and resilience that Scouting America is known for.



To join the Adventure:

Contact the Scouts for information at TowandaScouting232@gmail.com to join their next trip!



BC 11 FD

Butler County Fire District 11 - Towanda

Thank you to the community who showed up in force for our Shrimp and Crawfish Boil on March 28th. Our ticket line stretched down the street to in front of the museum!! It was a great time for everyone who attended. Our profit after expenses was around \$2500. Thank you, thank you! See photo

Membership/Training/Work— Membership is currently at 15. Training has been on apparatus knowledge, SCBA confidence, Mayday responses, Medical training with Butler County EMS, and participating in Live Fire Training with El Dorado Fire Department.

Towanda Fire Rescue Auxiliary provided lunch for all participants in the live fire training, Saturday April 18th.

Firefighters worked through the rungs of a ladder to simulate a tight opening. 16” x 13.5” was the size of the opening. All training participants made it through the opening, even including both chiefs.

Apparatus Updates:

Firefighters continue working on fabricating Pumper 7. This Pumper has been out of service to a fractured water tank. Through forestry grants and department purchases, replacement parts have been procured and hopefully Pumper 7 will rejoin our fleet soon.



Pumper 4 is being repaired by Flints Hills Fire Rescue after the wiring harness was catastrophically damaged while returning from a grass fire last fall.

Station Updates:

BCFD 11 Fire Board and Chiefs have been meeting with BG Consultants in beginning a design proposal for a new fire station. Stay tuned for updates.

Upcoming Events and Dates!!!

May 16: Towanda Fire Auxiliary Biscuits and Gravy Fundraiser, 7-10 a.m. at the Fire Station. Come to the fire station at 130 S. 3rd for breakfast and fellowship with the Auxiliary and local firefighters during Garage Sale Days.

June 6: FREE Family Fun Night hosted by BCFD 11 Towanda firefighters. Free hot dogs and food, water games, temporary tattoos, etc. 4-6 pm at Norman Park by the Towanda, Ks Public Library.

**Calls for April 2026
(as of 4/25/26)**

- 31 total calls in April
- 128 calls for the year to date
- 7 Fire (1 Alarm and 6 fires related to controlled burns)
- 21 Medical
- 1 Electrical Hazard
- 2 Volunteer Storm Watches



TOWANDA FIRE AUXILIARY

BISCUITS AND GRAVY BREAKFAST

WHEN: SATURDAY, MAY 16th

TIME: 7:00 AM UNTIL SOLD OUT

WHERE: TOWANDA FIRE STATION
(110 3rd street, Towanda, ks)

— ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT BUTLER COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #11 (BCFD#11) —

Get Involved!

There are Loads of Ways to Volunteer in Towanda!



Towanda Hometown Action Commission

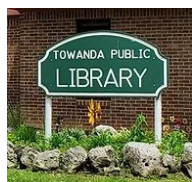
www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction



Towanda Lions Club

www.facebook.com/towandakslion

Meetings: 6:30 p.m. 3rd Monday of each month



Towanda Public Library

www.towanda.scklslibrary.info

316-536-2464

Friends of the Towanda Public Library

Debbie Heitzenrator 316-250-0761

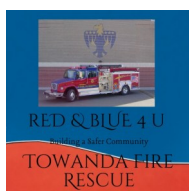
Dkheitz19@gmail.com



Towanda Area Historical Museum

www.storyoftowanda.org

info@storyoftowanda.org



Towanda Fire Rescue

Tom Pyle, Fire Chief

www.cityoftowanda.com/fire-department



Towanda Senior Center

316-536-8999



Towanda Rustlers 4-H

Carla Varner

cvarner92@wheatstate.com

For More Information:

For more ways to join us in "Lovin' the Small Town Life" check out

www.cityoftowanda.com/get-involved.

To submit local news or request advertising, email Sarah Gooding at administrator@cityoftowanda.com

All submissions must be received by the 25th of each month for consideration in the next month's edition of The Towanda Herald. All submissions will be considered, but placement is not guaranteed.

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