



# THE TOWANDA HERALD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TOWANDA, KS

Volume 3, Issue 4

June 2026

## Water Bill Questions?

We know water bill fluctuations can be frustrating and confusing. To help, City staff have developed a new bill review process. If you notice a higher-than-usual bill, we're glad to take a closer look.

### How It Works

Contact us by noon on Wednesday, June 10 to request a review

- Call City Hall at 316-536-2243 and ask for Cami, or
- Email Sarah at [administrator@cityoftowanda.com](mailto:administrator@cityoftowanda.com)

Our staff will:

- Pull your water usage data
- Manually check your meter
- Confirm bill calculations

You'll receive a detailed report, including your meter readings and usage patterns. This can help identify:

- Unusual spikes in use
- Possible leaks
- Other issues affecting your bill

### Important Timeline

- We aim to return results by Wednesday, June 17
- Bills must still be paid by the 20th to avoid late fees
- If an error is found after payment, your account will be adjusted accordingly

We're happy to work with you, and our goal is to make sure your bill is accurate and help you understand your water use.



On Monday, May 11, Diana Weaver and Susie Scott of the Friends of the Library State Organization Board drove down to Towanda to meet with the local group and present them with the Outstanding Group of the State of Ks for 2026 certificate and presented them with a \$ 100 dol-

## Towanda FOTL Honored

During the Pandemic and years following the aging Friends of the Library group more or less shut down all community events and fund raisers and support to the library services. In 2024 the library had a crisis with personnel which extended into 2025. the library services were in jeopardy. The Friends group reorganized and started promoting library services and community events especially geared to the children.

In 2024 they partnered with the Home town action group, community church, Lions Club, fire department, and museum to sponsor a Downtown Christmas event. The group sponsored Christmas

decorations to decorate the tree and 80 children made either a tongue blade Christmas tree or a Paint Brush Santa.

A puzzle night for adults was established and a book club.

In March of 2025 the Easter egg hunt was reestablished. Help came from the fire department and patrons to purchase eggs and candy,

Sandra Lou Taylor, who had taught school here in Circle District authored two books and the Friends group held author signings. A book launch will be held for the third book on April 4.

The group partnered with the library to

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# Message from the Mayor

I regularly talk with residents, business owners, and others around town, and it seems that regardless of who I speak with I hear the same concerns. The Towanda community wants to feel safe and our community wants quality basic services.

Last fall, the community overwhelmingly approved a 1% sales tax to help fund water system improvements and address water loss that regularly reaches between 30 and 45% of the total water sold by the City.

Now, as existing 1% sales tax from 2017 ends next February, we are asking residents to support a new 1.5% Streets & Safety Sales Tax on the August 4 ballot to support improvements in roads and the creation of a Towanda Police Department.

The Streets & Safety Sales Tax is focused on our basic community needs and would be used exclusively for streets, sidewalks, and law enforcement costs. This aligns with the needs I hear most from our community.

The service we are receiving from the Butler County Sheriff's Department leaves many local gaps, and I hear from residents that many have lost confidence and don't even bother to call law enforcement with concerns. This leaves a void in our community that leads to residents feeling less safe and business owners feeling less confident. These losses make it harder for Towanda to be the community its residents desire.

One of my key campaign goals is restoration of a police department, but this enhanced level of service comes at a cost. Depending on the level of coverage desired and future economic conditions, this service may cost about \$250,000, which is equivalent to 25 mills if it were funded by property tax dollars.

Additionally, your Council and I know that Towanda's roads are failing as the years go by, and our community desires better street systems. It is my goal to fund as many of these improvements as

possible with grants, but many grants require a local match, and funds from a sales tax will be critical for the City to provide matching funds to improve our roads and sidewalks.

Finally, it is important to note that when our older sales tax sunsets in early 2027 it will leave a gap if another sales tax is not passed. The current 1% sales tax brings in the equivalent of 17 to 18 mills, and while the designated spending would be different the proposed tax allows us to minimize increases.

If the proposed Streets & Safety Sales Tax does not pass, the City will be forced to look at raising the mill levy, cutting services and investments, or both.

We invite community members to learn more in the coming weeks between now and August 4 as we review next year's budget, host a town hall event, and strategize about how to respond to key concerns with the services the Towanda community wants.

## Friends of the Library

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man a book sale, and trunk or treat. The group has increased the Library endowment fund to an amount they can receive dividends, and purchased William Allen White books. Future plans include to continue to promote the library through these continuing programs.

Partnering with the library expenses were shared to professionally clean the carpets.

Promoting the library and it's services and drawing people back into using the Library again is the Friends group goal for the future.



## 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](http://www.cityoftowanda.com)

[facebook.com/TowandaKS](https://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](mailto:administrator@cityoftowanda.com)

Deputy City Clerk Cami Jones

[clerk@cityoftowanda.com](mailto:clerk@cityoftowanda.com)

Zoning/Code Enforcement Lisa Long

[zoning@cityoftowanda.com](mailto:zoning@cityoftowanda.com)

Public Works Foreman Rylan Rose

[super@cityoftowanda.com](mailto:super@cityoftowanda.com)

## Keep Your Pup Safe, and Within the Law

The City has recently received an increase in complaints about dogs running loose. We want to keep pets safe and avoid having to impound them, so we're asking all dog owners to follow City regulations.

### What the Law Requires

All dogs must be licensed with the City

- Cost: \$10 per dog
- The City provides free dog licenses between Jan. 1 and March 31 each year
- New residents may license their dog(s) at no charge (within 30 days)
- Available at City Hall (proof of rabies vaccination required)

### If your dog is found without a license:

- You may face a fine of \$20-\$100
- The licensing fee increases to \$25 per dog

### Dogs are not allowed to run at large within city limits

- Even well-behaved or "escape artist" pets must be kept contained
- Dogs that leave waste on other people's property are considered nuisances by City code
- The City enforces a system of increasing fines for repeat violations

We know dogs can be clever and adventurous, but keeping them licensed and secured isn't just good practice, it's the law. Following these rules helps keep your pet safe, protects your neighbors, and keeps everyone out of trouble.

**The City of Towanda  
congratulates  
Rylan & Heather Rose  
on the birth of  
Samson Rose  
7 pounds, 9 ounces  
Born June 4, 2026**

**(Rylan is the City's Public Works Foreman)**

**BUTLER COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 11  
(TOWANDA FIRE RESCUE)**

**FAMILY  
FUN  
NIGHT!**

**SATURDAY,  
JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>  
AT 4 PM**

**AT NORMAN PARK  
(Next to the Library)**

**FIRE TRUCK TOURS ★ FREE FOOD!**

**★ FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY! ★**

**JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF COMMUNITY FUN!**

# AUCTION

- Business & Commercial Equipment
- Estate & Farm Auctions
- Antiques & Collectibles
- Personal Property & Consignments

**SCAN TO BID**

**316-854-0550**

704 Main - Towanda, KS 67144

**[butlercountyauction.com](http://butlercountyauction.com)**

## Letter from the Editor

As young adults, my husband and I moved to the tiny town of Eskridge in the Kansas Flint Hills. He served a church and I worked for the local newspaper telling the community's stories.

It was there that I learned the story of "The Amazing Maisie DeVore", a local woman whose mission to provide a pool for the community's children inspired her to collect aluminum cans along area roads for 30 years to fund her dream. By 2001, she had collected more than 90 tons of aluminum and raised more than \$100,000 to open a swimming pool. I got to know Maisie and learned her story just a few short years later.

While time passes and memories fade, I've found myself thinking a lot about Maisie's Pool in recent months as the City of Towanda took on significant restoration of our pool.

Many communities have moved beyond the traditional "bathtub-style" pools like our community has, with aquatic centers making a bigger splash, but I'm also reminded that other communities long for what we have, as demonstrated by Maisie's dream and effort.

Towanda's pool is aging and has plenty of issues, but it is still a community jewel.

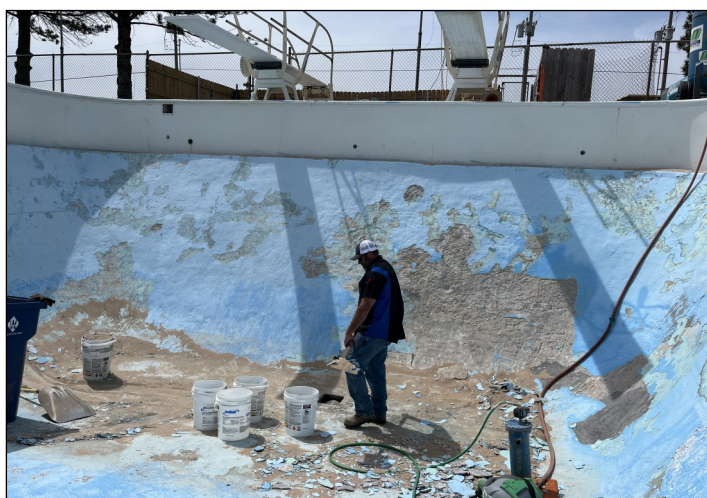
City Council has invested almost \$40,000 in upgrades this year to keep the pool operational for years to come, including replacing aging filters and a rehab of the pool surface that had the City's Public Works crew sandblasting, completing concrete repairs, and applying multiple layers of epoxy paint to create a clean, fresh surface.



One truism about pools is that they do not make money. In Eskridge, the DeVore Community Swimming Pool Association must continue to raise operating funds. My role with City of Derby included managing operating contracts and budgets for Rock River Rapids, and there I learned that even a regional attraction aquatic center cannot self-fund off admissions alone.

In past years in Towanda, pool admissions and pool parties have raised between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per season, while annual pool operations run approximately \$60,000. The City will never fully close this gap, nor would that be an appropriate goal, but we did take a look at admissions pricing this year and opted to change our season pass structure from a family pass to an individual season pass, pricing each regular pass at \$25 and discounting parent/guardian passes to \$15.

These are hard choices, as we seek to balance between cost-effectiveness and access. My heart goes out to house-



holds for whom this is a hardship, as I have also walked that same path in many seasons of my own life.

But what delighted me as a newcomer to Towanda is the way the community showed up. Individuals, businesses, and local organizations responded to the need in amazing and generous ways and have provided scholarship funds so that youth who otherwise could not access the pool now have that opportunity.

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude by what I see, and all I

can say is thank you. Thank you for being a caring community. Thank you for understanding that as the City sometimes we make challenging choices that make it viable for us to continue to provide services such as the pool. And thank you for being the type of community that is committed, like Maisie, to making sure that the community's children can swim this summer.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Gooding  
City Administrator

## Summer Internship: Water & Wastewater Crew

Looking for a summer job where you can work with your hands, learn real-world skills, and make a difference in your community?

The City of Towanda is hiring a Water/Wastewater Intern through the Kansas Water Environment Association's internship program—perfect for high school grads or post-high school students interested in skilled trades.

### What You'll Be Doing

As part of Towanda's Public Works crew, you won't be stuck behind a desk—you'll be out in the field learning by doing. Your summer will include:

- Tracking down and helping repair water leaks
- Assisting with sewer main maintenance
- Operating equipment to jet and clear sewer lines
- Supporting repair and rehabilitation projects
- Getting hands-on experience at the city pool,

### Why This Internship?

Build practical trade skills you can use in future careers

- Gain exposure to water and wastewater systems—critical infrastructure that keeps communities running

- Work alongside professionals who can mentor and train you

- Stay active with a job that's different every day

### Pay & Schedule

- \$16.50/hour
- Approximately 25–30 hours per week
- Runs through August 15

### Apply Now

- Send your resume and a cover letter to [administrator@cityoftowanda.com](mailto:administrator@cityoftowanda.com).

- Interviews begin June 15
- Position is open until filled, so don't wait!

If you're interested in skilled trades, working outdoors, and want a job where you can see the impact of your work every day, this is your chance to get started.

## 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, June 6 at 10 a.m. This month's topic will be the thyroid.

The thyroid is very important in maintaining optimum health. Do you know what minerals are important for the thyroid? Do you know the symptoms of a low functioning or over-active thyroid? These are just a few questions to be discussed. Come join us and share, discuss, or just listen.

Please direct any questions to



## Towanda Community Church

Second Wednesday each Month 5-6 p.m.

Everyone is Welcome!

## Towanda Battery Co.



**316-536-2969**

424 Highland - Towanda, KS 67144

## Griffin Max Construction, Inc.



Backhoe, Dump Truck, Trencher, Water Lines, Dirt Work

**316.323.2060**

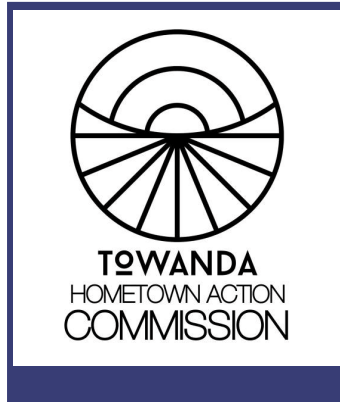
**Towanda Hometown Action Commission**

Members of the commission met at the Towanda Area Historical Museum on May 21st. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 18th 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, picking up trash, and painting cemetery sections markers. If you would like to be a part of making Towanda a more beautiful and better place to live, please let us know at [towandahometown@gmail.com](mailto:towandahometown@gmail.com) , add your thoughts to our Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction/?ref=share&mibextid=NSMWBT> or attend our next meeting.

**Adopt A Pot**

Downtown flowers will be going again this year. Planters have



**Upcoming Events:**

- June 1 Summer Reading begins. Sign up at the Towanda Ks Public Library**
- June 1 Hometown Action Cemetery section painting 6 p.m.**
- June 4 Sew Craft gathering at The Towanda Area Historical Museum 7 p.m.**
- June 6 Fire Department is hosting Free Family Fun night in Norman Park (by the Library) 4-6 p.m.**
- June 18 Towanda Hometown Action Commission meeting 6:30 p.m. at the museum**
- June 24 Book Club at the Library 2-3 p.m.**

been given the go-ahead and should be finishing up planting in the next few weeks.

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

**Towanda Scouting - Troop 232**

**Scouting emphasizes importance of selfless service**

*We must change boys from a 'what can I get' to a 'what can I give' attitude.*

(Lord Baden Powell).

In Scouting we want to emphasize and encourage a transition from selfishness to service. So, every year in the month of May, the Towanda's Pack and Troop heads out to provide a selfless service of marking Veteran's headstones with American Flags for Memo-

rial Day. Then after the day has passed, we go back out to pick them up and put them away for the next year. This is just another way that we can give back to our community. Thanks to the Towanda Lions Club who provide the Flags and the Veteran's plaques. Interested in Joining? Please reach out for more details at [TowandaScouting232@gmail.com](mailto:TowandaScouting232@gmail.com) or check out our Troop Facebook page 'Family Troop 232, Towanda, KS'



**Code violation reporting online**

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.



**Towanda Public Library**

Summer is in full swing here at the library!

We finished giving tours to all the grade school classes. We just got in our newest set of SCKLS rotating books. So we have 300 new books of different genres that will only be here for 6 months before they get switched out. Genres include nonfiction, mystery, scifi, fantasy, suspense, inspirational, romance, and general fiction. We started preregistering for the summer reading.

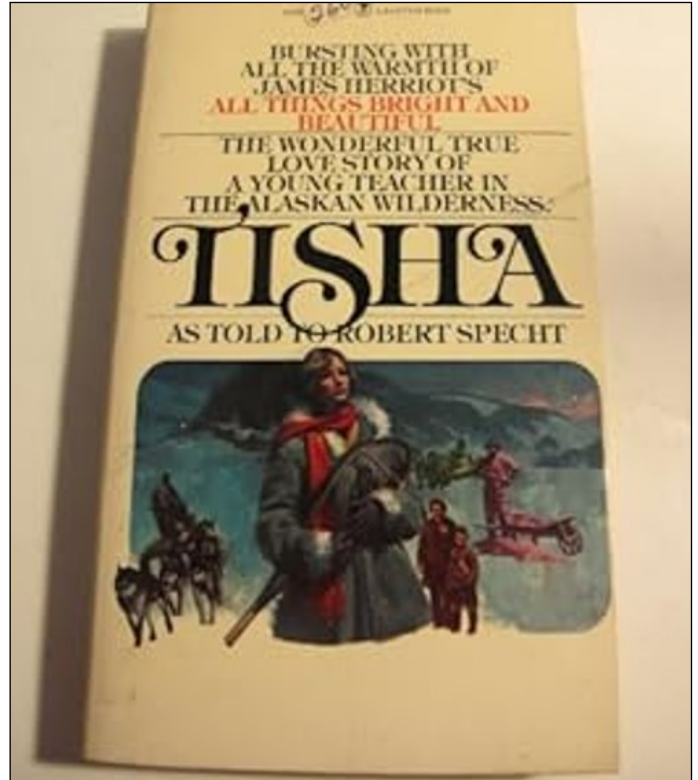
Our summer reading program, "Unearth a Story," begins on June 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through July 12<sup>th</sup>. You can sign up through June 8<sup>th</sup>. We will have events every Wednesday at 10:30 am throughout the program. 1<sup>st</sup>



and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays are Story Time for 3yo and up. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays are for older kids, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up. When you sign up you get a sheet with the event dates, your first tracking sheet (each dino egg is worth 15min), and a book mark! Award levels are based off of total time read and the pool party at the end will be for anyone that participated. The pool party date will be determined once they open and it can be scheduled!

**Book Club**

The June 24 book club will feature Tisha, as told to Robert Specht. The Book Club will meet Wednesday, June 24 at 2 pm at the library.



# 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.

# BCA Motors



## CAR SALES

See our cars online! [www.bcamotors.com](http://www.bcamotors.com)



### 316.370.1110

704 Main, Towanda, KS 67144

### Towanda Area Historical Museum

The museum is open with expanded hours and new exhibits!

#### Tornado of 1892

Thank you to our volunteers Marilyn Luszcak and Roger Meade for taking on and completing the Tornado of 1892 project. This has been in the works for some time now and is finally completed. Come see!



#### Native American Exhibit Expansion

We also have a wish to expand our Native American exhibit. We have a new display case which is showcasing a sculpture collection by artist Frank Miller, donated by Charles Heilman of El Dorado. The sculptures depict the every day tasks of the native people in our area. Artwork by Dave Traylor



and Bill Williams has also been added. If you have authentic artifacts from native tribes from our area that you are interested in donating or putting on loan to the museum, **please contact us**. Our area was right on the western trail for buffalo hunting for the Osage. Other Nations also frequented the area. This prime location is what prompted James R. Mead to establish a Trading Station here.

#### Tours!!

Museum tours are free! Of course, we always welcome donations. Recently CTE 4<sup>th</sup> graders completed their yearly tour of the museum. Kids were able to answer quiz questions post-tour for prizes. Everyone had a great time. If you would like a tour, stop in during open hours, or contact us for a private tour. Private tours are also free to the public.



#### 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of our Country

During the month of June, if you visit the museum and ask for the 250<sup>th</sup> free gift, you can receive a free copy of the Declaration of Independence (Limit 1 per household). Our remaining patriot T-shirts are also on 50% off clearance. Sizes are limited so come

Towanda Area Historical Museum

# WE'RE OPEN!

## 1<sup>ST</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> WEEKENDS

## Every Tuesday 10 am-noon

## From 1pm-5pm

More info at [storyoftowanda.org](http://storyoftowanda.org)

# BC 11 FD

## Butler County Fire District 11 - Towanda

### Membership/Training/Work

Members drilled on using a hydrant for water supply, hose drags, and hose loads at CTE in May.

Members also trained on Engine 1 turret and auxiliary pump usage (while providing an end of the year water spray for CTE on a chilly day.

### Apparatus Updates:

Firefighters continue working on fabricating/cleaning for paint on 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.

Painting has begun on Tanker 12. Tanker 12 does not fit into the station and the paint job gets beat up by the sun and weather. The Tractor has been painted and the tank painting has begun.

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

### Events:

**June 6, 2026: 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 May 2026 (as of 5/26/26)

28 total in May, 160 YTD

11 Fire

14 Medical

2 Citizen Assists

YTD - 56% of the calls have been Medical, 32% Fire, and 12% Public Assistance

## MYERS AUTOMOTIVE



407 Main St. Towanda, KS  
316-768-7000

## VINTAGE BANK KANSAS

COMMUNITY BANKING • INSURANCE AGENCY

400 Main St  
Towanda, KS 67144  
PH: 316-536-2282



*Moving Through*  
THE FUTURE WITH YOU.

www.VintageBankKS.com



# Get Involved!

## There are Loads of Ways to Volunteer in Towanda!



### Towanda Hometown Action Commission

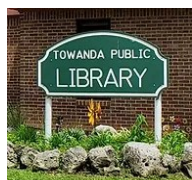
[www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction](http://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction)



### Towanda Lions Club

[www.facebook.com/towandakslion](http://www.facebook.com/towandakslion)

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



### Towanda Public Library

[www.towanda.scklslibrary.info](http://www.towanda.scklslibrary.info)

316-536-2464

### Friends of the Towanda Public Library

Debbie Heitzenrator 316-250-0761

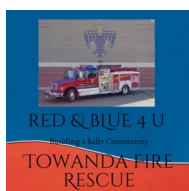
[Dkheitz19@gmail.com](mailto:Dkheitz19@gmail.com)



### Towanda Area Historical Museum

[www.storyoftowanda.org](http://www.storyoftowanda.org)

[info@storyoftowanda.org](mailto:info@storyoftowanda.org)



### Towanda Fire Rescue

Tom Pyle, Fire Chief

[www.cityoftowanda.com/fire-department](http://www.cityoftowanda.com/fire-department)



### Towanda Senior Center

316-536-8999



### Towanda Rustlers 4-H

Carla Varner

[cvarner92@wheatstate.com](mailto: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](http://www.cityoftowanda.com/get-involved).

To submit local news or request advertising, email Sarah Gooding at [administrator@cityoftowanda.com](mailto: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.

### Griffin Max Construction, Inc.



Backhoe, Dump Truck, Trencher, Water Lines, Dirt Work

316.323.2060