



# THE TOWANDA HERALD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TOWANDA, KS

Volume 3, Issue 2

April 2026



## Response-Ready!

The City of Towanda Public Works crew provides services ranging from maintaining water and wastewater utilities, street care and maintenance, care of parks, pools, and facilities, mowing, and more.

This service requires versatile skills, training in many different disciplines, and equipment that works and is ready to roll when a response is needed.

The City is in process of building a plan to address fleet and equipment needs while also carefully managing City resources. Purchase of both a pump trailer and dump trailer were strategic first steps within this plan.

The City also is investing in training for its staff members to best serve Towanda.



Top: The recent purchase of a pump trailer (left) allows City crews to have all equipment gathered and respond efficiently to address water leaks. A new dump trailer (right) is less costly to operate than a dump truck and will equip many City functions year-round.

Bottom: Three Public Works staff members have recently completed training to better serve the City. Todd Harrison and Robert Beard both completed underground utility locator training, and Robert Beard and Rylan Rose both earned their Commercial Drivers Licenses in March.

## Citywide cleanup offers help for spring cleaning

The Towanda Citywide Cleanup Day will take place Saturday, April 4, 2026.

Waste Connections, the City's trash hauler, will run an extra route beginning at approximately 6 a.m., and will pick up items left at the curb.

City residents should place items for pickup at the same location as they would for standard weekly trash pick-up. Items may include bulky waste.

### The following guidelines MUST be observed:

1. No hazardous wastes (used motor oil, lead-based paint, car batteries)
2. No liquids of any kind will be accepted
3. No yard waste (grass, leaves, branches, limbs).
4. No refrigerators, freezers, or air conditioners
5. No tires
6. No construction/demo waste
7. All items must be placed at the curb by 6 a.m.

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# Letter from the Editor

In the world of newspapers, the front page photo feature, or centerpiece, is a key component of planning for each issue.

A picture is worth a thousand words, and is the opportunity to tell a key story, but much of what the City does each day is behind the scenes.

But, it's not for lack of photo options that I chose to feature photos of recent City investments. Rather, these photos represent early efforts toward a greater strategy to best serve the Towanda community through being response-ready.

When it comes to budgeting and spending City resources, I think of priorities in three key buckets.

First and foremost, the City is measured by those we serve on its ability to deliver outputs, such as uninterrupted utilities, quality customer service and assistance, and key underlying services that make Towanda a great place to live.

The other two key areas help accomplish what members of the public see. These are: 1) Hiring and training quality staff members to deliver these services day in and day out, and 2) Providing effective and reliable equipment so that when staff come to work they can do their jobs.

I'm pleased to say that when I was hired I came into an organization that is fully staffed, and I think we have great people as part of our staff team that deliv-



ers City services.

Many members of our public works team have only been with the City for a very short time, so it is exciting to watch them learn and grow through experience with the City, and also through training opportunities that increase their knowledge and reinforce the work they do each day.

Even if staff members are not new with the organization, the opportunity to keep staff trained helps us to best serve our community with current professional knowledge, new practices and innovations, and ideas from communities.

Finally, I prioritize making sure staff

have working equipment to effectively do their jobs. While cities experience equipment maintenance issues just like everyone else, keeping an ageing fleet going can mean unexpected downtime, additional costs, and extra frustration when equipment ages beyond reasonable repair.

With this in mind, the City of Towanda is developing a Municipal Equipment Replacement Plan to guide updates and replacements within our fleet. Within this plan, we are reviewing what equipment is needed for City operations, lifespan of current equipment, and strategies to align future updates with balanced budgets.

We're excited to share that we've made our first two investments, a pump trailer for use on water line leaks, and a dump trailer for multiple uses, and we've also identified some older equipment that can be sold and removed from the City's fleet. It is our hope that sales proceeds can help with future purchases, creating a fly-wheel effect to better our fleet and equipment in Towanda.

I hope this look behind the scenes is helpful as we enter City budget season, and I look forward to the community seeing and experiencing the results of these investments as we enhance our ability to serve.

Sarah Gooding

Towanda City Administrator

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

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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

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Zoning/Code Enforcement Lisa Long

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

Public Works Foreman Rylan Rose

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

# ‘Around Town’

## Health Matters group launches

Health Matters is a new group organizing to discuss, learn and share topics on health.

There will be an organizational meeting to discuss interests, topics, and meeting

times at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 11, at the Towanda Library. We welcome all input.

For questions, please email [gailtowandalibrary@gmail.com](mailto:gailtowandalibrary@gmail.com).

## Reminder: City requires dogs tags

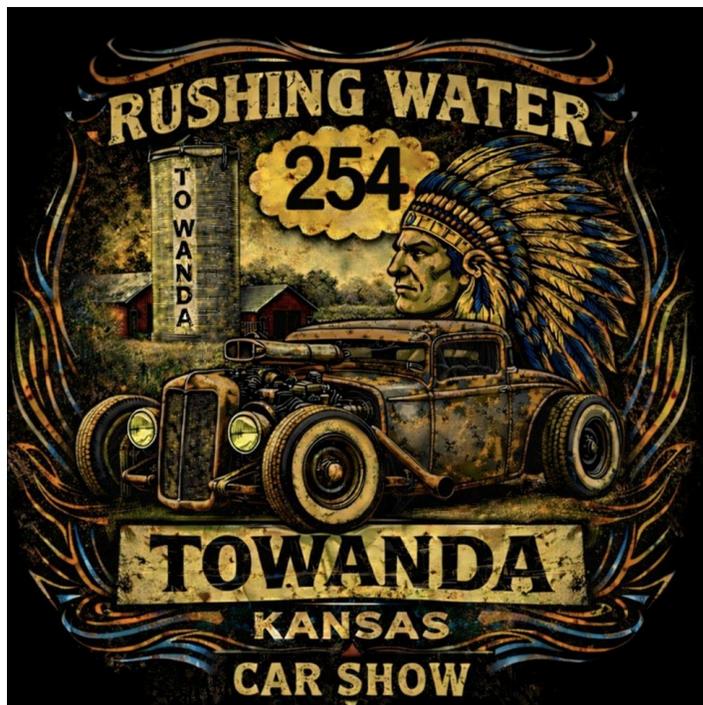
Please remember, dogs within the city limits must wear a collar with a city-issued dog tag at all times.

Having your dog licensed with the city helps us identify the dog’s owners and get him back home safe if he becomes lost.

It also helps ensure that dogs in Towanda have owners and are fully vaccinated.

Dog tags are available free of charge in the first three months of each year or if obtained within 30 days of a dog becoming a new resident of the city.

As of April 1, dog tags are \$10 per dog and can be picked up at City Hall with proof that your dog has received a current rabies immunization.



## Rushing Water Car Show

Hometown Action is helping host a first ever, Rushing Water Car Show Sept. 12 from 9 am to 3 pm, 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.

# MYERS AUTOMOTIVE



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# Towanda Area Historical Museum adds hours

The museum is open and is expanding its hours beginning in May, when the museum will add hours the third weekend of each month.

Current open times are the first weekend of the month, Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon.

**However, beginning in**

**May, the museum will also be open 1-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of each month.**

We will be closed Easter Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>. As always, you can contact us for a private tour.

This year we are focused on completion of the Tornado of 1892 exhibit, rotating exhibits of stored items, adding



a new History of the Railroad exhibit, adding QR codes to

exhibits for more information, completing some maintenance projects, and hosting the public for tours or community events.

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.



The Towanda Area Historical Museum is expanding hours in 2026, with open hours the third Saturday and Sunday of each month. Visitors to the museum can see exhibits featuring the Tornado of 1892, the History of the Railroad, and other rotating displays of Towanda history.

**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**

## Storm Shelter program reviewed; Shelter-in-Place Guidance shared

The City has received questions about storm shelters and is providing the following information and updates on local storm shelter services.

**First: Anytime there is severe weather in the forecast it's wise to have a plan to shelter in place. When the sirens blow, it's often too late to safely travel to a designated shelter.**

At our March 11 City Council meeting, the city administrator shared with Council that shelter services have been operated for years by one staff member who resides in Towanda, who leaves the safe-

ty of her home to travel across town and open the shelter. This has been done in the past as a service to the community, but it also puts a staff member at risk and increases City liability if that person were injured or killed while responding.

Additionally, consistency and communication are significant challenges during severe weather events. Some super-cells are forecast days in advance, but other tornados spin up from overnight thunderstorms. Pop-up storms prompt both volunteers and shelter-seekers to drive through dangerous conditions and the ac-

tive storm while the sirens are blowing, causing greater risk to life than sheltering in place.

At this time, **the City will NOT be opening a community storm shelter** and is reviewing strategy and options for next steps. This may look like a collaborative community effort in which those wishing to use the shelter might also volunteer to staff it. Again, consistency is key.

If you are interested in being part of a future solution, please use our website contact form or Facebook Messenger to share this interest with the City.

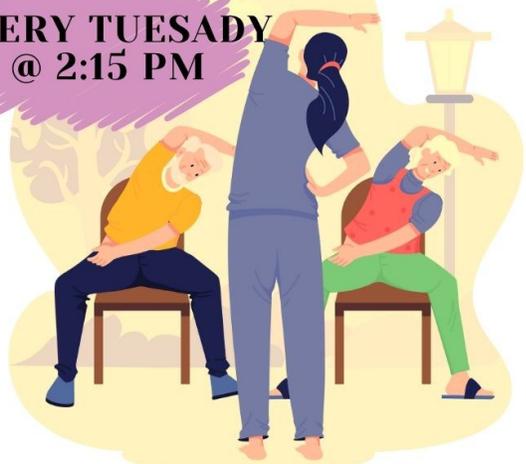
### Shelter-in-Place Guidance

- Go to the basement or lowest level in the structure.
- Shelter in a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level.
- Take your to-go bag and critical documents with you
- Manufactured home residents should go to a safe-room or storm shelter (a shelter is available at Pine Ridge).
- Consider coordinating with friends or neighbors for shelter planning.
- Complete any travel before the storm arrives. Travel during the storm is unsafe.

[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_shelter-in-place\\_guidance-tornado.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_shelter-in-place_guidance-tornado.pdf)

# 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.

BUTLER COUNTY DEPARTMENT ON AGING'S

# Spring Fling

## SENIOR RESOURCE FAIR

★ April 30, 2026 ★

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION

Visit over 100 Booths

Door Prizes at every booth

Free Shuttle & Parking

Monterey Lunches \$10

Free Health Screenings

Free Document Shredding

Free Photo Booth

Chance to win a Grand Prize

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**COMMUNITY BLDG**

206 N. Griffith



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Visit Spring Fling web page



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## Towanda Hometown Action Commission updates

The commission met March 19 at the Towanda Area Historical Museum.

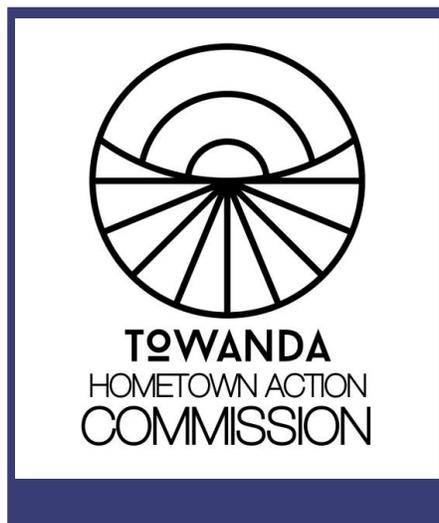
We are firming up a list of project ideas for 2026. If you would like to be a part of making Towanda a more beautiful and better place to live, please let us know via email, Facebook, or attending our next meeting at the Towanda Area Historical Museum at 6:30 p.m., Thursday April 16.

### Adopt A Pot

Planters downtown will feature flowers again this year. We *may* be expanding our efforts to include flower garden areas in conjunction with the City of Towanda. If you are interested in adopting a pot of flowers for Main Street or would be interested in adopting a library location or city entrance sign location, let us know at [towandahometown@gmail.com](mailto:towandahometown@gmail.com)

### Farmer's Market

The commission is in the beginning stages of hosting a Farmers' Market, prob-



ably the first part of June. We are learning the legalities and logistics of hosting such an event, but are hoping to have a mid-week, 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.

### Upcoming Events:

Towanda Area Historical Museum open for the year. March 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 1-4 p

Sew Crafty @ the museum (There will be no meeting in May.) April 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00 pm

## Get Involved!

**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-](mailto:towanda-hometown@gmail.com)**

**[hometown@gmail.com](mailto:hometown@gmail.com) or**

**Add your thoughts to our**

**Facebook group [https://](https://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction/?ref=share&mibextid=NSM)**

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**[WBT](https://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction/?ref=share&mibextid=NSM)**

## Book Club features new release by local author

The book Club will be held April Wednesday April 29 at 2 pm at the Towanda Public Library. This month's featured book discussion will be Sandra Lou Taylor's Third book in the Hadley Hope series, 'More Than a Little Turmoil'.

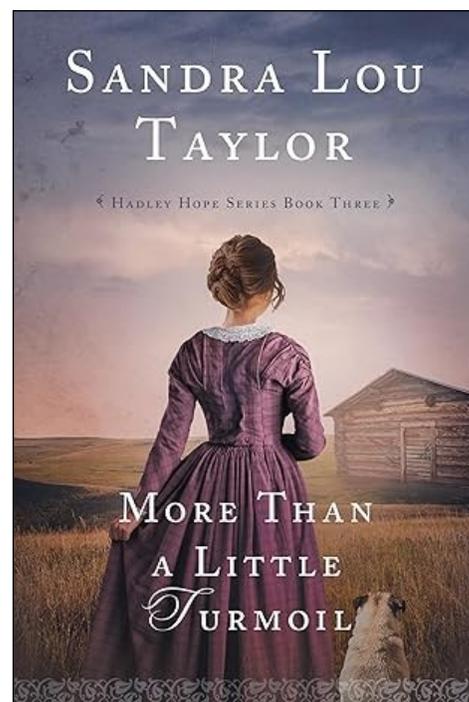
When the frontier became a battleground, ordinary people became heroes. Elizabeth Hadley envisions her family enduring mild hardships as she and Daniel build a new life in Kansas Territory in 1855. Instead of easily solved challenges, she finds herself thrown into a violent struggle that will determine the future of the United States.

Leaving behind the comfort of their

Indiana home, Elizabeth and Daniel navigate the dangers of living in a frontier community, sheltering fugitive slaves, enduring armed sieges, and protecting their growing family from pro-slavery vigilantes. She finds the strength to navigate the turbulent times through unwavering commitment to justice, the love of family, and faith in God.

This novel is based on actual events from the Bleeding Kansas era, the precursor to the Civil War. It is a story of ordinary people who risk everything to do what is right.

Sandra Taylor is from the Towanda Area and Taught in the Circle District for a number of years.



# BC 11 FD

## Butler County Fire District 11 - Towanda

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.

BCFD 11 Towanda presented at Circle High School concerning firefighting opportunities, both paid and volunteer. They also hosted a Touch a Truck and Water spray event for Special Education, ESOL, and Jag students.

### March Call Log:

- 27 calls this month so far.
- 12 Medical calls
- 7 grass fires
- 1 lift assist
- 1 CO alarm
- 1 electrical hazard
- 2 hazardous material leaks
- 1 standby for staffing at El Dorado Fire Station 2

### Membership/Training

Membership is currently at 15.

Training has been on apparatus knowledge and SCBA confidence/Search and Rescue in poor visibility.

### Upcoming:

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 Library.



Above: The annual Firefighter Appreciation dinner and awards was held February 28 at Fulton Valley Farms. Firefighters were recognized for their years of service and activities and awards. Firefighter Steve Holloway received Firefighter of the Year and Linda Pyle received Medical Responder of the Year. Firefighters and Board Members, as well as their guests, were invited.

Below: Volunteers served up all the fixin's of a full shrimp boil at the Fire District No. 11 fundraiser on Saturday, March 28. The department had lovely weather and long lines for the event, which drew many people from the Towanda community and beyond to enjoy the event.



# Get Involved!

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



### Towanda Hometown Action Commission

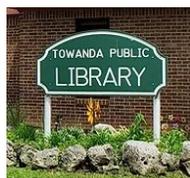
[www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction](http://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction)



### 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

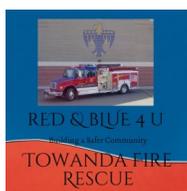
[Dkheitz19@gmail.com](mailto:Dkheitz19@gmail.com)



### 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.

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