



THE TOWANDA HERALD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TOWANDA, KS

Volume 3, Issue 1

March 2026

City makes updates at park, pool

The City of Towanda Public Works crew has been busy preparing for warmer weather.

Earlier this year, Council approved replacement of aging pool filters, and City crews revamped the space housing the filters ahead of installation.

Where the older filters were an eyesore and concrete was crumbling, public works employees replaced the concrete pad, addressed plumbing needs, built a wooden privacy fence, and coordinated the installation of a new triple-filter unit that prevents a pool shutdown if a filter fails.

The crew also is completing annual maintenance to clean, paint, and prep the pool ahead of the 2026 season.

Additionally, staff installed a permanent roof on the pool awning and has installed other fun spaces at the park, including a sand volleyball court and tetherball.

The City also developed a contract with Circle Recreation Commission for use and management of the park's ballfields through the 2026 season.

This contract makes the fields available for Circle Recreation ball practices, and com-

munity members or other organizations requesting practice space may reserve ballfields through CRC.

The hope for all of these additions and improvements is that the park becomes a more welcoming space for

residents and visitors to enjoy and that these will be valuable additions to City amenities for the community.



Above: A new tetherball and sand volleyball court have been added to the park to create additional recreation opportunities for the community. Public works crews used recycled materials where possible to control costs.



Left: Installation of new pool filters took place in mid-March. This gave the City an opportunity to clean up the visuals of the area, and new filters help avoid a failure that would shut down the pool for the season. Right: Crews added a permanent roof to the pool awning to provide a shaded area near the concession stand.



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Letter from the Editor

Hello Towanda!

The past few months I've been "Lovin' the Small Town Life" as I settle in at City Hall as your new City Administrator and while meeting members of the Towanda community.

It's been exciting to get a sense of the community's pride and dreams while also exploring where I can add my background and experience to serve Towanda well.

In particular, I'm excited to share my first edition of The Towanda Herald.

I'm deeply grateful for the people and organizations who contribute their time and talent in service to the community, as well as for their submissions that help keep the community informed and involved.

Producing the Herald also is a bit of a dream come true for me, with the opportunity to serve as your editor. This wasn't a role I ever thought I would have while working in local government, but I'm excited to provide news and information for the community as part of this role.

In many ways, this is a throwback to my first career as a community newspaper reporter. I began working as a cub reporter for my local weekly newspaper while in high school, continued my study of journalism in college, and worked for several



community newspapers and as a freelance journalist until 2017.

This career gave me opportunity to get to know communities of all sizes and types, provided a front-row seat into public decision-making and leadership, and opened my eyes to the roles and challenges of local government.

Additionally, I balanced my work as a community journalist with serving alongside my husband, who pastored small churches for 16 years, and now serves as a school counselor in a middle school in Wichita. In each place we've served, I've seen the incredible effort it takes to build

community, and in many places I've seen these efforts create beautiful results.

My passion for building community bridged the transition from journalism to earning my Master of Public Administration through Wichita State, and then working in local government in Derby, real property/housing initiatives in Wichita, consulting through the Public Policy and Management Center, and now serving Towanda in this role.

My hope is that the Herald can continue to be a valuable source of community information, as well as an opportunity to break down the complexities of City policy and operations and translate that information so residents can be aware of how the work done at City Hall affects their everyday lives.

I look forward to all that is ahead as I work with your elected City Council members, City staff, community organizations, and other partners to effectively serve Towanda.

And, I look forward to meeting many more members of the community, learn what is meaningful for you, and build that into effective City services that make the community all that it can be.

It's a joy to serve your community.
Sarah

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 Junes
clerk@cityoftowanda.com

Zoning Code Enforcement Lisa Long
zoning@cityoftowanda.com

Public Works Foreman Rylan Rose
super@cityoftowanda.com

‘Around Town’

Citywide cleanup day provides trash pickup, fresh start for spring

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.

The following guidelines **MUST** be observed:

1. No hazardous wastes (used motor oil, lead-based paint, car batteries, etc.)
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 (large amounts of wood/concrete, etc.)

1% water sales tax to begin

Last November, City of Towanda voters approved a 10-year, 1% sales tax to provide funding for updates to the City’s water system.

The aging water system has experienced leaks and water loss, with some leaks causing service interruptions or boil orders for City of Towanda residents. The proposed sales tax passed with

approximately 82% of the vote.

The sales tax will begin April 1, 2026, and run for 10 years, concluding March 31, 2036.

Local business will need to update their sales tax rates as of April 1, and those paying City sales tax on online orders will see the new rates take effect in April.

Garage Sale weekend in mid-May

Towanda’s Citywide Garage Sale Days will take place the third weekend in May.

Garage sale days officially begin Friday, May 15, and run through Saturday, May 16.

*Family and Friends,
Please join us
for cake & conversation
in celebration of*

*Brenda White’s
retirement*

*March 27th
from 1-5 p.m.
Vintage Bank Kansas
400 Main St
Towanda*



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 

News to Know

SW Ohio and SW 20th Roundabout Project scheduled for spring

The new roundabout project at SW Ohio Street & SW 20th Street is expected to begin the first week in May 2026.

This project consists of removing the bridge on SW Ohio Street overpassing SW 20th Street, along with two ramps and the median U-turn.

These will be replaced with a large, single-lane roundabout connecting the intersection legs of SW Ohio Street and SW 20th Street. This intersection will be closed during construction.

Butler County is responsible for the construction inspection of this project and will be communicating with emergency response services for emergency vehicle access. An official detour will be provided to the east of the project to direct trucks and vehicles on blacktop pavement. A local detour will be provided and maintained along SW 30th Street.

If you have any concerns, please contact Bronson Webb at Butler Count at 316-322-0305 or bwebb@bucoks.com.

Towanda area part of 2026 County appraisal review

In recent weeks, the Butler County Appraiser's Office has been conducting on-site inspections of real property as part of its 17% maintenance review.

The field staff will review the properties for accuracy of characteristic data and update records if necessary.

The review area is located from Turkey Creek Road to the western county boundary that is located between SW Parallel Street and SE/SW 60th Street. It excludes those properties that are located in

and around SE El Dorado that were relisted last year.

The inspection areas include the towns of Benton, Towanda, and part of El Dorado that is South of 6th Ave and west of High Street.

Field staff can be identified with Butler County photo identification badges and will be driving vehicles that are marked with Butler County.

Property owners with questions may contact the Butler County Appraiser's Office at (316) 322-4220.

Council Members take Oaths of Office

In January, Mayor Mike Hayes and Council Members Jennifer Watkins (later elected Council President) and Drew Shaults took their oaths of office. Each was elected last November for a four-year term.

Mayor Mike Hayes' election as Mayor left a vacancy for the remaining two years on his prior Council Seat. Angel Ramsey was appointed to fill the vacancy and took her oath of office in March.



Griffin Max Construction, Inc.



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

316.323.2060

News to Know

Council considers sales tax for streets, police

As of April 1, the City of Towanda will have two sales taxes on the books. In addition to a new sales tax on water, an existing sales tax has been collected since early 2017, and this 1% sales tax is scheduled to sunset in early 2027.

This older sales tax was designed to help cover multiple types of expenses, including of law enforcement, the swimming pool, and other general needs.

In recent years, this 1% sales tax has generated an average of \$175,000, which allows the City to fund these services without requiring an additional 17-18 mills in property tax.

Council members would like to continue to use other revenue sources, instead of just property tax, and have identified streets, sidewalk, and law enforcement as potential priorities for a future sales tax.

Staff are currently developing sales tax question options, and the City anticipates having a sales tax question on the August primary election ballot.

Making sense of property values and mill levies

Each year, the County Appraiser assigns an Appraised Value based on fair market value of the property.

Appraised value is multiplied by an assessment weighting. In Kansas, residential property is assessed at 11.5%.

The value of 1 mill on that home is 1/1000 of the Assessed Value.

Examples:

\$100,000 home (appraised) x 11.5% = \$11,500 Assessed value
1 mill = \$11.50

\$250,000 home (appraised) x 11.5% = \$28,750 Assessed Value
1 mill = \$28.75

Towanda residents pay mill levy rates for multiple taxing entities. Property tax statements reflect the total of all taxes.

2025 Mill Levies

State of Kansas	1.500
Butler County	29.625
City of Towanda/Library	43.577
Towanda Township	1.842
USD 375 /Circle Rec.	58.651
Fire District No. 11	6.483
Butler Community College	13.239
Total	154.917

Examples:

\$100,000 home (appraised)
\$11.50/mill = \$1,781.55

\$250,000 home (appraised)
\$28.75/mill = \$4,453.86

More information can be found at <https://www.bucoks.gov/183/Levies>

MYERS AUTOMOTIVE



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

Towanda Battery Co.



316-536-2969

424 Highland - Towanda, KS 67144

The Towanda Public Library

From the Library Director, Alecia Darrow

Hello everyone!

We have had a busy start to the year so far. We are finishing putting in the last of the books purchased from the Jan Kemp Memorial and rounding out the purchase of the 2025-2026 William Allen White reading lists. We are already prepping for our Summer Reading Program so we can have a calendar of events to hand out. We have gotten our Seed Library from KSU Research and Extension for people to use. Those will have additional varieties added throughout the season as planting times



advance. We have added 2 Experience Passes to our collection and are trying to add a few more. These are passes that can

be checked out for 3 days, used at their assigned locations, and returned. So far, we have The Exploration Place and Wichita Art Museum. We are also working on an after-school “come and go” program and are trying to come up with a program at the library for adults! If you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to send them to our email, message us on Facebook, or come in and tell us! Our goal is to serve as many groups as possible in our cozy little town.

Towanda Friends of the Library

At our February meeting, our first meeting of 2026, we reflected on the Towanda Christmas Party and how our ornament station went. We thought it went well!

We are planning our Easter Egg Hunt for Saturday, March 28 from 10-11am.

We are helping with local author San-

dra Taylor's book launch on Saturday, April 4 at 10:30 a.m. as she continues to explore the rich history of the rugged people who settled her home state of Kansas and developed its resources.

Sandra is a retired educator who spent most of her years working with children in Circle School District. As an active mem-

ber of Kansas Authors club, she enjoys encouraging others to harness their talents and embrace their creativity. In the *Hadley Hope Series*, Sandra brings history to life with romance and Christian values.

We also have an upcoming puzzle night. Keep an eye out for future details!

It's a Book Launch Party

Towanda Public Library
 APRIL 4
 10-NOON

- MEET THE AUTHOR
- REFRESHMENTS
- DRAWINGS
- DOOR PRIZES

The frontier:
 where ordinary people
 become heroes

More Than a Little Turmoil: Hadley Hope Series Book 3

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.

The Hadley family stands firm in their beliefs through dangerous rescues, drought, and political turmoil. While the men provide protection and provisions, Elizabeth wisely manages a household frequented by extended family members, runaway slaves, and people needing temporary shelter.

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.

EASTER

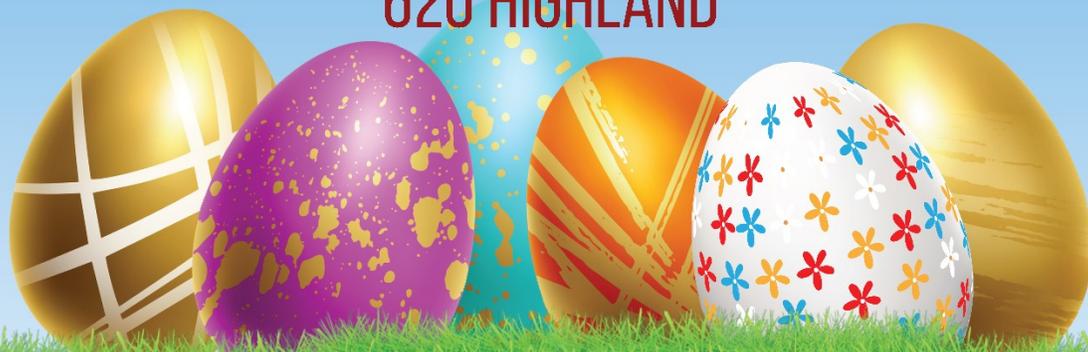
Egg Hunt

CANDY & PRIZES

SATURDAY, MARCH 28
10AM - 11AM

TOWANDA PUBLIC LIBRARY

620 HIGHLAND



SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF THE TOWANDA PUBLIC LIBRARY



Towanda Hometown Action Commission

The commission met on January 15 at the Towanda Area Historical Museum for our first meeting of the year.

Elections were held and the 2026 officers are:

President: Linda Pyle

Vice-President: Lindsay Cooley

Secretary/Treasurer: Sam Cooper

We reviewed last year's accomplishments and began a list of project ideas for 2026.

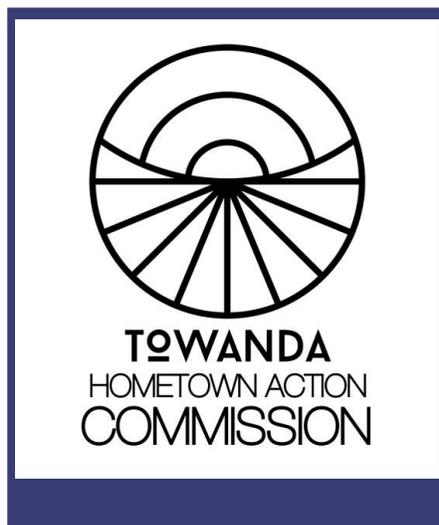
Our meeting in February was exciting! Several projects were firmed up. City Administrator Sarah Gooding attended and discussed partnerships between the city and us in the future.

Attend our next meeting at the Towanda Area Historical Museum on Thursday March 19, 2026, at 6:30 pm.

2025 was a big success!!

Our focus was on what small ways could we beautify our town and improve quality of life. The list below is what we were able to accomplish in 2025.

Adopt A Pot on Main Street. Local



residents adopted pots on the north side of Main Street in the downtown area and worked to keep them looking great all summer and into the fall.

Sign posts and Parking Railings at the Towanda Public Library were repainted in late spring after City Maintenance had built new planter beds and planted flowers.

Lions Club Sign Garden near the railroad tracks on East Main was repaired

and renovated. Lions Club replaced the sticker on the their sign.

Hosted a Clean Up Main Street Event Sept. 27. Volunteers pulled weeds from downtown sidewalks, trimmed grass along curbing, cleaned out curbs, and picked up trash. This was done the week before the high school Homecoming Parade. City Maintenance ran the street sweepers and local volunteer firefighters cleaned gutters.

Painted T-Bird Tracks down Main Street from the Towanda Community Church into the parking lot of Circle High School. This began on the afternoon of Sept. 27 and was completed before the Homecoming Parade by Hometown Action members and Firefighters.

October 21, **Hometown Action coordinated with Circle High School's Give Back** afternoon. 21 students and 2 sponsors worked with THAC volunteers, the Library Director, and City Maintenance workers to complete numerous projects in Norman Park and the Public Library:

After the city power-washed the **Shelter House and Gazebo** (and reroofed the



Towanda Hometown Action Commission

Gazebo), students primed both structures.

Weeded and “deadheaded” marigolds in front of the library

Trimmed trees and low-hanging branches from the cedars between the library and school

Inside the library, dusted shelving and placed marking stickers on movies and audiobooks

Helped organize and supervise with the City of Towanda Trunk or Treat.

Painted the grills with heat resistant paint in Norman Park by the library.

Hosted the Hometown Downtown Christmas Party at the end of November.

By working together with numerous organizations and individuals, our volunteers are making a difference. Will you

join us in 2026?

Adopt A Pot downtown will be going again this year. If you are interested in adopting a pot of flowers for Main Street, let us know at towanda-hometown@gmail.com

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

Upcoming:

Towanda Hometown Action Commission Meeting 3rd Thursdays @ the museum

March 28 @5-7 pm Butler County Fire District 11 Towanda’s annual Shrimp/Crawfish Boil at the Fire Station.

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 or

Add your thoughts to our Facebook group [https://](https://www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction/?ref=share&mibextid=NSM)

[www.facebook.com/](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)

Towanda Senior Center

Towanda Senior Center Happenings!!

The Senior Center is open on Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with lunch at noon on Fridays. A \$5 donation is suggested.

The Senior Center continues to offer chair yoga!! Classes are at 2:15 p.m. Every Tuesday in the Towanda Community Building, unless otherwise posted.

If playing cards is your game, we meet on Wednesday and Friday afternoons each week!

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.

BC 11 FD

Butler County Fire District 11 - Towanda

2025 in Review:

Total Number of calls for 2025: 346 calls for service. Of those, 109 were fire calls, 168 were medical, and 66 were other types of service calls such as lift assists and smoke detector alarms.

Members donated nearly 4800 hours working (staffing station, responding to



calls, repairs, refitting after calls, grant writing and coordination, etc.) and over 1000 hours in training!!

Calls for January 2026:

Total Number of calls: 31 calls this month. Numerous motor vehicle accidents, grass fires, a semi-trailer fire at the turnpike service center at the same time as a medical at the service center, and many other medical calls.

Calls for February as of 2/25/2026

This month has been busier so far than January with 30 calls. Numerous medical calls, vehicle accidents, grass fires, and illegal burns have kept members busy. (REMINDER: There is NO open burning within the city limits. You are not allowed to burn leaves or trash.)

Brush piles may be burned within the county IF a permit is granted from dispatch. Permits will only be granted if certain criteria are met and weather conditions allow.

Membership/Training/Work

Membership is currently at 15. Jared Bean was voted on as a member. We have been busy training on firefighting tool knowledge/apparatus location, apparatus awareness, a review of motor vehicle accident response, and cold weather response, in addition to several wildfire trainings.

Firefighters are working steadily in fabricating Pumper 7 for a new tank, booster reel, pump, and additional water sprays. 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.

GRANT AWARDS in 2025

The department continues to be good stewards of our tax-supported dollars by applying for grants. This year we applied for many grants and we were fortunate to be awarded several of them.

March 28, 5-7 p.m.

Crawfish/Shrimp Boil Fundraiser at the fire station

Come to the fire station at 130 S. 3rd for some great food and fellowship with our volunteer Firefighters and the Auxiliary.

Your generous donations will be set aside by the Volunteer Firefighters Association to be used for a new station or equipment!





We applied for but **were not** awarded: MSA grant for turnout gear and Kansas Fire Marshall grant for gear.

We applied for and **were** awarded:

National Volunteer Firefighter’s Council’s State Farm grant for 5 laptop computers. These will be used for training and record keeping purposes.

Volunteer Firefighter Assistance grant through the Kansas Forestry Service 50/50 match grant for foam systems for grass rigs and a chainsaw. Paperwork has been file and awaiting payment.

Kansas Firefighter Association’s

SAFER grant for new firefighter physicals and turn out gear. Approved, paperwork submitted, and awaiting final Federal approval and reimbursement.

The Volunteer Firefighters Association applied for and was awarded the HF Sinclair grant for \$3000, as well.

IMPORTANT EVENTS & DATES!!!

Feb. 28 was the Firefighter Appreciation dinner and awards at Fulton Valley Farms. FFs were recognized for their years of service and activities.

(Pictured: last year’s attendees)



Thank you to outgoing fire board members who helped guide us through that first year:

Mike Hayes

Mindy Runnalls

Dave Wohlgemuth

Dick Scott

Welcome to new board members:

Mark Ashenfelter

Representing Towanda Twp

Kevin Sawyer

representing Towanda City

Chris Stanyer

representing Towanda City

David Fyffe

representing Towanda Twp

Jeremy Hurt

representing Fairview (remaining initial board member)



Get Involved!

There are Loads of Ways to Volunteer in Towanda!



Towanda Hometown Action Commission

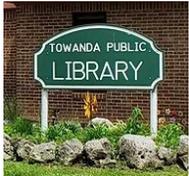
www.facebook.com/groups/towandahometownaction



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

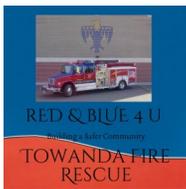
Dkheitz19@gmail.com



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.

Griffin Max Construction, Inc.



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

316.323.2060