# October 8, 2013

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• L&T staff report

Friends of Atwater State Park and Lake will host "Halloween in the Park" from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, at the park. Free hot dogs will be available for a $10 donation per person. All proceeds go to Atwater sponsorship of the park.

There will be trick-or-treating in the park and other dark, fun-themed trail. Participants are encouraged to dress up and support Friends of Atwater State Park and Lake.

## Fair association annual meeting set for Oct. 17

• L&T staff report

The Elks State Fair Association annual meeting will be at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 17, at the Seward County Activity Center. For anyone interested in joining the fair association and helping with the 2014 fair, please come and find out what it's all about. Membership is $10 per family. A mail-in ballot will also be submitted at $10 per family. A mail-in ballot will also be sent to those in attendance.

Ballots for the board will be now available under open on the fair board that will be voted on that evening.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 8, 2013
LEADER & TIMES
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## School board plans for public input at Wednesday meeting

### Competency grading up for discussion

By NICHE COOPMAN
• Leader & Times

The Liberal USD 480 board conducted its regular meeting Monday night in the Liberal Long Star of Texas in dwarf style. With two members, Crystal Clements, absent, and another, Tammy Sutherland-Sylvester, taking part by phone, the board wrapped up its business in a relatively short time.

The district's main board meeting will have a light week, however. In discussion, board members voiced optimism and concerns about upcoming meetings scheduled for the week.

Today, the board's Long Range Planning committee — members

• See BOARD/Page 5

## School financing

City to discuss adding 1/2-cent sales tax for school expansions to ballot for public approval at today's meeting

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## County approves fighting prairie chicken listing

By ROBERT PRICE
• Leader & Times

A resolution vote from the Seward County Commission Monday gave support to the listing of a proposed Lesser Prairie Chicken under the auspices of the Endangered Species Act.

After a lengthy discussion at its Sept. 16 meeting, the board of County Commissioners, back to Monday's meeting to put a small list to support Plans III of the directional plans.

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## Friends of the NRA sets date for annual banquet

• L&T staff report

There will be a Friends of the NRA Banquet on Oct. 19 at the Elks Lodge in Liberal.

Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. for registration and viewing of auction items. Dinner will be served at 7. Tickets are $25 for a single, $40 per couple, and $10 for children 12 and under.

Tickets are now available at First National Bank of Liberal, Hunter Warehouse of Liberal, or by calling or

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## Sen. Moran blasts VA for spending a half-million dollars on art

MORAN

### In letter to Sec. Shinseki, requests justification for purchase in third-floor of FY 2013

• Special to the Leader & Times

WASHINGTON (NC) — U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kans.), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, called on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on Monday to justify their purchase of $500,000 of artwork in the final days of the fiscal year.

"It is a time when the nation's standing debt threatens the well-being of our veterans and all Americans, and when spending across the government is being reduced, I fail to comprehend the reason why this purchase was authorized," Moran said in a letter to VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki.

Moran went on to request a justification for the purchase of the artwork, failing to prioritize the spending of taxpayers' dollars. The senator also noted that the money could have paid a half-million dollars's good use.

"Given the financial difficulties of our country in a set of unbelievable concerns, then the VA should have at least prioritized the needs of our veterans and provided the coordinate lengths of time to receive the items on Saturday January," Moran said in the. Shinseki. "These funds also would have been better spent filling positions in Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Kansas and other rural states where veterans are forced to travel long distances which the VA is struggling to respond adequately. Among these and many other priorities, the VA should be reconsidering what appropriations were not put to military use."

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently reported the purchases as part of a "one-of-a-kind" shopping spree by agencies that received funds from the Obama administration's stimulus program before Oct. 1. Additionally, there is concern that the purchase of the artwork was a discretionary funding levels in the future if appropriated funds are not spent by the end of each fiscal year.

## Kan. defends school funding decisions before court

TOPEKA (AP) — Attorneys for the state of Kansas will argue before the Kansas Supreme Court that parties suing the state over public school funding are being unreasonable in their demands.

At issue in Tuesday's hearing is whether the Supreme Court will uphold a lower-court ruling that the state's system for funding public schools is fiscal-feasibility for at least $440 million a year.

The court is hearing a lawsuit filed in 2010 by 54 school districts in Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita, Hutchinson, Kansas City and McLean. They argue the state has failed to comply with a 2006 court order to fund public schools.

The Kansas Constitution requires the Legislature to provide suitable funding for state schools. Gov. Sam Brownback, Stephen McAllister and State Sen. Jeff Longbine are parties.

A Supreme Court decision is anticipated by early January 2014.

In this Oct. 4, 2013 file photo, people gather in a car set ablaze on fire on the National Mall in Washington. Police on Monday identified the man, who later died, as John Constantine, 51, of Mount Laurel, N.J., though police had no more information on the possible reason. AP photo/Ray Lustig

## Family: Man who set self on fire was mentally ill

WASHINGTON (AP) — The church of a New Jersey man who set himself on fire near the Mall was the sounds of his long-lost voices, those not a political statement, his family said.

John Constantine, 51, of Mount Laurel, N.J., passed the sentiment of a minister of another on Monday, a day after he died from burns he sustained, police said. He then set himself ablaze, with passing joggers taking off their shirts to help put the flames out.

Police said Constantine was conscious and breathing at the scene, but he died later that night at a Washington hospital.

John Constantine was a loving father and

• See HOLY MON/Page 5

## Silver Lake man dies in riding mower accident

SILVER LAKE (AP) — Shawnee County authorities in Silver Lake man died in an apparent accident while mowing.

At 1:30 p.m. of Tuesday, Bernie M. Mendoza, was found Monday night around Jeanette, a riding lawn mower. Shawnee County sheriff's Lt. Jay Smoots says the man died at the scene.

Smoots says the sheriff's office was called about 10 p.m. Monday after Mendoza's family reported they hadn't heard from him since about 1 p.m.

The Shawnee County Coroner's Office in the Shawnee County Sheriff's office will determine the exact cause of death.


Vol. 128 • No. 140 • 18 Pages
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