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NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Sexual assault a growing epidemic

By ELLY GRIMM
• Leader & Times

According to the Centers for Disease Control in the United States, one in five women and one in 71 men have been raped in their lifetime, and on average, almost 500 women are raped or sexually assaulted each day in the United States.

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence says that in Kansas, approximately 245,000 women and 40,000 men will be raped in their lifetime and many more Kansans will experience other forms of sexual violence.

April is known as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the Liberal Area Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Services (LARC/DVS) continues to work in the area, offering several different services including individual advocacy, group support, criminal justice advocacy and temporary emergency shelter.

Lori Hensley, executive director of LARC/DVS, says that sexual assault is becoming a growing epidemic.

"Many people think that because we live in rural America it doesn't happen here but it does," she said. "If you would look at statistics there's probably as much or more sexual assault per capita in a rural community than there is in a large metropolitan area and the one thing that people need to understand is very few people that are violated by sexual assaults that it's a stranger."

In fact, the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence says that approximately 78.5 percent of Kansas rape offenders were known by their victims. However, Hensley says that there is a large amount of sexual assaults that go unreported.

"We do know from different statistics that come through law enforcement, criminal justice and the

See ASSAULT/Page 6A

State aid increase lowers property tax request for bond

• L&T staff report

With only four days to go before the bond election, and advance voting already taking place for more than a week, a change in the state formula for bond matching announced today will lower the request from property taxes should the bond be successful.

According to the Kansas State Department of Education, USD No. 480 will receive 54 percent support from the state rather than 49 percent. That means the property tax request to fund 29 percent of the project dropped to 24 percent.

Using a home of $100,000 as a guide, the original request for $9.49 per month will decrease to $7.57 per month, a 20-percent decrease in the amount needed to fund the bond proposal.

The new numbers were well received at central office.

"It will cost even less than I even thought," superintendent Paul Larkin said. "It makes me very proud and fortunate of where we are at with our financing. It will be even less of a burden to the property owners."

The district has been discussing the bond with the public, as has the Citizens for Responsible Growth, and sharing that 71 percent of the project would be funded by the state and sales tax with 29 percent from the property owners.

While the new numbers are considered estimates

See STATE AID/Page 3A

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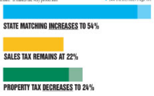

Kan. Senate passes expanded school funding plan

Senate says 'no' to funding Common Core

By JOHN MILBURN
• Associated Press

TOPEKA — The Kansas Senate approved a Republican education funding plan early Friday after expanding it to include a measure blocking public schools from using multistate reading and math standards.

The vote was 23-17 and sent the measure to the House, only hours after its Appropriations Committee finished work late Thursday on a more generous alternative plan. The full House planned to debate its measure later today.

Before the Senate's debate began, Majority Leader Terry Bruce, of Nickerson, urged GOP senators to vote for the proposal even if they thought it was flawed, to keep the Legislature's work on school funding issues progressing. Seven hours later, nine GOP senators broke with the party's leaders and joined all eight Democrats in opposing the bill.

Conservative Republicans have attacked the multistate Common Core reading and math standards since the State Board of Education adopted them in 2010. The measure GOP senators added to the funding plan, on a 27-12 vote, would prevent the spending of tax dollars on implementing the standards through June 2017.

Opponents see the Common Core standards as akin to federal standards, because federal officials have encouraged their use. Critics also say the standards take control of school courses away from states and local districts, and would be costly to put into effect.

"We are in control of the purse, and with that control comes responsibility and accountability," said Sen. Dennis Pyle, a conservative Hiawatha Republican.

But the standards were an initiative of governors' and education commissioners' associations, and supporters say they'll improve teaching nationwide.

"The Common Core standards have the potential to do the best possible curriculum for students across the country," said Terry Forsyth, a lobbyist for the Kansas National Education Association, the state's largest teachers' union.

Conservatives also amended the bill to make it easier for school administrators to fire teachers who've been on the job for more than three years. Supporters said the current administrative due process laws make it difficult to remove teachers who are underperforming and ineffective in the classroom.

The Senate Republicans' plan is designed to satisfy a Kansas Supreme Court decision directing lawmakers to boost aid to poor districts by July. Senators expected to consider multiple changes and vote on the bill late Thursday night.

The measure increases aid to poor districts by $129 million annually to reverse part, recession-driven cuts in funding. The bill offsets part of the cost by trimming state aid to all districts for online classes and transportation programs.

The bill also ties changes in aid to school districts to other education policies sought by conservatives, including a proposal to give families sending their children to private schools a tax break of up to $2,500 a year.

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, a Topeka Democrat, argued that

See SENATE/Page 3A

Kansas state Sen. Forrest Knox, standing, left, an Altoona Republican, discusses his proposal aimed at blocking schools from using Common Core standards for reading and math, with Sen. Jim Denning, right, an Overland Park Republican, Thursday at the Statehouse in Topeka. Senators have added the proposal to a school funding plan. AP photo/John Hanna

Water rates in Salina aimed at keeping precious commodity

By GORDON D. FIEDLER
• Salina Journal

SALINA (AP) — Salina's water rates designed to help decrease consumption of a precious commodity.

City water customers who are unsure if Salina is serious about conservation need only to become profligate with the garden hose this summer to clear up any doubts.

Salina abandoned its declining rate structure, which rewarded high use with lower cost, in favor of charging more for excess consumption.

"It used to be, the more you used the less it cost you," said Martha Tasker, director of utilities. "In 2008 we changed that. Now we have a water conservation rate. Many would give it a much fouler name."

The level of usage above which the conservation rate kicks in depends on a household's base consumption.

Here's how it works:

The city records a household's winter quarter consumption rate – the amount of water used in January through March. That amount might be anywhere from 5,000 gallons a month to 10,000 gallons, depending on the size of household and personal water use.

The customer then is allowed to use 120 percent more than that each month before breaching the conservation threshold. This applies only to users who consume at least 6,000 gallons a month. The city spots all customers 6,000 gallons, so those who may use, say, 1,000 gallons, won't reach the excess fee limit until they go over 6,000 gallons, not 1,200 gallons.

However, a household that averages 10,000 gallons a month during the three-month winter quarter would be able to use 12,000 gallons a month without paying the higher rate.

"Any water you use over that you pay an excess use rate for," Tasker said.

For that first 12,000 gallons, the city charges $4.20 per 1,000 gallons. That comes to $50.40 a month, plus meter fees and taxes. Each 1,000 gallons over that, however, soaks the user for $8.40. So if the user instead consumes 13,000 gallons, that extra 1,000 gallons adds $8.40 to the bill, or $58.80.

The change attempts to encourage customers to be water misers.

"It doesn't make sense if the more you use the less it costs. You're not going to be very careful with how much you use," she said.

The city draws its water from groundwater and from the Smoky

See SALINA/Page 6A

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