

In Brief

Ivester says he won't run

Senate Caucus Chair Tom Ivester announced Thursday that he has decided not to seek another term in the Oklahoma State Senate.

Ivester represents District 26, which includes portions of Kingfisher, Beckham, Blaine, Custer and Roger Mills counties.

Ivester, D-Sayre, issued the following comments on his decision:

"My wife and I have decided that it is time to pass the torch off to someone else to serve the people of Senate District 26. After prayerful consideration over the holidays we made the decision that I will not run for reelection. My time in the Oklahoma State Senate has been a tremendous experience. It is an honor to represent the great people of southwest Oklahoma.

"Personally, I want to spend more time with my family. It is difficult to be away from home four months each year during the legislative session. More importantly, my wife and I feel that God is calling us in a different direction at this time in our lives.

"I want to thank all those who have supported our efforts to improve the state. In the tradition of Cincinnati, my service is done and I am going home."

Ivester has served in the state senate since 2006 when he won the seat which had been held by term-limited Democrat Gilmer Capps.

Ivester went unchallenged in his re-election bid for the seat in 2010. He has served as Democratic Caucus Chair since 2011. He is an attorney in his hometown of Sayre, OK, where he lives with his wife and three young children.

Ivester works with his uncle in the same small-town law practice that his grandfather started in 1927.

He serves as a lieutenant colonel in the Oklahoma Army National Guard.

School board meetings slated

The Kingfisher School Board will discuss and possibly act on a contract with Joe D. Hall General Contractors to serve as construction manager for projects related to an April 1 bond election at the February meeting at 7 p.m. Monday.

Other action items on the agenda include an out-of-state band trip to San Antonio in April 2015, a statutory waiver on 2014-15 parent-teacher conferences, the proposed 2014-15 school calendar, two fundraiser activities (candy sales), one for the senior class and another for the speech-drama department, a memorandum of agreement with Americorps, possible awarding of a contract for the softball field lighting project and the superintendent's report.

After an executive session, the board is scheduled to act on employment of a fourth grade teacher through emergency certification process.

January sales tax receipts in

The Oklahoma Tax Commission has released sales tax distributions to state cities, towns and counties for January 2014.

The announced amounts for the following selected entities include: Cashion, \$10,463.29; Dover, \$11,233.18; Enid, \$2,885,118.66; Geary, \$30,972.41; Greenfield, \$505.48; Guthrie, \$403,793.94; Loyal, \$522.75; Hennessey, \$90,156.43; Hitchcock, \$591.56; Kingfisher, \$249,850.45; Oklahoma City, \$34,601,616.69; Seiling, [See Tax Page 11]

County jury awards contractor \$500,000 against mayor, over \$2 million total

A Kingfisher County jury returned a verdict Thursday afternoon awarding a Lone Wolf contractor \$150,000 in actual damages and \$350,000 in punitive damages from Kingfisher Mayor Jack Stuteville and another \$1.268 million in punitive damages from former Florida underwriter Larry Wright and his company The Underwriters Group Inc.

The city of Kingfisher and former city manager Richard Reynolds were dismissed as defendants Wednesday morning in the lawsuit filed by Pridex Construction and its owner Chris Poindexter after the parties announced a settlement (see related story).

The settlement agreement came at

the conclusion of the plaintiff's case after Oklahoma City attorney Margaret Love successfully argued Pridex had failed to prove most of the claims against her clients, Reynolds and the city.

District Judge Paul Woodward dismissed three of the four claims still pending against Reynolds as well as a claim against the city seeking return of the cash bid bond Pridex posted when it submitted a bid on a city drainage improvement project in 2011.

The only claim remaining against the city concerned reimbursement of the funds Pridex expended on preliminary work before the city commission voted to reverse its decision

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Pridex settles with city, former CM for \$50K

Details of the city of Kingfisher and former city manager Richard Reynolds' settlement with Pridex Construction LLC were not disclosed to jurors, but officials told the *Times and Free Press* Thursday that the city and its liability insurance carrier will pay a total of \$50,000.

The city's share will consist of returning Pridex LLC's check in the amount of \$23,548.20, the cash bond the company submitted with its bid in March 2011.

Because the check has never been deposited, "returning it won't have any financial impact on the city," City Manager Dave Slezickey said.

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Amputee to share personal story with students



KINGFISHER CHAMBER speaker Todd Huston scales one of the country's highest peaks.

The keynote speaker at this year's Kingfisher Chamber of Commerce banquet also will be sharing his story of personal courage with Kingfisher school students earlier in the day.

"Kingfisher...Reaching New Heights," is the theme of this year's banquet.

Todd Huston, an amputee who overcame his personal challenges to reach the summit of the highest peaks in all 50 states in less than 67 days, will speak to Kingfisher public school and Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School students at two assemblies Monday morning, Feb. 10, before speaking at the chamber banquet at 6:30 p.m. at the Kingfisher County Fairgrounds Exhibit Building.

"The chamber board felt his personal story and his motivational message would be such a benefit to our students that we're sponsoring him

to speak at the schools as well as the banquet," Chamber Manager Judy Whipple said.

Huston got his legs caught in a boat propeller at age 14, then battled through several surgeries in an effort to keep his legs, but bone disease eventually forced the amputation of one leg.

Huston eventually became a psychotherapist and clinical director of the Amputee Resource Center in California and also worked in psychiatric hospitals for adults, adolescents and children.

He used his professional skills and personal experiences to help patients facing similar challenges and also trained health-care professionals and written articles in working with individuals coping with disabilities.

Then Huston completed a world record-setting Summit America ex-

pedition by climbing to the highest elevations of all 50 states in only 66 days 22 hours and 47 minutes, shattering the original record by 35 days.

He has been featured in thousands of publications throughout the world, including the popular book, *Chicken Soup for the Soul, A Second Helping*.

He has appeared as a special guest on CBS Year in Sports and on most major broadcast and cable news networks.

In addition to earning a number of distinguished honors, Huston shared his story in a book, *More than Mountains: The Todd Huston Story*, and has hosted inspirational radio and television programs.

Tickets to the chamber banquet, which also will feature presentation of Kingfisher's Citizen of the Year and Volunteer of the Year awards, are available now at the chamber office and all four Kingfisher banks.

School answers questions about proposal

[Ed. note: In order to help Kingfisher School District patrons better understand the recent school board decision to call for a bond issue election April 1, the school administration has prepared responses to the following questions and authorized the Times and Free Press to publish them as a service to its readers.]

Why are bond issues necessary?
Most of the general fund at any school district is used for salaries, utilities and other recurring operating expenses and the money generated in a district's building fund is only enough to maintain existing buildings. The anticipated cost of needed construction and improvements throughout the district greatly exceeds our current resources. Simply put, we would be unable to keep up with student growth without issuing bonds.

How will this bond money be used?

Based on needs identified by school personnel and a capital improvement committee of community volunteers and also based on responses to a community survey, the following projects are included:

- A secure entry at Gilmore with new and renovated office space.
- Renovating the Gilmore basement to create a safe room, dining area and other usable space and installing fire sprinklers throughout the school.

• Adding two classrooms at Heritage that can also serve as handicapped-accessible safe rooms.

• A secure vestibule entry at the high school and expansion of the high school cafeteria.

• A new fine arts center at the high school, which will include an auditorium and band, vocal and speech-debate classrooms, plus renovation of those existing classrooms.

• A new gymnasium at the middle school.

• Furniture and equipment for the new rooms, KHS cafeteria expansion and basement dining hall at Gilmore.

• Technology upgrades.

• Two buses and two SUVs.

This bond issue does not include any funds for the construction, furniture or equipment for the proposed new Multi-Purpose Building, which will be financed entirely through private donations.

Which students will benefit from this bond initiative?

The short answer is - all of them. As the above list illustrates, new construction at each campus will enhance safety for all students and allow us to continue to provide the best education in improved and expanded facilities.

Why does the high school need a secured front entry?

Although the high school office faces the front doors, it's a busy place and someone can easily walk in the front doors without attracting the attention of someone in the front office. The secure entrance would utilize a second set of doors that will be locked after school starts, creating a vestibule where visitors must stop and be identified on a video camera before the door is opened via a remote lock release. The vestibule also would serve as an airlock to increase energy efficiency.

Why does Gilmore need additional office space and a secured front entry?

Although visitors are required to sign in at the office, the front door is not visible from the office, leaving the first grade hallway easily accessible to intruders. Also, the office area is completely open with no place to secure confidential student documents or student medication and no security for office staff. The new entry is primarily designed for safety, but also would include additional office space for therapists, professional counselors, psychologists, social workers, mentors and other volunteers to better serve our students. The addition also will include a comfortable meet-

ing room for IEP team meetings and parent conferences. Currently, small storage closets are being used to house outside agencies that serve our school.

Why do we need a new Fine Arts Center (auditorium plus band, vocal and speech and debate classrooms)?

The current auditorium, which seats around 500 people, was built in 1959. Even though it has been remodeled, it no longer meets the needs of the district or the community. The planned Fine Arts Center will be constructed at the high school and will seat 900 people. The new facility will include band, vocal and speech and debate rooms to accommodate our growing high school fine arts programs. As a bonus, the existing rooms for those classes will be freed up for additional classroom space in the high school. Hennessey Public School's new auditorium is an example of how a first-class performance venue is utilized by the entire community.

Why does the cafeteria at the high school need to be expanded?

The existing cafeteria is too small to accommodate all of the high school students at one time. With the expansion of the cafeteria, including the addition of a new serving line and other improvements, all high school students can be served in one lunch

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FIRST COMBINE

The daughters of Herb Vieth, Cheryl Kale, Karen Knight and Gina Vieth, donated the first self-propelled combine ever purchased in the county to the Chisholm Trail Museum last week. Delivered in the early 1940s to the Vieth brothers, Herb, Elmer, Alvin and Milton, the rare model was built with galvanized sheet metal and sometimes referred to as the "Silver Queen." Southside Auto Body loaned the use of a semi and driver Justin Muegenborg, far right, to deliver the combine, while volunteers Tom Kloepfel, museum board member John Gilmore and Albert Kloepfel helped with the delivery. More information about the combine will appear in next week's paper. The museum welcomes the efforts of any volunteers who would like to help with its restoration.