



County raises fees to lawyers

By Heather Alwin
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Attorneys working on Child in Need of Care cases will now receive \$75 an hour for their work, a \$25 per hour increase approved Friday by the Thomas County Commissioners to bring the pay rate for these cases in line with the rates paid for felony and misdemeanor cases.

Attorney Justin Barrett of Barrett Law Firm P.A. requested the change on behalf of the Thomas County attorneys who take these types of cases.

In Child in Need of Care cases, children are represented by a guardian ad litem, an attorney appointed to look after the best interests of the child. Since these cases often involve the potential termination of a parent's rights, the court also appoints attorneys

to represent the parents, said Barrett. Sometimes, grandparents also have attorneys appointed to represent their rights.

Attorneys appointed to take these cases bill their hours to the court. The court can charge these costs to the parents involved, though the county absorbs the cost when the parents cannot pay.

Barrett argued the \$50 per hour rate barely covers attorneys' expenses. He referred to the state Board of Indigent Defense Fund's estimate that the first \$30 per hour of an attorney's time goes to cover basic overhead expenses.

A Kansas Bar Association study, he said, shows the median cost of operating a law practice in Kansas is \$60,000 per year just to pay overhead expenses like office rent, utilities and secretarial support. The average statewide rate

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Father's medal comes home to Wichita

By Roy Wenzl
The Wichita Eagle

PILSEN (AP) — At the pulpit in the church where war hero Emil Kapaun was baptized in 1916 — and where he said his first Mass as a Catholic priest in 1940 — nephew Ray Kapaun on Sunday stood a few feet from his uncle's Medal of Honor and told hundreds of people that the medal had come home, where it belonged.

He said it belonged among the people who first believed in Father Kapaun, long before he joined the Army as a chaplain, long before he died a martyr and a hero in a Korean War prison camp in May 1951.

"The medal has made it home for everyone to see and to remember what his life was about," Ray Kapaun said.

Fighting back tears, Ray Kapaun then said that before the day ended on Sunday, he would borrow the medal, still inside the glass-and-wood casing that has held it since it was handed to him at a White House ceremony in April. And he said he'd take a little walk outside.

Across the street and a short walk north of the church was the little house where Emil Kapaun was born and where Ray Kapaun used to sit with his grandmother Bessie, Emil Kapaun's mother.

She would cry sometimes in the

years after her son's death. And she would wonder aloud to Ray whether her son would ever be awarded the Medal of Honor, as so many of his soldier friends told her he deserved.

"I'm going to walk over there and stand on that porch," Ray Kapaun told parishioners in St. John Nepomucene Church, "and I'm going to hold the medal and tell Grandma: 'The medal has come home.'"

Ray Kapaun presented the medal to the town of Pilsen during Father Kapaun Day, an annual celebration of the Kansas farm boy and priest's life that began years ago. The Wichita Eagle reported (bit.ly/19BE6b3).

Over two days, there were speeches; dinners; the baking in Pilsen of kolaches, a traditional Czech pastry; and a 60-mile walk from Wichita to Pilsen, in Marion County. The walk honored Kapaun by imitating in part the ordeal of the march to prison camps that Kapaun and hundreds of U.S. Army soldiers endured in Korea after they were captured at the battle of Unsan in 1950.

In the walk this year, said the Rev. John Hotze, a Wichita Diocese Catholic priest who said Mass in Pilsen on Sunday, were 170 walkers, most of them sleeping in tents during the three-day hike.

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Aircraft maker delivers No. 4,000

WICHITA (AP) — Wichita aircraft maker Beechcraft is celebrating the delivery of its 4,000th Model 36 Bonanza plane.

Beechcraft employees were scheduled to join Chief Executive Officer Bill Boisture at a ceremony today to hand over the keys

to the customer at the company's headquarters here.

Beechcraft Corp., formerly Hawker Beechcraft, emerged in February from bankruptcy protection as a slimmed-down company, focused on the successful Beechcraft line of propeller-driven general aviation aircraft, plus a couple of Hawker jet models.



TONY PACELLI/SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

A mobile home at Colby Trailer Village went up in flames Saturday night (above). Firemen surrounded the blaze and spent several hours getting it under control (below), but the flames spread to an adjacent trailer. By the time the fire died down, the first trailer was burned to the ground and the other one had been gutted (bottom).

Fire strikes trailer park

By Sam Dieter
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One trailer burned to the ground and the one next to it was gutted by a fire Saturday night at the Colby Trailer Village along East Fourth Street, or U.S. 24, at the east edge of town.

Chief Bob McLemore said the fire department got a call at about 10:30 p.m. and the fire was under control by midnight. As the one mobile home burned to the ground, the one next to it — which sits at the end of a row of trailers — caught fire. Smoke from the blaze appeared to stretch across half the town by 11:30 p.m., and fire fighters cordoned off much of the trailer park.

Richard Schutte, a resident of the trailer park, said he noticed the fire while he was hanging out in his yard with a friend.

"We were over in my yard when we saw the trees start on fire," he said.

He said he and his friend, Paul Lynn, tried to get the trailer open, but the door was too hot. They ran over to the next trailer, which was being rented by Austin Plumisto, kicked the door in and got a dog out.

Then, he said, they went around waking up the park residents and telling them to leave.

Schutte and a neighbor, Leon Zerr, who lives next to the trailer that burned down, said two dogs lived in that trailer, and they must have been killed in the fire. Chief McLemore confirmed that two dogs were missing in the first trailer to catch fire.

They referred to the man living in the trailer as Sunny, but McLemore said his name was Lewis Creighton. McLemore confirmed that Austin Plumisto was living in the second trailer to catch fire, along with Tyson Plumisto, although he was not sure of the spelling of Tyson's name.

Schutte and Zerr added that Austin Plumisto had ammunition in his trailer, and they heard it go off as it burned. The side of a pickup truck next to that trailer melted.

Zerr credited Dwayne Plumisto, a captain with the fire department, with saving his trailer by having water sprayed on it to stop the flames from the one next door.

"He's the one who kind of directed them down to my house," Zerr said. "He did a tremendous job."

McLemore said firemen had to haul water to the area by tanker, since it's outside the city limits and does not have a fire hydrant. The nearest hydrants are at Colby Wrecking Yard, to the east about a quarter mile and across U.S. 24 from the trailer park, or at the intersection of First Street Annex and Fourth to the west.

"We're just lucky the wind didn't come up here and change direction," Schutte said.

He and Zerr said the damage could have been much worse, pointing out that there are lots of trees in the park, and the yards are filled with flammable items. A pile of wood in Creighton's yard was mostly untouched by the blaze.

They said Sunday afternoon that fire fighters were

still at the scene that morning. McLemore said the state fire marshal's office is sending an investigator to help him search for the cause.

