

# City approved electric rate increase for all users

RATE, from Page 1

than Option Two, but it would bring in less revenue.

Commissioner Bill Finley, who was initially in favor of a compromise between the two options, said he didn't think businesses could take the kind of increased rates in Option Two. He said he acknowledged that Option One did not raise enough money, and that would have

to made up with cuts elsewhere.

Commissioner Jenifer Sanderson favored Option Two, saying she didn't know many businesses that were \$20 away from folding, but there might be residents who were a \$20 utility bill increase away from being able to buy medicine. Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said the city has to have a money set aside for operating costs and future repairs.

"We need to keep up or all of a sudden we have a problem," she said.

Commissioner Gary Farris, who supported the lower increase, said the city shouldn't worry about setting money aside.

Garcia suggested a compromise between the two options, one that raised about \$800,000 in revenue, but included smaller increases for commercial rates than Option Two.

Gerber said the city staff could put together any scenario the the commissioners wanted.

Fairbanks said that the commissioners could nitpick the issue to death, but sooner or later they would have to do something. She said the staff has been conscientious in putting together the options. Either course will make some people unhappy, she said.

Fairbanks made a motion to ac-

cept Option Two, which failed 3-2. She and Sanderson voted yes, Garcia, Finley and Farris voted no.

Gerber said the city staff could work on the compromise Garcia proposed, but after going through the budget later that evening, the commissioners discussed the rate increase again. This time when Fairbanks made the motion to go with Option 2, it passed 3-2, this time with Finley voting in favor.

Mayor John Garcia said he wanted to make sure constituents know that this is a cost that the city is facing, and passing along to its utility customers.

"There were always going to be some added costs from that long-term contract," he said. "Our hands were tied."

# Attorney general talks case work

ATTORNEY, from Page 1

Schmidt spoke about the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. Most people don't realize the KBI is a division of the Attorney General's Office, Schmidt said. He said he has been focusing on building a proper relationship between his office and the KBI as well as improving the agency in some areas that had been allowed to atrophy.

For instance, he said, the KBI only had one firearms examiner. That meant that turnaround on any firearms analysis for a case could be as much as 48 months. Now the

KBI has hired another two examiners. The KBI was also lacking in digital forensic investigators. With the increasing importance of digital evidence from cell phones and other electronics, Schmidt said he spoke to the state Legislature and got funding to go from one investigator to nine.

"None of this comes free," he said. "But we're trying to stay tight-fisted."

Two of those eight new investigators will be hired in partnership with local or federal agencies, he said.

The Attorney General's Office is also the principal enforcer against

consumer fraud, he said. The office tries to take all the cases of fraud it can, even small amounts.

Schmidt spoke about several headline cases his office is working on. Kansas and Nebraska will soon go to trial again over usage of water from the Republican River. Schmidt said the states had come to an agreement and an earlier case was dismissed, however the case is back in court, this time against Nebraska for violating a court order.

The bulk of the school finances trial is finished, he said, and no matter who wins, the loser will likely appeal.

# Designation means more resources

CANCER, from Page 1

was one of the key parts of getting the designation. The 16-member group brings together hospitals, research institutions, physicians, nurses and patients in Kansas and Western Missouri with the aim of improving the quality of treatment, prevention and early detection.

Alliance members have access to resources — such as survivorship studies, education, second opinions or support group teleconferencing — and can share best

practices with other members.

Goodland was one of the earliest members of the Alliance.

"We were in on it from the ground floor," Goodwin said. "We're excited to be seeing more and more resources and services pushed out to the community."

Goodwin was the one who identified a need for the support group teleconferencing. This allows support groups in far flung areas to have access to guest speakers who would not otherwise be able to make the trip.

The Alliance will play an even

bigger role as the Cancer Center takes the next step toward being designated as a Comprehensive Cancer Center. That designation would allow the Center to focus on outreach and prevention research.

"We're excited to be working toward that," Jensen said.

It will take another four to five years of work to obtain that designation. The cancer institute designation is a five year program, Jensen said, and re-applications must be submitted a year in advance.

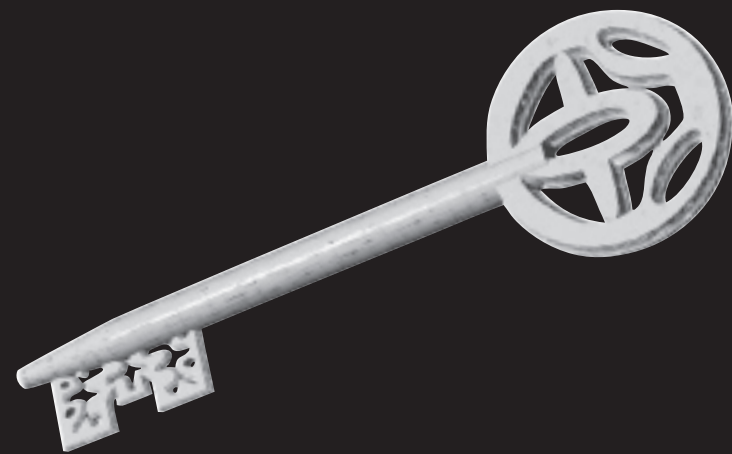
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