

* Runway already open for air traffic

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 \$8.15 million.
 The current runway, said Mr. Metcalf, is the shortest in northwest Kansas, at 3,490 feet long. Before Phase 1, which included recycling the pavement and rebuilding the entire runway, it was 3,790 feet. This length, 300 feet shorter than before the renovations, could make it hard for air ambulance planes to land, at least during hot weather. The insurance for such planes requires that the runway be long enough that they can accelerate to take-off speed and then shut down in case of an emergency, Mr. Metcalf said. "They have landed there for a long time," he added, "but they don't like to, particularly when it's hot. Temperature affects the lift of a plane's wing, he said, and if the temperature is below 85 degrees, at night and most days of the year, the runway length isn't a problem. If it is hotter, however, the rebuilt runway

isn't long enough for a larger plane to accelerate and then shut down, Mr. Metcalf said.
 The runway wound up 300 feet shorter because the federal agency has new rules that require a safety zone between the end of a runway and a highway or developed area, such as the county fairground to the south. The runway end had to be moved 300 feet to the north to clear that area, but because of a drop off at the north end, it couldn't be extended another 300 feet to preserve the length.
 Originally, the Federal Aviation Administration said they would help pay for a new 4,800-foot runway, said Mr. Metcalf. Then, the Kansas Department of Transportation said they would contribute money to make it a 5,500-foot runway. However, neither organization has put up any money for the expansion so far, he said.

Stock water gets state help

The Kansas State Conservation Commission has approved a plan to work with livestock producers on a cost-share program to improve livestock water supplies.
 The state Department of Agriculture's Division of Conservation says stockmen should apply to restore existing ponds, wells or spring developments and other water-storage projects. Officials report, however, that initial requests already total about 10 times the money available.
 The commission, with five elected and four appointed members, approved the use of \$500,000 of cost-share money to provide help to stockmen affected by drought.
 They have 45 days to sign up for this initiative, which could give them up to \$2,000 per project and up to \$4,000 per landowner. Projects will be considered and approved on

a first-come, first-served basis.
 The division will collect applications submitted through county conservation districts and then process and approve individual contracts.
 "The impacts of this drought are being felt far and wide and will continue to be felt even after rain arrives," said Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman. "We are here to help producers cope with the drought today, but also to help them recover and plan for future droughts."
 Cost-share money can be used for sediment removal, spillway replacement or embankment seeding. Rodman said the division and the conservation districts will be flexible to help producers meet the criteria.
 Projects for well and spring development and new ponds will follow current policy requirements.

Getting ready for traffic



CONCRETE WAS POURED out of a revolving tank, into a pumper truck, up and out a spout, and then finally through a pipe that led to the forms of the new bridge 13 miles south of Oberlin and a mile west of U.S. 83. The bridge, poured last Tuesday, will likely be finished in the next few weeks.
 - Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

* Youths visit county

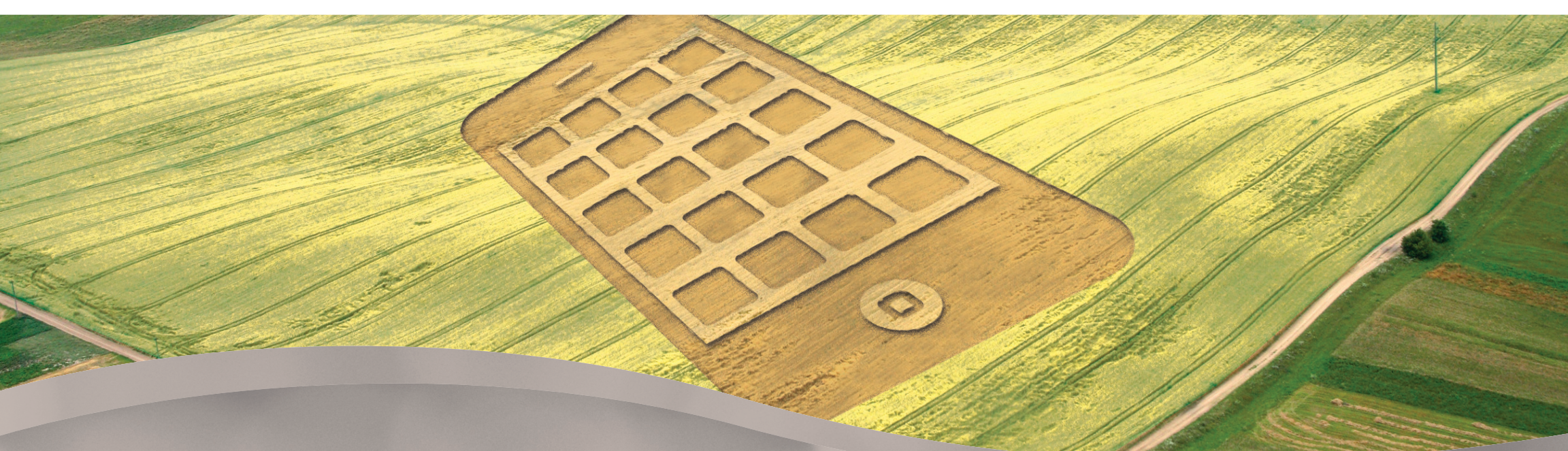
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 They visited the extension office, the office of the county engineer, the register of deeds, the treasurer and the appraiser.
 The schedule was arranged by County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler. As the students visited the clerk's office, she registered a few of those who were 18 to vote. They also visited the sheriff's office and the dispatch office, the courts and an ambulance outside of the courthouse.
 "I found the whole thing pretty interesting," said Dannay Rhein, "and I'm not even a political person."
 Brittany Urban agreed.
 "It's cool to know about everything that goes on in there," she said.
 The kids also got to visit the county commissioners during their meeting and learn about budgets, as well as how taxes work with the clerk and the treasurer. In the clerk of the court's office, they got pamphlets detailing their legal rights as minors and those they get when they turn 18.
 Upstairs, the kids toured a jail cell and saw how the county's chief dispatcher, Marilyn Mack, looks up information and takes 911 calls. Undersheriff Allen Marcum explained that officers aren't just there to arrest people doing things wrong, but also to serve and protect the citizens.
 "You can always feel safe coming to us, even if you just need to talk," he told the students. "We will always keep your confidentiality. Right now can be a difficult time, with family and friends and everything. If you ever feel uncomfortable, we can always help you here."
 And that was the tone of the day, by the end of it. Students walked away knowing why they didn't want to be at the courthouse, why they would have to be at some point, and how and why they should want to be sometimes. It's a lot of responsibility, being an adult. It could even be, the classes learned, harder than being a teenager.
 The day ended at 11 a.m., and the students walked back to school to continue their day.

* Senator visits voters at cafe

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 good friend of the senator's. "Businesses see we don't have an electrician or a doctor, and they don't want to come here."
 Sen. Schmidt then told everyone about the programs he wants to push for. Aside from education and rural development, he said, he wants to defend and expand programs for seniors and the disabled. Someone asked about Steve Anderson, the Oberlin graduate who is now state budget director. When he heard about his goal of eliminating the income tax, Sen. Schmidt wrinkled his brow.
 "There's a balance between sales, property and income tax," he said. "It's a three-legged stool; it needs

balance. Sales tax is difficult for low-income people, so you want to keep that to a minimum. But if you take income tax down too far, that money has to be made up for with local property tax, which hurts rural areas like this."
 "The jury is out right now for both sides. Both sides of the issue know (the state's taxes are) going to be cut by hundreds of millions of dollars. But you have to make it up by increasing other taxes and economic development, which even those promoting a lower income tax say will take at least 18 months to see anything from."
 "We have to be very careful what we cut out here."
 "Income tax cuts would help

people in Johnson County," agreed Mr. Binder, talking of the state's richest county, "but our property taxes will go up because of it."
 Throughout this period of time, the Orrs sat quietly eating their lunch and occasionally looking over and smiling at the crowd. Mr. Schmidt thanked them for staying, even when they made it clear they didn't want to participate. But at the end of the talk, Mrs. Orr echoed others, who had earlier expressed their frustration over the failure of the two political parties to work together.
 "Really," she said, "I don't think the party is as important as the person."



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