

## Cost of parking illegally downtown to go up

Fines to cost more; and three tickets and you're towed to start Monday

By ERIN MATHEWS  
Salina Journal

Parking violations in downtown Salina are going to come with a hettier price tag.

Starting Monday, owners of vehicles that remain in a parking space longer than the posted time limit will be fined \$5. If the ticket is not paid within seven days, the fine increases to \$10. If not paid within a month, the fine increases to \$25.

The city currently charges \$2 for parking violations paid within 48 hours, \$5 after 48 hours and \$25 after five days.

Also beginning Monday, vehicles that accrue three or more citations that remain unpaid for 30 days or more will be towed, said Lt. Russ Lamer, of the Salina Police Department. Vehicles that are towed will be under a police hold until fines are paid in full and will be subject to towing and impound fees, Lamer said.

The Salina City Commission approved the increases in October for parking fines for the downtown area, which is bounded on the north by Elm Street, by South

Street on the south, by Fourth Street on the east and Seventh Street on the west.

Most of the downtown district has a three-hour parking limit, although also included are the parking lots at the City-Country Building and Salina Public Library, where some spots are limited to 15 minutes or 30 minutes.

### Won't give 'em the 'boot'

Lamer said officials initially looked at using a parking boot to immobilize a vehicle with unpaid tickets but opted for towing, because that would free up a parking space.

"The intention for downtown parking enforcement is to provide spaces for people to park," Lamer said. "Downtown businesspeople want the parking spots out front that are three-hour for their customers."

Lamer said a vehicle that has no previous citations in the system will receive a warning on its first violation.

"If somebody comes here from out of town and says, 'I didn't know and I didn't see,' they're going to be given a warning so they can learn," he said.

Previous outstanding fines will not result in a tow, but violators are encouraged to pay those fines,

as well, he said. Anyone who has questions about outstanding fines is encouraged to call Salina Municipal Court, 255 N. 10th, 825-7230.

### Get a mailed notice

Jane Eilers, municipal court supervisor, said it is important to include the citation with payment to ensure proper credit. Notifications of unpaid tickets will be mailed to the vehicle owner at the address listed when the vehicle is registered, she said.

Fines can be paid by placing payment, along with the citation, in a collection box or payment can be made at municipal court.

## Briefly

### City, county offices to close for holiday

City and county offices will be closed Friday, which is Veterans Day.

Salina sanitation crews will provide regular trash collection.

The city landfill will be open from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but the household hazardous waste facility will not be open.

For more information, call 309-5750 or go online to [salina-ks.gov](http://salina-ks.gov) and [saline.org](http://saline.org).

### Firefighters give \$13K to patient support

Salina firefighters presented a \$13,000 gift to the Salina Regional Health Foundation on Tuesday that will pay for wigs, prosthetics and other services and items needed by cancer patients.

The money was raised by the firefighters' union through the sale of pink firefighter T-shirts promoting breast cancer awareness during the month of October.

The items will be available free of charge to patients at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center.

### Guard member sentenced for lying

TOPEKA — A Kansas National Guard member who admitted helping an AWOL Liberian soldier lie to obtain a U.S. entry visa has been sentenced to six months probation.

Spc. William Reed Halvorsen, of Elmdale, was sentenced Tuesday. He pleaded guilty in August to a felony charge of aiding and abetting fraudulent statements. Prosecutors say Halvorsen became friends with Liberian aviator Pearson in 2010 while serving on a military mission in the west African country.

### EPA grant targets diesel emissions

WICHITA — The Environmental Protection Agency has given the Kansas Department of Health and Environment a \$343,000 grant to help reduce diesel emissions in Wichita and Kansas City.

The money will be used to retrofit 59 school buses in Kansas City, Kan.

From Staff and Wire Reports

### Corrections

The Journal wants to set the record straight. Advise us of errors by calling the Journal at (785) 825-6363, or toll free at 1-800-827-6363. Corrections will run in this space as soon as possible.

### fuel finder

A sampling of unleaded gas prices in the region.

To view the 10 lowest area gas prices, go to [salina.com/news](http://salina.com/news).

- Salina, \$3.24<sup>9</sup> BP, 671 Westport
- Salina, \$3.25<sup>9</sup> Phillips 66, 220 W. Magnolia
- Salina, \$3.25<sup>9</sup> Kwik Shop, 1727 W. Crawford

## Taking CARE

### EPA grant for up to \$300,000 to help make Salina homes healthier

By GORDON D. FIEDLER JR.  
Salina Journal

Radon in Salina will be on the defensive soon when a local program begins its assault on the radioactive gas.

The city has been awarded a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency for up to \$300,000 to, among other projects, detect and mediate radon in Salina homes.

The money also will be used to conduct a Healthy Homes program, storm water runoff awareness and a pharmaceutical disposal project.

Barbara Johnson, specialist with the Pollution Prevention Institute at Kansas State University, discussed the various projects at a Salina League of Women Voters Lunch and Learn event Tuesday at the Salina Public Library.

"Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today," Johnson said.

She cited the results of radon testing conducted by the Salina Saline County Health Department in 1988. The department issued detection kits to homeowners, and the findings by those who voluntarily shared the information indicated that 64 percent of homes had radon readings above the EPA's recommended maximum of 4 picocuries per liter of air. A picocurie is a trillionth of a curie.

"We're going to try to help identify the most in need," said Shawn Esterl, health department sanitarian, who was at the meeting. "We're going to shoot for the low-income homeowners with high readings."

He said the presence of radon isn't unique to Salina.

"Radon is an issue all over the state," Esterl said. "About three-fourths of the state has high radon issues."

He said radon occurs naturally and is produced by decaying uranium in the soil. It enters houses through cracks in basement foundations. It can't be eliminated but it can be vented enough to reduce its health threat.

Storm water in river Johnson also discussed the need to improve the quality of storm water that ends up in the smoky Hill River channel.

"We want to try to prevent contaminants from going down the storm drains," she said.

Water quality and quantity were the top two concerns of the community during an earlier survey of environmental issues. Radon and lead were three and four.

Another use for the money



Barb Johnson, pollution preventionist at Kansas State University, talks Tuesday during the League of Women Voters Lunch and Learn program at the Salina Public Library.

will be to begin a Healthy Homes program, a Housing and Urban Development initiative established by Congressional directive in 1999. It aims to reduce household hazards that threaten children and families. Among the program targets, according to HUD's website, include mold, lead, allergens, carbon monoxide and radon.

The program would be administered locally by the health department.

Johnson said the grant request also included money to establish an organic garden and organize a Greens Fair on Earth Day in April.

—Gordon D. Fiedler Jr. can be reached at 822-1407 or by email at [gdfiedler@salina.com](mailto:gdfiedler@salina.com)

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## Rate cut to rent fair buildings

County board talks about hiring a firm to market the expo center

By CHRIS HUNTER  
Salina Journal

Saline County commissioners Tuesday voted to reduce rental rates for county fairground buildings and offer multiuse discounts, and they discussed hiring a company to help market the facilities.

Rental rates were brought up last month by Phil Penn, Livestock and Expo Center director. Penn wanted to reduce rates because bookings at the expo center facilities have dropped nearly 30 percent in the past decade.

The drop in bookings also prompted Penn and commissioners to discuss how to improve marketing of the facilities.

During a study session, commissioners had an unscheduled meeting with Gabriel Lippincott, of Heritage Development Group, about developing a marketing plan for the buildings.

Lippincott was visiting Salina to look at the expo center facilities as Heritage prepares the plan. The group hopes to have a plan to commissioners today.

"What we want to know is how we can best serve the community,"

Lippincott said. "We want to see how we can bring economic development to the community. We want to bring outside dollars into the community."

### Promoting animal events

Lippincott said Heritage Development Group has an extensive background in booking animal events.

"Our speciality is equine, canine and bovine events," Lippincott said. "But we go into all sorts of events."

He said the group has managed events at the Kansas Coliseum's pavilions in Wichita, Intrust Bank Arena in Wichita and in Dodge City.

"The Coliseum (pavilions) won't be around much longer," Lippincott said. "We want to bring those events here."

Penn said he believes Heritage could help market the county facilities better and bring in more events.

"Our idea is to promote the buildings and get it moving and shaking a little more," Penn said after the study session. "They (Heritage) can take it to a place where we can't since they can tap into more resources."

### Lower fees and a discount

Commissioners voted unanimously to offer the multiuse discount. They voted 2-1 to lower the base rate at the 4-H Building from \$600 to \$500 and in Kenwood

from \$500 to \$400 in 2012.

The rates were increased to their current levels last year.

Under the new multi-use discount rate structure, a group could book an event at the 4-H Building for \$500 for the first event. If the group booked six events, it would pay \$250 for each event. Other buildings also have reduced rates and multi-use discounts.

### Undercutting market rate

Chairman John Reynolds opposed the drop in price for the base rate.

"I oppose it because it undercuts the market rate," Reynolds said. "I don't think it is fair to use taxpayer money to undercut taxpayers' businesses that have put money in their facilities to upgrade their facilities."

He said he didn't want to take business away from private businesses such as the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center and the Masonic Center.

Auctioneer John Oml, who was at the meeting, said he is glad commissioners reduced rental rates. He said the new rates are "workable."

—Reporter Chris Hunter can be reached at 822-1422 or by email at [chunter@salina.com](mailto:chunter@salina.com)

## Pets die in fire at Saline Co. home

By the Salina Journal

A fire that started in a fireplace damaged a home in northern Saline County on Monday night and killed the family's pet dogs.

Timothy C. Main returned home from church about 8:45 p.m. to find smoke coming out of his house in the 700 block of East First. Ray Sheriff Glen Kochanowski said.

Kochanowski said Main rushed into his house, looking for his pets, but his black pug and red Irish setter were dead.

Rural Fire District No. 7 Chief Shane Komarek said those dogs and a third apparently died of smoke inhalation.

Firefighters from rural fire districts 7 and 5 responded to the blaze, which spread from the fireplace when a wall behind the fireplace ignited, Komarek said. The fire burned into the garage on the other side of the wall and spread into the attic, Komarek said.

Komarek said the fire caused minimal structural damage, but there was smoke and heat damage throughout the house. He said he did not have a damage estimate.