

2020 Butler County Legislative Agenda

- **Demolition of the KDOC minimum security facility at El Dorado Lake**

In 2009 the Kansas Department of Corrections eliminated operations at the minimum security facility located below the dam at El Dorado Lake. The structure has not been utilized since and is currently in a state of disrepair and should be razed from the property. The County is currently working with the Corps of Engineers to sub lease the property from the Department of Wildlife and Parks and one of the conditions will be the demolition of the facility and restoration of the site as required by the current contract with KDOC. The County requests the Legislature immediately allocate funds for the demolition of the building so the site may be developed for a future uses.

- **Support uniform funding of Community Colleges statewide to equalize the impact from regional institutions**

County Community Colleges in Kansas are regional learning institutions, serving students from a multi-county area. However, local taxes supporting our Community Colleges are currently levied only in the county where each college is located. This leads to a disproportionate burden on taxpayers of the ‘host’ County, who effectively subsidize educational costs of students from nearby counties. For example, the property tax levied by Butler Community College on Butler County taxpayers adds nearly 60% to the tax levied by the county itself, while nearly 80% of Butler College students reside outside Butler County.

Although out-of-county students pay a modest increment in tuition, the difference is only a fraction of the costs underwritten by Butler County residents, while out-of-county families escape the college mill levy entirely. Additionally, the resulting tax differential between the host county and neighboring counties retards economic and population growth in the host county. This is unfair to host counties like Butler. The legislature should adopt a broad-based funding system that shares costs equitably among those benefitting from our Kansas Community Colleges.

- **Constitutional home rule for Kansas Counties**

Butler County favors extending constitutional protection for county home rule authority—a change that will enable county leaders to best serve their constituents. Butler County stands on the principle that government closest to the people will best understand and serve the community’s needs. This principle should be constitutionally protected. Restrictive laws by the state and federal governments serve only to minimize effectiveness at the local level.

- **Equity in taxation with alternative energy projects**

In 2006, the Kansas Legislature passed an energy bill alternative energy projects fully exempting alternative energy projects (wind and solar) property taxation. Then in 2018 the legislature modified the property taxation of these projects to allow for a ten (10) year exemption similar to IRB projects after which the projects would be placed back on the tax roll. This change created major inequity with wind farm projects across the state and even created inequity with two different solar projects in Butler County. The County believes these inequities conflict with constitutional law in taxation and valuation and would encourage the Legislature to readdress the bill and treat all projects the same by making all projects taxable after the 10 year abatement.

- **Modification of K.S.A. 58-3211 the Recreational Trails in Kansas Act to exempt cities and counties**