LOCAL SCENE

MONDAY, JANUARY 11
• Al-Anon, College United Methodist Church, Warrenton, 7 p.m.
• Wright City Lions Club, 678 Westwoods Road, Wright City, 7-10 p.m.
• Alcoholics Anonymous Group 130 meeting, Fellowship Baptist Church, 8-9 p.m.
• Warren County Commission, administration building, 9 a.m.
• Warren County Republican Central Committee meeting, Tuesdale City Hall, 6:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12
• Story Time for Preschoolers, Scenic Regional Library Facebook page, Warrenton, 10 a.m.
• Warren County Commission, administration building, 9 a.m.
• Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting, Country Lakes Golf Course, 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
• Innisbrook Board of Trustees, the village hall, 4 p.m.
• Warren County Ambulance District Board meeting, Base 1, 604 Fairgrounds Road, Warrenton, 6 p.m.
• Old Thresher Association meeting, Agricultural Heritage Museum, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13
• Virtual storytime for preschoolers, Scenic Regional Library Facebook page, 10 a.m.
• The Kiwanis Club of Wright City meeting, Ruiz Castillo, Wright City, noon.
• Alcoholics Anonymous Group 130 meeting, 678 Westwoods Road, Wright City, 10 a.m.

COUNTY

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Highway 47 as another short-term goal.
Meyer said he’s already been receiving public feedback about issues for the commission to resolve, notably issues with state roads that residents want the county to take up with MoDOT. For long-term goals, Meyer said he wants to focus on projects that improve the county’s infrastructure and plans for future growth.
“We’ve got to get ready. If this economy stays good, (growth) is going to come. It’s going to be good for the county,” Meyer said.

Matt Flake

Flake comes to the commission after years of experience as a member of the county’s planning and zoning committee, and then as county sanitarian. He said he’s familiar with a lot of issues the county deals with, and has added to that knowledge through recent budgeting discussions.
Flake said his early priority will be to meet with each county office and begin discussing opportunities to find more grant funding for projects, facilities and equipment. He said regional economic development is another priority.
“I’d like to work with the Economic Development Council or Boonslick (Regional Planning Commission) to get some more industry in the county, and I believe we’re working toward that right now,” Flake said.
Long-term, Flake said one of his goals will be to maintain county roads and facilities while conserving funding for future needs. Another is to make sure the county’s planning and zoning rules are fair for everyone while accommodating future growth.
“I look forward to it. We’ve got a pretty new commission, two who just got elected and one who’s only been here two years,” Flake commented. “I think we all have open minds and all want to do what’s best for the county going forward.”

Extension to expand mental health resources

Missouri’s rural counties lack mental health services despite growing financial stress and suicide rates. All of Missouri’s 99 rural counties face a shortage of mental health professionals; 57 of them have none.
University of Missouri Extension hopes to change that through a multistate project to help farmers, ranchers and farm families find affordable help close to home.
MU is part of a $28.7 million, three-year grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture through the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN).
FRSAN supports projects that provide stress assistance and suicide prevention services for farmers, ranchers and farm families.
Trade policies and extreme weather have increased financial stress on the farm, she says. While the U.S. economy overall saw continued growth after the 2008-2009 recession, the farm sector has endured six periods of recession and rising numbers of bankruptcies.
Suicide rates among rural Missourians rose by 78 percent between 2003 and 2017, Funkenbusch says. Hospital emergency departments reported a 177 percent increase in visits for suicide attempts or suicidal ideation in the past decade.
“Critical resources are woefully inadequate and poorly matched to the needs of farmers and ranchers,” says Kathy Korthuis, Extension and Engagement Marshall Stewart.
MU Extension professionals in all of Missouri’s 114 counties and a large network of health care and agriculture groups will collaborate to bring services to underserved areas, Stewart says. In addition, MU Extension will share resources with agency partners and others.
As part of the project, MU Extension faculty will train to become certified instructors in Mental Health First Aid, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) and Taking Care of You. They will provide information to farmers through online and printed resources and social media. They will also hold workshops...