



CANDY SIDE UP



Register/Bob Johnson

Four-year-old Tasha Vanderman helps her dad, Kenneth Vanderman, fill plastic eggs with candy for an Easter egg hunt at Riverside Park Easter Sunday.

Churches ready for egg hunt

By **BOB JOHNSON**
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About 40 volunteers, mostly members of youth groups from First Assembly of God and Fellowship Regional churches, filled 8,000 plastic eggs with factory wrapped candy Wednesday evening.

The eggs will be scattered about Riverside Park's picnic area for a 2 p.m. Easter Sunday event sponsored by the two churches.

The Easter egg hunt has grown each year, to the point this year the second church, Fellowship Regional, joined

as a partner. Games and food booths will be a part of the celebration. Door prizes, donated by community members, will include tricycles, bicycles, an iPod and gift certificates.

Assembly of God pastor
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Baker 'pulls out all the stops' for music

By **STEVEN SCHWARTZ**
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It takes a skilled operator to make a booming pipe organ sound like music.

Ron Baker, the new chief executive officer of Allen County Hospital, will be a guest musician at First Christian Church on Palm Sunday. He has nearly 40 years of experience on the keys — a passion that he has followed since he began high school.

"Back in the 1960s, we were still in the era when people were pushing music lessons for kids," Baker said.

Baker and his sister began playing the piano in elementary school, taking lessons from Marlene Lenski. He said the competitive nature between the two drove him to try the organ, a different instrument that could show he could be just as talented as his sibling. After playing some Sundays at the Lutheran Church in Humboldt, where Baker grew

up, he was hooked on the organ.

"I got to the point that I enjoyed it more than the piano," he said.

He then began taking lessons from Marjorie Gard, an experienced organist who saw the potential in the young Baker. As a senior in high school, Gard set up an audition for Baker with the chair of the organ department at the University of Kansas, James Moeser — who later became dean of the music school. Moeser was so impressed he accepted the young Baker into the program for the fall of 1974.

"That lasted about a week," Baker said laughing. "What happened is I really got cold feet."

Baker transferred from

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Ron Baker

Senate budget keeps increased sales tax

By **JOHN MILBURN**
Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas senators gave first-round approval Wednesday to their version of the next state budget, including language that would require legislative approval before the state could expand Medicaid coverage.

The bill, which would spend \$14 billion in each of the next two fiscal years, was debated

for more than five hours. Final action is set for today, which would set the stage for negotiators to work out differences with the House over spending.

"We always have to weigh the decisions. We really are weighing priorities through this," said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Ty Masterson, an Andover Republican.

Senators included a provi-

sion in the budget bill that leaves open the possibility of Kansas taking a federal offer to expand Medicaid health care coverage, but only if legislators give Republican Gov. Sam Brownback their consent. Brownback has opposed the federal health care act but has said his administration was looking at all options.

Senate President Susan

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New business brings variety to Iola

By **ALLISON TINN**
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There is a new business in town and it's providing a mix of services.

The Phone Shoppe is a cell phone store, which provides nationwide prepaid cellular plans through Page Plus.

Located at 110 East St., it is owned and operated by Iola newcomer Danny Brown.

Brown also wears another hat. He is a bail bondsman and plans to open a bail bonds office at the same location with a large wall separating the two businesses.

Brown, who has been a bail bondsman for seven years, has

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Register/Allison Tinn

Iola newcomer Danny Brown has opened the Phone Shoppe at 110 East St. In addition to the cell phone business, Brown is a bail bondsman.

Ultramarathoners ready, rain or shine

By **STEVEN SCHWARTZ**
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The forecast for Saturday's Prairie Spirit Trail ultramarathon is 40 degrees with a 20 percent chance of rain and snow — a fact that has only increased registrations.

We're not talking about ordinary people here.

"We actually had a couple more people sign up after the forecast was released, and had a couple more decided to bump up to the longer distance," said Eric Steele, race organizer.

This year is the inaugural event for the trail, and 138



people had signed up as of Wednesday afternoon. Steele said he expected only about half as many participants. There are 21 states represented by the runners.

"We are really excited about what we have going for a first-year event," he said.

Steele said he and his organizers, who run Epic Ultras,

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Water restrictions lifted

Based on recent snow and rainfall, the city of Iola has moved from a stage 2 water warning to a stage 1 water watch until further notice.

City administrator Carl Slaugh said the water levels have been high enough in area rivers that the water supply has not been coming from John Redmond Reservoir. The Neosho River Basin Water Assurance District said the water levels were sufficient to lift the warning.

Under stage 1 watches, there are no restrictions on what part of the day people may use water outside of their home (washing cars, watering lawns, etc.).

While no restrictions are in

place, the city still urges citizens to make good use of their water and conserve when possible.

Slaugh said the stage 1 watch will most likely not change during the spring months, based on yearly averages of rainfall.

"It'll be several months before we are likely to get a change," Slaugh said. "There normally aren't any concerns until mid or late July."

He said the city of Iola will post information on water quality and usage on the city's website.

Iola has received 4.07 inches of precipitation for 2013, as of today. Just under half an inch has accumulated in the month of March.



