The Wichita Eagle
BY RICK PLUMLEE
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"There are people in that office who are at the administrative level who are making $24,000 to $30,000 more than lawyers who are prosecuting cases. And that’s just wrong. There are too many administrators in that office."

Mike Bennett, his opponent in the Aug. 7 Republican primary and a current deputy district attorney, said, "This isn’t the Harvey County attorney’s office with three attorneys and a secretary. This is a major enterprise. So you can’t run it without administrators at all is folly."

Bennett and O’Connor use the only two candidates, so the race will be decided in the primary. Nila Faulston is retiring after 24 years as the district attorney.

The District Attorney’s Office has a $9.1 million budget for 2012.

Most of its funding comes from Sedgwick County, which is seeking to cut spending overall to eliminate a $9.3 million deficit by the end of next year.

Bennett said that the office’s 120 employees are administrators.

O’Connor said he had a “fundamental difference” with the way money was spent in the office.

“I understand you need administrators,” he said, “but we’re not offering a shiny administrative building... We’re electing a district attorney... someone to fight crime.”

Bennett said, “I agree we can cut money. I’m open to anything, but I also have my eyes open to reality.

Living softcore as fewer people are required to do the same amount.

Lessons in riding, living

Volunteers Marty Johnson and Jenny LaSalle work with R.J. Beste, 12, during the 2012 Lose the Training Wheels bike camp for children and adults with disabilities.

BY KATIE GILBAUGH
Eight campers on specialized bikes rode inside the Wichita Ice Center during each session.

The camp, which began Monday and ends today, served 40 campers ages 8 to 53.

The goal is to have everyone do this, Johnson said. “I … figured they could get along without me at work for one hour."

The Independent Living Resource Center has sponsored the camp for the seven years it has come to Wichita.

"The biggest part is inclusion," said Dale Koverberg, communications and public relations coordinator for the Independent Living Resource Center. "For many kids, a big fear of riding a bike is how to ride a bike. If their neighbors and adults are not there then they can’t do it themselves."

Johnson said he had brought about the program in years past but made the decision to volunteer this year.

"I thought I’d be too busy," Johnson said, “but this year I figured they could get along without me. I just made the commitment to go and I’m glad I did it.”

In addition to being a volunteer, Johnson recruited others.

After sending an e-mail about Lose the Training Wheels to a few friends, he said he had 10 people sign up immediately.

"Most have full-time jobs or are taking time away from work to do this," Johnson said. "I encourage anyone who has a volunteer with people with special needs. It’s very rewarding."

Campers begin the program by riding bikes with a roller instead of a rear wheel. The rollers allow the campers to learn balance, Johnson said.

In addition to the riding two-wheeled bicycles by the camp for the seven years it has come to Wichita.

The Independent Living Resource Center has sponsored the camp for the seven years it has come to Wichita.

Please see CAMP, Page 2B

Walnut recovery may open door to job

BY STAN FINGER
John W. Thompson was on his way home to Topeka after attending his mother’s ArtCenter for 21 years when he rode the

"That bothered me," Thompson said. "Somebody might be missing that wallet, they thought, so he decided to return it.

He exited at 21st Street, looped back and parked on the shoulder of the outside southbound lane, leaving numerous roosting nails and screws on the pavement.

"I thought, ‘I’m going to get a flat tire on my guy’s wallet,’” Thompson said.

He waited until there was a full tire and grabbed the wallet from the outside lane. It had begun to spall away from already being run over many times. Not knowing where else to go with it, Thompson drove to the Patrol South bureau at Hawthorne and turned in it to Manly Hebert. He hadn’t taken anything out of it, he told Hebert, but officers may need to go back to 2:135 and look for money or credit cards that might have been knocked out of the wallet by traffic.

When, the customer service clerk for Patrol South, found identification in the wallet and called the owner.

Jim Park thought he was a prank. Yes, he had misplaced his wallet, but it was something he was other where in his house in Willowbend in northeast Wichita.

But when he started asking specifics about the found wallet, details started falling into place. Yes.

Please see WALNUT, Page 2B

County population surpasses half-million

District attorney candidates square off at forum

BY RICK PLUMLEE

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County population surpasses half-million

BY DAMN TUCKER

The Wichita Eagle

The milestone passed quietly some time last year.

There was no celebration, and hardly anyone noticed.

Last year was the first time Sedgwick County’s population reached the half-million mark, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released on Thursday.

Every year since the estimates re- released on Thursday.

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