

Kansas Currents

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

Central Kansas Extension District

centralkansas.ksu.edu

Jan. – Feb. 2026

District Extension Agent:

Lisa Newman

Family & Community
Wellness

Melissa Schrag

Adult Development
and Aging



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Radon Action Month

January is both Kansas Radon Action Month (KRAM) and National Radon Action Month (NRAM).

Winter is an excellent time for Kansas residents to test their homes for radon. Testing is easy and low-cost – and it could save your life.

You can't see radon gas. You can't smell it. But it's dangerous. Breathing in high levels of radon can raise your risk of lung cancer.

Testing your home is the only way to find out if you have a radon problem. If you do, you can fix it. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1 out of 15 homes has high radon levels.

Radon comes naturally from rocks and dirt in the ground. There's always some radon in the air around us. The problem is when radon gas from underneath a home leaks in through cracks or gaps. Too much of it can build up inside.

When you breath in radon gas, particles can get trapped in your lungs. Over time, they can cause lung cancer. The risks from radon depend on two things:

-How much: High radon levels are more dangerous.

-How long: The more contact you have with radon gas, the greater your risk.

The good news is that testing your home for radon is easy. You can do it yourself or hire someone to do it for you.

Radon in your home can be a serious health risk – but it's a problem you can fix. If you haven't tested your home for radon, get a test kit. Kits can be purchased from our Salina or Minneapolis office.



Test Your Home. Protect Your Health.

JANUARY IS NATIONAL
RADON ACTION MONTH



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service



Medicare Advantage OPEN ENROLLMENT

January 1 – March 31, 2026

**Already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan?
This is your chance to:**

-  Switch to another Medicare Advantage plan
-  Return to Original Medicare
(and Part D if needed)

Why consider a change?

- ✓ New health needs
- ✓ Moving to a new area
- ✓ Coverage or cost changes
- ✓ Extra benefits like dental & vision
- ✓ Provider network updates

How to switch:

- › Contact the new plan directly
- › Use Medicare Plan Finder

Need help?

Saline Co: 785-309-5850
Ottawa Co: 785-392-2147
1-800-MEDICARE

Simply Produce

Simply Produce is a produce bundle program between Central Kansas District and Gene's Heartland Foods in Minneapolis.

Community members can purchase produce bundles containing fresh fruits and vegetables for \$15 at any register located at Gene's in Minneapolis. Contents in the monthly bundles do vary from month to month.



January purchase dates: Jan 8-13. Pick-up date and time: Friday, Jan 16, 12-12:30 p.m.

February purchase dates: Feb 12-17. Pick-up date and time: Friday, Feb 20, 12-12:30 p.m.

Purchasing location: Gene's Heartland Foods located at 218 W 3rd, Minneapolis.

Pick up location: Community Bible Church located at 929 N. Rothsay, Minneapolis.

Walk Kansas 2026 is Right Around the Corner

This fun, 8-week wellness program is designed to help you move more in whatever way works best for you – walking, biking, yoga, strength training, or any activity that gets you up and active. You can participate on your own or gather a team of 4-6 friends, coworkers or family members for extra motivation.

New this year: an easy-to-use online platform where you can track your efforts, celebrate milestones and cheer on your teammates throughout the challenge.

Registration opens March 3 and the program kicks off March 22. Now's the perfect time to start assembling your team, brainstorming a fun team name and gearing up for a healthy, active spring! Let's make this the most energized Walk Kansas yet!



Fuel Your February with Kindness

Join us for an uplifting and research-based session designed to help you celebrate **Random Acts of Kindness Day** with purpose and joy.

During this 30-45 minute webinar, you'll learn how simple, spontaneous acts of kindness can boost your physical and mental health, strengthen relationships and create positive ripple effects throughout your community. We'll explore practical, everyday kindness ideas you can try immediately – and you'll leave equipped and (hopefully) inspired to spread meaningful moments of kindness on February 17 and beyond!

Tuesday, Feb 17 beginning at 12:10p. Use the QR code to register.



FAFSA Virtual Drop-In Help Events

These events are being offered to provide one-on-one support for those needing assistance with filing the 2026-27 FAFSA, provided by knowledgeable financial aid professionals from across the state of Kansas.

- Thursday, January 22, 2026 (5:00pm - 7:30pm)
- Thursday, February 19, 2026 (5:00pm - 7:30pm)



The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time annual benefit.

The 2026 LIEAP application period begins January 20, 2026, at 8 a.m. and ends March 31, 2026, at 5 p.m. Applications will not be accepted, and payments will not be issued until the season officially opens.

Applying for LIEAP is easy. You can complete your LIEAP application online through the DCF Self-Service Portal at dcfapp.kees.ks.gov during the LIEAP application period.

Paper applications can be requested by calling toll-free 1-888-369-4777

Avoid Food Safety Penalties

The final big game of the football season is almost here! If you are planning to host a party to cheer on your favorite team, here's some food safety reminders to plan a safe event.

Pregame—First and foremost, wash your hands before preparing any food. Have a food thermometer handy to ensure cooked food or leftovers reach safe internal temperatures.

Don't play dirty! – Prevent cross contamination by keeping raw meats and poultry away from the veggie tray or other ready-to-eat foods. Have several utensils ready to keep foods separate also.

Half time is here! – How long has your hot or cold food been sitting at room temperature? Use the 2-hour rule and reheat hot foods or chill cold foods for safety. Keep foods out of the temperature danger zone (40-140°F), you just want touchdowns in the end zone!

Postgame—Pack leftovers in small shallow containers for quick chilling. You will be a winner!



Medicare Trivia



Which groups of people are covered by Medicare?

People age 65 and older

People under age 65 with a long-term disability who have received Social Security Disability Insurance payments for at least two years

People with end-stage renal disease (ESRD)

People with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease

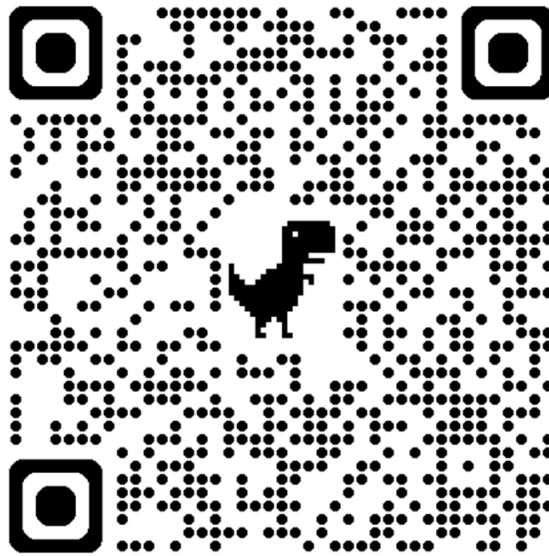
**Answer:
All of the above**

How Americans Are Thinking About Aging

A recent Pew Research Center survey reveals that income plays a major role in how Americans experience aging. Nearly half of adults 65+ say they're aging very well, but this varies by income: 61% of older adults in the upper income tier report aging positively, compared to 51% in the middle tier and 39% in the lower tier. Higher-income seniors are also more likely to rate their health as high and remain socially active.

Financial concerns loom large for adults under age 65; 45% aren't confident they'll have enough resources for retirement. While many believe people can influence physical health and mobility as they age, fewer feel they can control mental sharpness or appearance.

The U.S. population is aging rapidly, with those 65+ growing from 12.4% in 2004 to 18% in 2024. **Want more insights, including who's taking steps to look younger? Scan the QR code to read the full study.**



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Central Kansas Extension District

Salina Office

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Address Service Requested

The enclosed material is for your information. If we can be of further assistance, feel free to call or drop by the Extension Office.

Salina Office

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