

Local counties talk fire danger at weekly meetings

(KAIR)--Possible penalties for those who ignore bans on outdoor burning was a topic of discussion Monday, during the regular weekly meeting of the Doniphan County Commission.

According to the unofficial minutes of the meeting, that happened when Doniphan County Sheriff Chad Clary appeared before the Commission, "to discuss regulations when a countywide burn ban has been issued by the Emergency Management Director."

It was Commissioner Bobby Hall who addressed Clary regarding what he says a deputy stated during a recent, Local Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting, with the Third District Commissioner saying that it was stated that the Sheriff's Department was told by the Commission not to issue tickets during burn bans, a directive Hall says was not given. He further stated that he, as a volunteer firefighter, "knows the severity of battling a fire when conditions are not conducive."

Clary explained the Sheriff's Office's approach to issuing such citations, saying a Doniphan County resolution, pertaining to open burning of land, "is only enforceable as a civil matter in unincorporated areas of the county," adding that incorporated cities follow home rule authority and enforce their own ordinances, including open burning.

Clary ended his time before the Commission by advising them that, on average, nine out of ten individuals contact the Sheriff's Office to report or inquire about open burning prior to doing so.

The matter of open burning was also a topic during Monday's meeting of the Jefferson County Commission.

According to the unofficial minutes of the weekly session, County Emergency Manager Keith Jeffers discussed the effects regarding wild land fire danger, a topic that's gained statewide concern this week. That led to a discussion regarding open burning permits in the county.

Additionally, Jeffers informed the Commission that a storm spotter meeting is planned for 8:30 Tuesday evening, in Meriden, held annually as part of Severe Weather Awareness Week for the state.

On Monday, the same day that local area counties, including Doniphan, Brown, and Atchison, issued burn bans, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly, due to increased fire weather conditions, issued a verbal state of disaster emergency proclamation

for this week.

All residents, statewide, are urged to avoid outdoor burning, or engaging in any spark-inducing activities, due to the dangers conditions have posed.

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