

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Fillies, Rebels Win on Huntingdon Senior Night

BY BRAD SAM
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HUNTINGDON (February 4) — Huntingdon High School celebrated Senior Night Tuesday, hosting McKenzie and honoring three senior cheerleaders and six senior players between basketball contests.

The Fillies dominated the early minutes and cruised to a 65-21 win, while the Rebels led most of their game, pulling away late for a 74-60 victory.

Senior cheerleaders are Kansas Barnhill, Grace Smothers and Emily Tippitt. Senior Fillies are Delaney Byars, Claire Cary, Quinn Kelley, Josey Stokes and Sara Beth Smith. The lone senior Mustang is E.J. Lewis.

The seniors were joined on the court by parents and other family members.

Huntingdon Fillies 65, McKenzie Lady Rebels 21

The Fillies shut out the Lady Rebels 19-0 in the opening frame, led by Quinn Kelley with six points on a pair of three-pointers. Josey Stokes scored five. Delaney Byars and Knox Bennett each hit a three, and Sara Beth Smith had a pair.

Huntingdon had a 23-6 advantage in the second quarter, led by Smith with six points, including a three-pointer. Byars and Stokes each scored five, each with a three. Kelley hit another three-pointer, and Emalynn Maness and Ellie

Wilson each had a pair. Lady Rebel Jaycee Stafford scored five points, and Molly French hit a free throw. At the half, Huntingdon led 42-6.

The Fillies enjoyed a 13-2 tilt in the third, led by Kelley with six points on another pair of threes. Byars scored five, and Smith added a pair. Stafford added a pair for McKenzie. Entering the final frame, Huntingdon led 55-8.

The Lady Rebels finished on a higher note with a 13-10 edge in the fourth, led by Stafford with seven points, including a three. Sophie Pate and Zayda Scates each hit a three-pointer. Bennett led the Fillies with four points, including a three. Maness and Grier Bartholomew each hit a three.

Huntingdon's Quinn Kelley led all scorers with 15 points on five three-pointers. Delaney Byars scored 13 with a pair of threes. Josey Stokes and Sara Beth Smith each had ten points, each with a three.

Jaycee Stafford led McKenzie with 14 points, including a three.

Rebels 74, Mustangs 60

McKenzie had a 16-12 lead after the first frame, led by Tate Surber with eight points, including a three-pointer. Craegen Travis scored six, and Landon Brown had a pair. E.J. Lewis led Huntingdon with five points with a three. Kenton Smith also hit a three, and Caleb Ezell and Bryson Whiteside each had a pair.

The Rebels had a 19-14 advantage in the second quarter, led by Travis with nine points. L. Brown hit a three. Surber, Carter Kee and Avery Brown each had a pair, and Cole Brown hit a free throw. Smith and Lewis each scored four for the Mustangs, and Ezell, Whiteside and Hayes Eubanks each had a pair. At the half, the Rebels led 35-26.

McKenzie had a 20-15 edge in the third, led by Surber with ten points, including a pair of threes. A. Brown scored four, and C. Brown and Travis each had three points. Smith led Huntingdon with five. Lewis and Kelt-on Johnson each scored four, Johnson with a three. Ezell added a pair. Heading into the final frame, McKenzie led 55-41.

The fourth quarter was a 19-19 wash. A. Brown led the Rebels with eight points. Surber scored four, and L. Brown hit a three. C. Brown and Kee each added a pair. Braylin Dearmon led the Mustangs with six points. Johnson scored five with a three, and Smith had four points. Ezell and Garvin Kee each had a pair.

Rebel Tate Surber led all scorers with 24 points, including a trio of three-pointers. Craegen Travis scored 18 points, and Avery Brown had 14.

Kenton Smith led Huntingdon with 16 points, including a three. E.J. Lewis scored 13 with a three.



Huntingdon celebrated Senior Night between games. Pictured (L to R): Kansas Barnhill (escorted by mother Alleina Rose and grandmother Princetine Barnhill), Emily Tippitt (parents Beth and Tyler Tippitt), Delaney Byars (parents Kim and Chad Byars), Quinn Kelley (parents Holly and Cliff Kelley), Sara Beth Smith (parents Dayna Smith and Van and Laura Smith), Josey Stokes (parents Tracy and Richard Stokes), Claire Cary (parents Susan and Mike Cary), E.J. Lewis (parents Heather Lewis and Jason Lewis) and Grace Smothers (parents Deanna and Nathan Smothers). Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner



Left, Mustang Kenton Smith throws down one of his two dunks on the night. Smith led Huntingdon with 16 points. Right, Huntingdon's Sara Beth Smith splits defenders in the paint for an open layup. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner



Left, The original McKenzie Banking Company building at 15 Broadway, which now houses the McKenzie Memorial Library. File photo Center, The McKenzie Banking Company staff in front of the newly-renovated main office downtown. Right, The newly-renovated lobby of the Main Street McKenzie Banking Company building. Teller row was removed for an open, personal feel. Photos by Brad Sam/The Banner



Left, The original design of the current main office location at 676 North Main Street. Center, The lobby of the original McKenzie Banking Company at 15 Broadway. Right, The original lobby of the current main office at 676 North Main. File photos

Bank

...From Front Page

The branch at 15345 Highland Drive opened in 1967.

Bell retired on January 17, 1978, handing over the reins to Ruth Morris. Morris oversaw a major renovation in 1984, including the relocation of the book-keeping department to the basement.

On October 25, 1985, McKenzie Banking Company stockholders sold their shares to McKenzie Holding Company, renamed to Progressive Financial Services, Inc.

Charles P. Wilson became president on December 31, 1985, followed by Keith Priestley in 2007.

In 2008, McKenzie Banking Company and other branches consolidated under the name Foundation Bank.

Charles' son, Chad P. Wilson, has been president since 2010.

Yet another renovation was recently completed, beautifying and modernizing the Main Street office inside and out.

Shawna Fowler is the McKenzie Branch Manager and also serves as the

deposit services supervisor.

For the majority of her 17 years with the bank, she was a new accounts representative. She was named assistant branch manager seven years ago until the retirement of Emily Young.

A graduate of Sharon High School and the University of Tennessee at Martin, she moved to McKenzie when she married, and sold insurance at Jim Alexander (also downtown) before a job opening drew her to MBC.

Fowler told The Banner she enjoys working with people and talking to people. "MBC wants to be involved in the community, in what's happening."

She spoke about the balance of a growing company that wants to keep its roots deep in downtown McKenzie. "We talk about that a lot because we've been here so long, a lot of our clients and customers are older and we don't want to just fade away. We want to keep growing and that's the reason we've tried to spread to other locations."

"That's another reason we did this refresh, to try to change with the time, be more personable for the new, younger generation, to have a new look. We're trying to get new customers

and keep our old customers all at the same time. Being here and being the hometown bank, we're trying to be that but still grow and change."

One part of that is keeping up with changing trends and technology, particularly the rise of online banking options. Fowler said, "You have to listen to what your customers want, especially younger customers, because they want internet banking, the mobile app, all the technology, so you have to keep up with that, which we try to do. Then, the older customers want to see your face. So, it's push and pull. You just have to do all of it and try to do all of it well."

"Some banks have drive-thrus where you don't even see a person. You talk into a computer, and it might be a person on the other end, but you're not seeing their face. We had talked about trying that, but I don't think our customers want that."

She also acknowledged it's not just the online banks MBC is competing with. "Anything we want to do we want to be competitive against other banks in town, so we want to have competitive rates. We have one of the best checking accounts that we know of around here that pays a good in-

terest rate. You get benefits from that checking account that we don't think anybody else has. So that's what we try to do. We try to do everything that somebody else does, but we try to do it better. So that's really what we're always focused on. Our name in town is good. We have a good reputation."

Part of that reputation comes from community outreach and involvement.

The bank is a member of the McKenzie Chamber, and Fowler served on the board.

MBC actively supports McKenzie schools, including being a sponsor of the new football scoreboard. "We try to work with the school a lot, if they need something, we're always there to help them. We just fed the teachers breakfast before they went back for the second half. We sponsor everything that goes on at the school, as well as summer sports leagues. We try to be involved in everything, so we're seen, and not just seen, but they know that we're here if they need something."

MBC has been an excellent neighbor to another cornerstone of downtown, the Park Theatre. Major contributions to the restoration initiative earned MBC a namesake in the

historic theater, the stage.

In past years, and beginning again soon, MBC has sponsored weekly discounted movie screenings for bank customers.

Fowler said, "It's just sad to me the way downtown has gone down, there's so many empty buildings, we wanted that [the theater restoration] to happen if it was possible, so we just did what we could to make it happen. Our donation and whatever we needed to do to get it to come to fruition, we did. And I'm glad, I'm glad it's being used, even if it didn't have our name across the stage, I'm glad it's open for the community. I wish everything downtown was full, but we were excited that we could do that."

Fowler said of her own building's renovation, "We wanted to make it open, more personal." Demolition began last summer. Teller row was removed from the lobby, making way for desks for each teller. "It's beneficial to customers to be able to sit and talk to them, and to the tellers to have more room for their job duties."

The project leaned on local labor and talent. "We tried to use a lot of local people." Granite Warehouse of McKenzie and JC Educational and Office Supply of

Paris were major suppliers.

Allyson Barden of McKenzie repainted furniture that MBC wanted to keep through the renovation, and Ava Warman, also of McKenzie, drew sketches of the Bethel Wildcat and Rebel man that hang framed in the new lobby.

"I knew that I wanted to do that, I wanted to use local people for our remodel. And I think it turned out great. We've only had good feedback. People like being able to sit down and talk during their transactions."

The exterior was revamped with updated landscaping and a new sign and logo. Fowler insisted, however, that one thing remained unchanged. "They wanted to take off 'your hometown bank since 1934' and I said, 'No, we're leaving that, that describes what we are.'"

Fowler said, "I think we have such a good team here, we have good tellers, front line people, our behind the scenes staff, our loan staff is good, our new accounts people are good. Even the people you don't see. We have such a good team here that I'm proud of."

The Foundation Bank umbrella now includes locations in McKenzie, Paris, Paris Landing, Alamo, Obion and Jackson.

TENNESSEE

General Assembly Reviews HB 0552: The Family Right to Educational Emancipation Act

BY JOEL LANCASTER
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The Tennessee General Assembly is considering House Bill 0552 (HB0552), known as the Family Right to Educational Emancipation (FREE) Act. Sponsored by Rep. Todd Warner (R) and Sen. Janice Bowling (R), the bill proposes a new category of homeschooling, removing state oversight, attendance requirements, and testing mandates for families who opt out of traditional education.

If passed, parents or legal guardians could homeschool their children without reporting requirements to the state. They would not have to submit attendance records, standardized test results, or progress reports. The bill explicitly prevents state or local agencies from imposing new regulations on these families.

Under HB0552, students between the ages of 6 and 17 would be exempt from Tennessee’s compulsory school attendance laws. Unlike other homeschool categories, they would not need to register with local districts, private umbrella programs, or church-related schools.

The bill also removes the current requirement linking school enrollment to driver’s license eligibility. At present, students under 18 must provide proof of school attendance to obtain a license or permit. HB0552 would eliminate that rule, allowing homeschooled students to apply without school documentation.

Tennessee already recognizes multiple homeschooling options, including independent home schools, church-related home schools, and umbrella pro-

grams. HB0552 creates a new, fully independent homeschooling option, distinct from existing regulated pathways.

Supporters argue the bill reaffirms parental rights and removes bureaucratic interference in education. Critics, however, warn that eliminating oversight could lead to gaps in education, particularly for students without proper resources or structure. Some opponents argue that without reporting requirements, there would be no way to track educational outcomes for students in this category.

HB0552 is currently in committee review and has not yet reached the House or Senate floor for debate. If passed, the law would take effect July 1, 2025.

For official updates, visit the Tennessee General Assembly website.

Cats Stun Freed-Hardmen

MCKENZIE — Bethel lost an ardent supporter with the passing of Bethel Hall-of-Famer Shorty Akers earlier in the week. Shorty was honored before both games versus Freed-Hardeman Saturday. One has to know the Wildcats, who attended the Akers funeral on Friday played with even more passion in memory of their friend.

This game was a tale of two halves, with Bethel jumping out to a commanding 15-point halftime lead before Freed-Hardeman mounted a furious second-half rally. Ultimately, Bethel held on to secure a thrilling 74-72 victory, delivering a statement win over the No. 1-ranked Freed-Hardeman Lions.

Bethel came out firing on all cylinders, shooting an efficient 50% from the field and 45.5% from three in the opening half. Their aggressive defense and ability to capitalize on Freed-Hardeman’s mistakes helped them build a 43-28 halftime advantage.

Key contributors in the first half included Chauncey Hughes III, who knocked down three triples, and Connor Guthrie, who provided instant offense off the bench with a pair of three-pointers. Bethel’s

interior presence, led by Ethan Turner and Kendan Maddox, also played a crucial role, with the duo combining for 17 rebounds.

The Lions came storming back in the second half, outscoring Bethel 44-31 and shooting an impressive 66.7% from the field. Their inside game was dominant, finishing with 34 points in the paint compared to Bethel’s 18.

Jordan Stephens led the charge with a game-high 18 points, but his struggles at the free-throw line (5-12) proved costly in such a tight game. Makai Vassell (12 points) and Peyton Law (11 points) also stepped up in the second half, helping the Lions claw their way back.

However, despite the late push, Bethel managed to hold off Freed-Hardeman with clutch free-throw shooting and key defensive stops.

Decisive Factors

Bench Production — Bethel’s reserves outscored Freed-Hardeman’s 38-30, with key performances from Connor Guthrie (9 points), David Starr (9 points), and Joe Wimberly (6 points).

Second-Chance Points — Bethel dominated the offensive glass, securing 13

offensive rebounds, which led to a 15-5 advantage in second-chance points.

Three-Point Efficiency — Bethel shot 50% from beyond the arc (8-16), compared to Freed-Hardeman’s 35.7% (5-14), which helped them maintain their lead.

Clutch Free-Throw Shooting — Bethel capitalized at the line, hitting 78.3% of their free throws (18-23), while Freed-Hardeman struggled, making just 59.4% (19-32).

The victory was the first time Bethel has beaten a No. 1 ranked squad since they knocked off top ranked Dalton State back in 2015. DSU went on to win the national championship that same year.

Coach Jeff Britt said, ‘I am so proud of our young men as they made play after play. It has been a tough week and I am so glad it ended this way. Our young men deserve all the credit.’ Britt added, This was one for our friend, Short Akers.

Looking Ahead

This victory marks a significant boost for Bethel (16-8, 4-5), as they continue their push in conference play. Meanwhile, Freed-Hardeman (20-4, 5-3) will look to regroup after a tough loss but showed resilience with their second-half fight.

School

...From Front Page

The contract was awarded to Toadvine Enterprises as the low bidder at \$83,999, covering demolition and installation. With this replacement, the home and visitor sides will be swapped, ensuring improved seating arrangements.

Board members reviewed multiple bids and selected seven-row bleachers to maximize seating. A wood option was chosen to align with existing facilities and ensure longevity.

High School Gym Floor Refinishing to Begin

The board also approved a \$28,900 contract with CQT Flooring to sand and refinish the high school gym floor, ensuring a safer, more durable playing surface. This project includes:

- Updated court graphics reflecting school branding.
- Volleyball sleeve installations to support expanded athletic programming.
- Refinished boundary and game lines to improve court visibility.

The refinishing will be scheduled to minimize disruptions, with work expected to be completed during the summer break.

District-Wide Radio Communication System Enhancements

In a significant security and communication upgrade, the board approved the purchase of 103 new

radios for all three district schools, ensuring that every staff member has access to a radio for daily use and emergency communication.

The total project cost is approximately \$46,400, but the district will use a portion of its COPS grant funding to offset costs, reducing the district’s share to \$11,500. The COPS grant is a 25% match grant, helping cover security enhancements.

Key upgrades include:

- A new repeater installed at the high school to strengthen signal coverage across campus.
- A radio-to-intercom integration, enabling staff to use radios for emergency announcements over the school’s intercom system.
- Replacement of aging analog radios with modern digital units, improving clarity and range.

Dr. Justin Barden emphasized the importance of these security upgrades, stating that ensuring clear and reliable communication for all staff is a top priority.

Integrated School Management (ISM) System Implementation

As part of an effort to modernize school operations, the board approved the implementation of an Integrated School Management (ISM) system. This system will enhance administrative efficiency by streamlining:

- Student records and enrollment tracking
- Teacher and staff scheduling
- Attendance and grade

management

- Parent communication and engagement tools

Board members highlighted the importance of adopting technology-driven solutions to increase transparency and operational efficiency within the district. The ISM system is expected to be fully operational by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

Future Facility Upgrades Under Discussion

Board members also reviewed upcoming capital improvement projects, including:

- Roof replacements for key district buildings.
- Expansion of outdoor learning spaces.
- Further security enhancements, including updates to entry systems and surveillance infrastructure.

Funding strategies and timelines for these projects will be reviewed at future meetings.

Next Steps

With these projects approved, MSSD will coordinate installation schedules to ensure completion before the start of the 2025-2026 school year. The board will receive progress updates at the next meeting, where additional facility and security needs will be discussed.

Superintendent Dr. Barden reiterated that these improvements align with the district’s long-term commitment to providing safe, modern, and well-equipped learning environments for McKenzie students.



MHS Homecoming Royalty (L to R): Carter Kee escorting Brooklin Hudgins, Landon Brown escorting Jacey Pinson, Landyn Smith escorting Queen Sophie Pate, Craegen Travis escorting Emma Smith and Tate Surber escorting Kyla Beveridge. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner

Pate

...From Front Page

She was escorted by senior Landyn Smith, son of Kendall Smith and grandson of Larry Joe and Tiffany Smith.

Other members of the

Homecoming royalty included:

- Senior Kyla Beveridge, daughter of Keith and Melissa Beveridge, escorted by senior Tate Surber, son of Tommy and Meredith Surber.
- Senior Brooklin Hudgins, daughter of Cari Hudgins, escorted by senior Carter Kee, son of Josh and Court-

ney Kee.

- Senior Jacey Pinson, daughter of Jason and Jennifer Pinson, escorted by senior Landon Brown, son of Allen and Tonya Brown.
- Senior Emma Smith, daughter of John and Irina Smith, escorted by senior Craegen Travis, son of Jennifer Travis and Brian Travis.



West Carroll school board members received various gifts crafted by students for School Board Appreciation Week. Pictured are (L to R): Betty Wallace, Kelly Weaver, Misty Mitchell, Chairman William Robinson, Keith Murray, Jeremy Jackson and Director of Schools Preston Caldwell. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner

Gifts

...From Front Page

t-shirts and more.

The board heard an update from a representative of Lashlee-Rich on an upcoming renovation project. All windows and doors will be replaced at the primary and elementary schools, and vestibules will be installed at all three schools. The project is delayed while awaiting state approval, but all parties hope work will begin during the summer.

The board was informed that asbestos was detected in the exterior window caulk at the primary school. The caulk will be removed during the renovation. It was noted that finding such trace amounts of asbestos is not uncommon in older schools, and all of the schools passed state inspection, including for asbestos, last year.

The school calendar for 2026-27, aligning with the county school calendar, was approved.

Three upcoming field trips were approved. The junior/senior high Beta Clubs will attend the leadership summit in Gatlinburg on March 5-7. The junior/senior high FCCLA will attend the state convention in Gatlinburg on April 2-4. The CTE/FBLA state conference is in Chattanooga from April 6-9.



West Carroll CTE students operate the Spirit Box School Store at the junior/senior high. The vending machine offers necessities such as school supplies and hygiene products as well as West Carroll merchandise at reasonable prices. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner

The board officially recognized the retirement of Supervisor Regina Alred and the employment of her replacement, Michelle Matthis.

Resignations by Colton Taylor and Zach DePriest were acknowledged.

CTE instructor Erin Lewis reported on the West Carroll Spirit Box School Store. The student-run vending machine offers necessities such as school supplies and hygiene products as well as West Carroll merchandise at reasonable prices. Lewis said the store officially

launched on Wednesday and had already seen \$50 in sales.

Prior to the meeting, a reception was held for retiring elementary school custodian Wade Bryant. Director of Schools Preston Caldwell said Bryant had “the most positive attitude. Hard-working and dedicated, he’s a kind and perfect role model for children.”

The meeting adjourned after 25 minutes.

The next meeting of the West Carroll school board is Thursday, March 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Sunstar

...From Front Page

transition simply brings all eight Tennessee locations under one name,” said Micki Cunningham, McKenzie branch manager. “Customers can expect the same great service, same team, and same commitment to

our community.”

Sunstar Insurance Tennessee will continue to provide comprehensive coverage options tailored to business and individual needs. The company’s local presence remains strong, ensuring personalized support and expertise for clients in McKenzie and surrounding areas.

The official name change

takes effect immediately, with new branding rolling out in February 2025. Customers are encouraged to reach out with any questions and can expect a seamless transition with no service interruption.

For more information, contact Sunstar Insurance Tennessee’s McKenzie office at (731) 352-2424 or visit www.sunstartn.com

McKenzie

...From Front Page

development grant; presentation of Mulberry Park

plans; Strategic Planning Dates; and recognize Jason Arnold on completing training for Mental Health Strike Team. Prior to the meeting at 5:45 p.m., the council will meet as the Alcohol Board

to approve or deny a new certificate for a Type B “On Premise” permit to Matthew Tanner, dba: Paris Station, LLC at 27 Broadway Street, McKenzie, TN 38201.



Living at Lakeside News

BY SHEILA WILLIS
Activities Director

Greetings, Residents kicked off the New Year with a gold-and-black décor Happy Noon Year luncheon with all the fanfare of a midnight celebration. We did a countdown toast at noon with faux bubbly, sang Auld Lang Syne and declared New Years Resolutions. We celebrated the actual New Year with a few Southern traditions. We watched the Rose Bowl Parade in the morning, caught the game in the afternoon and at lunch enjoyed a meal of pork, black-eyed peas, cabbage and cornbread. We just know we are going to have a healthy and wealthy 2025.

The folklore of a lucky year has come to fruition a couple of times already. First, when we celebrated a Las Vegas-themed Elvis Presley's birthday party. Residents feasted on the King's favorite peanut butter and banana sandwiches and took photos driving a pink convertible past the iconic Welcome to Las Vegas landmark. We played the slots at our life-size human slot machine with many winners walking away with a bag of Fort Knox gold chocolate coins, fake \$50 Russell Stover dollar bills and rolls of silver Mini-M&Ms rolled coins. We sang and danced along to some Elvis classics and played a little trivia.

The second opportunity for some good fortune came on Chinese New Year, celebrating the year of the snake. Our wonderful kitchen staff made a Chinese meal at lunch, and we served Chinese snacks at our party that was decorated with lanterns, dragons and a red fortune table where all prizes were red in color, such as Kit-Kats, Coke, popcorn, etc. Residents drew out of the mouth of a 3D dragon for a red en-

velope, and, if they recovered one, they got to pick a prize, and if not, they were given a consolation fortune cookie. A big "shi sh"i (thank you) to Felecia and Trish with Volunteer Home Health for providing prizes and assisting with this fun day.

We got all glammed up for a night-in at the Lakeside Art Museum. Residents dressed to impress as we opened a Pop-Up Gallery. We had multiple sections of art, such as: replicated famous artworks, resident artwork, up-and-coming artists, local artists and an international artwork section featuring Items from Morocco, Mexico, China, Iraq and Germany. Volunteers Cheryl King and Charlene Doyle passed hors d'oeuvres and non-champagne. At the end of the evening, we raffled off a few of the replicated works of art to those in attendance. Clark Brown took home the prize.

16 lucky residents scored treat-filled coffee mugs on National Gourmet Coffee Day that were given by The Waters of McKenzie. Carrie Christian, representing Amedisys Home Health, played Trivia for Coins and held an auction for residents to bid on some of their favorite treats. We appreciate all our volunteers, vendors and sponsors.

Besides Elvis, we celebrated four more birthdays: Thelma McCain, Janet Duck and Freddie Brooks, and our eldest resident Maxine Garner turned 96. Residents joined her celebration of opening family presents and then the ladies broke out the mixing bowls for a cooking class social and celebrated National Chocolate-Covered Cherry Day by making cakes for the evening dessert as a gift to her on her special day.

We welcomed new residents to the Lakeside family in January, Wanda Smith of

McLemoresville and Marjorie Evans of Shiloh, Georgia.

Hometown Health Clinic hosted a meet-and-greet brunch featuring Leann Ellis, FNP-BC. It's such an added benefit to our residents to have the convenience of an in-home visit from a medical professional when needed.

I wish that every minute of every day for our residents were happy celebrations, but that is not the reality of our time here on Earth, so we took time for a remembrance and a recitation of the famous "I Have a Dream" speech on Martin Luther King Day. We also partnered with Chaplain Randy Blankenship of Baptist Hospice to host at Lakeside the third Thursday at 6:30 p.m. for the next six months a Grief Support Group. This event is free and open to the public. The loneliness of the post-holiday season and the cold and dark days of winter can often leave some feeling alone and mourning losses, but this group is here and ready to be a source of comfort.

We lost a dear resident this month as well. It is with precious memories we remember Mr. Carl Applegate. Carl was a Veteran of the Korean War where he served as a Corporal Radar Tech, a loving husband and father and a true servant of Christ. He led weekly church services, devotions and Bible studies not just in his home here at Lakeside but at other facilities in Paris, making numerous trips weekly. He was our outdoor holiday décor guy, seasonal flower guy and fed the wildlife daily. He checked on everyone and made them feel special. When neighboring residents entered the hospitals or rehabs, he was almost always one of the first to visit and whatever he felt they might enjoy took it along, not waiting to ask if he was needed. Our loss is Heaven's gain, Carl Applegate 10-23-1933 to 1-13-2025. Rest In Peace. Until Next Time...

came the president of Carroll Arts, Inc.

As the newly-minted president, it has been a learning experience, migrating from my peripheral perch of occasional performances with Carroll Arts, to center of the operation. Speaking of the operation, I saw it in full swing in January at the Trivia Bowl, and I am in awe of the work ethic and hustle of these ladies and gentlemen. It's a really good group of people, and there is always room to grow.

If you have a passion for the arts, I encourage you to come to a meeting or Carroll Arts event and see these awesome helpers in action.

Did you know, Carroll Arts has an event this Saturday? Which brings me back to my earlier invite... Hearts in Harmony is on Saturday, February 15 at 6 p.m. at the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in McKenzie; and it features a delicious meal paired with live musical entertainment from Carroll County artists.

Keith and Melissa Hennis of McKenzie and Isaac Stephen Walker and Jay Mills of Hollow Rock-Bruceton will

be performing.

The meal, provided by Marlene Kreuter, will include: pork tenderloin, mashed potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, rolls and dessert with tea, lemonade, water and coffee to drink.

Tickets are \$15 per person, which potentially makes it a more affordable option, with no wait times.

To be clear, if you already have dinner plans at a local restaurant, keep those plans! Always support local small businesses! If you are free this Saturday though, Carroll Arts still has tickets on sale.

Proceeds will go to support upcoming events, two of which are the high school Celebration of the Arts and the Creativity Camp in the summer for elementary and middle school students.

Carroll Arts, Inc. is a non-profit organization that fundraises year-round to shine a light on the arts and artists in Carroll County, Tenn. If you would like to learn more, please e-mail carrollartsinc@gmail.com.

You can also reach out to me at The Banner, 731-352-3323. Thank you for reading.

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF DAVID JOHNSON

Let a Blind Man Show the Way

Walking the Market Place in downtown Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Central America, I was assaulted by the cacophony of sounds—horns honking, salsa music blaring, people laughing, shouting, and talking.

Sifting through the myriad of odors—diesel exhaust, fresh fruit, body odor, fresh flowers, perfume, spoiled garbage—was both nauseating and pleasant.

Taking in the visual panorama was the most challenging. My eyes were constantly shifting focus from the small details to the bigger mosaic of colors and shapes.

It seemed everyone in this city of a million people was squeezed into this one-hundred-yard-long stretch of narrow street. I kept my hand on the camera around my neck and repeatedly felt my back pocket with my other hand to be sure no one had stolen my wallet.

Turning a corner, I saw him squatting outside a small wooden shed. He was small enough to be one of Santa's elves, complete with white hair and beard. But his clothes bore no bright colors or sparkles. They wore the grime of numerous unwashed days.

His face continuously turned in the direction of the sound of people passing him by. The smile never left his creased, tanned face.

It took me a moment to realize what he was "selling." The giveaway was in his upheld right hand—a shoe brush. He wanted people

to pay him to shine their shoes.

I pointed him out to my companions.

One of them, an optometrist, quietly and somberly said, "He's blind."

Handicapped by his blindness, this man couldn't rely upon government programs to help make a living. There were no special schools to help train him to realize his full potential. Not in this poor country.

Yet, he refused to be cast in the mold of a beggar.

I felt both pity and admiration for him while remembering the adage, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

I was reminded of another blind man on a dusty road outside the ancient city of Jericho. Bartimaeus was his name.

He was a beggar, relying upon the gifts of others to survive.

Did you ever play the "If a magic genie gave you three wishes, what would you wish for?" game? It was fun to play, even if it wasn't real.

However, blind Bartimaeus had the experience of a lifetime when a real life "magic genie" appeared on the stage of his life and asked him the best question of all time.

Jesus of Nazareth was leaving Jericho on the very road that Bartimaeus was sitting beside. As soon as he heard that Jesus was passing close by, from out of his darkness he shouted, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus stopped.

Hearing Bartimaeus cry out again, he told his disciples to bring him to him.

Then came the question. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Do you hear how wide open that question was? This was Jesus, the son of God, asking the question. He literally could have done anything (and everything) for Bartimaeus.

It was the question of the ages! An opportunity to play the "what if" game.

In a voice filled with the pain from years of unmet wishes and yet vibrant with newfound hope, Bartimaeus said, "Teacher, I want to see!"

Even though his answer was about deliverance from his physical darkness, he provided for all of mankind the answer we're all seeking.

Isn't deliverance from spiritual darkness what we all want?

Don't you want to see what God's Will for you is?

Don't you want to see what direction you need to take in complicated situations?

Don't you want to see God's hand in your life?

If you're ever uncertain what to pray for, let the simple words of a blind man from Jericho show you the way: "Lord, I want to see!"

**Taken from The Wit and Wisdom of David Johnson, Volume 2: The Hairy Catfish Caper*

Previewing Lee's 2025 State Address

NASHVILLE (February 20) — Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee released the following excerpts ahead of his seventh State of the State address that will be delivered tonight at 6 p.m. CST in the House Chamber of the Tennessee State Capitol.

Tennesseans are invited to view a preview video that highlights the state's incredible success and bright future.

Tennessee Innovates

"2025 should be the year to think bigger and to think boldly about what's possible, and go there. If Tennessee has led the nation as a beacon of opportunity, security and freedom, why can't we be the nation's capital of innovation too? Somebody is going to determine what the future looks like. That should be Tennessee."

"Just like a business innovates to better serve their customer, or as science innovates to save lives, or as an athlete innovates to change the game, this is a time for us to innovate to create a brighter future for Tennesseans."

Dynamic Economy, Greater Opportunity

"I've been saying for years

– the state with the workers will win every time. That is even more true today. Together, over the last six years, we have recruited more than \$37 billion in capital investment that has resulted in 234,000 new jobs. Tennessee is a top contributor to our nation's economy because of our willingness to adapt and welcome emerging industries."

Government Efficiency

"Limited government is knowing how to do more with less. More bureaucracy does not mean better service. Businesses already know this – government should do the same."

Leading the Future of American Energy

"The Volunteer State is on track to be the epicenter of energy innovation, and it couldn't happen at a more crucial time. For the past few years, Washington has prioritized social agendas over practical energy policy. As a result, we're staring down the barrel of an energy crisis with an electrical grid that is on the fragile verge of being completely overwhelmed...So, Tennessee's ambition to lead in nuclear innovation is much

bigger than just competing with other states. This is about securing the future of America."

Securing the American Dream

"Once again, U-Haul has ranked Tennessee among the top five most moved-to states. 90 of our 95 counties are experiencing population growth. While it's a point of pride, it's also a call to action. Whether you're born in Tennessee or choose to move to Tennessee, we want you to stay in Tennessee...Our state needs a housing plan that makes this key part of the American Dream possible."

Conserving Tennessee

"From the Delta to Appalachia, Tennessee is blessed with natural abundance that we have to protect and preserve for future generations. Yet, we also continue to be one of the fastest-growing states in the nation – in rural and urban areas alike. So, how do we balance record growth with a plan to protect our natural resources? You start by rejecting conventional wisdom that says you cannot do both. To grow Tennessee, we have to conserve Tennessee."

Editor's Viewpoint

BY BRITTANY WASHBURN MARTIN
brittany@mckenziebanner.com

Hearts in Harmony

Valentine's Day is this weekend, how do you usually celebrate? In my lifetime it has varied — it's been a romantic evening out, a galentine's get-together, a table for one, and dining in with an SVU marathon. I will say, a table for one is the most uncomfortable meal you will ever have in a crowded restaurant.

So, if you are single, widowed, divorced, or otherwise find yourself without a date this weekend, I understand, I've been there; but why are you letting that stop you from getting out? I invite you to come sit with me this Saturday. I'll explain...

I recently stepped into the role of one of my mentors, Ms. Glynda Rich, and be-

came the president of Carroll Arts, Inc.

As the newly-minted president, it has been a learning experience, migrating from my peripheral perch of occasional performances with Carroll Arts, to center of the operation. Speaking of the operation, I saw it in full swing in January at the Trivia Bowl, and I am in awe of the work ethic and hustle of these ladies and gentlemen. It's a really good group of people, and there is always room to grow.

If you have a passion for the arts, I encourage you to come to a meeting or Carroll Arts event and see these awesome helpers in action.

Did you know, Carroll Arts has an event this Saturday? Which brings me back to my earlier invite... Hearts in Harmony is on Saturday, February 15 at 6 p.m. at the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in McKenzie; and it features a delicious meal paired with live musical entertainment from Carroll County artists.

Keith and Melissa Hennis of McKenzie and Isaac Stephen Walker and Jay Mills of Hollow Rock-Bruceton will

be performing.

The meal, provided by Marlene Kreuter, will include: pork tenderloin, mashed potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, rolls and dessert with tea, lemonade, water and coffee to drink.

Tickets are \$15 per person, which potentially makes it a more affordable option, with no wait times.

To be clear, if you already have dinner plans at a local restaurant, keep those plans! Always support local small businesses! If you are free this Saturday though, Carroll Arts still has tickets on sale.

Proceeds will go to support upcoming events, two of which are the high school Celebration of the Arts and the Creativity Camp in the summer for elementary and middle school students.

Carroll Arts, Inc. is a non-profit organization that fundraises year-round to shine a light on the arts and artists in Carroll County, Tenn. If you would like to learn more, please e-mail carrollartsinc@gmail.com.

You can also reach out to me at The Banner, 731-352-3323. Thank you for reading.

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Obituaries

BETTY JEAN KEE
1931 – 2025

JEFFERSONVILLE, Ind. — Funeral services for Betty Jean Kee were Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at Brummitt-McKenzie Funeral Home at 11:30 a.m. The family received friends on Tuesday, 10 a.m. until service time. Interment was at Mt. Olivet Cemetery and her son-in-law, Conrad Moorer was the officiant.

Mrs. Kee, 93, died peacefully Thursday, February 6, 2025, at her home. She was born on April 27, 1931, in Clarksville, to Will and Agnes Deason Choate. She was a member of the Church of Christ. She truly enjoyed spending time with family and friends. She always wanted the best for everyone. She was involved with Church activities and teaching Bible classes in her younger years. She loved traveling with family, get-togethers, dinners, ball games, and reading. She was a devoted wife, great mother and wonderful grandmother and great-grandmother. She will be greatly missed.

She is survived by her daughter, Janice (Patrick) of Belleview, Fla., her son, Barry Kee (Patsy) of Pensacola, Fla., her son-in-law, Conrad Moorer of Jeffersonville, Ind.; five grandchildren, Katie Gravante (Jeremy), Jason Ross, Todd Moorer (Kim), Richard Ross, Valerie Bates (Randy); nine great-grandchildren, Torin, Aidan and Keegan Ross; Brody Gravante; Genevieve, Cora and Lottie Moorer; Alden and Keelynn Bates.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, Richard Elvis Kee; her daughter, Cynthia

Moorer, her parents, her brothers, Lonnie Choate, Lloyd Choate, James Edward Choate and sisters Hazel Suiter, Dorothy Suiter and Elizabeth York.

Brummitt-McKenzie Funeral Home, McKenzie. If you need assistance, phone 731-352-4848. www.brummittmckenziefuneralhome.com +

PAUL BURNS
1941 – 2025

WESTPORT — Mr. Paul Burns, 83, of Westport, Tenn., died Thursday, February 6, 2025, at Harmony Hill Assisted Living Residence.

Funeral services were in the Chapel of Chase Funeral Home on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 11 a.m. with Bro. Billy Clark and Bro. Tim Parish officiating. Burial followed in Jamison Cemetery.

Mr. Burns was born on July 13, 1941, in McMoresville, to the late James Kyle and Mary Sue (Mitchell) Burns. He was preceded in death by his wife, Karen Sue Burns.

He is survived by a daughter, Amanda Hayes of Westport, a son, Cary Hayes (Monica) of Columbia, a sister, Ann Isom of North Carolina, a brother, Jimmy Burns of Maitland, Fla. He also leaves behind five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Chase Funeral Home, Huntingdon.

JAMES DARNALL
1937 – 2025

HUNTINGDON — Mr. James Darnall, 87, of Huntingdon, died Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at Life Care Center of Bruceton.

Funeral services were Thursday February 6, 2025, at Huntingdon Church of Christ. Interment was in Clark Cemetery. Brother

Chris King officiated.

Mr. Darnall was born September 14, 1937, to the late John Ed Darnall and Oletha Enochs Darnall. He is also preceded in death by his wife, Wilma Darnall and son, Mitchell Darnall.

He was the owner of Darnall's Barber Shop in Huntingdon and a member of the Huntingdon Church of Christ.

He is survived by sons, Joey (Krista) Darnall and Jimmy (Melissa) Darnall; grandchildren, Lainie Darnall, Braylin Dearmon, Tyler Darnall, Michael Darnall and Joe David Hillard.

Dilday-Carter Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements, 731-986-8281.

PEGGY ANN WEBB
1934 – 2025

HUNTINGDON — Mrs. Peggy Ann Webb, 90, of Huntingdon, died Thursday, February 6, 2025, at her home.

Funeral services were Saturday, February 8, 2025 at Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. Interment was at Shiloh Cemetery. Brother Scott Carter officiated.

Mrs. Webb was born September 19, 1934, to the late Andrew Newton "Nute" Cole and Mentha Josephine Cozart Cole. She is also preceded in death by her husband, Wallace Webb; step-son Bobby Webb; grandson, J.J. Webb; brother, Carl Otto Cole; sisters, Ara Burklin, Arlie Bee Kizer, Josie Mae Myracle, Bessie Kizer, Lessie Cole, and Mackey Kizer.

She is survived by sons, Harold (Denise) Webb of Huntingdon, and Gary Webb of Huntingdon; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren, Denver Mitchell and Emily Ophelia Turner.

Dilday-Carter Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements, 731-986-8281

TCAT Awarded Healthcare Grant

DICKSON (January 31) — The Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Dickson has been awarded \$160,750 through the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Rural Healthcare Workforce Development Initiative. This funding positions TCAT Dickson among five TCAT campuses and thirty-eight statewide entities benefiting from the grant.

According to Dr. Levi Mayer, Vice President of Academics and Compliance, the funds will support both students and current healthcare professionals by offering enhanced certifications and financial assistance.

A sizable portion of the grant will fund tuition scholarships for IV Therapy classes, which will be avail-

able to: Practical Nursing students from TCAT Dickson (Dickson and Clarksville campuses), TCAT Henry/Carroll, and TCAT Hohenwald.

Dr. Mayer highlighted the importance of IV Therapy certification, which allows nurses to administer medications through intravenous lines, making them more competitive in the job market and increasing their earning potential.

Additionally, the funding will support phlebotomy and telemetry certifications, addressing critical employer-identified needs in the local healthcare sector.

Half of the grant will be allocated to financial assistance for students enrolled in TCAT Dickson's healthcare career programs. Funds will cover:

Tuition, books, scrubs,

drug testing, and certification fees.

Transportation assistance, including gas cards and automobile repairs performed by TCAT Dickson's Automotive Technology program.

Childcare assistance, with payments made directly to providers to avoid tax burdens for students.

"Life happens. Life should not be an obstacle in the way of education. This grant will alleviate some of those obstacles," Dr. Mayer said.

TCAT Dickson will begin distributing these grant funds on July 1, 2025. Applications for financial assistance will be available for qualifying students pursuing careers in Practical Nursing, Pharmacy Technology, Patient Care Technology/Medical Assisting, and Dental Assisting.

Mama T's
WHAT'S
COOKIN'



E: recipes@mckenziebanner.com
By Teresa Washburn

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BANANA SPLIT
BROWNIE PIZZA

Box brownie mix
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
8 oz. crushed pineapple, drained
2 tablespoons sugar
2 bananas, sliced
1 cup strawberries, sliced
1/2 cup nuts, chopped
Chocolate syrup
Whipped cream topping
Prepare brownies according to package directions. Pour mixture into 9x13 pan or smaller. Bake until done, do not overbake. Cool com-

pletely. Mix cream cheese, pineapple and sugar until blended. Spread on brownies. Arrange fruit on top of mixture. Sprinkle with nuts. Add chocolate syrup as desired and garnish with whipped cream.

KISSY COOKIES

1 large egg, slightly beaten
1 cup chunky peanut butter
1 cup sugar
36 Hershey's kisses or hugs
Combine first three ingredients. Roll into one inch

ball. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10 minutes at 350 degrees. Do not overcook. Immediately press kiss in center of each cookie. Let cool on cookie sheet before you remove.

EASY AMBROSIA
CAKE

1 angel food cake (use directions on box)
1 package frozen coconut (or 1 can 3 1/2 oz.)
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup orange juice
1 pint cream, whipped
1 can crushed pineapple (2 cups) with juice
Bake cake and cool. Break in bite size pieces. Whip cream and combine with other ingredients. Place in 9x13 pan or dish. Chill overnight.

JELLO POUND CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix
3/4 cup water
1 box jello (small) strawberry, orange, lemon
3/4 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs (white)
Mix all together. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

State Settles with NCAA for Student-Athletes

NASHVILLE — Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti announced that a bipartisan coalition of states led by Tennessee has reached a settlement in principle in its lawsuit against the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA).

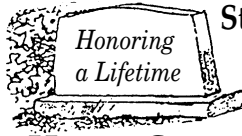
"We've been fighting hard to protect Tennessee student-athletes," said Attorney General Skrmetti. "Last year, we blocked the NCAA's unlawful enforcement against Tennessee students and schools, and now this settlement in principle lays the groundwork for a permanent solution."

Tennessee Attorney General Skrmetti and Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares, along with the Florida, District of Columbia, and New York Attorneys General, filed a federal lawsuit against

the NCAA alleging that its NIL Recruiting Ban creates anticompetitive restrictions that violate federal antitrust law and harm current and future student-athletes. A federal judge agreed with the States' allegations and blocked the NCAA's enforcement of its unlawful

rules throughout the duration of this litigation.

The Attorneys General and the NCAA have negotiated a settlement in principle that will protect student-athletes' NIL rights during the recruiting process and prohibit the NCAA from reviving its NIL Recruiting Ban.



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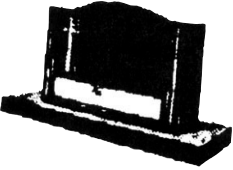
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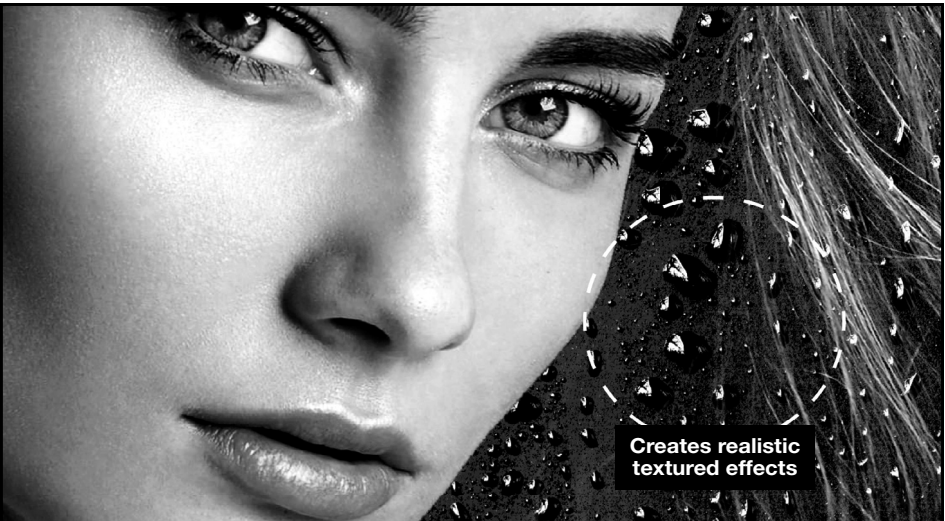


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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ONE SOUND CHOIR REUNION AT GREATER ENON

A One Sound Choir reunion is Sunday, March 23 at the 10 a.m. morning worship service a Greater Enon Missionary Baptist Church, 313 East Walnut Ave., McKenzie.

HUNTINGDON CROSS COUNTY/TRACK ST. PADDY'S RUN, WALK

The Huntingdon Cross Country and Track and Field teams host a St. Paddy's 1K, 5K Run/Walk on Sunday, March 16 at 2 p.m.

at Huntingdon Middle School. Entry fee is \$25. Entries may be mailed to Elizabeth Lott, HHS, 475 Mustang Drive, Huntingdon, TN 38344. Please print legibly and include name, age on race day, date of birth, gender, address, telephone number, email and t-shirt size. Make all checks and money orders payable to HGSE: Cross Country/Track and Field. To be guaranteed a short sleeve t-shirt, please register by March 5. Age group awards will be given at the completion of the race.

UPCOMING DATES, EVENTS

The following list of events was provided by Carroll County Chamber of Commerce. Specific information about events may be available at a later date.

March 10-14 — Bethel University Spring Break.
March 24-28 — Carroll County Schools Spring Break.
May 1 — National Day of Prayer.
May 3 — Carroll County Sports Hall of Fame and Bethel University Spring Commencement.
May 17 — Bruceton in May.
May 22 — Chamber Golf Tournament.
May 22 — Last day of school spring semester.
May 26 — Huntingdon and McKenzie Memorial Day Celebrations.
June 28 — Eastview Fireworks Celebration.
July 4 — McKenzie and McLemoresville July 4th Celebrations.
August 5 — 2025-2026 school year begins.
August 22-23 — McKenzie Sweet Tea Festival.
September 27 — Huntingdon Heritage Festival.
October 13-17 — Fall Break.
October 27 — County Chamber Banquet.
November 7-8 — Carroll County Christmas Market.
November 24 — Ducks Unlimited Banquet.
December 19 — Last day of fall semester.

CAPITOL TALK DATES RELEASED

The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce announced upcoming dates for "Capitol Talk" with local state elected officials at the Carroll County Civic Center. Representative Brock Martin will be at the civic center on Friday, February 14. Representative Tandy Darby will speak on Friday, March 14. Senator John Stevens will be at the center on Friday, April 11. Events start at 8 a.m. with remarks from 8:10-8:30 a.m. and question and answer from 8:30-9 a.m.

CARROLL ARTS TO HOST HEARTS IN HARMONY

Carroll Arts, Inc. will host the Hearts in Harmony dinner on Saturday, Feb-

ruary 15 at 6 p.m. at the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in McKenzie. The event will feature live musical entertainment by Keith and Melissa Herris of McKenzie and Isaac Stephen Walker and Jay Mills of Hollow Rock-Bruceton, and a delicious meal. The meal, provided by Marlene Kreuter, is pork tenderloin, mashed potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, rolls and dessert with tea, lemonade, water and coffee to drink. All are welcome to attend. Tickets are \$15 per plate and must be purchased by February 12. Tickets sold at The McKenzie Banner, by Eric Teas at the McKenzie VFW and Carol Armprist at the McKenzie Senior Center. For more information, e-mail carrollartsinc@gmail.com.

HIGH SCHOOL CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS APRIL 12

Carroll Arts, Inc. presents the Celebration of the Arts, an event showcasing Carroll County high school students involved in the arts, will be held on Saturday, April 12 at The Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center in Huntingdon. The celebration is open to all high school students in Carroll County to exhibit or perform in the areas of visual arts, music, and drama. Performers will take to The Dixie stage to display their talents and artwork will be prominently displayed in the gallery. The art exhibit starts at 6:30 p.m. and performances start at 7 p.m. If students are interested in participating, please reach out to your school's art, drama, band, or guidance counselor.

Carroll Arts, Inc. is a non-profit dedicated to shining a light on the arts in Carroll County, Tenn. To learn more, e-mail carrollartsinc@gmail.com.

Other upcoming events include: Hearts in Harmony Dinner on February 15; An Evening with Carroll Arts in June; The Creativity Camp for Carroll County elementary and middle school students in July; Southern Fried Funnies during McKenzie's Sweet Tea Festival in August; Storytelling during the Huntingdon Heritage Festival in September; A Mistletoe Christmas Program during McKenzie's Christmas Celebration in December; and the 15th Annual Trivia Bowl in January 2026.

MCKENZIE INDUSTRIAL BOARD TO MEET

The McKenzie Industrial Board meets Thursday, February 20, 2025, for

training with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. Janna Hellum is the presenter.

The Mayor and council members are invited and encouraged to participate in this meeting and learn about economic development in Tennessee.

The meeting is at 6 p.m. at The RailYard, Broadway Street, Downtown McKenzie.

BAPTIST CARROLL COUNTY TO HOST PREVENTATIVE HEALTH LUNCHEON

Friday, February 21, noon to 1 p.m. — When it comes to your heart health there are many things you can do to minimize your chances of developing cardiovascular disease.

Our free, one hour lunch event, led by Baptist Carroll County's Cindy Cole, RN and certified diabetes educator, and Amber Bradley, RN, will help you learn how to improve your heart health by being proactive in your care.

- We'll cover:
- Understanding your risk factors (family history, cholesterol, blood pressure).
 - The importance of routine heart screenings and what tests to consider.
 - How to recognize early warning signs of a heart attack or stroke.
 - Heart-healthy lifestyle tips, including diet, exercise and stress management.
 - New medical advancements.

To reserve your spot, please call 731-986-4461 or email sarah.pitcher@bm-hcc.org. Baptist Memorial Hospital, Carroll County.

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

The Northwest Tenn. Economic Development Council is accepting applications for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. This program assists low-income households through direct energy payments to their energy provider. Individuals interested in applying for the LIHEAP Program should make an appointment at the Northwest TN Economic Development Council office in their county of residence. Go to our website for county site contact information: nwcommunityaction.org.

CARROLL HUMANE SOCIETY EVENTS

Cat Vouchers
We always have spay/neuter vouchers for cats at a cost of \$50 and to be used at Paris Vet Clinic.

If you need to pay with cash, come by the shelter to purchase. Otherwise, we have a NEW NUMBER to purchase using a credit/debit card. Please leave a message and the volunteer will return your call very soon, 731-514-0878.

Dog Vouchers

Dog vouchers are available for \$60 each cash or card only. These must be purchased at the shelter during business hours Tuesday-Saturday 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Appointments will be made at the time of purchase and begin on January 6, 2025. The participating vet clinic is Huntingdon Animal Clinic. You'll be responsible for paying the clinic when you pick up your animal. We do recommend that you have your pet vaccinated due to exposure to other animals. Puppies must be a minimum of 4 months of age (older if small breed) at the time of surgery.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Huntingdon Location — Adult Education Building, 14155 Paris Street. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Classes are offered for one-on-one instruction on Mondays, 1-4 p.m. and Thursdays, 9 a.m.-NOON. For more information, phone 731-364-5481.

CARROLL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEETS

The Carroll County Democratic Party meets the third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at 12740 Lexington Street, Huntingdon.

CARROLL REPUBLICAN PARTY MEETS

Carroll County Republican Party meets monthly each fourth Tuesday, 7 p.m. in the Public Safety Building in Huntingdon.

CARROLL COMMISSION MEETS MONTHLY

Carroll County Commission meets the second Monday of each month, 7 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Carroll County Office Complex, High Street, Huntingdon. There are no meetings in February and July.

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Thank You!

A BIG Thank You to some special ladies of Inglenook Book Club! They have been helping to stock the snack pantry at MES and supply prizes for our students. These ladies go out of their way to help our school. These are some special ladies, indeed!

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HEART EYES (R)

Tues. 7:30
Wed. 7:30
Thurs. 7:30

DOG MAN (PG)

Tues. 7:25
Wed. 7:25
Thurs. 7:25

COMPANION (R)

Tues. 7:30
Wed. 7:30
Thurs. 7:30

MUFASA (PG)

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THE BANNER

McKenzie Police Reports

DUI — Omar Suarez-Cruz, 40, Stallings Road, Dresden, was charged with DUI-First Offense, Driver's License Required to be Carried, Financial Responsibility, and Display of Registration Plates on February 9. Officer Dustin McClure stopped the vehicle due to nonfunctioning registration plate lights. Suarez-Cruz had a Mexican ID. The officer could smell alcohol and initiated a field sobriety test. He was transported to Baptist Hospital for a blood-alcohol test and then to Carroll County Jail.

DUI — Debbie Lynn Reynolds, 60, Reynolds Road, Huntingdon, was charged with DUI, Simple Possession or Casual Exchange, Drivers License to be Carried on February 7. Officer Dustin McClure stopped Reynolds' vehicle after it crossed the double yellow line multiple times. After activating his emergency lights, Reynolds' vehicle continued slowly without initially stopping until one-half mile later. A check of her license revealed the driver did not have a license. Officer McClure and CCSD Deputy Smith conducted a field sobriety test. A search of the vehicle netted 1.5 grams of crystal-like material believed to be meth. She was administered a blood/alcohol test at Baptist Hospital and then transported to Carroll County Jail.

Theft of Truck — At-tasen J. Washam, 25, Janes Mill Road, Gleason, was charged with theft of a pickup truck on February 2. Officer Dalton Raspberry was dispatched to Grandberry Street in McKenzie where Matthew Taylor reported his pickup truck had been stolen. Ms. Washam was to wait in that truck while he momentarily went inside his home to retrieve some items. While he was inside the home, Washam drove away in the truck. Gleason Police Officer found the truck at Washam's house in Gleason. MPD traveled to Gleason to arrest Washam, who was transported to Carroll County Jail.

Driving on Revoked License — Dylan Bates, 22, Bethel Court, McKenzie, was charged with Driving on Revoked License, Failure to Yield to Stop Sign, Violation of Financial Responsibility on February 3 after his Gator Express did not have a license plate on the vehicle. Officer Dustin McClure witnessed the vehicle traveling with a license tag and then witnessed Bates fail to stop at a stop sign. He was cited into Carroll County Jail for booking.

Driving on Suspended License — Crystal R. Mealer, 49, Spruce Apartments, McKenzie, was charged with Driving on Suspended License and Failure to Yield to a Stop Sign on February 7.

Officer Darren Davis witnessed Mealer disregarding a stop sign and initiated a traffic stop. A check of her license revealed the suspended status. She was cited into Carroll County Jail for booking.

Burglary, Theft — McKenzie Police are investigating the theft of a handgun from an automobile on February 4. Officer Kyle Beauchamp took a report from Michael Carter of Everett Street stating that a Glock G17, 9mm pistol was taken from his vehicle's console.

Simple Possession — Two juveniles were charged with Simple Possession or Casual Exchange and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia on February 5. Officer Dustin McClure and Sgt. Darren Davis responded to a call in which a witness said there were two individuals smoking marijuana in a parked vehicle. When the officers arrived, when the juvenile rolled down the windows, smoke rolled out. One subject attempted to stuff something inside her pants. Both juveniles were ordered out of the vehicle and a pat down and search of the vehicle revealed a green leafy substance believed to be marijuana, baggies of marijuana and roaches and blunts in the vehicle. A THP vape was also located in one of the subjects purse. Each was charged with Simple Possession — Schedule 6 and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Carroll County Sheriff's Reports

Trespass — On January 31, Carroll County Sheriff's Office received a called from Mrs. Joelyn Funderburk stating that she had just ran a young man out of her house. She stated that she grabbed her pistol and proceeded down the hall and rounded the corner. There stood a young man wearing a black zip-up jacket, dark blue jeans, and brown work boots. He had dark brown facial hair (short beard) and he was tall. Mrs. Funderburk asked the young man what he was doing there, and he said he was sorry and then ran out the front door.

Drug Equipment Violation — On January 31, Deputy Chance Townes initiated a traffic stop on a black Silverado for speeding and the tags were the wrong registrations. The driver, William Moore, 25, of Lexington, advised he had a marijuana pipe in his vehicle which was found after a search. His driver's license was also revoked.

Drug/Narcotic Violation — On February 1, Deputy Alex Sherwood conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for Failing to Maintain Lane of Travel. The driver was Brandon Tylor Woodard, 44, of McKenzie. Woodard advised the deputy that he did have marijuana in the truck and his driver's license was also revoked. On his person Woodard had a small syringe and a clear plastic baggy containing 4.5 grams of methamphetamine in his pants pocket. In the vehicle a glass meth pipe, marijuana pipe, and a prescription pill bottle with methylphenidate tablets were located. He was transported to Carroll County Jail.

Possession of Drugs — On February 1, Deputy Alex Sherwood conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for Failing to Maintain Lane of Travel. After the vehicle stopped, a white male exited the driver seat and began running. A foot pursuit ensued. The subject, Colton Kyle, 19, of

Huntingdon, refused to stop after being told repeatedly. Taser was deployed but failed to stop Kyle. Pepper spray was deployed with some effect, but eventually he lost his footing and fell to the ground where he was put under arrest. The passenger, Janiaya Miller, 18, of Hollow Rock, was still in the vehicle. After a search, a pink make-up bag was found with three grams of marijuana and a marijuana pipe. Both were arrested and transported to Carroll County Jail.

Simple Assault — On February 3, Deputy Grant Davis responded to a home in Atwood in reference to a possible Domestic Assault. Terry Watford, 59, of Atwood, was found to be the offender and primary aggressor. The victim stated that she asked her husband for help with something on her phone and he became angry and assaulted her. The victim stated she is in constant fear for her safety. There were multiple marks on the victim's arms, as well as blood. Terry Watford was arrested and transported to Carroll County Jail.

Criminal Impersonation — On February 2, Deputy Alex Sherwood conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for having an out-of-date registration plate. The passenger of the vehicle, Nicholas Simmons, 43, of Hollow rock, gave a false name because he had an active arrest warrant out of Carroll County. He was placed under arrest for criminal impersonation and his warrant.

Evading Arrest; Possession of a Firearm — On February 2, Deputy Bon-

gioanni made a traffic stop on a black Impala for Failing to Maintain Lane. When Deputy Bongiovanni got the vehicle the car drove away. The driver attempted to the deputy at very high speeds sometimes 110 mph going towards Madison County where he eventually turned on to Highway 104 going to Milan. After continuing for several miles, the vehicle started smoking and speed started to decrease, and the car finally stopped. Deputy Bongiovanni stepped out of the patrol car and held the driver at gunpoint while waiting for backup deputies. At this time, four suspects were detained. Additional officers arrived approximately five minutes later, and they were able to place all four individuals under arrest. The driver was Kameron Washington, 21, of Milan; front seat passenger Edric L. Howard, 29, of Milan, back seat riders were Maketavious Batts, 27, of Memphis, and Maurion Elijah Lee, 21, of Milan.

After searching the vehicle, 5.7 grams of marijuana was found, a scale, 13 individual commercial baggies, a large plastic bag with marijuana residue on it, a Glock 17 9 mm with an extended magazine, \$7,382 was found on Howard, \$450 found on Lee, \$670 found on Batts, two cell-phones claimed by Howard, and one cell claimed by Washington. Due to all the items found, it is believed all individuals were involved in the possession, manufacture, and sale of marijuana. All four were arrested.

Carroll County General Sessions Court

HUNTINGDON (February 5) — The following cases were heard in Carroll County General Sessions Court on February 5, 2025.

The following were found or pled guilty.

Christopher Allen, Highway 70, Jackson, guilty, Evading Arrest, time served, probation.

Justin Arnold, Magnolia Street, Camden, guilty, Unlawful Possession of a Weapon; guilty, Drivers License to be Carried; forfeit weapon, 30 days jail, probation.

Kimberly Brown, Boe-ing Ct, Carville, N.C., guilty, Meth Possess or Casual Exchange, \$750 fine, 30 days jail; dismissed, Fugitive from Justice; dismissed, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Paul Raymond Buckland, Jr., Fowler Cr., Hollow Rock, guilty, Driving Unregistered Vehicle, 38 hours jail, probation; dismissed, Violation of Financial Responsibility.

Mark Clark, Grandview Place, Troy, Tenn., guilty, Meth-Possession or Casual Exchange, \$750 fine, 309 days jail, probation, time served credit of 16 days;

hold for charges in Weakley and Obion counties; dismissed, Unlawful Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Timothy Coffman, Bluebird Cove, Jackson, guilty, Meth-Possession or Casual Exchange, 30 days jail, alcohol/drug evaluation and counseling.

Emily Jean Hood, Linden Street, McKenzie, guilty, Theft, no contact with victim, probation.

Matthew Howard, Highway 51, Munford, guilty, Meth Possess or Casual Exchange; dismissed, Vandalism to Walmart; dismissed, Tampering with Evidence; dismissed, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, \$750 fine, 30 days jail, \$28.43 to Walmart, no contact with Walmart.

Nicholas Simmons, Thorne Lane, Atwood, guilty, Public Intoxication, 10 days jail, probation.

Courtland Sivadon, Clifty Village Lane, Paris, guilty, Drivers License to be Carried, 48 hours jail, probation.

Warren Sledge, Barnett Street, Huntingdon, judicial diversion, Domestic

Assault, \$100 fine, no violent contact with victim, probation, must enroll in a 26-week battery-intervention program; relinquish firearms to Huntingdon Police Department.

James Derrick Warbritton, Ledsinger Road, Huntingdon, guilty, Evading Arrest, time served, probation.

Dwayne Patrick Jones, McDonald Avenue, McKenzie, dismissed, Probation Violation.

Kevin Austin Lambuth, Firetower Road, Huntingdon, dismissed, Driving While License Suspended.

Stacy Michell Mann, White Street, McKenzie, dismissed, Driving While License Suspended; dismissed, Registration Certificate Must Be Carried.

Dalton Mingle, Elm Street, McKenzie, dismissed, Child Abuse/Neglect.

Makayla C. Pugh, Elm Street, McKenzie, dismissed, Child Abuse/Neglect.

Lucas Thumn, Morca Road, Greenfield, dismissed, Driving While Suspended; dismissed, Violation of Financial Responsibility.

Marriage License

Maria Nicole Sertuche, 27, of Huntingdon, to Tevin Christopher Hartley, 24, of Jackson.

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McKenzie Police Department

NOTICE

Notice of sell of abandoned vehicles from the McKenzie Police Department impound. The following vehicles will be sold at public auction beginning 03/03/2025 if they are not claimed by the owners and any applicable fees paid and documentation provided.

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1999 Dodge RPC	Vin# 3B7HC13Y4XM589126
2010 Ford Fusion	Vin# 3FAHP0CGXAR144797
2003 Mercury MGL	Vin# 2MEFW75W73K607134
2000 Jeep Grand Cherokee	Vin# 1J4GW58N9YC105859
2001 Chevrolet Cavalier	Vin# 1G1JC524417115890
2001 SABB 93E	Vin# YS3DF78K117004980
2005 Chrysler Seb	Vin# 1C3EL46X85N581044
2010 Dodge Avenger	Vin# 1B3CC4FD5AN158491
2004 GMC Yukon	Vin# 1GKEC13ZX4R133612
2006 Ford Escape	Vin# 1FMCU04176KA37043
2007 Chevrolet Tahoe	Vin# 1GNFK13077R112510
2003 Triumph Tri Motorcycle	Vin# SMT600FS53J180577
2005 Nissan Altima	Vin# 1N4AL11D65C352899
1997 Chevy GK1	Vin# 2GCEK19R1V1264833
2002 Ford Ranger	Vin# 1FTZR45E82TA38604

These vehicles will be on www.govdeals.com. This website is open to the public, however, you must register on the website prior to bidding on any items.

A777/6-2

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF CARROLL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

PROBATE CASE NO: 2025PE14

ESTATE OF: JOE DAN WOOTEN, LATE OF CARROLL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Notice is hereby given that on the **29TH** day of **JANUARY, 2025**, Letters Testamentary, of Administration, in respect to the Estate of **JOE DAN WOOTEN** deceased, who died **DECEMBER 23RD, 2024**, were issued to the undersigned by the Chancery Court Clerk & Master of Carroll County, Tennessee. All persons, resident and non-resident, having claims, matured or unmatured, against the Estate are required by law to file the same with the Clerk of the above named Court on or before the earlier of the dates prescribed in (1) or (2) otherwise their claims will be forever barred:

(1) (A) Four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting, as the case may be) of this notice if the creditor received an actual copy of this Notice to Creditors at least sixty (60) days before date that is four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting); or

(B) Sixty (60) days from the date the creditor received an actual copy of the Notice to Creditors, if the creditor received a copy of the Notice less than sixty (60) days prior to the date that is four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting) as described in (1) (A); or

(2) Twelve (12) months from the decedent's date of death.

All persons indebted to the above Estate must come forward and make proper settlement with the undersigned at once.

This **29TH** day of **JANUARY, 2025**.
THIS NOTICE WILL RUN TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.

FILE CLAIMS IN TRIPLICATE WITH:
KENNETH TODD - CLERK & MASTER
99 Court Square, Suite 105, Huntingdon, TN 38344

C. MARK DONAHOE, Executor/Administrator
C. MARK DONAHOE, Attorney
KENNETH TODD, Clerk & Master

A561/R25142/5-2

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF CARROLL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

PROBATE CASE NO: 2025PA13

ESTATE OF: BETTY JANE COLEMAN, LATE OF CARROLL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Notice is hereby given that on the **28TH** day of **JANUARY, 2025**, Letters Testamentary, of Administration, in respect to the Estate of **BETTY JANE COLEMAN** deceased, who died **MAY 3RD, 2024**, were issued to the undersigned by the Chancery Court Clerk & Master of Carroll County, Tennessee. All persons, resident and non-resident, having claims, matured or unmatured, against the Estate are required by law to file the same with the Clerk of the above named Court on or before the earlier of the dates prescribed in (1) or (2) otherwise their claims will be forever barred:

(1) (A) Four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting, as the case may be) of this notice if the creditor received an actual copy of this Notice to Creditors at least sixty (60) days before date that is four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting); or

(B) Sixty (60) days from the date the creditor received an actual copy of the Notice to Creditors, if the creditor received a copy of the Notice less than sixty (60) days prior to the date that is four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting) as described in (1) (A); or

(2) Twelve (12) months from the decedent's date of death.

All persons indebted to the above Estate must come forward and make proper settlement with the undersigned at once.

This **28TH** day of **JANUARY, 2025**.
THIS NOTICE WILL RUN TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.

FILE CLAIMS IN TRIPLICATE WITH:
KENNETH TODD - CLERK & MASTER
99 Court Square, Suite 105, Huntingdon, TN 38344

MATTHEW R. WEST, Executor/Administrator
ALEXANDRA BLACKBURN, Attorney
KENNETH TODD, Clerk & Master

A561/R25141/5-2

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF CARROLL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

PROBATE CASE NO: 2025PE15

ESTATE OF: FRED TAYLOR BELL SR., LATE OF CARROLL COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Notice is hereby given that on the **31ST** day of **JANUARY, 2025**, Letters Testamentary, of Administration, in respect to the Estate of **RED TAYLOR BELL SR** deceased, who died **DECEMBER 20TH, 2024**, were issued to the undersigned by the Chancery Court Clerk & Master of Carroll County, Tennessee. All persons, resident and non-resident, having claims, matured or unmatured, against the Estate are required by law to file the same with the Clerk of the above named Court on or before the earlier of the dates prescribed in (1) or (2) otherwise their claims will be forever barred:

(1) (A) Four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting, as the case may be) of this notice if the creditor received an actual copy of this Notice to Creditors at least sixty (60) days before date that is four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting); or

(B) Sixty (60) days from the date the creditor received an actual copy of the Notice to Creditors, if the creditor received a copy of the Notice less than sixty (60) days prior to the date that is four (4) months from the date of the first publication (or posting) as described in (1) (A); or

(2) Twelve (12) months from the decedent's date of death.

All persons indebted to the above Estate must come forward and make proper settlement with the undersigned at once.

This **31ST** day of **JANUARY, 2025**.
THIS NOTICE WILL RUN TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.

FILE CLAIMS IN TRIPLICATE WITH:
KENNETH TODD - CLERK & MASTER
99 Court Square, Suite 105, Huntingdon, TN 38344

FRED T. BELL JR., Executor/Administrator
DWAYNE D. MADDOX III, Attorney
KENNETH TODD, Clerk & Master

A561/R25144/5-2

Rural Schools, Special Education Advocates Raise Concerns Over Education Freedom Act

BY JOEL LANCASTER
jlancaster@mckenziebanner.com

The Education Freedom Act, now law in Tennessee, has sparked debate in the Tennessee legislature and among rural educators, with special education advocates voicing concerns over its potential impact. The bill expands the state’s school voucher program, allowing families to use \$7,075 per student toward private school tuition, on-line programs, and other educational expenses. While supporters hail the move as a win for school choice, critics argue it disproportionately affects rural districts and students with disabilities who may lack viable alternatives.

Legislative Breakdown and Opposition

The bill passed the Tennessee House (54-44) and Senate (20-13), largely along party lines. Governor Bill Lee has championed the law as a historic expansion of educational opportunities, arguing that families, not the government, should determine the best schooling options for their children.

“This law empowers parents with the freedom to choose the best education for their kids,” Lee said in a statement after signing the bill.

Lt. Governor Randy McNally defended the legislation, calling it a lifeline for parents when local schools fail to meet their children’s needs.

“This law ensures that education funding follows the student, not the system,” McNally said. “Families who feel their children are underserved by their public

schools finally have another option.”

However, opposition to the law was bipartisan, with several rural Republican legislators joining Democrats in voting against it. Critics argue that the bill diverts public education funds to private institutions while failing to provide rural families with real alternatives.

Sen. Jody Barrett (R-69), who opposed the bill, issued a blunt statement condemning its passage.

“History will look back on this moment as the day rural Tennessee was sold out. This is a handout to private schools that exist in metro areas, funded by the taxes of rural families who have no access to these options.”

Rep. David Hawk (R-5), another opponent, raised concerns about rural funding losses.

“If we can afford to send \$7,000 per child to private schools, why are our rural public schools struggling to afford more counselors, nurses, and career training programs?”

Lack of Private School Options in Rural Counties

In Carroll, Weakley, and Henry counties, the lack of private K-12 schools means the voucher program offers no real alternatives for most families. While urban areas like Memphis and Nashville have a range of private institutions accepting state vouchers, rural communities have few, if any, private school options within reasonable commuting distance.

Carroll County: No eligible private K-12 schools.

Weakley County: Dresden Pentecostal Christian

Academy exists but does not participate in state voucher programs.

Henry County: No participating private schools, with Paris being the closest town with a limited selection of parochial schools.

Despite these limitations, House Speaker Cameron Sexton (R) insisted that rural families can still benefit from the program through online learning and alternative educational services.

“This law isn’t just about private schools—it also expands access to online programs, tutoring, and microschools that give families more flexibility in their children’s education,” Sexton said.

Governor Lee’s administration argues that the voucher program encourages “educational entrepreneurship,” which could lead to new private school start-ups in underserved areas.

“If there’s demand, we expect to see growth in new school options,” said Education Commissioner Lizette Reynolds.

However, local school leaders remain skeptical, questioning whether new private school options will materialize in rural Tennessee.

Dr. Myles Hebrard, Director of Schools for Hol-low Rock-Bruceton, raised concerns.

“There are families in our district who might qualify for this program, but without a private school nearby, how does this help them?”

Impact on Special Education

A major point of contention is how the bill affects students with disabilities.

Unlike public schools, private institutions are not

legally required to provide accommodations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, some private schools voluntarily offer specialized programs for students with disabilities.

Some private schools require families to sign agreements that exempt the school from IDEA obligations, meaning students may not receive legally mandated services such as individualized learning accommodations, therapy, or behavioral support.

Dr. Lee Carter, Vice President of the Tennessee School Boards Association, questioned the fairness of shifting funds to schools that can pick and choose their students.

“If private schools don’t have to enroll every student, is this really about expanding access or just shifting resources?”

Many rural special education administrators fear that public school funding losses could impact essential services, including:

- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Behavioral support programs
- Specialized learning aids and classroom accommodations

However, Rep. Mark White (R-83), chair of the House Education Committee, rejected claims that special needs students would suffer under the new system.

“Many private schools offer incredible programs for students with disabilities,” White said. “Parents should be able to choose the best learning environment for their child, whether that’s public or private.”

White pointed out that some special needs families have already sought private school alternatives and could benefit from state-funded support.

“For too long, Tennessee families with special needs children have had limited choices,” White added. “This changes that.”

Still, public school officials worry about long-term funding consequences if the law leads to declining public-school enrollment.

Dr. Hebrard reiterated these concerns.

“This is not just a funding issue; it’s a civil rights issue. Our public schools are legally required to serve every child, regardless of ability. If funding is reduced, it could leave students with disabilities without the resources they need to succeed.”

Financial Implications for Public Schools

While Governor Lee’s administration maintains that public schools will not lose funding due to vouchers, opponents argue otherwise. Because Tennessee’s education funding formula is based on per-student enrollment, rural districts that lose students to the voucher program could see reductions in state funding allocations.

Meanwhile, some rural county officials have questioned whether the bill could face legal challenges, citing Tennessee’s constitutional restrictions on public funding for private institutions. Legal experts suggest these cases could impact the law’s implementation statewide.

House Majority Leader William Lamberth (R-44) dismissed these concerns,

saying competition will drive improvements in both public and private schools.

“If we allow competition in every other sector of society, why wouldn’t we allow it in education?” Lamberth asked. “Public schools will adapt and improve when they’re no longer the only option.”

What Comes Next?

With 20,000 vouchers available statewide, school officials in Carroll, Weakley, and Henry counties say they are assessing potential budget risks and preparing contingency plans in case of funding losses.

The Tennessee Department of Education is expected to release additional guidelines in the coming months, but for now, rural educators and special education advocates remain deeply concerned about the law’s long-term effects.

As districts brace for potential financial shifts, one question remains:

Will the Education Freedom Act expand opportunities for all students, or will it deepen existing inequalities in rural Tennessee’s education system?

Sources and References: Tennessee General Assembly – Bill Text & Records, Tennessee Department of Education – ESA Program Guidelines, Tennessee Comptroller’s Office – ESA Fiscal Impact, Governor Bill Lee – Official ESA Statement, Tennessee House – Press Releases & Speeches, Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA), Tennessee Education Association (TEA)

JOB OPENING

Title of Position: Fire Department Administrative Assistant
Department: Carroll County Fire Department
Supervisor: Carroll County Fire Chief

Carroll County Fire Department is currently accepting applicants for the position of Administrative Assistant. This role will provide administrative and clerical support to the Fire Department, ensuring efficient operations and communication. This role involves handling records management, assisting with budget preparation, processing reports, coordinating department activities, and providing customer service to internal and external stakeholders. Responsibilities will include responding to emergency calls during and after normal working hours.

Administrative Support: Serve as the primary point of contact for administrative inquiries within the fire department; perform clerical duties, including answering phones, responding to emails, and managing correspondence; maintain and organize department files, records, and confidential documents; prepare and distribute meeting agendas, minutes, and reports; and manage calendars, schedule appointments, and coordinate meetings for fire department leadership.

Records & Compliance: Maintain personnel, training, and incident records in compliance with department policies and legal regulations; assist in preparing and filing required reports for local, state, and federal agencies; and ensure accurate documentation of fire inspections, permits, and emergency response activities.

Financial & Budgeting Assistance: Assist in preparing the department’s budget by compiling financial data and tracking expenditure; assist with purchase orders and invoices; and maintain records of department expenditure and assist in grant applications when necessary.

Communication & Public Relations: Act as a liaison between the fire department and the public, responding to inquiries and providing assistance; assist in preparing press releases, social media updates, and newsletters; and support public education and community outreach initiatives.

Office Management: Order and maintain office supplies and equipment for the department; ensure smooth day-to-day operations by managing office logistics and maintaining an organized work environment; and assist with department event planning, training sessions, and special projects.

Qualifications & Skills: High school diploma or equivalent; associate degree or higher preferred; prior experience in an administrative or clerical role, preferably in a government or emergency services setting; proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint) and records management software; strong organizational and multitasking abilities; excellent written and verbal communication skills; ability to handle sensitive information with discretion and maintain confidentiality; knowledge of fire department operations, terminology, and regulations is preferred; state of TN EMR license or higher is preferred; and have or obtain within 12 months of hiring the following: 16 Hour Introduction to Firefighting State of TN, 64 Hour Basic Firefighter State of TN, State of TN Live Burn/Fire Training and CPR from American Heart Association or equivalent.

Work Environment: Office setting within the fire department headquarters; will occasionally require visits to fire stations, emergency scenes, or community events; and standard work hours, with occasional need for extended or after-hours support during emergencies.

Carroll County Government is an equal opportunity employer. Employment will be based upon consideration of the qualifications of all applicants for employment. Discrimination based upon an applicant’s race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

For inquiries, please contact Carroll County Fire Chief Jonathan Gaskins at jgaskins@carroll.tn.org or 731-415-3855.

To submit a résumé, please email to jgaskins@carroll.tn.org. To pick up an application, please pick up and return to Chief Gaskins at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 210 Noranda Dr., Huntingdon, TN 38344.

Deadline for applicant submission: February 21, 2025, by 4 p.m.

Property Transfers

Linda L. Williams to Jodi Williams in District 16.

Shane M. and Courtney R. Oatsvall to Iraklis and Nikolaos Hatzopoulos in District 12.

Chasity and Leean M. Kee to Chasity Renay Kee in District 8.

Nonyelu Chukwuogo to Esther M. and Kevin Thomas Monteith Rodriguez in District 4.

Dan Wesley and Carie Neal Bradfield to Brian and Jana L. Stafford in District 4.

Harry Lee and Donna Taylor Butler to Katherine Mary and Ronald Leland Holland in District 11.

Harry Lee Butler to Katharine Mary and Ronald Leland Holland in

District 11.

Harry Lee and Watler Butler to Katharine Mary and Ronald Leland Holland in District 11.

Amy Mann to Amy Renee Floyd in District 4.

Philip Edward Moore to Sandy D. Moore in District 24.

Nathan Webb to Bailey Webb.

Jay Mark and Karen Laurene Daniel Self to Daniel and Jennifer Hayden in District 6.

Paul Douglas Lowery to Jeremy Brent Lowery in District 2.

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Gas Prices Decrease

TENNESSEE (February 10) — Average gasoline prices in Tennessee decreased 6.0 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.72/g today, according to GasBuddy’s survey of 3,821 stations in Tennessee. Prices in Tennessee are 2.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 11.5 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has decreased 0.2 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.624 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Tennessee was priced at \$2.39/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$4.11/g, a difference of \$1.72/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$2.39/g while the highest was \$4.11/g, a difference of \$1.72/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 4.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.09/g today. The national average is up 2.2 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 9.6 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Historical gasoline prices in Tennessee and the national average going back ten years:

- February 10, 2024: \$2.83/g (U.S. Average: \$3.19/g)
- February 10, 2023: \$3.09/g (U.S. Average: \$3.39/g)
- February 10, 2022: \$3.24/g (U.S. Average: \$3.48/g)
- February 10, 2021: \$2.25/g (U.S. Average: \$2.48/g)
- February 10, 2020: \$2.14/g (U.S. Average: \$2.42/g)
- February 10, 2019: \$2.02/g

- (U.S. Average: \$2.28/g)
- February 10, 2018: \$2.37/g (U.S. Average: \$2.58/g)
- February 10, 2017: \$2.05/g (U.S. Average: \$2.27/g)
- February 10, 2016: \$1.53/g (U.S. Average: \$1.71/g)
- February 10, 2015: \$2.04/g (U.S. Average: \$2.18/g)

“While some states have seen gas prices inching up, much of the country continues to see mostly stable prices. States that experience price cycling have seen increases, while many others have only experienced minor fluctuations,” said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. “With tariffs on Mexico and Canada currently on pause, trade policy has yet to directly impact fuel prices. However, refinery issues are creating localized disruptions, particularly on the West Coast, where a refinery fire and the transition to summer gasoline are pushing prices higher. Elsewhere, volatility and seasonal trends continue to drive normal fluctuations. For now, the overall direction of gas prices remains typical for this time of year, but we remain on watch for potential policy changes that could impact fuel prices.”

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data. GasBuddy’s survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy’s averages, graphs, maps and historical pricing data covering the U.S. and Canada is available 24/7 at <http://prices.GasBuddy.com>. SOURCE GasBuddy

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HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL



Above Left, Rebel Eli Vinson pulls up for a jumper in the paint. Above Right, Lady Rebel Jaycee Stafford pulls up for a midrange jumper. Stafford led all scorers with 28 points. Below Left, Lady Rebel Braylin Auvenshine gets inside for two points. Below Right, Rebel Cole Brown drains a three from the top of the key for the first points of the game. Photos by Brad Sam/The Banner



McKenzie Splits Wins on Homecoming

BY BRAD SAM
brad@mckenziebanner.com

MCKENZIE (February 7) — McKenzie High School celebrated Homecoming Friday, hosting Houston County for a pair of consequential district basketball contests.

The Lady Rebels shook off an early deficit and gained momentum down the stretch for a 56-46 victory that cemented McKenzie as the two-seed in the upcoming playoffs.

The Rebels went back and forth with the Fighting Irish in the first half, but Houston County pulled away late for a 78-63 win. The loss leaves McKenzie as the three-seed in the district.

McKenzie Lady Rebels 56, Houston County Lady Irish 46

The Lady Irish jumped out to a 14-5 lead after the opening frame, led by Presley Moore with seven points. Kylee Smith scored four, CJ Clark had a pair, and Ally Mitchell hit a free throw. Jaycee Stafford scored all five Lady Rebel points, including a three-pointer.

McKenzie doubled up Houston County 18-9 in the second quarter to tie the game, led by Stafford with eleven points. Molly French hit a three. Sophie Pate had a pair, and Ava Hastings and Braylin Auvenshine each hit a free throw. Clark scored six for the Lady Irish, and Mitch-

ell hit a three. At the half, the score was knotted at 23-23.

The Lady Rebels took the lead with a 19-14 advantage in the third, led by Auvenshine with eight points, including a three-pointer. Stafford scored seven with a three. Hastings hit a three, and Aurora Johnson hit a free throw. Clark led Houston County with seven points. Mitchell scored three, and Moore and Smith each added a pair. Entering the final frame, the Lady Rebels led 42-37.

McKenzie sealed the win with a 14-9 tilt in the fourth, led by Stafford and Auvenshine with five points each, Auvenshine with a three. French and Johnson each added a pair. Smith led the Lady Irish with five points, including a three. Clark scored four.

Lady Rebel Jaycee Stafford led all scorers with 28 points, including a pair of three-pointers. Braylin Auvenshine scored 14, also with a pair of threes.

CJ Clark led Houston County with 19 points. Kylee Smith scored eleven with a three.

Fighting Irish 78, Rebels 63

McKenzie had a 17-16 edge after the first frame, led by Craegen Travis with nine points, including a three-pointer. Cole Brown and Tate Surber each hit a three, and Landon Brown had a pair. Irish Brady Bucciarelli and Mac Baggett each scored five, Buccia-

relli with a three. Ryan Carter scored four, and Casen Clark had a pair.

Houston County had a 17-15 advantage in the second quarter, led by Baggett with seven points with a three. Clark scored four. Townes Epps hit a three, and Carter also had three points. Surber led McKenzie with four points. Avery Brown hit a three. C. Brown, L. Brown, Eli Vinson and Carter Kee each had a pair. At the half, Houston County led 33-32.

The Irish enjoyed a 20-11 tilt in the third, led by Baggett and Carter with eight points each, Baggett with a three. Clark scored four points. Surber had five points for the Rebels. A. Brown hit another three-pointer, and Kee also had three points. Heading into the final frame, the Irish led 53-43.

Houston County clinched the win with a 25-20 fourth, led by Carter with eleven. Baggett scored seven with a three. Clark had six points, and Bucciarelli hit a freebie. Surber led McKenzie with eight points. C. Brown scored five, and Vinson had four points. L. Brown hit a three.

Irish Mac Baggett led all scorers with 27 points, including a trio of threes. Ryan Carter scored 26, and Casen Clark had 16.

Tate Surber led McKenzie with 20 points, including a three-pointer. Cole Brown scored ten with a three.



Rebel KD Cunningham signs to play football at Kentucky Wesleyan College. Pictured are (L to R): KD's father, Coach Kentrell Diggs; KD; his mother, Raven Cunningham-Tharpe; and sister, Kamdyn Tharpe. Photographs on either side of the family are of KD's late grandmother and his grandfather, unable to attend, and his late great-grandmother. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner

Rebel KD Cunningham Signs with Kentucky Wesleyan Football

BY BRAD SAM
brad@mckenziebanner.com

MCKENZIE (February 7) — McKenzie High School football standout Kadarius (KD) Cunningham will continue his gridiron career at Kentucky Wesleyan College. The senior was feted at a signing ceremony Friday in the MHS Theater, joined by family members, coaches, teammates, classmates, teachers and a plethora of supporters.

Principal Kelly Spivey welcomed all and complimented KD as well as all of the supporters who helped him along the way.

KD's father, MHS Assistant Coach Kentrell Diggs, encouraged everyone to strive to reach their dreams with KD as an example of what hard work can accomplish.

The ceremony was notably long as many, many groups and individuals wished to have their photo taken with the beloved three-sport athlete and share in the celebration.

KD told The Banner he chose Kentucky Wesleyan because it always felt like home. "The first time I went

there, for a camp, it felt like the right place to be. When they made the offer, God put it on my heart."

He said he chose football because it's a family sport. "Being around it since I was little, it's a special thing to me."

KD expects to play defensive line and could see some playing time on offense as well.

He said that being a Rebel

has meant "everything" to him. "The town, the atmosphere, it's always felt like a good place to play sports. I will always treasure being a Rebel, always."

He will major in sports management.

Kentucky Wesleyan College is located in Owensboro, Kentucky. The Panthers compete in the NCAA Division II's Great Midwest Athletic Conference.

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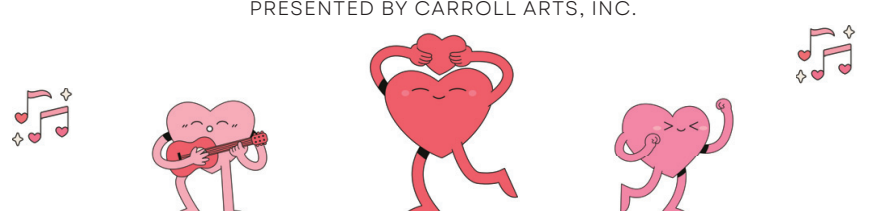
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to start the first quarter, a 9-0 run to start the third quarter, and an 8-0 run to start the fourth. The Fillies outscored the Lady Bulldogs 16-2 in the final frame.

Scoring for HMS were Wylie Kee 21, Krystin Moore 14, Kaylee Eatmon 11, Lakeitha Cason 9, Millie Luther 8, Madeline Anderson 5, Courtney Brewer 2 and Anderson Pearson 2.

The Fillies started the two-week tournament with a 59-19 win over Allons as Kee scored 16, Brewer 9, Cason 6, Moore 5, Emma Smith 5, Anderson 5, Pearson 5, Luther 4, June Dillahunt 3 and Eatmon 1.

In the semi-finals the Fillies defeated Merrol Hyde 64-32 to advance to the championship game. They were led in scoring by Kee with 14, Luther 14, Moore 10, Anderson 8, Brewer 6, Pearson 4, Eatmon 2 and Vivian Singleton 2.



McKenzie Rotary Club Hears About West Tennessee Healthcare

tal, Volunteer Hospital in Martin, TN and Henry County Hospital.

Prescott came to West Tennessee Healthcare in 1996 as a Registered Nurse in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. She has held the positions of Clinical Manager and Director of SICU and Administrator of Camden General Hospital.

In 2007, she was named the Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer of Jackson-Madison County General Hospital.

She is active with several community and civic organizations including serving as a board member on the Greater Jackson Chamber, a member of the Jackson Rotary Club and Downtown Jackson Development Committee.

She is board certified as an Advanced Nurse Executive with the American Nurses Credentialing Center, a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, American Nurses Association and American Association of Critical Care Nurses. She is a graduate of Union University with a Bachelors of Science in Nursing and a Masters of Business Administration.

The McKenzie Rotary Club meets on Tuesdays at noon in the Vera Low Center at Bethel University.

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