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Marshall County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources

Master Gardener Plant Sale 2026 Set to Bloom in Benton

By Jasmine Chameis
WSIL

BENTON, Ky. (WSIL) — Gardeners across western Kentucky will have the opportunity to shop for plants and learn new skills during an upcoming community event in Marshall County. The Master Gardener Plant Sale 2026 will take place Saturday, May 16 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Marshall County Extension Office, 2081 Mayfield Highway in Benton. The event is hosted by the Marshall County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources and organized by the Marshall Master Gardener Association. Organizers say the sale will feature a wide selection of plants and gardening materials, including trees, shrubs, vegetables, fruits, herbs, bulbs, seeds, annuals, perennials, succulents, and houseplants. Compost, planters, and other gardening supplies will also be available. In addition to the sale, attendees can take part in a free educational class titled "Transplanting 101" at 10 a.m., led by Master Gardener Doug Pardy.
The session will focus on practical techniques to help plants establish and grow successfully. The event will also include children's activities, gardening advice, publications, recipes, and door prizes. Organizers note, payment will be accepted by cash or check only. The event is open to the public.

Dave Baker to emcee at Fancy Farm gathering

By Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

Longtime broadcaster Dave Baker has agreed to emcee the Fancy Farm political picnic on Aug. 1st. Photo

FANCY FARM, Ky. (KT) – Now that the greatest two minutes in sports have passed with the running of the Kentucky Derby, attention across the state now turns to Kentucky's most anticipated political gathering: the St. Jerome Fancy Farm Picnic.

The 146th annual picnic is always held on the first Saturday in August, so this year it will be on Aug. 1. On Tuesday, Political Chairman Steven Elder announced that longtime broadcaster Dave Baker will serve as emcee for this year's event.

"Dave brings professionalism, energy, and a deep love for Kentucky to the stage," said Elder. "There's no one better to help guide the day at the greatest political event in the state." Baker is a familiar voice across Kentucky, with a broadcasting career spanning more than four decades at WKYT-TV in Lexington. Since 1982, he has served as a sports anchor, reporter, and account executive, and currently works as Special Projects Coordinator. He regularly appears on WKYT's news, sports, and special event coverage, and co-hosts Everyday Kentucky as well as The Afternoon Buzz, a live weekday program on WKYT+.

In 2022, Baker was honored with the Kentucky Broadcasters Association's prestigious Golden Mic Award, marking his induction into the KBA Hall of Fame. He recently concluded his 37-season run as host of the University of Kentucky Sports Network's Countdown to Tip-Off Show, a staple for Wildcat basketball fans statewide.

Beyond broadcasting, Baker

*See **BAKER** back page*

Marshall County Fiscal Court Convenes Special Meeting Thursday

From Marshall County Daily

(BENTON, Ky.) — The Marshall County Fiscal Court will hold a Special Called Meeting this Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. to address a packed agenda spanning emergency services, infrastructure funding, and routine county business.

Rescue Squad Update on Tap

The meeting will open with a guest presentation from Curt Curtner, Emergency Management Director, who is expected to deliver an update on the county's Rescue Squad operations.

Budget Amendment Up for Final Approval

Lawmakers are poised to take a final vote on Ordinance 2026-03, a budget amendment that is appearing before the court for its second and final reading. If approved, the ordinance would take effect immediately. The court will also ratify the minutes from its April 21st regular meeting and review April personnel changes submitted through official correspondence.

Infrastructure Grants and Road Agreements

Among the new business items, the court will consider a County Road Aid Agreement and an accompanying resolution, as well as a Federal Lands Access Program grant tied to Happy Hollow Road — a funding opportunity that could bring outside dollars to bear on local road improvements.

Additional Items

The court will also take up annual bids, surplus property disposition, and board appointments. Notably, magistrates are expected to vote on rescheduling the May 15th Fiscal Court meeting. The session will conclude with approval of county bills, followed by an executive session to discuss matters of litigation and personnel — both of which are permitted under Kentucky's open meetings law to be held behind closed doors

The meeting is open to the public and will be held at the Marshall County Courthouse in Benton.

Marshall County Public Library Summer Reading Kick-OFF Event

BENTON, KY- The Marshall County Public LIbrary will be hosting a Summer reading kickoff event including things suchs as games, crafts, and giants dinosaurs!

This event will be at the Benton Branch and will on Saturday May 16th from 10AM-3PM. A list of the scheduled events are listed in order:

- 10-11AM: Bingo
- 10-11:30AM: Dinosaur crafts and activities
- 10-3PM: Dinosaur movies
- 11AM-2PM: Dinosaur obstacle course
- 12:30-1:30PM: CCW Reptiles(LIVE ANIMALS)
- 2-3PM: Feller express dino encounters

For more information, you can visit www.facebook.com/MarshallCoLibrary/ and visit the library at there address listed here: 1150 Birch Street, Benton, KY, United States, 42025

AG UPDATE

for Ag and Natural Resources

Tom Miller,
Ballard County Ext. Agent

Unrivalled Planting Season

As I write this on Friday, May 1, the planting season is essentially over. Ther are a few fields that are not planted yet, but I would guess that 95% of the corn and 95% of the single crop soybeans are planted. I have been the ANR agent here for 26 years and worked in agriculture another 12 years before that and never have I seen this amount of planting done in April. That should bode well for harvest. It is much too early to tell what our weather this growing season will be like but getting an early start like this tends to favor yields. Last year our corn planted in April was 50 to 100 bushels better than the corn in May.

The wheat crop looks good. Almost everyone was able to get their fungicides on in a timely manner. The warm March and April weather has the wheat crop 10 days to 2 weeks ahead of normal. Now, a couple of weeks of cooler weather should slow the grain filling period and help wheat yield. The canola crop looks good. Proper management of canola is still kind of in the experimental stages. Fungicides were applied and the dryer weather should limit "white mold", a disease that ended our past romances with canola. This is the 3rd or 4th trial of canola in KY in the last 50 years and it has never stuck yet, maybe the 3rd of 4th time will be a charm.

We have wheat and canola harvest to go, hopefully both will start around the end of May. Double crop beans still need to be planted when harvest finishes. Weed control and nitrogen side dressing are happening now. Due to our abnormally dry winter and spring, we are starting the season without any extra water. We need a good rain every 10 to 14 days to keep everything growing.

I'll also give a reminder about the Wheat Field Day in Princeton. It will be on Tuesday May 12 at the UK Research Farm in Princeton. Field presentations will begin at 9:00am. The address is 300 Extension Farm Rd, Princeton KY 42445

Essential Steps Farmers Should Take After Planting Season

Staff Report

Once planting season is complete, farmers must shift their focus from sowing seeds to protecting and supporting crop growth. The period after planting is critical because proper management during this stage can greatly influence harvest quality and yield.

The first important step is monitoring soil moisture. Newly planted crops require adequate water to establish strong roots. Farmers should regularly inspect fields and use irrigation systems when rainfall is insufficient. At the same time, overwatering should be avoided because it can lead to root diseases and nutrient loss.

Weed control is another key responsibility after planting. Weeds compete with crops for sunlight, nutrients, and water, reducing productivity. Farmers can use mechanical cultivation, mulching, or approved herbicides to keep fields clean and healthy.

Crop scouting should also become a routine activity. Farmers need to inspect plants for signs of pests, fungal infections, or nutrient deficiencies. Early detection allows quick treatment and prevents larger outbreaks that could damage entire fields.

Applying fertilizers at the correct stage is equally important. After planting, crops often need additional nutrients to support growth. Soil testing can help farmers determine the right type and amount of fertilizer required.

Farmers should also maintain farm equipment during this period. Tractors, sprayers, and irrigation systems should be cleaned and repaired to ensure they are ready for future use.

Finally, keeping detailed records of weather conditions, crop performance, and field treatments helps farmers make better decisions throughout the growing season. Careful attention after planting lays the foundation for a productive and successful harvest.

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Carla Hildebrand Retires After 27 Years at Wickliffe Mounds

By Laurna Todd
KPI Writer

After 27 years of dedicated service as park manager at Wickliffe Mounds, Carla Hildebrand is retiring, leaving behind a legacy of education, preservation, and countless memories made with visitors from across the region and beyond.

Hildebrand said her passion for the historic site never faded throughout her career because of her deep love for archaeology and the unique history surrounding Wickliffe Mounds.

"I absolutely loved this place — and still do," Hildebrand said. "My education and experience were in archaeology, so it was a natural fit with my interests. Each year, I learned something new, developed my professional skills, and replenished my enthusiasm for the place and the people who visited, worked, and inquired about the deep, complex, and fascinating history here."

Representatives from the Chamber, Kentucky Great River Road, and the Ballard County Fiscal Court recently recognized Carla Hildebrand on her retirement after 27 years as park manager at Wickliffe Mounds, honoring her years of dedication to preserving and sharing the site's rich history with visitors from across the region.

Throughout nearly three decades, Hildebrand said it was the people she encountered who made the greatest impact on her life.

"Without a doubt, it is the people I will remember the most," she said. "The faces of the school kids, the appreciation of the visitors, the colleagues and co-workers who made up the ongoing cycle of telling the story of Wickliffe Mounds through time."

One of the highlights of her career was building relationships with Native American tribes, especially through educational events and collaborative projects.

"A major highlight is the friendships made with Native American Tribes and listening to their voice, their stories, and their interpretations of the ancestors' culture and history," Hildebrand said.

Hildebrand has witnessed major changes at the site over the years. She first became affiliated with Wickliffe Mounds during archaeological field schools in the early 1990s, when the site primarily focused on research and scientific data collection. She later saw it transition into a Kentucky State Historic Site under Kentucky State Parks, expanding into tourism, visitor experiences, and interpretive programming.

She said she is especially proud of the work completed alongside the Chickasaw Nation and the efforts made to create a welcoming environment for families.

"We made the site not only about the archaeological research, but also a welcoming place for visitors to bring their families to learn about the history, have a picnic, browse the gift shop for a souvenir, and create special memories of their own," she said.

As she enters retirement, Hildebrand said she is looking forward to spending more time with family and making memories with her grandchildren.

"That's an easy question — grandchildren and making new memories with family," she said.

Farm-to-Fork grants available

By TOM LATEK
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell is inviting Kentucky Proud members to apply to participate in the Kentucky Proud Farm to Fork program for 2026.

"Kentucky Proud is the perfect way to share a little bit of Kentucky on your table," Shell said. "Kentucky Proud is a national model for promoting local agricultural products, and the Farm to Fork Program helps publicize the many outstanding products produced by our farmers and agribusinesses."

The Kentucky Proud Farm to Fork Program, administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, works to increase awareness of the local food movement by teaming up with host groups to benefit a charity in their community. These groups can host an event that will highlight local farms, farmers, producers, and Kentucky Proud® products. Funding is made possible through a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund.

The Farm to Fork cost-share grant can reimburse up to 50 percent (a maximum of $750) of the event's eligible Kentucky-grown food products and associated promotional expenditures. Only those meal ingredients and items that directly impact Kentucky farms will be eligible for consideration and can be submitted for the full grant amount.

Applications for 2026 Farm to Fork events are due 30 days before the event is scheduled to occur, however all events must take place before Nov. 13, to be eligible for the grants. For more information about the Farm to Fork program or to download an application and guidelines, go to kyagr.com/marketing/farm-to-fork.html.

Find more information about Farm to Fork cost-share grants, by contacting Alisha Morris at (502) 782-4119 or by emailing her, at Alisha.Morris@ky.gov.

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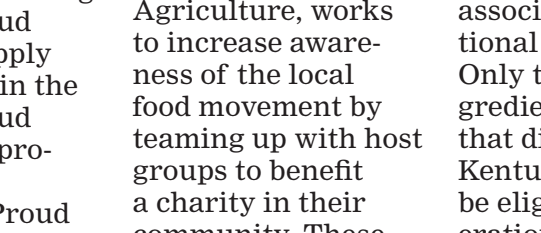
Saturday, May 16, 2026



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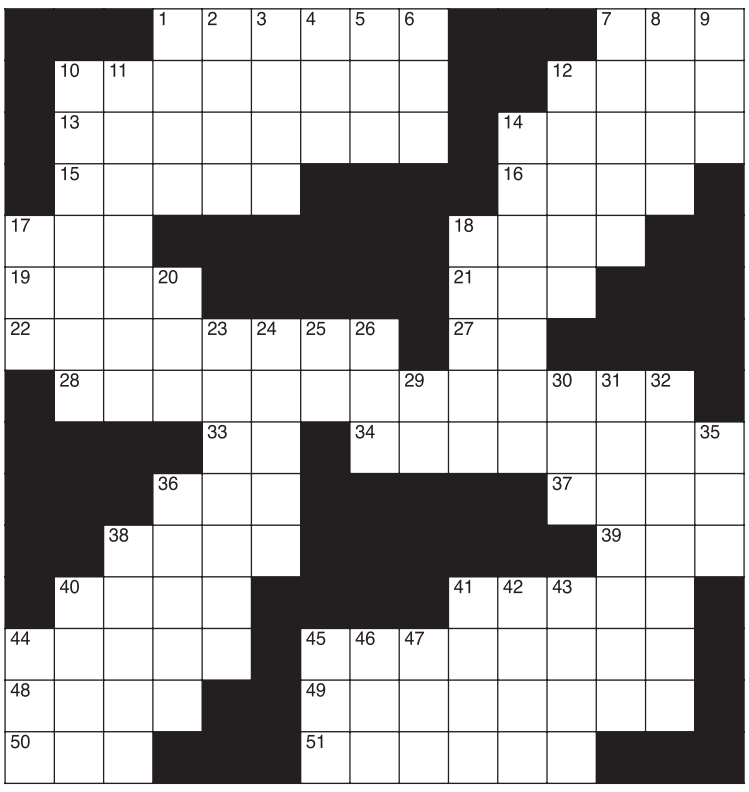
Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

1. Large dung beetle
7. Gambling game __-lo
10. Further along
12. Type of tobacco
13. Looked for
14. Silk fabric
15. Computer method to solve equations
16. As fast as can be done (abbr.)
17. Tear
18. Brews
19. "Famous" cookie baker
21. Women's Army Corps
22. Front parts of an animal
27. It's causing quite a stir
28. Beloved March holiday
33. 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
34. More impudent
36. Indicates center
37. Young woman (French)
38. A cause of distress
39. Santa's helper
40. Hillside
41. Many wombs
44. Is afraid of
45. Popular baked goods ingredient
48. Popular computers
49. Conceiving of
50. Google certification (abbr.)
51. Sturdy

Puzzle Solutions on B9

CLUES DOWN

1. Peruse quickly
2. Automobiles
3. Razorbill genus
4. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
5. Consumed
6. A place to sleep
7. Small seeds
8. Legendary law man Wyatt
9. Female sheep
10. Indigenous peoples of eastern Siberia
11. A place ships dock
12. Reciprocal of sine
14. Discomfort
17. British Air Aces
18. Exit sleep
20. Solar energetic particle
23. Plagues characterized by starvation
24. Short musical composition
25. Trauma center
26. Habitual twitching
29. A place where checks are exchanged (abbr.)
30. Decameter
31. Hinged surface in a wing
32. Shouting
35. Sports official
36. Volcanic craters
38. Supportive device
40. It's part of a rosary
41. Two-toed sloth
42. Body art
43. Let out
44. Foreign medical graduate
45. Nonprofit journalism organization (abbr.)
46. Couples say it
47. Bird's beak

PUZZLE SOLUTION

			S	C	A	R	A	B				C	E	E
		E	S	C	A	L	A	T	E			C	H	A	W
		S	E	A	R	C	H	E	D		M	O	I	R	E
		K	A	N	S	A					A	S	A	P	
	R	I	P							A	L	E	S		
	A	M	O	S						W	A	C			
	F	O	R	E	F	E	E	T		A	I				
		S	T	P	A	T	R	I	C	K	S	D	A	Y	
					M	U		C	H	E	E	K	I	E	R
				M	I	D						M	L	L	E
			B	A	N	E							E	L	F
		B	R	A	E					U	T	E	R	I	
	F	E	A	R	S		C	I	N	N	A	M	O	N	
	M	A	C	S			I	D	E	A	T	I	N	G	
	G	D	E				R	O	B	U	S	T			

Crypto Fun

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to humor.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 10 = C)

A. **11 19 20 15**
Clue: Funny saying

B. **10 19 18 14 10**
Clue: Funny person

C. **7 2 17 26 23**
Clue: Expresses humor

D. **2 17 12 14 15 25 10 15**
Clue: People watching a show

Answers: A. joke B. comic C. laugh D. audience

Word Search

LOVING HORSES WORD SEARCH

D	P	H	H	A	P	D	D	D	E	R	M	U	Z	Z	L	E	E	K	Q
H	U	E	S	A	O	N	U	N	U	H	T	Q	M	Z	R	D	Z	M	R
R	B	A	C	G	L	D	P	N	A	B	O	F	D	E	D	M	Z	F	E
D	C	W	T	O	N	T	N	O	W	I	C	M	P	W	R	U	R	F	T
M	T	L	C	F	L	I	E	H	N	S	R	W	Q	O	P	A	Z	O	N
F	U	M	S	K	A	T	D	R	G	Y	W	T	R	T	L	P	M	A	A
W	N	N	C	T	L	M	B	L	B	F	B	B	S	M	I	L	M	L	C
D	T	K	N	H	A	I	L	S	E	K	K	R	T	E	E	G	A	L	I
Q	S	N	P	H	W	L	N	Z	C	G	C	I	O	T	U	M	Y	G	O
N	E	T	M	U	I	B	L	W	F	T	A	D	D	M	R	Q	Q	W	Z
D	H	B	T	O	R	T	N	I	Z	L	H	L	W	T	Q	S	E	H	P
H	C	M	U	Z	T	C	W	R	O	D	Q	E	Y	I	R	B	D	T	I
D	B	U	M	M	Y	Q	E	C	E	N	R	N	K	E	B	K	F	Y	R
P	Z	R	T	L	Y	L	U	N	U	T	A	E	H	R	C	L	K	F	K
C	F	W	L	S	D	C	Y	P	A	A	S	T	S	O	P	C	K	C	Q
Z	L	I	I	D	R	Y	M	A	S	H	I	A	L	S	O	P	O	W	U
S	F	O	A	O	L	Y	H	B	O	W	I	E	P	A	A	L	H	R	F
C	W	S	U	K	R	Z	N	O	N	N	R	Q	U	M	T	G	G	Z	A
T	I	P	O	S	U	M	F	P	Z	O	A	E	W	E	E	W	E	Z	B
M	A	N	E	L	P	R	E	N	F	L	Y	A	F	K	I	N	S	P	N

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

ANSWERS IN THE B SECTION

WORDS

BRIDLE
CANTER
CHESTNUT
COLT
CROUP
DRESSAGE
EQUESTRIAN
FETLOCK
FILLY
FOAL
FORELOCK
GALLOP
GELDING
HALTER
HOOF
MANE
MARE
MUZZLE
PASTERN
PONY
SADDLE
STALLION
TROT
WITHERS

Sudoku Puzzle

How it Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! Good Luck! **ANSWERS IN THE B SECTION**

			7			5		
		5		9	6	1		7
		2			5	9		
		7	9	2				1
				3	7			9
3				4		2		
1			3					
	8					7	6	
								3

Word Scramble

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to horses.

TASLBE

Answer: Stable

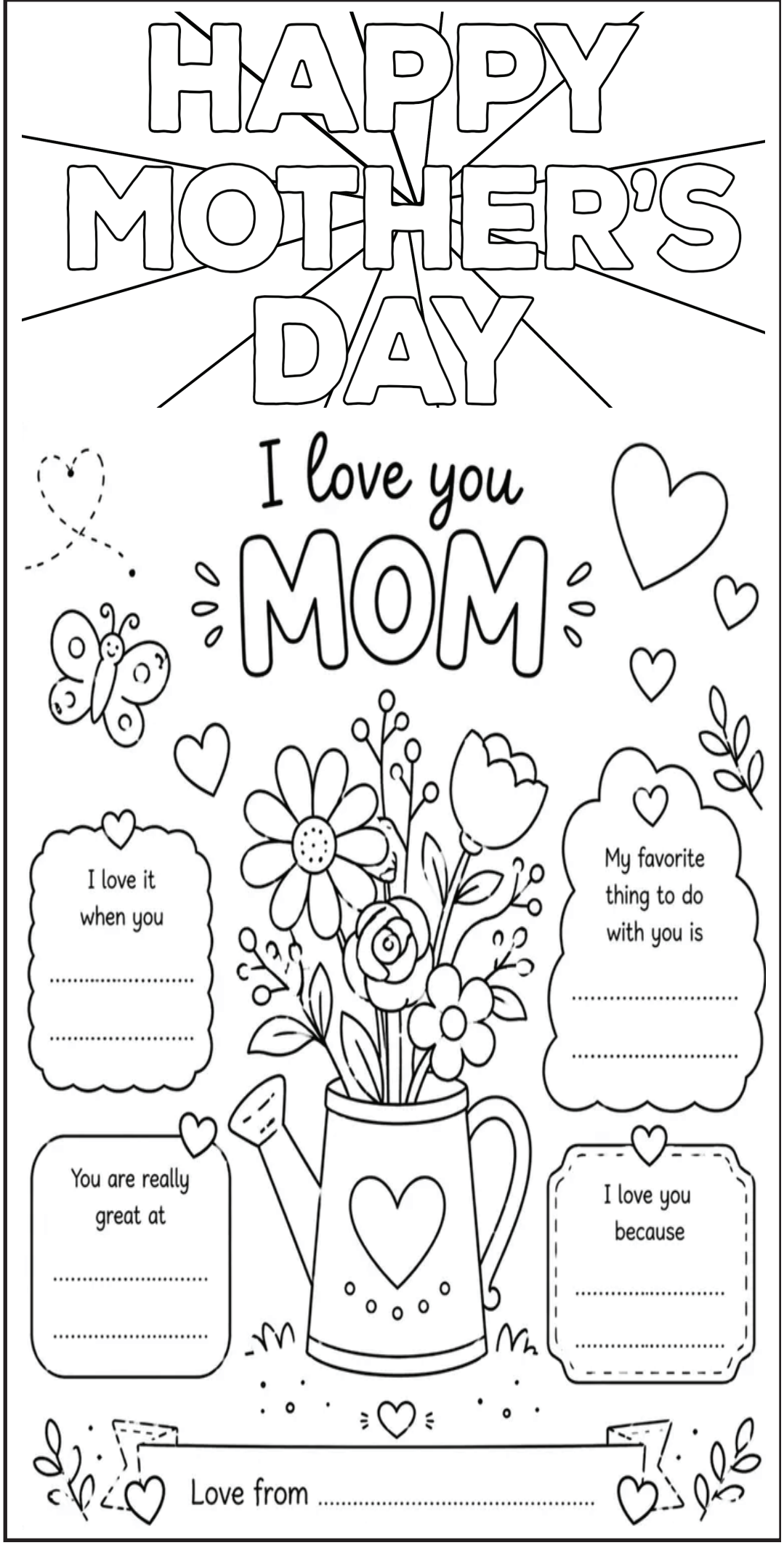
Guess Who?

GUESS WHO?

I am a singer/songwriter born in New York on May 9, 1949. I played the piano at a bar to help support my mother while in high school. I progressed to being a Grammy Award-winning artist and pianist known for my huge catalog of songs. I am the third best-selling solo artist in the U.S.

Answer: Billy Joel

COLORING FUN



WEST KY SPORTS

New Frontier Ahead For Williams

(Photo by Tim Taylor)

By Tim Taylor
KPI Sports Writer

Ballard Memorial senior Trinity Williams has decisions to make as her last season on the Lady Bomber softball career nears a completion. She now has one less decision to make after she signed to continue her softball playing career at Frontier Community College in Fairfield, Illinois. "It is really special," said Williams. She added, "I was not sure I wanted to play college softball, but after going to visit Frontier, I realized all the things I liked about playing." Frontier's Coach Jeremy Ellis made the 2 plus hour trip to La-Center to be a part of the signing ceremony. On his newest Bobcat signee, Ellis said "I've enjoyed the recruiting process with Trinity. She seems like a great kid and has a great family. I like her athletic ability and how she presents herself as a batter." Lady Bomber Coach Scott Alexander firsthand has seen that athletic ability and versatility of Williams. He has been a part of her playing career since she started on the softball field. Being able to coach her in high school over the last 5 years, he has seen that development continue. She has been an integral part of the 2 All A 1st Region Championships that ended in a 2023 Final 4 All A State finish and 2025 All A State Runner-up finish. Alexander said of Williams, "It is awesome and gratifying to see her achieve one of her goals. I am so happy for her." The Bobcats have gained a player that will send them to new frontiers as they look forward to the future with Williams on their team.

Lady Eagles Relays Rewrite Record Books in Recent Meet

By Laurna Todd
KPI Writer

Graves County Middle School's track team turned in a record-breaking performance recently, as a standout group of Lady Eagles made history in the relay events.

Ava Green, Aubree Armstrong, Ayla Smith and Kennedy Galloway teamed up and delivered an impressive showing, setting new school records in both the 4x200-meter and 4x100-meter relays.

In the 4x200 relay, the quartet posted a time of 2:01.03, breaking the previous school record of 2:03.63 set in 2024. The same group followed up in the 4x100 relay with a time of 57.75, surpassing the previous mark of 58.38 established in 2019.

The performance marked the first time the four athletes competed together as a relay team, making the accomplishment even more notable. Their early success highlights strong teamwork and coordination, setting the tone for what could be a promising future for the relay group.

GCMS Record Highlights – Relays

4x200 Relay: Green, Armstrong, Smith, Galloway – 2:01.03 (2026)

Previous Record: 2:03.63 (2024)

4x100 Relay: Green, Armstrong, Smith, Galloway – 57.75 (2026)

Previous Record: 58.38 (2019)

Marshall County introduces new girls' basketball coach

New Marshall County girls' basketball head coach Lyndon Dunning was introduced during a press conference on Thursday, April 30.
(Photo courtesy of Marshall County High School Athletics)

Mayfield senior signs with Brescia basketball program

Mayfield High School senior Owen Byrd signed with the Brescia University men's basketball program during a ceremony held at MHS on Friday, May 1.
(Photo courtesy of Mayfield High School)

Waldron named MVC Freshman of the Week

Staff Report

MURRAY — Murray State catcher Allie Waldron was named the Missouri Valley Conference Freshman of the Week as announced by the MVC Office in St. Louis on Tuesday, May 6.

The second Racer in as many weeks to win the award, Waldron continued her stellar freshman campaign at Drake with six RBIs, two doubles, and a pair of home runs. In a 17-6 win on Friday, May 1, the freshman notched her second multi-homer game of the season, finishing 3-for-4 with a pair of three-run home runs and a double. She also continued to be a steady presence behind the plate, delivering 11 putouts, three assists and playing error-free.

The St. Louis native is second on the team with a .329 batting average, 46 hits,11 doubles and 23 walks. She has also delivered 29 RBIs and five home runs in her freshman campaign.

The Marshall County High School unified track & field team is pictured. *(Photo courtesy of Marshall County High School Athletics)*

GCMS took first place at the KY NASP State tournament in bullseye in March. They are heading to Nationals in Louisville this weekend hoping to bring home a national title. *(Photo courtesy of Graves County Middle School)*

Five Murray State players named to MVC Softball Scholar-Athlete Team

Staff Report

MURRAY — Five members of the Murray State softball team were named to the 2026 Missouri Valley Conference Softball Scholar-Athlete Team.

To meet the criteria, student-athletes must be at least a sophomore academically and athletically. Redshirt freshmen were not eligible. Nominees must have a 3.50 cumulative GPA, both as an undergraduate and graduate student, where applicable. Eligible nominees must compete in at least 75 percent of the institution's games played OR must start in at least 50 percent of the institution's games. For pitchers, a student-athlete must have made at least 17 appearances or pitched 35 innings.

Adison Hicks is a senior with a 3.94 GPA. A December 2025 graduate with a degree in Health and Physical Education, she is now working on a master's degree in Special Education. The redshirt junior is batting .317 on the season with 44 hits, 33 RBI, and 11 extra base hits. She also features several clutch hits and highlight plays, including a walk-off home run to beat the Michigan State Spartans.

Kenley Minor is a sophomore with a 3.91 GPA as she pursues a bachelor's degree in business administration. In her second year with the Racers, she has evolved into a powerful threat at the plate, batting .279 and leading the team with 36 RBI and eight home runs while playing third base. Earlier this season, the Clinton, Indiana native set a career high with seven RBI in a game against UIC, where she hit a pair of home runs and led Murray State to a series-clinching 13-2 win.

Bre Haislip is a senior with a 3.72 GPA and will graduate this month with a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science with a focus in Occupational Therapy/Pre-Health Professionals. The Petersburg, Tennessee native has been a fixture in the circle all season for Murray State with an 11-8 record across 131 1/3 innings pitched. She features a team-low 3.09 ERA and has pitched seven complete games with two shutouts and leads the team with 83 strikeouts.

Katy Huels is an academic junior with a 3.64 GPA while she pursues a bachelor's degree in business administration. In her second season with the Racers, the 2025 All-MVC First Teamer has continued ot be a threat at the plate with a .276 batting average, 37 hits, and 10 RBI. She is also part of an outfield unit that committed just two errors throughout the regular season, with a .989 fielding percentage.

Kynadee Warner is a sophomore with a 3.63 GPA, pursuing a bachelor's degree in exercise science/exercise physiology. A newcomer to Murray State, Warner is another contributor to this season's standout group in the outfield, featuring a 1.000 fielding percentage. She also leads the team at the plate, batting .366 from the leadoff spot with a team-high 59 hits as well as two triples and six RBI.

McCracken County shut out Ballard Memorial 5-0 on Monday, May 4. The Lady Mustangs' special guests for the game were the Heath 7U Glitter Bombs. *(Photo courtesy of McCracken County High School)*

Grooms tabbed Calloway County cross country head coach

Staff Report

MURRAY — Calloway County has announced the return of Jonathan Grooms as its boys' and girls' cross country head coach.

Grooms previously served in the coaching role from 2015-2023, leading his squads to four KHSAA regional team championships and two regional runner-up finishes. During Grooms' previous tenure, his athletes earned 12 All-State honors and 44 All-Region selections. He was also named Area 1 Coach of the Year four times.

"Two years away didn't change the mission — it strengthened it," said Grooms. "I'm back, more driven than ever, ready to build something special again."

Grooms began his coaching career at Calloway County as an assistant coach in 2003 before becoming head cross country coach at Carlisle County in 2006.

Calloway County competes in Class 2A, Region 1. The alignment for Class 2A, Region 1 is as follows: Calloway County, Hopkins County Central, Hopkinsville, Logan County, Paducah Tilghman, Trigg County, Union County, Webster County.

KHSAA Student Advisory Group selected for 2026-27 schoolyear

Staff Report

LEXINGTON — Sixteen student-athletes from across the Commonwealth of Kentucky have been named members of the 2026-27 KHSAA Student Advisory Group. The leaders will represent the KHSAA at the NFHS National Student Leadership Summit n Indianapolis July 16-19.

The group will also assist in the planning and execution of the KHSAA HYPE Student Leadership Conferences scheduled for August 31-September 1 at the Central Bank Center in Lexington. Members of the Student Advisory Group are as follows: Corran Blair, Beechwood; Kate Borders, Tates Creek; Mya Moore, Elizabethtown; Reagan Workman, Mason County; Isabella Fish, Scott; Terrance Drake, Bethlehem; Landon Atcher, Elizabethtown; Marcellus Ashford, Bryan Station; Collen Harley, Mercy; Triniti-Ann Steed, Sacred Heart; Sawyer Maggard, West Carter; Mason Clements, McCracken County; Jackson Kincaid, George Rogers Clark; Ella Dulaney, Frederick Douglass; Madelyn Boling, Paducah Tilghman; Kinly Cooper, Pendleton County.

The group attending the NSLS will split into groups and work through topical discussions on relevant and contemporary issues. The free program is designed to help students hone their leadership abilities and teach them how to effectively influence and lead their peers in a positive manner.

Kentucky Virtual Library expands services statewide

By TOM LATEK
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – The Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL), part of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), has expanded its contract with EBSCO Information Services (EBSCO) to provide statewide access to LearningExpress Library Complete and Financial Fit.

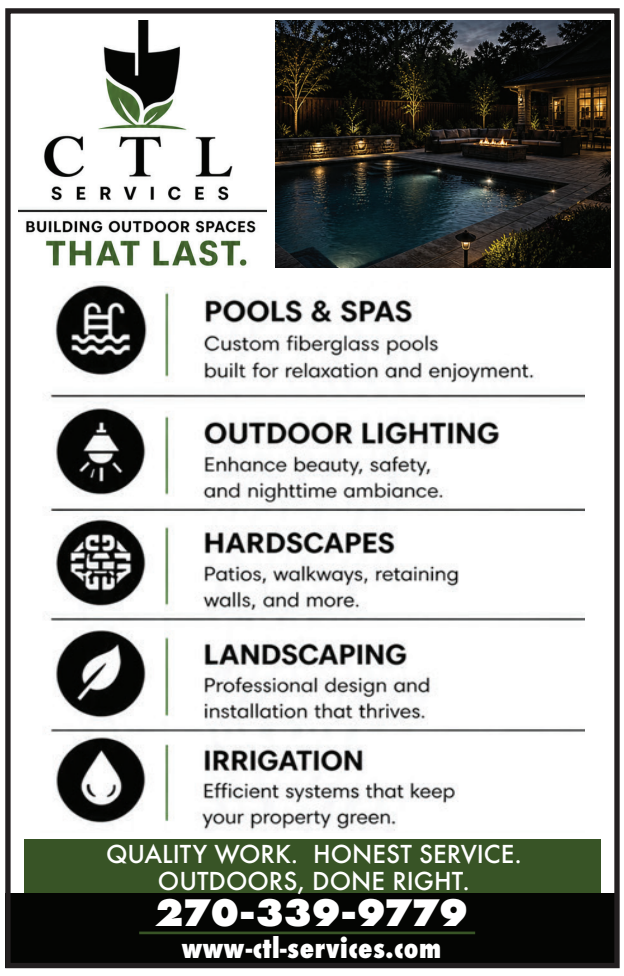
These platforms, which are now available at schools and libraries throughout the state, provide Kentucky residents with enhanced resources to help them prepare for standardized college and graduate admissions exams (e.g., ACT, SAT, GRE), strengthen financial literacy, and assist with job searches and career exploration.

"These resources align closely with Kentucky's goals for postsecondary enrollment and completion, workforce success, and financial education," said Ilona Burdette, KYVL Executive Director. "They can help Kentuckians thrive in their careers, communities, and personal lives."

CPE, for instance, is working with public colleges and universities to implement the Kentucky Graduate Profile, which emphasizes 10 Essential Skills every graduate needs to achieve career success. College students and instructors can use LearningExpress modules to reinforce skills such as critical thinking, communication, and quantitative reasoning and build knowledge in core subjects. Workplace skills and knowledge, including software training, career exams preparation, working in team settings, and more can be found in the LearningExpress Library.

FinancialFit complements Kentucky's recently passed legislation, HB 342, requiring ninth-graders to complete a financial literacy course in order to graduate. With its scenario-based lessons, engaging videos, and built-in quizzes, FinancialFit is a valuable resource for teachers and students alike. Individuals interested in accessing these resources can visit participating schools or public libraries.

For more information, email the Kentucky Virtual Library at kyvl@ky.gov.



Pope says Cats fell short while chasing 'generational' talent

By KEITH TAYLOR
Kentucky Today

LEXINGTON, Ky. (KT) — Kentucky coach Mark Pope has no concerns about the current roster he's assembled for next season.

Pope answered a short list of questions posted on social media accounts on Wednesday. Within 24 hours, Pope received nearly 2 million views and 5,000 questions on the media platforms X and Instagram.

One question was regarding recruiting and the transfer portal, with 14 of the top players visiting campus and none of them committing to the Wildcats.

"I'd like to get all 20 kids to visit our campus," he said. "That's a major win, and there's no limit … We were chasing a generational talent, and we fell a little short, but we weren't sitting on our hands. We put together a roster that we are going to love watching crush it in Rupp Arena."

Kentucky coach Mark Pope watches open practice last Thursday at the Enterprise Center in St. Louis. *(Keith Taylor/Kentucky Today)*

Pope addressed an inquiry about the No. 5 spot. Pope isn't concerned and believes Malachi Moreno will return next season. Moreno has declared for the NBA Draft with an option to return to Kentucky next year.

"Malachi Moreno was the No. 1 priority for us going into this portal season," Pope said. "We think that he's going to be the best center in all of college basketball next year here at Kentucky. He's also going through the draft process."

Pope added that Moreno "had a great workout just last night for an NBA team." and will be participating in the NBA Combine next week.

"We're supporting him every step of the way," he said. "This is the place where basketball dreams come true, and Malachi has two dreams. He's dreaming of hanging a banner at Kentucky, and he's dreaming of playing in the NBA, and so we're supporting him, chasing both of those at the same time.

"We're working hard in the portal right now to shore up this five-spot. We're going to have an unbelievable crew at the center position.

He also thinks the addition of Zoom Diallo and Alex Wilkins from the portal gives the Wildcats a solid backcourt next season.

"One of the top priorities for us going into the portal was finding creators, and these are two of the elite creators in all of college basketball," he said. "They are going to form a dynamic duo for Kentucky basketball. They are both over 30 percent assist rate. There's currently only one other roster in the entire country with two players over a 30 percent assist rate. This is going to be awesome."

The Kentucky coach said the Wildcats are being used by players for more leverage on the recruiting trail.

"We're the biggest brand in basketball," Pope said.

Kentucky's 16th Annual

HAITI BENEFIT AUCTION 2026

Our purpose is a cooperative effort of many chuches and individuals to porcure funds for qualifying missions in Haiti.

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The event center will be open ALL DAY on Friday for donations & to look at sale items!

EVENT SCHEDULE FOR FRI, MAY 15, 2026

3 pm Begin taking donations at the Silent Auction Board
4 pm Begin serving supper: Fresh Mississippi Catfish, Hushpuppies, Cole Slaw, Baked Beans, Dinner Rolls, Homemade pie & Ice Cream!
5-8 pm Auction begins! Small crafts, misc items, select furniture, several quilts & some tools.
8 pm - Enjoy acapella singing from various groups until close!

Event schedule for Saturday May 16, 2026

Hit-n-Miss ice cream

6:30 am: Begin serving breakfast buffet

Breakfast Menu

Biscuits & Gravy, Hashbrowns,Sausage Patties,Scrambled Eggs with Toppings,Fruit Cups,Homemade Cinnamon Rolls,Juice & Coffee!

8:00 am: - Main Auction Begins!
8:30 am: - Silent Auction board opens.
9:00 am: - Tool Auction Begins!
9:30 am: - Main Auction Furniture Sales Begin!
10:00 am: - Quilt Sale Begins
10:30 am: - Lunch serving line opens
1:00 pm: - Silent Auction soft close

Food items are sold by donation only. We depend on your generosity.

100% OF AUCTION PROCEEDS GO TO HAITI MISSIONS

This event is sponsored by (but not limited to) the local Mennonite and Plain communities. Any help is appreciated. There are many ways you can be a part of this mission effort. One of the ways you can help is to come on sale day and partake of the good food and buy some the many unique items you can only expect to find at this sale. Let's work together and make this year a good one for the people of Haiti!

For more information call Kevin Miller (270) 893-8340

Student Achievement Showcase to honor academic excellence, leadership

Press Release

PADUCAH, KY - The Student Achievement Showcase celebrated outstanding student success across campus, recognizing academic excellence, leadership and involvement in student organizations and clubs.

The event also included the induction of new members into Phi Theta Kappa, honoring students who have demonstrated exceptional scholastic achievement and commitment to their education.

Ballard County

Sergio Carlos Mota Vargas — PTK Inductee

Shahizah Cuizon — PTK Inductee

Emma Graves — PTK Inductee; Health Sciences, Future Educator's Organization, Best All-Around Award

Rebecca Matney — Arts and Sciences, Early Childhood Educator's Club, Inspiring Early Childhood Education Award

Calloway County

Zachary Burton — Applied Technologies, Pathfinders, Pathfinder Services Award; Applied Technologies, Phi Theta Kappa, The Heart of Phi Theta Kappa Award

Chloe Mensch — Health Sciences, Health Science Technology, Excellence in Health Science Technology

Sharon Sleboda — Arts and Sciences, Business Administration - Human Resource Management Award, Human Resource Management Student of the Year

Madison Whitlow — Health Sciences, Student Art and Design Club, Creative Helping Hand Award

Carlisle County

Melissa Carter — Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory Technician, Excellence in Medical Laboratory Technician

Adrian Cunningham — Arts and Sciences, Accounting, Excellence in Accounting Award

Albert Terry — Arts and Sciences, Excellence in Chemistry, The Excellence in Chemistry Award

Jacqulyn Wallace — PTK Inductee; Health Sciences, Nursing Assistant, Outstanding Nursing Assistant

Crittenden County

G'Anna Sizemore — Applied Technologies, Cosmetology, Outstanding Clinical Lab Award

Fulton County

Amanda Sanders — Health Sciences, Nursing Nightingale Award - Associate Degree Nursing, ADN Nursing Nightingale Award

Graves County

Angel Esteban Arguera Martinez — Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory Technician, Leadership in Medical Laboratory Technician

Kayleen Elkins — Applied Technologies, Cosmetology, Outstanding Excellence Award

Anjelica Jackson — PTK Inductee

Kristin Martinez — Arts and Sciences, Interdisciplinary Childhood Education, 2026 Academic Excellence in Early Childhood Education

McKenzie Page — PTK Inductee

Lela Marie Tidwell — PTK Inductee; Arts and Sciences, Education, Academic Excellence in Education

Hickman County

Maura Wilson — Health Sciences, Student Art and Design Club, Dedicated Newcomer Award; Health Sciences, GSA, GSA Leadership Award - President

Johnson County

Lindsie Nance — PTK Inductee

Livingston County

Jody Gingerich — Arts and Sciences, Criminal Justice - Transfer, Outstanding Graduating Student in Criminal Justice (Transfer); Arts and Sciences, Alpha Epsilon Beta, Alpha Epsilon Beta Outstanding Leadership Award

Lyon County

Annie Bounds — Health Sciences, GSA, GSA Leadership Award - Vice President

Haylee O'Daniel — PTK Inductee

Marshall County

Haylea Conde — Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory Technician, Clinical Excellence in Medical Laboratory Technician

Amber Fralix — PTK Inductee; Arts and Sciences, Criminal Justice - Transfer, Outstanding Student in Criminal Justice (Transfer); Arts and Sciences, Phi Theta Kappa, Iota Eta Chapter Legacy Award

Raygen Elizabeth Fugate — Arts and Sciences, Science, Excellence in Science

Kassandra Gibson — PTK Inductee

Samantha Lavender — PTK Inductee

Audrey Noles — Health Sciences, Surgical Technology, Academic Excellence in Surgical Technology Award

Parker Edward Story — Arts and Sciences, Criminal Justice, Outstanding Graduating Student in Criminal Justice (Applied Science)

Massac County

Alysa Browning — PTK Inductee; Applied Technologies, Future Educator's Organization, Leader Award

Alexis Gilchrist — Health Sciences, Advanced Nursing Assistant, Outstanding Advanced Nursing Assistant Student

Ethan Hornback — Health Sciences, Surgical Technology, Quynh Pham Outstanding Clinical Achievement Award

Natalee Owens — Health Sciences, Associate Degree Nursing, ADN Academic Excellence Award

Preston Summers — Arts and Sciences, Math, Excellence in Math

McCracken County

Devin Bonner — Health Sciences, Student Government Association, Visionary Leader Award

Erica Brandstetter — PTK Inductee; Applied Technologies, Computer Engineering Technology, Computer Engineering Technology (CET) Outstanding Student Award

Donetta Casey — Health Sciences, Early Childhood Educator's Club, Organizational Motivator Leadership Award

Lindsey Champion — Health Sciences, Radiography, Radiography Outstanding Clinical Award

Kalli Chapman — PTK Inductee

Lily Conn — Health Sciences, Dental Assisting, Academic Achievement in Dental Assisting

Rayne Copeland — Health Sciences, KANS, Outstanding Leadership Award for KANS

Erica Davis — PTK Inductee

Lauren Denton — Arts and Sciences, Alpha Epsilon Beta, Alpha Epsilon Beta Outstanding Leadership Award

Shakeitha Douglas — Health Sciences, Kentucky Medication Aide, Outstanding Kentucky Medication Aide Award

Elisabeth Dunn — PTK Inductee

Emily Eason — PTK Inductee

RaeLynn Felker — PTK Inductee; Applied Technologies, Phi Theta Kappa, Outstanding Leadership Award; Applied Technologies, Future Educator's Organization, Outstanding Leadership Award; Arts and Sciences, Education, Academic Excellence in Education; KCTCS Scholar

Samantha Fraser — Health Sciences, Physical Therapist Assistant, Spirit of Physical Therapy Award

Kaylee Gaia — Arts and Sciences, Early Childhood Educator's Club, Vision Through a Child's Eyes Leadership Award

Bryson Gamblin — PTK Inductee

Destiny Gowins — Health Sciences, Physical Therapist Assistant, Academic Achievement Award in Physical Therapy

Raymond Green — Health Sciences, Student Art and Design Club, Ring Collector & Dedicated Member Award

Taliyah Hamilton — PTK Inductee; Health Sciences, Student Government Association, Outstanding Leadership Award

Carsen Hammonds — PTK Inductee

Alia Hernandez — Health Sciences, Student Government Association, Organizational Leadership Award

Brooke Humphrey — Health Sciences, Alpha Epsilon Beta, Alpha Epsilon Beta Outstanding Leadership Award

Joe Jackson — Arts and Sciences, Business Administration Mangement Award, Business Administration Management Student of the Year

Jenna Jackson — Health Sciences, Dental Assisting, Excellence in Dental Assisting

Chase Jarvis — Arts and Sciences, Social Science, Outstanding Student in Social Science

Cecilia Kaler — PTK Inductee

Tristan Kellermeyer — PTK Inductee

Laynie Kidd — PTK Inductee

Maria Korte — PTK Inductee

Kloee Latham — PTK Inductee

Angelena Locke — PTK Inductee

Kyle Mcclellan — Arts and Sciences, Physics, Excellence in Physics

Devan Mounts — PTK Inductee

Landon Nichols — Arts and Sciences, Communications, Public Speaking Distinquished Addition Award

Susann Parlor — Arts and Sciences, Business Administration Transfer, Business Administration Transfer Student of the Year

Lonnie Peck — Arts and Sciences, Visual Arts, Outstanding Student in Visual Arts

Jeanine Phelps — PTK Inductee; Arts and Sciences, Future Educator's Organization, Perserverance Award

Amy Proxmire — Health Sciences, Medical Information Technology, Outstanding Medical Information Technology Student

Jeffrey Reeder — Applied Technologies, Computer and Information Technologies, Computer and Information Technologies (CIT) Outstanding Student Award; KCTCS Scholar

Ava Russell — PTK Inductee; KCTCS Awards, Phi Theta Kappa, Community Impact Award

Danielle Schmuck — Student Success Center, Student Success Center, Nat and Jo Tilley Dortch Award of Excellence

Landon Snyder — PTK Inductee

Logan Steckenrider — PTK Inductee; Arts and Sciences, Logistics and Operations Management, Outstanding Logistics and Operations Management Student

Chloe Streetman — Arts and Sciences, Interdisciplinary Childhood Education, 2026 Outstanding Early Childhood Education Graduate

Graclyn Taylor — PTK Inductee

Calli Toon — PTK Inductee

Joseline Vieyra — PTK Inductee

Haylee Welch — Health Sciences, Student Art and Design Club, Club Pillar Award

Montgomery County

Madison Coon — Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory Technician, Academic Excellence in Medical Laboratory Technician

Obion County

Lidia Acevedo — Health Sciences, Radiography, Radiography Outstanding Clinical Award

Dafeny Ruiz — PTK Inductee

Maribel Smith — Health Sciences, JRCERT, Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) Award

***BAKER** from Front Page*

has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to community service. He has been recognized by both the Kentucky House and Senate for his work with the Malt Beverage Education Corporation, promoting awareness about the dangers of underage drinking.

Baker currently serves as a trustee at Georgetown College and holds leadership roles with Baptist Health Lexington and Baptist Health Kentucky's foundation efforts.

A graduate of Georgetown College and a member of the Franklin High School Hall of Fame in Ohio, Baker and his wife, Donna, are proud parents of six children and recently welcomed their first grandchild.

The St. Jerome Fancy Farm Picnic is nationally recognized as Kentucky's premier political speaking event, drawing elected officials, candidates, and thousands of attendees each year for a day of spirited speeches, barbecue and tradition.

Murray State University Launches 3 Year Strategic Planning Initiative

From Marshall County Daily

(MURRAY, Ky.) — Murray State University has officially kicked off a comprehensive strategic planning process that will chart the institution's course for the next three years.

University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson framed the effort as more than a routine administrative exercise. "Strategic planning goes beyond a static document — it is a collaborative blueprint that enables us to anticipate opportunities, clarify our purpose and priorities, and align the resources needed to achieve our shared goals," he said.

Leading the initiative are three co-chairs drawn from across the university's colleges: Chris Wooldridge, faculty member and director of the Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development in the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business; Dr. Ben Littlepage, professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs in the College of Education and Human Services; and Dr. Elise Kieffer, program director and assistant professor of Non-Profit Leadership Studies, also in the Bauernfeind College of Business.

The co-chairs will head a Strategic Planning Committee made up of representatives from across campus and the broader community. The group's charge is to develop a mission-driven roadmap with actionable strategies spanning student experience, teaching and learning, academic innovation, inclusive excellence, financial sustainability, investment in people, and community engagement.

The strategic plan will also run parallel to a Campus Master Plan focused on the university's physical infrastructure, with the two frameworks intended to complement one another.

Patterson emphasized the significance of the work ahead. "With thoughtful engagement and a commitment to excellence, we will develop a Strategic Plan that reflects our values, sharpens our direction, and ensures continued impact for our students, faculty, staff, community, and beyond."

Founded in 1922, Murray State University operates its main campus in Murray along with five regional campuses in Fort Campbell, Henderson, Hopkinsville, Madisonville and Paducah. The university counts more than 80,000 alumni worldwide.

For more information, visit murraystate.edu.

Mayfield PD Transitioning to New Temporary Location

By: Laurna Todd
KPI Writer

Mayfield Police Dept. temporary location at 228 Andrea Drive, the former location of Temporary Fire Station 1, Photo credits: Ciro Astarita

The Mayfield Police Department and the City of Mayfield will soon begin transitioning operations as rebuilding efforts continue across the community following the December 2021 tornado.

Over the coming weeks, the police department will relocate to a temporary site at 228 Andrea Drive, the former location of Temporary Fire Station 1. Officials say the move is necessary as the department awaits completion of its new permanent home currently under construction on Broadway alongside the new City Hall facility.

According to Mayfield Police Chief Nathan Kent, the department's current location — commonly referred to as the former Atmos Energy building — is now for sale. "What is colloquially known as the ATMOS Energy building, MPD's home since the tornado destroyed City Hall, is for sale," Kent said. "The owner lives in Chicago and has no ties to Mayfield. We assess that he will sell that building before we would be ready to move into our permanent, new station that is under construction on Broadway." Kent said those circumstances prompted the department to seek another temporary option.

"While the temporary, sprung structure that the fire department had been utilizing is not ideal, it was available, and its rent is significantly less expensive than at our former location," he said. "Those two factors are what compelled us to move."

The department anticipates moving into the new permanent police station in May 2027.

Kent emphasized that the transition has not interrupted daily police operations or emergency response services. "This transition has not affected daily operations," Kent said. "Our patrol officers were not tasked with moving and have worked their shifts as normal, answering all calls for service from the public."

Residents will still be able to reach the department using the same phone numbers, including the main line at 270-247-1621 and the non-emergency dispatch number at 270-856-3721. Kent noted that while the physical move may create a busy week for staff, the department expects to have its business office fully operating at the Andrea Drive location by next Monday.

"The business office is inside the trailer closest to the public parking lot, and we will erect signage to help direct citizens," he said. Looking ahead, Kent said he is excited about what the new combined City Hall and police facility will offer both officers and the public.

"The City of Mayfield has never had a stand-alone, purpose-built police station," Kent said. "I'm excited for our officers, as they will soon be working out of the most state-of-the-art police station in western Kentucky."

Kent added that the current temporary facility lacks many of the public accommodations citizens expect when visiting a police department. "In our current facility, we have no public restroom, nor a public lobby," he said. "Both of those are inconvenient for citizens that come in person to the temporary site. There is not protection from the weather as they are being served."

"In contrast, the new City Hall and Police Department will be spacious and accommodating to the public," Kent added.

Beshear taking emergency steps to lower gas prices

By TOM LATEK
Kentucky Today

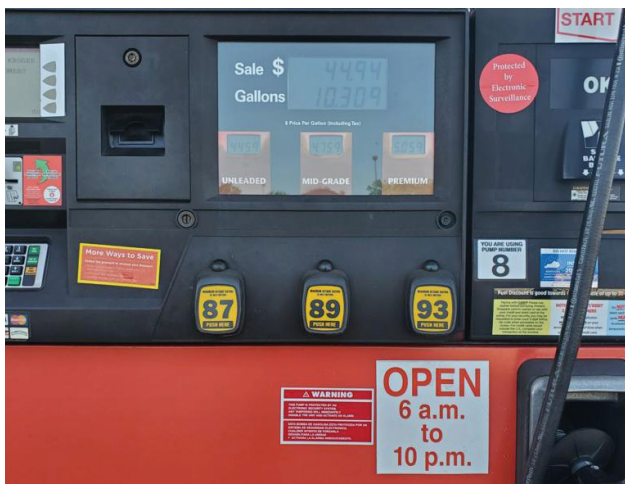
FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Gov. Andy Beshear announced emergency steps he was taking to deal with higher gas prices due to the war in Iran during a Tuesday press conference.

"Gas prices have now skyrocketed to more than $4 per gallon in Kentucky," Beshear said. "Today the average is $4.28 per gallon. A year ago, it was $2.85. Diesel is $5.32, which is two dollars more than a year ago."

The governor was not shy about who he blames for the higher prices.

"All this is entirely attributable to the Trump Administration starting a war without thinking through the costs to the American people. They failed to address the basic question of how they would secure the Strait of Hormuz. They thought the war would be short, that the Iranian people would rise up. They were wrong and now the American people are paying for it."

Beshear announced several steps he is taking: "I am signing an emergency regulation to freeze the gas tax and to prevent a future price hike on July 1. The current gas tax is 26.4 cents per gallon and is expected to rise to 27 cents on July 1."



He also signed an executive order declaring a state of emergency related to gas prices, which would reduce the gas tax by 10 cents per gallon, with an effective date of May 11, but said one step is needed for it to become reality. "And that is a sign off by Kentucky's Attorney General, since it could freeze a couple of statutes that are on the books."

In addition, the governor activated the state's price-gouging law and sent letters urging leadership in Congress and leaders in Kentucky's congressional delegation to suspend the federal gas tax until the end of the year. f that's approved, prices could drop another 18 cents per gallon through the end of 2026.

He also signed an executive order Tuesday to freeze the 2026 motor vehicle assessment rate ahead of an expected increase on Jan. 1, 2027.

Attorney General Russell Coleman issued a statement responding to the proposals: "Of course Kentuckians should have lower gas prices. But Governor Beshear has vetoed almost every tax cut that's come to his desk. Now, he's just playing politics and running for President. Kentuckians stand with President Trump, and they're not buying what the Governor is selling."

However, Coleman added he will sign and publish an executive order before May 11, 2026 when the governor's order takes effect.

Indiana's Republican Gov. Mike Braun has signed similar executive orders, according to Beshear.

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Murray State University Paducah Regional Campus student set to celebrate 79th birthday by earning her bachelor's degree

MURRAY, Ky. — EJ Abell is celebrating her 79th birthday on May 8 by checking off the only item on her bucket list: earning her degree.

Abell, of Paducah, Kentucky, will walk across the stage at commencement that day with her Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS) degree in arts and humanities.

"I should have finished my degree long ago, but it certainly is time now to do so!" said Abell.

Abell, who is now enrolled at the Murray State University Paducah Regional Campus, first began her college journey in the spring of 1969 at Murray State's main campus. She had been out of high school for a while when her late friend and Murray State alumna Susan Kerr, '70, encouraged her to enroll.

"I give her all the credit for starting me on my journey," Abell said.

She majored in art and minored in English, with plans to graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and work as a practicing artist. But as it tends to do, life happened.

Abell got married and worked part-time while her husband was in law school in Birmingham, Alabama. It wasn't financially feasible for both of them to go to school, she said. Over the years, the couple raised a family: a daughter, Holly, and a son, Nathan.

Abell started teaching art to children in 1975. At the time, there was no art teacher at Clark Elementary School in Paducah, so she taught sixth graders through a Parent Teacher Association position. The next year, she began teaching group classes privately, which she has now done for more than 50 years. Abell also worked for nearly 20 years as the education director at the River Discovery Center in downtown Paducah.

Abell took courses both for credit and non-credit through the years. When she was ready to return to her degree in earnest, she attended West Kentucky Community and Technical College for several semesters until she heard about the BIS program at Murray State, and with the help of the Center for Adult and Regional Education (CARE), she transferred to the Murray State University Paducah Regional Campus in 2014.

She credits CARE Executive Director Dan Lavit with getting her started toward her BIS degree.

"He made it sound doable, and I knew when we had the conversation that I would finish," Abell said.

Abell also said she leaned on Murray State University Paducah Regional Campus Director Karami Underwood and her academic advisor, Melanie Watson, for support along the way.

"It would have been much more difficult had I not had Melanie beside me every step of the way," Abell said.

Watson had nothing but praise for Abell as a student and as a person.

"EJ is an excellent student," Watson said. "She is on track to graduate with honors recognition which means she has an excellent GPA. EJ was also chosen to carry the gonfalon for our Integrated Studies program under CARE. This is an honor given to students who know what it means to work hard and go above and beyond. She has excelled in all her classes with due diligence."

Abell (left) is pictured here with her academic advisor, Melanie Watson (right)

Abell said taking advantage of the Senior Scholars program made it feasible for her to finish her degree. This program allows eligible adults over the age of 65 to receive tuition waivers. To learn more about the Senior Scholars program, visit murraystate.edu/seniorscholars.

Abell said the most rewarding part of her experience returning to Murray State has been the focus that she has gained since her younger years as a college student.

"That has made my learning more gratifying," she said. "We are never too old to learn. And it is never too late to go back for a degree. What better use of your time than to continue your education? The world changes quickly, and learning new things keeps you abreast of those changes. I get up every morning and have coffee and do homework. It's a lovely start to the day."

Watson said Abell inspires people every day, and she often shares Abell's success story to encourage others that they, too, can complete their bachelor's degree.

"It is never too late to work on your dream!" said Watson.

For Abell's capstone project, she organized a solo three-dimensional art exhibition called "Retrospective."

"It takes a lot of work to create a solo exhibition, due to all the art pieces that are needed for such a display," said Watson.

The opening reception started on March 12, and her art show could be viewed through April 16 at the Paducah School of Art and Design.

"EJ has a unique way of assembling art pieces so that she connects with her viewers," Watson said. "She takes material people might discard and arranges them in a way that tells a story. I found her art pieces to be fascinating. I am so proud of her!"

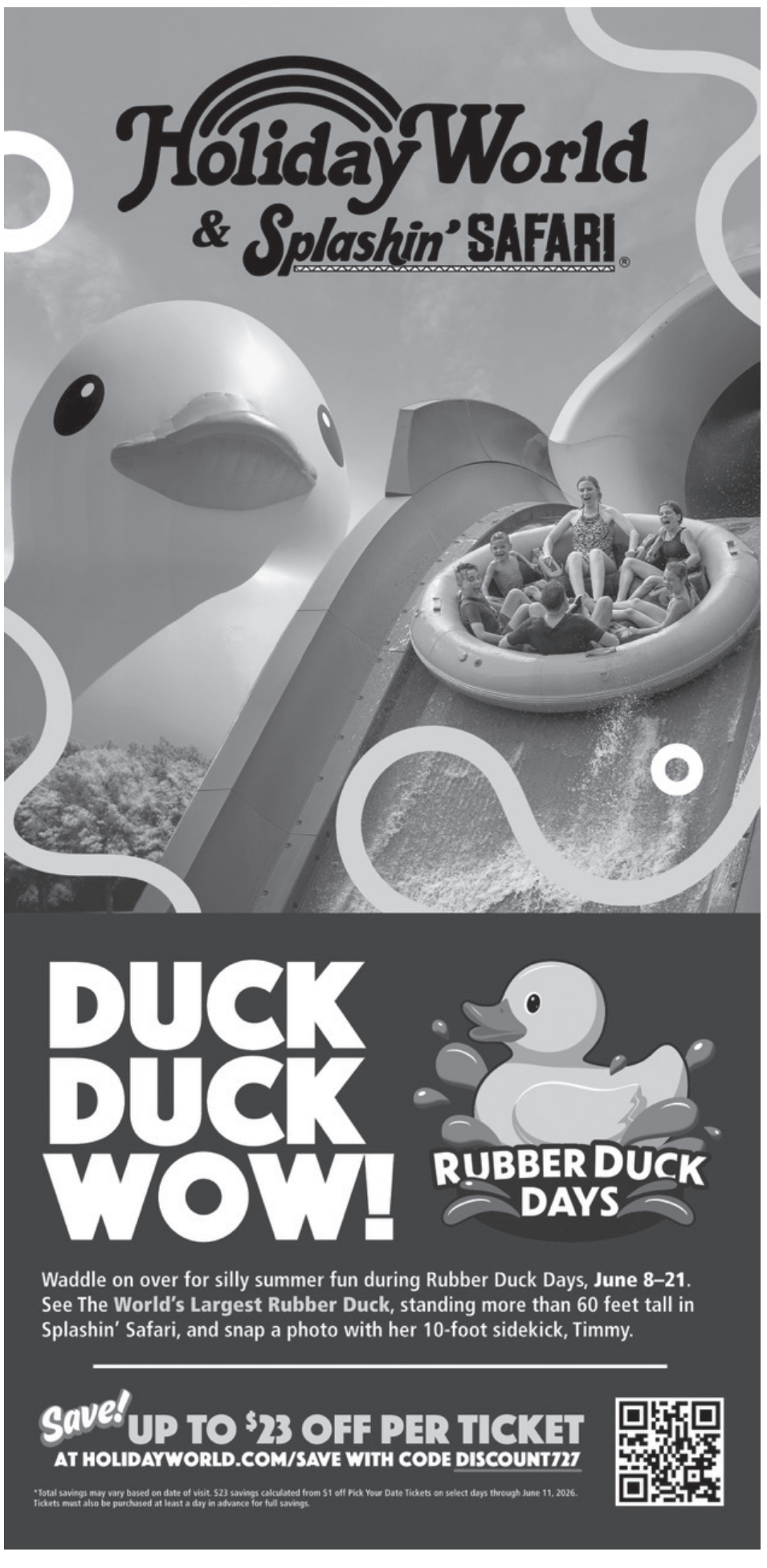
Abell said she's dedicating her degree to her late father, who, although not formally educated himself, valued education very much and encouraged her as a child to be curious and to learn all that she could.

She is also looking forward to having her friend, Dr. Shirley Menendez, who supported and encouraged her throughout her entire adult life, in the audience for commencement, as well as her children and grandchildren.

When asked why, of all the colleges and universities she could have chosen, she opted to come back to Murray State, Abell's response was simple.

"I started at Murray State," she said. "I loved it then. I love it now. It is home."

Abell will have the honor of carrying CARE's gonfalon at her May 8 commencement ceremony.



BALLARD

Kameron Dale Bristoe passed away on Friday, May 1, 2026, in Paducah, Kentucky, at the age of 35. Memorial Services will be held at 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at Lovelaceville Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. Karson Elliott and Rev. Jared Hayes officiating. Visitation will be from 11:00 am until the service hour of 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at Lovelaceville Missionary Baptist Church.

Cathy Lee, 70, of Kevil went to be with the Lord on Monday, April 27, 2026, at her home. Funeral services were held at 1:00pm on Monday, May 4, 2026, at Christ Community Church with the Rev. Tim Turner officiating. Burial will follow at New Liberty Methodist Church Cemetery.

James B. Tanner, age 73, passed away Saturday, May 2, 2026 at his home in Barlow, KY. Visitation was held on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at Morrow Funeral Chapel in LaCenter after 11:00 a.m. Funeral service was held on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. with Rev. Ryan Baker officiating. Interment followed at Barlow Cemetery.

Melissa A. Cook, age 51, passed away on Friday, May 1, 2026, at Baptist Health of Paducah, KY. A memorial service is scheduled for Friday, May 8, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Morrow Funeral Chapel in LaCenter, KY. with Brother Letoun Bledsoe officiating.

Karen Armstrong, age 61, known to her family as "Sissy" passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2026, at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville, TN. There are no services are scheduled at this time.

CALDWELL

Joyce McCormick Thomas, age 85, of Princeton, passed away Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Mercy Health Lourdes in Paducah. Funeral services were held at 1:00 pm Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at Morgan's Funeral Home with Bro. Dean Ray officiating. Burial followed in Piney Grove Cemetery.

Ruth Ann Curlee, age 85, formerly of Louisville, passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Caldwell Medical Center. There will be no public services held at this time. In true "Ruthie" fashion, she would want this simple reminder to be her farewell: take time to be with the people you love, cherish the moments God has given you, and never miss an opportunity to make someone feel special. Morgan's Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Delbert "Eddie" Tosh, Jr., 76, of Princeton, passed away on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at his home. Funeral services and masonic rites were held at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Morgan's Funeral Home with Bro. Mike Boyd officiating. Burial followed in Doom Chapel Cemetery in Kuttawa.

CALLOWAY

Frances Ann "Fran" Styers, 87, of Murray, KY, passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026 at her daughter's home. A visitation celebrating her life is set for 2 pm – 4 pm on Sunday, May 24, 2026 at Imes Funeral Home, 311 North 4th Street, Murray.

Murdena Faulkenberry Simmons, born November 11, 1947 in Decatur, Alabama, went to glory May 1, 2026. The celebration of life was held at 1 pm on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at the Heritage Chapel of Imes Funeral Home, 1804 Highway 121 Bypass North, Murray.

Brenda Marie West, 60, of Hazel, KY, passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at her home. Her family welcomed visitors from 11 am - 1 pm on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at Imes Funeral Home, 311 North 4th Street, Murray, KY 42071.

Timothy Joel Wilson, 55, of Murray, passed away on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at Murray Calloway County Hospital. Arrangements are currently incomplete at Imes Funeral Home.

Carolyn R. Paschall, age 85, of Murray, Kentucky, passed away on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at the Anna Mae Owen Residential Hospice House in Murray, Kentucky. A funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m., Thursday, May 7, 2026, at the J.H. Churchill Funeral Home & Cremation Services with Rev. David Allbritten and Rev. April Arnold officiating. Burial followed in the Murray Memorial Gardens.

CARLISLE

Sheila Faye Phillips, 57, of Arlington, Kentucky, passed away on May 3, 2026, at her residence surrounded by her family. There will be no services at this time. You may leave a message for the family or light a candle at www.milnerandorr.com.

CHRISTIAN

Celeste Richardson De Colon, age 88, of Oak Grove, KY, passed away on Monday, May 4, 2026, at Bradford Heights Nursing and Rehab of natural causes. The family has chosen cremation with a Celebration of Life Service to be held at a later date. Maddux-Fuqua-Hinton Funeral Home has been entrusted by the family to handle the arrangements.

Brother Earl Grace, age 88, of Hopkinsville, KY, passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at his home surrounded by his family of natural causes. Funeral Services were held on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at Maddux-Fuqua-Hinton Funeral Home at 1:00 PM with Pastor David Harrison, Pastor Nicholas Greenman, and Brother Randy Grace officiating and burial to follow in Johnson's Chapel Cemetery.

Glenda "Carol" Smith Carter, age 84, of Hopkinsville, KY, passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at St. Thomas Mid-town Hospital of natural causes. The family has chosen cremation with a Celebration of Life Service to be held at a later date. Maddux-Fuqua-Hinton Funeral Home has been entrusted by the family to handle the arrangements.

Dorothy Jean Henderson, age 87, of Hopkinsville, passed away on Friday May 1, 2026, at Christian Health Center of natural causes. The family has chosen cremation with a Private Family Burial Service to be held at O'Daniel Cemetery and a Celebration of Life Service to be held at a later date. Maddux-Fuqua-Hinton Funeral Home has been entrusted by the family to handle the arrangements.

Harold Dean Looney, 72, of Herndon, KY passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Jennie Stuart Medical Center. Graveside services will be 1:00 p.m. Saturday, May 9, 2026, at Flat Lick Cemetery with Rev. Darrell Crawford and William Randolph officiating. Visitation will be Friday, May 8, 2026, from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Hughart, Beard & Giles Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Bryan "B-MO" Morris, 45, of Hopkinsville, KY died at 10:10 a.m. Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at his residence. Funeral services were at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Hughart, Beard & Giles Funeral Home with Rev. Brandon Boone officiating. Burial followed in Riverside Cemetery.

Fay "Mamaw" Walton, 78, McKinney Road, Hopkinsville, KY, passed away Monday, May 4, 2026 at Bradford Heights Nursing and Rehabilitation of natural causes. Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, May 9, 2026 at Lamb Funeral Home with Rev. Roger Tucker officiating. Burial will follow in Newton Cemetery. Visitation will be from noon until the service hour on Saturday, May 9, 2026 at the funeral home.

Sally Ann Walker, 63, Benton, KY, formerly of Hopkinsville, KY passed away Saturday, May 2, 2026 at her home of natural causes. A private family graveside service was held Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at Riverside Cemetery. Lamb Funeral Home assisted with arrangements. A celebration of life will be held at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, May 10, 2026 at Hopkinsville Foursquare Church.

Sherwood Buckner, 66, passed away on Friday, May 1, 2026, at Deaconess Gateway, Newburg, Indiana. Visitation will be Friday, May 8th from 11-12 pm with Funeral to follow at 12 pm at the Gamble Funeral Home, 1311 S. Liberty St., Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

Keith Lawrence Buckner, 70, of Palmyra, TN died Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at his residence. Funeral services were at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at Dogwood Funerals & Cremations of Hopkinsville with Pastor Ronald Rigsby officiating.

CRITTENDEN

Richard Joseph "Rick" Coyle, 58, a devoted husband, beloved brother and uncle, and a lifelong public servant, passed away on April 30, 2026, at his home in Marion, Kentucky, surrounded by family. A celebration of Rick's life will be held at 2PM Friday May 8 at Rocket Arena in Marion, KY, with private committal services to follow. A memorial service will be held at a later date in Chicago.

FULTON

Linda Lee Gay, age 71, of South Fulton, TN passed away Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at her residence. There will be no services held at the funeral home.

Joe Lynn Duke of the Crutchfield Community, passed away April 28, 2026 at Countryside Rehab in Bardwell, Ky. There will be no services at this time.

GRAVES

Phyllis Ann Rice Key, age 89, of Mayfield passed away on Monday, May 4, 2026 at Mills Health and Rehab in Mayfield, KY. Funeral services for Mrs. Phyllis Ann Rice Key were held at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at Byrn Funeral Home in Mayfield, KY. Rev. Keith Allred and Josh Malone will officiate. Interment followed at Highland Park Cemetery.

Judith Elaine Delapp, age 84 and a resident of Hickory, Kentucky, passed away at 7:10 AM Monday, May 4, 2026, at Baptist Health Paducah. Funeral services for Judy were held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at the Brown Funeral Home in Mayfield, KY. Rev. Ben Stratton will officiate with burial to follow in the Farmington Cemetery.

Joyce Kelton, age 82, a resident of Mayfield, Kentucky, passed away peacefully at her home, surrounded by her family, on Sunday, May 3, 2026, and entered into the arms of Jesus. Funeral services for Mrs. Joyce Kelton will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at Brown Funeral Home in Mayfield. Bro. Brent Arnold will officiate, with Bro. Shannon Seaton and Bro. Tyler Wunderlich assisting. Burial will follow at Pottsville Cemetery.

Heather Faye (Hutson) McCarver, 48 of Mayfield, KY, passed away, Monday, May 4, 2026, at Jackson Purchase Medical Center, Mayfield, KY. Arrangements are forthcoming at the Blalock-Coleman Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Murray, KY.

Mark Anthony Aldridge, 67, of Murray, passed away Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN. A memorial service celebrating Mark's life will be held at a later date. Blalock-Coleman Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to be entrusted with the care of Mr. Aldridge.

HENDERSON

Betty Jean Turner, age 67, of Henderson, KY, passed away at 3:59 a.m. Saturday May 2, 2026, under the care of St. Anthony's Hospice. Relatives and friends were invited to Betty's Life Celebration from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday and from 10:00

FUNERAL NOTICES continued

FUNERAL NOTICES continued

a.m. until service time on Thursday May 7 2026, at Benton-Glunt & Tapp Funeral Home in Henderson, KY. The funeral service was held at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday at the funeral home with Reverend Glenn Morris and Reverend Dan Book officiating. Burial followed at Cash Creek Cemetery in Henderson County KY.

Julia Ann (Powell) Chandler, age 74, of Sebree, Kentucky, passed away on May 5, 2026, surrounded by her loving family and cherished friends at St. Anthony's Lucy King Care Center. Funeral services will be held on Friday, May 8, 2026, at 1:00 PM at Tomblinson Funeral Home in Sebree, Kentucky. The service will be officiated by Bro. Nolan Gillenwater, Bro. Johnny McCurry, and Bro. Seth Lindsey. Burial will follow at Shady Grove Cemetery in Poole, Kentucky.

Shanna Lynn Pippin Priest, 54, of Henderson, passed away peacefully surrounded by family and friends on Friday, May 1, 2026, at Deaconess Midtown Hospital. Funeral services were held at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at Tomblinson Funeral Home in Henderson, with Rev. Glenda Walden officiating.

Jimmy L. Williams, 76, of Henderson, Kentucky, passed away Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Deaconess Midtown Hospital in Evansville, Indiana, with his loving family at his side. Services were at 1 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church. Father Shibu Cheriyankunnel will officiate. Burial was in Roselawn Memorial Gardens.

HICKMAN

George Oliver Best, age 79 of Clinton passed away Friday, May 1, 2026 at the Jackson Purchase Medical Center. Memorial Services will be held at a later date. Brown Funeral Home in Clinton are in charge of arrangements.

Shirley Jackson of Clinton passed away on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at the Clinton Hickman County ICF. Funeral arrangements for Mrs. Shirley Jackson are incomplete at this time. Hornbeak Funeral Home in Fulton is in charge of arrangements.

HOPKINS

Rose Mary Norman, 75, of Evansville, was born on January 9, 1951 to the late Nola Marie Norman and Richard Norman, she passed away peacefully on May 1, 2026, at Brickyard Healthcare, surrounded by her loving family. Visitation will be held Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at Mason Brothers Memorial Chapel.

Virginia Nell Cobb, 77 of Nortonville passed away Friday, May 1, 2026, at her home. Graveside service were held Monday, May 4th at noon at New Salem Cemetery in Nortonville with Pastor Doug Barnett officiating.

Tracy Dale Brashear, 68, of Manitou, KY, passed away on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at Deaconess Midtown Hospital in Evansville, IN. A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2026, in the chapel of Harris Funeral Home with Pastor Ray Barber officiating. Burial to follow at Concord Cemetery in Manitou, KY. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. until the funeral hour on Saturday at the funeral home.

Kathy Owen Skaggs, 68, of Mortons Gap, KY, passed away on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at her home. A graveside service was held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at Old Salem Cemetery in Mortons Gap, KY with Pastor Charlie Spears officiating. Harris Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

James Michael "Mike" Vaughn, 79, of Madisonville, KY, passed away peacefully on Friday, May 1, 2026, at Ascension St. Vincent in Evansville, IN, surrounded by his loving family. In accordance with Mike's wishes, Mike will be cremated, and no funeral service will be held. A celebration of life will be held at a later date for family and friends to gather and honor his memory. Harris Funeral Home was entrusted with care.

Robert "Trick" Wayne Watson, 70, of Madisonville, KY, passed away on Friday, May 1, 2026, at his home. A funeral service was held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, 2026. in the chapel of Harris Funeral Home with Bro. Dennis Mosby officiating. Burial will be held at a later date at Suthards Cemetery in Earlington, KY. Military honors will be conducted by the Hopkins County Honor Guard.

Shirley Farmer Whitsell, 67, of Madisonville, KY, passed away on Friday, May 1, 2026, at Baptist Health Deaconess in Madisonville. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Harris Funeral Home was entrusted with care.

William Thomas "Buddy" Givens, 81, of Madisonville, Kentucky, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Thursday, April 30, 2026, at Baptist Health Deaconess Hospital. Funeral Services were held at Carters Chapel General Baptist Church, 580 Wyatt Avenue, Madisonville, KY, at 2 p.m. on Sunday May 3, 2026, with Bro. Tom Wilgus officiating.

Sharon Gail Cates Harris, 82, of Madisonville, KY, passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2026, at her home. The funeral service washeld at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at Christian Assembly Church, 3600 Hanson Road, Madisonville, KY, with Bro. Roy Ellis officiating. Burial was at Odd Fellows Cemetery in Madisonville.

LIVINGSTON

Harold Gene Harris, 76, passed away Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at his home in Salem. Funeral Services were held on Friday, May 1, 2026 at 1:00 PM in the chapel of Boyd Funeral Directors and Cremation Services. Burial followed at New Union General Baptist Church Cemetery.

MARSHALL

James H. "Elvis" Cain, 86, of Benton, Kentucky, and formerly of Trigg County, Kentucky, passed away on May 5, 2026, at his place of residence. Visitation will be from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at the Life Celebration Center of Filbeck-Cann, 1003 Poplar Street, Benton, KY 42025. A memorial service will be at 1:00 PM on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at the Life Celebration Center of Filbeck-Cann.

Virginia Wade, 94 of Calvert City, Kentucky passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026 at Mercy Health - Lourdes Hospital in Paducah, Kentucky. A funeral service was held at 1:00 PM on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at Collier Funeral Chapel located at 211 West 5th St. Benton, Kentucky 42025. Burial followed at Calvert City Cemetery.

Sandy Dennis Williams, 65 of Gilbertsville, Kentucky passed away on Saturday, May 2, 2026. A private family graveside will be held at Murray Memorial Gardens, Murray, KY. Collier Funeral Home is handling all arrangements.

Ronnica Dale Waddell, 60, of Benton, Kentucky passed away on Friday, May 1, 2026, at Marshall County Hospital. A memorial service was held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2026, at Three Crosses Church located at 845 US Highway 641 Spur, Benton, KY 42025. Pastor Leah Degolia will officiate.

Kevin Woodrow Miller, age 39, of Benton, passed away on April 30, 2026 at Murray-Calloway County Hospital. A funeral service was held at 3:00 PM on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at Collier Funeral Home. Burial followed at Briensburg Cemetery.

Lexi Diamond Hall, 34 of Hardin, Kentucky passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at her home. A graveside service was held on Monday, May 4, 2026 at 1:30 PM at the Union Hill Church of Christ Cemetery with Bro. Don McBrayer officiating.

Kim Davis, 64 of Benton passed away May 3, 2026 at Marshall County Hospital. Memorial services will be planned for later date Lindsey Funeral Home is honored to serve the Davis family.

McCRACKEN

Barbara Block Palmer, known lovingly to many as Barbara Ann, passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026, in Paducah, Kentucky. Funeral services were held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Paducah, with Pastor David Appold officiating. Burial followed at Beyer Cemetery in Paducah.

Michael Kent Adams passed away peacefully on May 1, 2026, surrounded by his beloved family. here will be no services scheduled at this time. A Celebration of life will be announced at a later date. Milner & Orr Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Paducah is in charge of arrangements.

Jackie Ray Harris, 84, of Paducah, Kentucky, passed away on May 1, 2026, at The Holiday Senior Living in Paducah. Per the family's wishes, there will be no services at this time. Milner & Orr Funeral Home and Cremation Services are handling the arrangements.

Randy Lantrip, 67, of Paducah, KY passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at the Ray and Kay Eckstein Hospice Care Center. Services will be held at a later date. Milner & Orr Funeral Home and Cremation Services is in charge of arrangements.

Dr. William Duane Shidal, Jr., MD, a devoted radiologist, compassionate colleague, loving and generous uncle, and friend to many, passed away on April 29, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of care, dedication, and quiet kindness. No services have been scheduled at this time. Milner & Orr Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

William Todd Lasley, 55, known to many simply as Todd, passed away on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, in Paducah, Kentucky at his home. A funeral service was held at 1:00 PM on Monday, May 4, 2026, at the Lone Oak Chapel of Milner & Orr Funeral Home with Pastor Todd Hawkins officiating. Burial followed at Woodlawn Memorial Gardens.

James Richard Neill II ("Merlin"), 57, took his final ride to heaven on May 3, 2026, in Paducah, Kentucky. A celebration of his life will be planned at a later date. In the meantime, we ask that you simply take a ride and cherish the freedom of the open road, as he always did in spirit.

Melinda Stevens Barlow, 78, passed away in her home in Paducah, Kentucky, on May 1, 2026. Online condolences may be left at www.lindseyfuneral.com. Lindsey Funeral Home is honored to serve the Barlow family.

Ronald Jackson Jones, 75, of Metropolis, IL passed away Friday, May 1 at 3:51 pm at Baptist Health in Paducah, KY. There will be no funeral services. Arrangements are entrusted to Lindsey Funeral Home in Paducah, KY.

Verda Mae (Powell) Champion, of Reidland, passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at her residence. A graveside service was held at 2:00 pm on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at Mt. Kenton Cemetery in Paducah with Brent Powell officiating.

Weslyn Faith Ballard, born and departed on May 4, 2026, passed away peacefully at Baptist Health Paducah. She was surrounded by those who loved her more than she will ever imagine, a testament to the deep affection and care that enveloped her during her brief presence in this world. Keeling & Goodman Funeral Home is honored to serve the Ballard family.

To place a full obituary, including a photo, call 270-442-7389 for details and pricing.
Obituaries and funeral notices should be received by 9 a.m. Wednesday for inclusion in that week's paper.

FUNERAL NOTICES continued

Sandra L. Hamby, age 89 of Paducah, a devoted mother, faithful believer, and cherished member of her community, passed away peacefully on May 1, 2026, at Baptist Health Paducah. A visitation will be held on May 8, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., followed immediately by the funeral service at 2:00 p.m. at Keeling & Goodman Funeral Home, located at 2410 Jackson Street, Paducah, KY, with Bro. Jimmy Franks and Bro. Jonathan Goodman officiating. Burial will follow at Fooks Cemetery in Benton, KY.

TRIGG

Carolyn Hite - September 16, 1946 - May 6, 2026 - Funeral arrangements are incomplete for 79 year old Carolyn Hite of Oak Grove. She passed away Wednesday morning, May 6, 2026 at her home. Please check back later for complete service details.

Leslie Anne Lee Wallace - March 6, 1957 - May 5, 2026 - A memorial visitation for 69 year old, Leslie Anne Lee Wallace of Cadiz will be Friday, May 8, 2026 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at King's Funeral Home.

Randle Gene Cruse, age 79, of Cadiz, Kentucky, passed away on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at his home in Cadiz. Funeral services were at Goodwin Funeral Home, 138 Main Street in Cadiz, at 2:00 PM, Sunday, May 3, 2026, with Chris Sivells and Don Amis officiating. Burial followed in Siloam Cemetery with honors by the Kentucky State Police Honor Guard.

UNION

Raymond G. "Old Dude" Cornwell, age 95, of Morganfield, KY, passed away on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at the Lucy Smith King Care Center in Henderson, KY. Funeral service was held at 10 AM Thursday May 7, 2026 at Whitsell Funeral Home in Morganfield, KY. Rev. Jeff Paris will officiate.

Jack Steven Stewart, 78, of Sturgis, Kentucky, passed away on May 2, 2026 at The Heartford House in Owensboro, KY. Born on May 19, 1947, Jack lived a life marked by service, hard work, and deep devotion to his family. Funeral services were held at Whitsell Funeral Home IN Sturgis, KY on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Visitation will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. prior to the service. Burial in Pythian Ridge Cemetery in Sturgis, KY.

WEBSTER

Christy Marie Whitsell, née Williams, was born on April 29, 1968, in the small town of Madisonville, where her journey began with humble roots and a heart full of kindness. She passed away on her 58th birthday, April 29, 2026, at the Lucy Smith King Care Center, leaving a legacy of love, resilience, and a tender spirit that touched everyone who knew her. Funeral services were held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at Vanover Funeral Home in Clay at 2:00 PM with Pastor Tim Rigdon and Pastor Barbara Rigdon. Burial was in White Oak Cemetery in Clay.

Sean Guzik 40 of Eddyville, KY passed away Sunday May 3, 2026 at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville, TN. Funeral service will be 2pm Saturday May 9, 2026 at Townsend Funeral Home in Dixon, KY. Visitation will be 12-service time at the funeral home. Rev. Dave Ezell and Dr. Jim Ewing will officiate the service with burial in Lakeview Cemetery in Dixon, KY.

Mike Fletcher 75, of Corydon, KY passed away on May 2nd, 2026. He was born on February 11th, 1951 in Henderson, KY. Mikes family invites you to join them for his memorial services at the Poole Church of Christ 252 HWY 145 Corydon, KY 42406 on Saturday May 16th, 2026 at 2PM. Visitation will be at the church from 12:00PM until service time. Minister Gary Puryear will officiate. Townsend Funeral Home in Dixon, KY is handling arrangements

Cemetery saved by a caring descendant

By Betty L. Johnson
bettyjohnsonky@yahoo.com

When original caretakers and family associations dissolve, descendants often become the stewards of historic cemeteries. This role can be both a responsibility and an opportunity to preserve cultural heritage. This has been the case for descendant, Jane Marie Richardson Owens, now retired in her 80's. Jane Marie and her Uncle Buddy Richardson and friend, Bobby Vance, worked hard, steadily in just a little part of the Old Historic Hazelwood Cemetery at a time. Only the tip top of the large monuments could be seen in the little Hazelwood community, peeking over the very overgrown cemetery. The little Morgan family of Florence Etta Morgan, never stopped working until the Old Hazelwood Cemetery was cleaned up and kept that way for a long period of time.

Later on over the years, perseverance paid off again, as other community helpers continued caring for the very historic Old Hazelwood Cemetery, located North of Barlow, on right of Hwy 1105, between Barlow and Oscar. This beautiful, roadside, cemetery was once a very important landmark, as the Masons owned the property with a lodge nearby. Also, there was a Hazelwood School jut a half mile North of the cemetery. Last year, we discovered Mr. Morris Lynn, who in his 80's, still loved to help people, had cared for Old Hazelwood Cemetery 10 or 12 years, until his death in 2025. Mr. Lynn was also a good steward and a true "Servant of God" (Matthew 25:23), plus an inspiration to everyone who knew him.

Repeating and unfortunately, there are many of our old historic cemeteries, abandoned, continuing to deteriorate, and hidden away from the public view. The cemetery residents are just resting until our Lord returns. Please remember, "they are not dead until forgotten" let's honor our cultural heritage and be good stewards. Our cemetery group desperately needs volunteers to take care of our community roadside cemeteries. This year, we are trying to reach to over a hundred county cemeteries that we have not cleaned up or documented. "You are the light of the world--like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:14,15)

PLEASE VOLUNTEER ... WE NEED YOUR HELP ... bettyjohnsonky@yahoo.com or text 270 210 3538.

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VICTORIOUS *Living* ...in a troubled world

How does scripture address the need to belong?

By Teresa LeNeave
leneave2@comcast.net

In a culture that often rewards conformity, many people wrestle with the feeling of not belonging. Everybody wants to belong to something; to feel like they matter in this world.

The question is: how does scripture address the need to belong? For starters, John 15 says Christ is in us and we're in Him.

We may not completely understand how it works that we are in Him, and He is in us, but it raises an important question: if we truly grasped what Christ has done for us, would the pressure to fit in still hold so much weight? Probably not.

In scripture, Jesus offers a powerful response to man's struggle for acceptance. Romans 8:11 reminds us that "the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you" (NIV). This idea is a foundation of the Christian faith: that the very power responsible for the resurrection of Jesus is not distant, but is alive within us.

The (ESV) translation reinforces this truth, explaining that the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies. From these scriptures, we can conclude, there is an indwelling presence that transforms us from within. We not only have hope in this world but also in the world beyond.

As I reflect on these words, it brings a sense of hope and renewal to my heart. They suggest that spiritual life is not only something to anticipate in the future but something to experience right now. Right now, when we really need it.

I'm so thankful, the promise is not limited to eternal life after death, but it includes a present reality marked by purpose and inner change. And, don't we all want that? Thank God, Jesus' work is not confined to eternity, but it is deeply relevant to everyday life.

I believe, for the Christ follower, these verses inspire confidence and hope. They serve as a reminder that believers are not defined by social acceptance, but we are defined by a Divine presence that empowers us to live with courage and enduring hope.

Hope is an anchor. In fact, the Bible says it's the anchor for the soul. Hebrews 6:19 (NIV), states: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

If you struggle with acceptance or fitting in, just know how important you are to God. If you believe in Jesus Christ and what he did for you through His death and resurrection, then a great power lives in you. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. Acts 17:28 says, "In Him we live, we move and we have our being". That tells me, we can all belong to the greatest connection available to mankind: God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

LANDING ON GRACE

Bro. Brandon G. Bramlett
Bandana Baptist Church

He was left dangling and fearing for his life. The young man was being hazed by his college fraternity, and was carried to a secluded spot in the woods where he was lowered by a greasy rope into an abandoned murky well. He figured his friends would fetch him after a few minutes, but he was mistaken. His bones shook as he saw that they tied their end of the rope over a bar at the top of the well, leaving him hanging in mid-air. After a half-hour of shoulder-burning torture, he let go of the slippery rope and plummeted into the well—until he planted safely on the dirt two inches beneath his feet!

Solid ground caught him when he let go, and sovereign grace is always there to catch believers in Christ when they "let go" of the rope of obedience to God. When we sin against the Lord and let go of Him, we will never plummet all the way to spiritual death (cf. John 5:24; 2 Tim. 4:18). However, that doesn't mean the fall to His sod of steadfast love will be pleasant. When sin loosens our

grip on God, we will be bruised on the way down by His loving discipline and the charitable rebuke of our faithful brethren (Heb. 3:13; 12:11). And we may fall as far as Peter did, even denying that we know Christ (Luke 22:54-62), but if we truly belong to God, we will always land on His sovereign grace.

Christian, sometimes you will lose your way, but Christ will never lose you. He promised, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day" (John 6:39). Sin may slick your hands and relax your hold on grace, but Christ's nail-scarred hands will never let go of you. "I give them eternal life," Jesus assured, "and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).

Of course, this is not an incentive to let go of the Lord. May God forbid that we view His sustaining grace as liberty to let go! To the contrary, the Lord calls us to "continue in the faith" and continue no longer in sinful ways (cf. Romans 6:1-4; Col. 1:21-23). Instead, this heartening truth is a holy rationale to wholly rely on God's relentless grace to catch us when we fall. Therefore, all believers in the grip of grace may exclaim with the psalmist David, "Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:10, KJV).

Outdoor Truths

By Gary Miller
Outdoortruths.org

My preferred exercise is bike riding. One particular ride is short in distance but difficult in effort. Here I was climbing this hill, my legs hurting, my heart racing, and my Garmin watch telling me that my heartbeat was on the "easy" side. I wanted to reach the aerobic level, but it was telling me in essence that while you're struggling, this should really be easy. At that moment I was reminded of the young boxer who was taking on the world champion. The youngster was getting pummeled by the champ during the first round. At the end of the round, he went to his corner. His encouraging manager said, "You're doing great. He hasn't laid a hand on you!" To which the young boxer replied, "Then keep an eye on the referee, because somebody is beating the daylights out of me." I wanted to find out whose arm my watch was on. Because whatever I was doing it was not easy.

I think about this same scenario in my Christian life. If you're a Christian, you do too. What we want to be easy is anything but easy. And to be honest, many have quit trying. Not because of a lack of desire, but because of overwhelming guilt coming from one failure after another. If that's you I have some good news. Quitting is the best thing you can do. But if you quit the right way, there will be no guilt. Let me explain. The Apostle Paul quit too. In fact, because he quit, he was then able to live the life God wanted him to live. To the Roman church he said this. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. (Rom 7:18-19 NLT) Does this sound like you? Well let me show you what he did. "For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So, I died to the law. I stopped trying to meet all its requirements so that I might live for God." (Gal 5:19 NLT) There you have it. He tried. He failed. He quit. He lived for God.

The truth is, the Christian life is not hard to live. It's impossible. Naturally, anyways. And that's why Paul quit. He was trying to do something naturally that could only be done supernaturally. So, he quit and decided to just let Christ live through him and bring about what ever He wanted to in his life. After Paul quits, he says this. (the very next verse)" I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal 5:20 NIV) And this is when he experienced freedom and ease. So, my friend, if you're struggling with guilt from your inability to live the Christian life, you are in good company. If you want to stay in that same company as Paul, move where he moved. To the unemployment line. God will take it from there.

Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 23 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. Stay updated on Outdoor Truths each week by subscribing at Outdoortruths.org

Would the existence of aliens affect our faith?

By William F Holland Jr.
billyhollandministries.com

We are all philosophers, which simply means we all have opinions and worldviews about most everything. Since the birth of the internet and social media, we've seen just how true this is, and I'm sure, as the topic of this column caught your attention, you already have your own thoughts about the subject. If you've ever been a part of a group discussion, it does not take long to realize that humans are proficient at collecting ideas with the ability to store them in their memory banks, along with the confidence to communicate what they believe. This includes the possibilities and speculations about extraterrestrials. Before we get started, we should establish that there are different types of views about aliens, and not all of them necessarily mean beings from other planets. Whether your response is 'no', 'yes', or 'I don't know', this has become one of the most popular unsolved mysteries in our culture.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the interest in the unexplained phenomena of UFO's has soared. We have seen the documentaries where witnesses declare they have seen objects in the skies, and some have not only testified about seeing creatures, but claim they were abducted. Up to the 1940's, the majority of the population thought that martians were a joke, saying those who claimed to see flying saucers were hallucinating, confused, or just wanting attention. But in today's modern world, there is not as much laughing and mocking. One reason could be the significant number of highly respected people, including pilots, who have come forward. Another reason could be that our entertainment industry has produced so much fantasy fiction that the younger generations consider these anomalies more of a probability than a possibility.

As a Christian minister, you would think I would occasionally have someone ask me what I think about little green men from outer space, but it's rarely mentioned. Maybe it's because we have not just a trepidation of our integrity being questioned, but an honest fear of the unknown. There is still a certain amount of stigma associated with saying we have seen an unidentified starship, but maybe the more important questions are: What difference would it make if aliens are real, and what makes life on other planets seem unreasonable? I realize that many Christians interpret the Bible as not mentioning other worlds or civilizations that exist within or beyond our solar system. However, is there anything necessarily wrong or sinful with being open-minded about people definitely seeing disturbing things in the sky, and the likelihood that strangers are watching us?

The sheer vastness of the universe alone allows our minds to ponder what or who else is out there. Since God is infinite, could this planet be just one of many He has created? What did God do before He made our world? It's interesting to consider if these advanced and curious lifeforms are just our neighbors, or angels that once lived in heaven and were cast down to where we live? Both are no doubt far more advanced than we are, and most likely have been observing us since darkness was upon the face of the deep. I believe orthodox worldviews would struggle if aliens were to finally reveal themselves and want to negotiate an alliance with our planet, but it's my opinion that the proof of extraterrestrials would most likely cause religious belief systems to accept this discovery as another part of God's indescribable power and authority, rather than panic and collapse.

While the scientific community, along with the spiritual philosophers try to process the reality that aliens are actually real, many who believe and trust God would eventually interpret these lifeforms as a confirmation to move away from an earth-centered view where we are the only living creatures in the entire cosmos. One example of a theological debate would be whether these visitors are simply beings from another planet that desire to be friends, and if the Bible and salvation apply to them. On the other hand, are they demons that have a mission to deceive, plunder, and destroy? Or could they be God's angels that are doing His will and trying to help us? Either way, most people would be extremely cautious, even if gifts were offered, such as incredible advances in technology, within the negotiation of a galactic peace alliance. Then, of course, there will always be those who will dismiss and ignore the evidence as they claim it contradicts the foundation of divine truth. What are your thoughts?

Dr. Holland is a Christian minister, author, and community outreach chaplain. Ask for a free download of his song, "Intentions of the Heart" at psalmz103@gmail.com

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2	6	7	4	5	1	3	8	9
5	9	8	2	6	3	4	7	1
8	7	2	1	4	6	9	5	3
9	4	6	7	3	5	8	1	2
1	5	3	8	2	9	7	6	4
6	8	9	5	1	4	2	3	7
7	3	1	6	9	2	5	4	8
4	2	5	3	8	7	1	9	6

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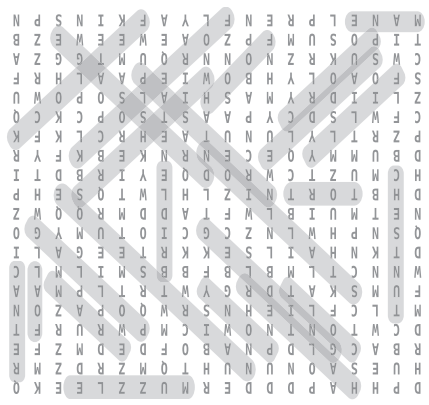

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Scan to visit our website and learn more about Sam Carter and his vision for Trigg County

Or visit: samcarter2026.com

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May 8th thru May 14th

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Showtimes:
Fri 7:00 pm; Sat & Sun 1:30 pm, 4:00 pm & 7:00 pm
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Crittenden County mourns the loss of deputy Rick Coyle after line-of-duty shooting

Staff Report

MARION, Ky. — The Crittenden County community is mourning the loss of Deputy Rick Coyle, a veteran law enforcement officer and school resource officer, who died Thursday morning after weeks in critical condition following a line-of-duty shooting.

Coyle, 58, had been hospitalized since April 2, when he was shot while assisting with the service of an emergency guardianship order at a residence along KY 365. Authorities said the encounter resulted in an exchange of gunfire that left Coyle critically wounded and the suspect, 59-year-old Ronnie Phillips of Marion, dead.

In a statement released Thursday, Crittenden County Sheriff Evan Head described Coyle as "a beloved member of the sheriff's office," expressing gratitude for the outpouring of community support and asking for continued privacy for the deputy's family. Funeral arrangements, including full line-of-duty honors, are expected to be announced in the coming days.

Coyle's death marks a historic and somber moment for the county, representing the first time in modern history that a local law enforcement officer has been shot in the line of duty.

Beyond his badge, Coyle was widely known for his role in local schools, where he served as a resource officer for the past two years. Students and staff at Crittenden County High School and Middle School remembered him as a steady, approachable presence who fostered trust and safety without intimidation.

Before relocating to Kentucky, Coyle spent nearly three decades with the Chicago Police Department, including service on a SWAT team. Colleagues said he remained committed to mentoring younger officers and serving his community even after retirement.

In the weeks following the shooting, residents gathered for vigils and offered support to Coyle's family, reflecting the deep impact of his life and service on the community he called home. Counselors were made available in local schools to help students cope, and tributes continued to pour in from across the region, underscoring the lasting legacy Coyle leaves behind.

ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION
8332 US Highway 62 W • Kuttawa, Kentucky

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026
10:00 AM

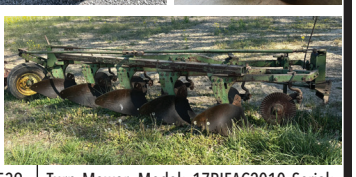
3 BEDROOM HOME
81± ACRES
3 Tracts & Combinations

• Mini Farm
• Recreation
• Hunting
• Investment
• Cumberland River Frontage

CUMBERLAND RIVER FRONTAGE

PREVIEW: Monday, May 4th • 5:00-6:00 pm

Tract 1 Details: 10.84 Acres
This well-maintained 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home offers a functional layout designed for comfortable everyday living. The spacious kitchen flows into the dining area, creating a great setup for family meals and gatherings. A sliding door opens to a rear wooden deck, perfect for relaxing or entertaining. The primary suite includes a private bathroom, while the home also features a 2-car attached garage with workspace, sink, and man door access. Just inside the garage entry, you'll find a laundry room combined with a half bath for added convenience. **Outside, the property is improved with a 64' x 40' shop building, ideal for equipment storage, hobbies, or workshop use.**



Truck, ATVs, Motorcycles - 2014 Chevrolet 1500 4X4 Pick Up Truck, 194,067 miles, Cloth Interior, Runs & Drives, VIN: 1GCVKREC8EZ253383, 2004 John Deere Gator HPX 4X4 ATV, New Tires, Enclosed Cab, Needs Battery Starter, SN: M0H4GX01580, Hours: 1014.7, 2022 Honda Forman ATV, 4X4 Foot Shifter, Miles: 159, Hours: 56, Honda CL 350 Motorcycle, Miles: 9,063, VIN: CL350-4018850, 1977 Honda CB550K Motorcycle, Miles: 12,142.6 Hours: 51.1, VIN: CB550K-2002627
Tractors - John Deere 4020 Tractor 2X4 with Loader, Hours: 2745.4, Loader: Model E0148, SN 003871W, Tractor: Model T213R, SN 268928R, Ford 2X4 Tractor, Hours: 3020.3, 4 Speed, 3PT Hitch, Updated Starter, Alternator, Belt, Plugs & Muffler.
Trailers & Boats - Rich Line 13 FT Boat SN:55028, 54" X 97' Utility Trailer, Single Axle 9 FT Trailer, Double Axle 8 FT Trailer
Farm Implements & Attachments - IH 470 14 FT Disc SN: 047000U013539, Pittsburg Field Cultivator, Rhino 3PT Hitch w/ Hydraulic Swivel Blade 7FT 10IN, SQ720 Bushhog Rotary Cutter 6 FT, 3 PT Hitch Seed Sower, 5 FT Countyline Tiller, John Deere 5 Shank Plow, Ford One Row Corn Cutter 3 PT Hitch, Bush Hog 10 Shank 3 PT Hitch Model 23D SN: 11-00400, Ford 3PT Hitch 2 Row Planter, Allis-Chalmers 3 PT Plow, Ford 3 PT Plow Model: IO-I52 SN:37670, 1 Row 3PT Hitch Ripper, The Dunham Co. Culti-Packer 88", Leland McGee MFG. 5.5' Box Blade, Spring Tooth 7 Shank Harrow, 6 FT 3 PT Disc, 4 PT Ford Plow SN: 1177, Campbell MFG Pull Behind Sprayer SN: 4487, Woods Batwing 9318 15 FT SN: 784298 Mower, Huskee 42" Sweeper Model: 45-0260-131 7119, Dearborn Row Crop Cultivator Model: 13-2, Vintage Drag Harrow, Vintage Disc Harrow, 3 Row Plow, Horse Drawn Antique Cultivator, Spike Tooth Drag,
Mower - 2020 Cub Cadet ZT1 50" Zero Turn Mower, Model: 17RIEAC2010 Serial: 1H180H50247 Hours: 70.7, Motor: Kawasaki FR691V, 23HP, LED Lights
Shop & Tools - 30 Gallon Fuel Tank w/ Fuel Pump, Yard Wagon, 100 Gallon Fuel Tank Gravity Flow, Scrap Metal, Wagon Frame, Lake Bouy, Wooden Swing, 55 Gallon Drums, Kitchen Sink, Cables, 4IN Drain Pipe, 10" Sears Radial Saw, Chains, Yard Hand Tools, Post Hole Digger, Horse Saddle, Sawhorses, Shooting Target, ATV Sprayer Tank, Pump Sprayers, Backpack Sprayer, Propane Grill, Tarps, Shop Light, Extension Cords, Battery Charger, Hoses, Ladders, Traps, Metal Tool Chest, Lincoln Arc Welder, Hoses, Air Compressor, Bench Grinder, Miter Saw, Gas Cans, Cen-Tech Battery Charger, Drill Press, Hand Saws, Craftsman Wrenches, Multiple Floor Jacks, Shop Stools, Hand Tools, Shop Fan, Hydraulic Shop Press, Coolers, Lawn Chairs, Tires, Truck Bed Tool Box, Push Mower.

REAL ESTATE TERMS: The property will be offered in 3 individual tracts, any combination of tracts, or as a whole property. The property will be sold in the manner resulting in the highest total sale price. A 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to the final bid and included in the deed transaction sale price. 15% as down payment on the day of the auction with balance in cash at closing on or before 30 days. The down payment may be in the form of cashier's check, personal check, or corporate check. YOUR BIDDING IS NOT CONDITIONAL UPON FINANCING, SO BE SURE YOU HAVE ARRANGED FINANCING, IF NEEDED, AND ARE CAPABLE OF PAYING CASH AT CLOSING. Buyer Will Be Required To Sign A Lead Based Paint Disclosure Waiving The Opportunity To A 10 Day Post Sale Inspection. Make Inspections Prior To Date Of Sale. Closing shall take place on or before 30 days from auction date. All 2026 ad valorem taxes will be prorated at closing. The property will be sold by a new survey. Buyer is responsible for 50% of the cost.
PERSONAL PROPERTY TERMS: A 10% Buyer's Premium Will Be Added To The Final Bid And Included In The Sales Price. Full Settlement Date Of Sale. Check Or Cash Only.

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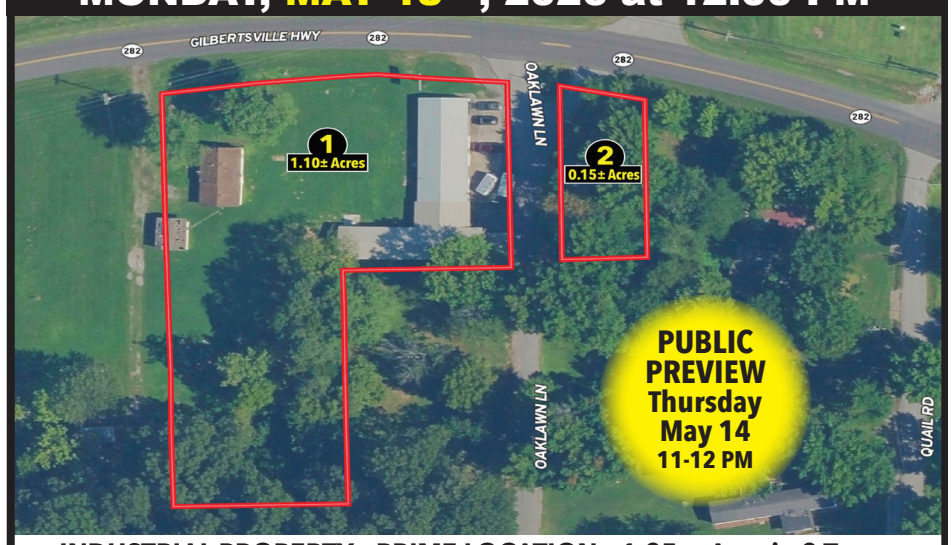
965 Pembroke Fairview Road
Pembroke, KY 42266

MASTER COMMISSIONER AUCTION
CIVIL ACTION NO. 25-CI-00078
4913 Gilbertsville Highway • Calvert City, KY 42029
MONDAY, MAY 18TH, 2026 at 12:00 PM



INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY – PRIME LOCATION – 1.25±- Acre in 2 Tracts
Positioned in the heart of the Calvert City industrial corridor, this property offers an outstanding opportunity for investors, business owners, or operators looking to capitalize on proximity to major industrial plants directly across the street.

PROPERTY OVERVIEW
- 4,000+ Sq Ft Industrial Building
- Situated on 1.25 Acres
- Zoned I-1 (Light Industrial)
- Excellent visibility and access from multiple road frontages

PROPERTY HIGHLIGHTS
- **Flexible layout:** Offices, Shop, Manufacturing, Storage
- 5+ Offices with Reception Area
- Large Open Production Area
- Rear Shop Space

- 2 Half Bathrooms
- 3-Phase Electric Available
- City Water & Sewer
- West Kentucky Electric
- Spectrum Internet Available
- Ample Parking and Expansion Potential

***INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY:* This is a strategic industrial location with strong upside potential. Ideal for manufacturing, warehousing, service-based businesses, or expansion near major employers.**

REAL ESTATE TERMS: The property will be offered in 2 individual tracts, any combination of tracts, or as a whole property. The property will be sold in the manner resulting in the highest total sale price. A 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to the final bid and included in the deed transaction sale price. 15% as down payment on the day of the auction with balance in cash at closing on or before 30 days. The down payment may be in the form of cashier's check, personal check, or corporate check. YOUR BIDDING IS NOT CONDITIONAL UPON FINANCING, SO BE SURE YOU HAVE ARRANGED FINANCING, IF NEEDED, AND ARE CAPABLE OF PAYING CASH AT CLOSING. Buyer Will Be Required To Sign A Lead Based Paint Disclosure Waiving The Opportunity To A 10 Day Post Sale Inspection. Make Inspections Prior To Date Of Sale. Closing shall take place on or before 30 days from auction date. All 2026 ad valorem taxes will be prorated at closing. The property will be sold by the deed. **This property is being sold pursuant to a Master Commissioner Auction ordered by the court in Civil Action No. 25-CI-00078. Additional terms, conditions, and court requirements will apply.**

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MAY 2026
A Special Supplement to
KPI Newspaper Group

FARMERS' Quarterly

★★★ YOUNG FOLKS IN AGRICULTURE ★★★

Murray State University hosts groundbreaking for new Veterinary Sciences building

MURRAY, Ky. — The Murray State University campus and broader community participated in a special groundbreaking event for the University's new Veterinary Sciences building on April 22.

Located on the University's West Farm, the building will be utilized by undergraduate students majoring in Veterinary Technology and Pre-Veterinary Medicine, as well as future students in the University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

The Murray State University campus and broader community participated in a special groundbreaking event for the University's new Veterinary Sciences building on April 22.

In 2024, the state biennium budget included $60 million in funding for the facility, in order to enhance existing and future programs in veterinary sciences.

The one-story building will measure over 88,000 square feet and offer classrooms, laboratories, offices and support space, as well as common areas for students to collaborate and study. Construction is estimated to be a 24-month process.

Murray State has the largest pre-veterinary medicine/ veterinary technology enrollment of any university in Kentucky, and the veterinary technology program is just one of three programs in Kentucky that is fully accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

Murray State is also racing ahead toward a new College of Veterinary Medicine,

see **GROUNDBREAKING,** page A2

Ballard County Fair Board receives over $44,000 state grant for new barn project

By Laurna Todd
Farmers' Quarter Writer

The Ballard County Fair Board Inc. has received $44,118 in grant funding from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to assist with the construction of a new horse and multi-purpose barn, along with additional improvements to the fairgrounds barn area.

The grant was approved in November 2025, with funds officially received in March 2026. According to fair board officials, the project was made possible through the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's County Fair Capital Improvement Grant Program, which helps county fairs make needed facility upgrades.

To qualify for grant funding, county fairs must be incorporated, own their fairground property and demonstrate project need. The Department of Agriculture provides up to 75 percent of the total project cost, while the remaining 25 percent must be covered through in-kind labor, donations and local fundraising efforts.

Ballard County Fair Board Treasurer Joni

Jordan said the board applied for the grant due to a growing demand for additional horse stalls and multi-use barn space.

"With the increase of harness horse racing in Kentucky in recent years, there is a need for more barns with stalls," Jordan said. "Barns are not only needed for fair racing, but also for horsemen needing stalls to rent during early spring through mid-July during the racing meet at Oak Grove Racing & Gaming near Fort Campbell."

Jordan noted that horsemen from states including Mississippi and Illinois often rent stalls at local fairgrounds with tracks so they can stay, train and reduce travel time to races. She added that all existing stalls at the Ballard County Fairgrounds are currently rented.

The new barn is being designed with flexibility in mind. Planned stalls will be constructed using

see **BARN,** page A2

GROUNDBREAKING,
from page A1

offering a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree to support future generations of veterinarians and advance both the region and the Commonwealth in critical areas of economic growth, workforce development, and industry needs. The University is currently working toward obtaining the required AVMA program accreditation through its Council on Education. Additional details on the University's College of Veterinary Medicine initiative is available at murraystate.edu/vetmedicine.

"Today's groundbreaking represents our commitment to advancing veterinary science, supporting animal health, and preparing the next generation of compassionate, skilled professionals," Murray State University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson said. "Murray State University extends its gratitude to countless individuals who have provided their support and advocacy for this initiative. We are building more than a facility—we are building opportunities for our students while helping shape the future of veterinary medicine."

"We are very thankful for the countless individuals who have worked hard to see this vision, our state-of-the-art Veterinary Sciences building, become a reality," Murray State University Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine Dr. Laura Ken Hoffman said. "This new learning space will educate hundreds of students over the years, as we prepare graduates to become practicing veterinarians and leaders in animal health. This groundbreaking ceremony marks the start of exciting times for the Commonwealth of Kentucky and surrounding regions. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this possible and has played a role in laying a foundation for the future."

Since 1922, Murray State University has provided a collaborative, opportunity-rich living and learning community that fosters personal growth and professional success through a high-quality college experience. Students receive support from inspiring faculty and staff and will join a distinctive campus community — the Racer Family. Murray State prepares the next generation of leaders to join more than 80,000 successful alumni who make a difference in their community, across the country and around the world. We are Racers. The University's main campus is located in Murray, Kentucky, and includes five regional campuses in Ft. Campbell, Henderson, Hopkinsville, Madisonville and Paducah.

To learn more about Murray State University, please visit murraystate.edu.

A rendering of the The Murray State University's new Veterinary Sciences building.

BARN,
from page A1

movable panel systems, allowing the building to be converted into an open multi-purpose space when needed for events and activities.

Construction on the main structure of the barn has already been completed by Gargus Buildings, while Sullivan Lime & Backhoe handled all dirt and gravel work associated with the project.

Remaining work, including installation of the stalls, will be completed by fair board members through volunteer labor, along with funding generated from horse racing events and community donations.

In addition to expanding the fairgrounds, fair board members hope the new structure will serve as a lasting tribute to those who have supported the fairgrounds throughout its history. Plans are underway to designate the facility as a memorial barn honoring individuals who trained horses, raced, donated funds or volunteered their time over the years.

A memorial fund is currently being established for those wishing to donate in memory of family members or friends to help cover the cost and construction of the new panel stalls.

For more information about the memorial fund, contact Ballard County Fair Board Inc. Treasurer Joni Jordan.

ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION
TUESDAY, MAY 12TH, 2026 AT 10:00 AM

3 BEDROOM HOME
81± ACRES
3 Tracts & Combinations
8332 US Highway 62 W.
Kuttawa, Kentucky
• Mini Farm
• Recreation
• Hunting
• Investment
• Cumberland River Frontage
CUMBERLAND RIVER FRONTAGE

Truck - ATVs - Motorcycles - Tractors - Trailers & Boats - Farm Implements & Attachments - Mower - Shop & Tools
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Tract 1 Details: 10.84 Acres
This well-maintained 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home offers a functional layout designed for comfortable everyday living. The spacious kitchen flows into the dining area, creating a great setup for family meals and gatherings. A sliding door opens to a rear wooden deck, perfect for relaxing or entertaining. The primary suite includes a private bathroom, while the home also features a 2-car attached garage with workspace, sink, and man door access. Just inside the garage entry, you'll find a laundry room combined with a half bath for added convenience. **Outside, the property is improved with a 64' x 40' shop building, ideal for equipment storage, hobbies, or workshop use.**

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ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION
Saturday, May 30TH, 2026 at 10:00 am

1455 McKENDREE CHURCH ROAD • KEVIL, KY 42053
LOG HOME - BUILDINGS - BARN
92± ACRES
IN 4 TRACTS & COMBINATIONS
McCracken County Farm
726
JUST 10 MINUTES TO McCRACKEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL!

Outstanding opportunity to purchase 92± acres in McCracken County offered in 4 tracts & combinations! This diverse property features a beautiful log home, multiple shops and barns, and a strong mix of open farmland and wooded acreage–perfect for residential, recreational, or agricultural use. Enjoy the privacy of a rural setting while being just minutes from shopping, restaurants, and conveniences in the Paducah area. Whether you're looking for a country home, mini farm, hunting property, or investment, this offering provides flexibility to buy individual tracts, combinations, or the entire property.

REAL ESTATE TRACTS

Tract 1	20.79± Acres
Tract 2	25.16± Acres - *3 Bdrm 3 Bath Log Home - 2,113± sq ft, Detached 2 Car Garage, 30'x40' Metal Shop Building, 40'x40' Metal Building, 40'x40' Tobacco Barn*
Tract 3	20.42± Acres
Tract 4	25.67± Acres

Ideally situated only 10 minutes from McCracken County High School Kentucky Oaks Mall, and Paducah's dining and retail amenities.

REAL ESTATE TERMS: The property will be offered in 4 individual tracts, any combination of tracts, or as a whole property. The property will be sold in the manner resulting in the highest total sale price. A 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to the final bid and included in the deed transaction sale price. 15% as down payment on the day of the auction with balance in cash at closing on or before 30 days. The down payment may be in the form of cashier's check, personal check, or corporate check. YOUR BIDDING IS NOT CONDITIONAL UPON FINANCING, SO BE SURE YOU HAVE ARRANGED FINANCING, IF NEEDED, AND ARE CAPABLE OF PAYING CASH AT CLOSING. Buyer Will Be Required To Sign A Lead Based Paint Disclosure Waiving The Opportunity To A 10 Day Post Sale Inspection. Make Inspections Prior To Date Of Sale. Closing shall take place on or before 30 days from auction date. All 2026 ad valorem taxes will be prorated at closing. The property will be sold by a new survey. Buyer is responsible for 50% of the cost.

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2002 WILSON, 43 ft. Good trailer, good doors and hoppers, air ride with dump valve, roll tarp. Two standard hoppers, two speed landing gear, air ride suspension, all steel wheels, tandem axles.
Stk. #02WIL960HOPPER..... **$15,000**

2023 KAUFMAN, 39 ft x 102 in 30 ton payload capacity, nice trailer, 5 ft ramps, dove tail, good tires, air brakes. Dual landing gear. Tri-axle 30 ton Kaufman 30 ton tri-axle pintle, all steel wheels.
Stk. #23KAUF30T631PINTLE..... **$34,000**

2012 TRAVIS, Nice trailer, barn door, air lift axle, full frame, 2 speed landing gear. Missing cylinder hose/has been used as a tipper. Sells as is. Aluminum gate. 42 ft length.
Stk. #12TRAV666DUMP..... **$20,000**

2026 WITZCO, New 52 ton detach lowboy trailers, 26 ft well, chain tie downs, polished alum wheels, air ride with dump valve and lift axle, adj ride height, out riggers, d-rings, Honda pony engine, chain/binder storage, factory warr.
Stk. #26WIT045NGB52..... **$68,000**

2017 TRAILSTAR, Good trailer, dumps, not rusty, dump valve, air ride, 2 way gate. Trailstar 39 ft end dump, two speed landing gear, side ladder, aluminum wheels, tandem axle, 80,000 lb gross vehicle weight.
Stk. #17TSTAR597DUMP **$24,000**

2002 TRAVIS, Nice trailer, good shape, roll tarp, air gate. Travis 40 ft dump, tarp, air ride suspension, all steel wheels, tandem axle.
Stk. #02TRAV918DUMP..... **$13,000**

1992 TRAIL KING, Nice trailer, good tires, out riggers, non-ground bearing detach * Southern trailer/not rusty. Trail King TK80HDG-483, 40 ton payload capacity, air ride suspension, 82,520 gross vehicle weight.
Stk. #92TK80TDETLOW **$24,000**

1986 TRANSPORT, Good trailer, not rusty, good floor, pony engine. 44 ft length, 96 in width, 23 ft well length, 50 pay load capacity, 118,500 gross vehicle weight, wood floor, all steel wheels.
Stk. #86TT50TLOWDET..... **$30,000**

2005 WARREN, Good trailer, good augers. Warren 8 bay feed trailer, air ride suspension, tandem rear axles, 36 ft length, aluminum composition, 22.5 tires, all steel wheels.
Stk. #05WARREN070FEED **$12,000**

2018 MACK PINNACLE, Good southern ran truck, not rusty, runs and drives excellent. Air seat, air brakes, differential lock, dump valve, power windows, power/heated mirrors, tilt/tele, well maintained truck.
Stk. # 18CXU618DC..... **$17,000**

2007 TRAIL KING, Appears to be a nice trailer, electric tarp, belt appears good, n o title/ bill of sale only. Trail King live floor, tri axles, 49 ft length, aluminum wheels, spring suspension, 22.5 tires.
Stk. #07TK187BELT..... **$22,000**

2008 JET, Nice trailer, excellent shape, tarp, jet hopper bottom, steel composition, roll tarp, front and rear ladder locations, spring suspension, all stell wheels, tandem axles, 68,000 gross vehicle weight, 40 ft length.
Stk. #08JET220HOPPER..... **$17,000**

1973 FRUEHAUF, Good trailer, good shape. Has been used for waste from a kill plant. Fruehauf tank trailer, stainless steel composition, spring suspension, tandem rear axles, 38 ft. length.
Stk. #73FRUE508TANK..... **$9,000**

2012 TIMPTE, Good trailer, roll tarp, good doors, vibrators. 42 ft hopper, two hoppers, standars, knock rails, manual roll tarp, two speed landing gear, front and rear ladder locations, front and rear catwalk, 65,000 lb. GVW.
Stk. #12TIM390HOPPER..... **$18,500**

1979 TRANSCRAFT, Good trailer, good tires, 40 ft long. Transcraft 40 ft flat bed, 96 in width, steel composition, floor type spring suspension, fixed neck.
Stk. #79TRAN40FLAT **$5,000**

2020 KENWORTH T680, Very nice truck, fleet maintained, no rust, southern ran t ruck, air seat, air brakes, tilt/tele, power windows, power/heated mirrors, 455 HP, 12 speed, differential lock.
Stk. #20MX541T680DC **$24,000**

2022 VOLVO, Very nice truck, fleet maintained. Runs excellent, air seat, tilt/tele, differential lock, dump valve, power windows, power door locks, power mirrors, heated mirrors, cruise control, 12 speed, auto transmission.
Stk. #22AV524VNRDC **$26,000**

2021 VOLVO, Very nice truck, fleet maintained, Runs excellent, air seat, tilt/tele, differential lock, dump valve, power windows, power door locks, power mirrors, heated mirrors, cruise control, 12 speed.
Stk. #21D13542VNRDC **$26,000**

2021 INTERNATIONAL, X15 Cummins engine, 12 speed automated transmission. Super nice truck, runs and drives excellent, fleet maintained, air seat, smart wheel, power windows, power/heated mirrors, sliding 5th.
Stk. #21X15443LTDC..... **$26,000**

2020 PETERBILT 579, 455 HP, 12 speed, automated transmissions, nice truck, runs excellent, low miler, air seat, power windows, power/heated mirrors, tilt/tele, differential lock, dump valve, sliding 5th wheel, good tires.
Stk. # 20MX371579DC **$28,500**

2020 KENWORTH, 455 H P/12 speed automated transmissions. Nice truck, runs excellent, low miles, air seat, power windows, power/heated mirrors, tilt/tele, differential lock, dump valve, sliding 5th wheel, good tires.
Stk. #20MX529T680DC **$25,000**

2021 INTERNATIONAL RH, Very nice truck, fleet maintained, excellent shape, runs and drives perfect, smart steering wheel, power windows, power/heated mirrors, dump valve, differential lock, air seat, dual 80 gal fuel tanks.
Stk. #210ZARK363RHDC **$16,000**

2019 PETERBILT, Good truck, runs great, clean, air seat, fleet maintained, no rust, very nice truck, power windows, power/heated mirrors, differential lock, dump valve, A/S 5th, cruise, tilt/tele, 12 speed.
Stk. #19MX631579DC **$25,000**

2020 INTERNATIONAL, Good truck, runs and drives excellent, fleet maintained, power windows, power door locks, smart wheel, tilt/tele, sliding 5th wheel, dump valve, 12 speed, 132 engine displacement.
Stk. #20YEL522RHDC..... **$13,000**

2017 WESTERN STAR 4700, Good truck, runs excellent, air seat, air brakes, differential lock, sliding 5th wheel, dump valve, fleet maintained, thick frame, heavy duty truck. Low miles, southern truck, not rusty.
Stk. #17DET123WSDC..... **$25,000**

2013 INTERNATIONAL, Super nice truck, runs and drives excellent, air seat, air brakes, differential lock, dump valve, sliding 5th wheel, power windows, power/heated mirrors, low miles, 10 speed, 450 HP.
Stk. # 13PAY375DC..... **$16,000**

2014 INTERNATIONAL, Nice truck, runs great, clean, differential lock, dump valve, cruise heated mirrors, air seat, tilt/tele, fleet maintained, manual transmission, 10 speed, overdrive.
Stk. #14N13549PAYDC..... **$16,000**

2014 TIMPTE 43 FT, Nice trailer, very clean, manual roll tarp, dump valve, two speed landing gear, front and rear ladder locations, air ride suspension, aluminum wheels, 65,000 gross vehicle weight.
Stk. #14TIM337HOPPER..... **$20,000**

2021 FREIGHTLINER, Very nice truck, runs excellent, clean, air seat, air brakes, fleet maintained, differential lock, dump valve, power windows, power mirrors, A/S 5th, 410 HP, Detroit engine, 12.81 engine displacement.
Stk. #21DET478CASDC **$250,000**

2013 FREIGHTLINER, Good truck, runs excellent, heavy-duty truck, full locking rears, air seat, power windows, power/heated mirrors, tilt/tele, 10 speed, differential lock, air ride suspension, 455 HP.
Stk. #13DET692CORDC..... **$18,000**

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Soybean Organizations' executive director Debbie Ellis announces retirement

Debbie Ellis, the longtime Executive Director of the Kentucky Soybean Board and Kentucky Soybean Association, has announced that she will retire in November after a robust career of 40 years serving Kentucky's soybean farmers.

"It's time," she said. "Our organizations have accomplished a lot over the past 40 years, and I am proud of the programs and policies that have been established. I believe the boards have done a good job promoting soybeans and their uses. While serving in this role, I have met some really great people and made so many good friends over the years. I'm ready to move on to the next chapter, and I know that our volunteer farmer-leaders are taking the task of finding our next Exec very seriously."

The Executive Director provides support for both the Kentucky Soybean Board, which invests Kentucky's portion of the soy checkoff, and the Kentucky Soybean Association, which is our state's membership and policy organization for soybean growers. This position is responsible for leading the team, overseeing the administrative functions of both organizations, and implementing programs and initiatives set forth by the farmer-leaders who serve on the boards. This position reports to the Executive Committees of both the Board and the Association, who work together to ensure that both organizations are adequately served.

"We cannot thank Debbie enough for the good work she has done for Kentucky's soybean farmers and the greater ag community," Board Chairman Fred Sipes said. "She has given so much of herself over the years, and her retirement leaves a big void that will be tough to fill. It's hard to imagine Kentucky Soybean without Debbie Ellis in it, and we are so thankful for the foundation she has created for us to continue building on. The impacts of her tenure will be felt – and appreciated – long after her retirement."

A job description and instructions for interested parties to apply may be found on the home page of the organizations' website, KySoy.org, under Careers. Applications will be accepted through July 3, and in-person interviews will be conducted by a panel of volunteer farmer-leaders at the Princeton office in August. Ellis has graciously agreed to help train her successor until retirement in November.

Debbie Ellis

"We cannot thank Debbie enough for the good work she has done for Kentucky's soybean farmers and the greater ag community,"
— Board Chairman Fred Sipes

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Kentucky agriculture celebrates May as Beef Month

Kentucky is the largest beef cattle state east of the Mississippi River

Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell, center, was surrounded by Kentucky beef industry personnel and producers as he celebrated May as Beef Month in Kentucky at The Yards in Lexington. The Yards, in the Blue Grass Regional Stockyards Marketplace, is an education center focusing on science and practices of the beef industry. For more images of the event, click here.

(Kentucky Department of Agriculture)

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Kentucky cattle producers and industry representatives joined Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell Monday as he signed a proclamation commemorating the month of May as Kentucky Beef Month.

"Through the hard work of our cattle farmers, Kentucky retains its distinction as the state with the largest beef inventory east of the Mississippi River with 862,000 head," Commissioner Shell said. "I join Kentuckians in recognizing the effort, diligence, and perseverance of this important agricultural sector as we celebrate May as Kentucky Beef Month."

The United States is the world's second largest producer of beef, primarily high-quality, grain-fed beef. Kentucky ranks 14th nationally for total cattle inventory with 1.82 million head and 10th in the nation for beef cattle. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Kentucky is home to 31,060 beef cattle producers of the 69,400 total farms in the state.

"Behind every flavorful bite is a story of care and commitment," said Kelly Baird, Kentucky Beef Council Director of Communications and Events. "This May, we're celebrating that delicious product and the people who bring it to our tables. What better way to celebrate our beef producers than behind the grill, explore recipes, cooking tips, and what raising beef looks like in Kentucky at kybeef.com."

January 2026 numbers for all cattle inventory are down slightly from 2025, matching what's happening nationally. The U.S. beef cattle reached a 64-year low in 2025. Several factors including low calf prices, high costs, and drought across the county played a role in the declining inventory.

In contrast the lower number of beef cattle has created a higher market demand and driven up the sale prices for farmers. The tight national cattle supply and higher market prices will likely contribute to higher agricultural receipts for the state. The final agricultural cash receipts for 2024, the latest available, show the cattle and calves sector brought in $1.5 billion, ranking it first for Kentucky commodities.

Cattle prices are expected to remain strong and potentially peak, following a year of high demand in 2025. Tight supplies and strong demand drove the market for much of 2025 with Kentucky cattle prices up 20-30 percent from the previous year. It's predicted Kentucky's anticipated strong livestock sector could help maintain overall cash receipts above $8 billion for 2025 with estimates of a record $8.5 billion for 2026.

* * * * *

The top five Kentucky counties for number of beef cattle are:

Barren
Pulaski
Madison
Breckinridge
Warren

Kentucky small businesses honored at annual awards ceremony

This event is in celebration of National Small Business Week

By Ryan Ferguson

LEXINGTON, Ky.— The Kentucky Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Kentucky District Office of the Small Business Administration will host the annual Kentucky Celebrates Small Business event at the Central Bank Center, May 13 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. EDT. The event recognizes high-performing small business owners from across Kentucky.

"Kentucky's entrepreneurs continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience, innovation and leadership. Small businesses are the foundation of communities across the Commonwealth, and we are proud to celebrate the outstanding business owners who continue to create jobs, strengthen local economies and inspire future entrepreneurs," said Kristina Joyce, Kentucky SBDC state director.

"It is an honor to recognize these exceptional small business leaders and advocates from across Kentucky," said Robert Coffey, SBA Kentucky district director. "Their commitment to innovation, service and growth exemplifies the impact small businesses have on our communities and economy."

The 2026 Small Business Administration award winners include:

Kentucky Small Business of the Year – John Harnage, Kentucky Thermal Institute

Kentucky Rural Small Business of the Year – James Turner Altman, Altman Eye Center

Kentucky Veteran Small Business of the Year – Amber Damos, Life Force Wellness Center

Kentucky Small Business Advocate of the Year – Cynthia Lee-Stewart, Cyn Lee Sales

Awards from the 2025 Kentucky Celebrates Small Business event.

Picture provided by Ryan Ferguson.

Kentucky Financial Services Advocate of the Year – Robert Lewis Watson, Jr., Community Trust Bank, Inc.

Kentucky Women-Owned Small Business of the Year – Shonda Durham, Head Spa of London

Kentucky Small Business Media of the Year – Martina Barksdale, VisitLEX

2026 Kentucky SBDC Pacesetter Award winners include:

see **AWARDS,** page A6

AWARDS,
from page A5

American Bluegrass Marble – owners Kim Heinzen and Louisa Lewandowski, Louisville

Bellaire Animal Medical Center – owner Dr. Loyde Jolly, Nicholasville

BK Plumbing Supply – owner John Burgin, Louisville

Danville Bike and Footwear – owner Christian Polley, Danville

Defying Dementia, LLC – owner Jenny Jacobs, Bowling Green

Dollhouse Daycare of Columbia – owner Audreanna Bradshaw, Columbia

Lollipop Kidz Child Care Center – owner Tanya and Michael Moore, Beattyville

McCauley Egg Company – owner Jesse and Leslie McCauley, Mt. Vernon

Nothing Bundt Cakes – owner Melanie Leach, Lexington

Peaberry Coffee – owner Markus Ellegood, Paducah

Playground Abode – owner Kristen O'Meally, Louisville

The Golf Emporium – owners Jason Cox and Tracy Naylor, Owensboro

For more information about the Kentucky SBDC Pacesetter Award or the Kentucky Celebrates Small Business event, please visit the Kentucky Small Business Development Center website at www.kentuckysbdc.com.

Kentucky SBDC

The Kentucky Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has been assisting the commonwealth's small business community for over 45 years. With centers statewide and an experienced and knowledgeable staff, the Kentucky SBDC provides unparalleled business coaching and training services at no cost to help existing business owners and potential entrepreneurs start, grow and succeed.

Kentucky SBDC services include one-on-one business coaching, training workshops, access to market research, loan packaging help, assistance with financial projections and information needed to make informed business decisions.

Kentucky SBDC is co-sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration and is administered by the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment in partnership with regional academic institutions, economic development organizations, the private sector and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Kentucky SBDC is funded, in part, through a Cooperative Agreement with the U. S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of SBA.

SBA

The U.S. Small Business Administration helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow, expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov

UK researchers tackle hidden crisis in modern pig production

Researchers are taking on pre-weaning litter morality size, a problem that is beginning to have a major effect on swine producers.

By Jordan Strickler

Lexington, Ky.—

A University of Kentucky reproductive biologist is leading an ambitious four-year study to investigate one of the most pressing, yet largely invisible, problems facing the American swine industry: the mismatch between how many piglets modern sows conceive and how many their uteri can actually support.

Jonathan Pasternak, associate professor in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences (AFS) within the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, received a $650,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to study the developmental impact of uterine crowding in the contemporary sow. The project will run through January 2030 with assistance from the Animal Molecular and Cellular Physiology group, which includes AFS assistant professors Coral Kent-Dennis and Katherine Halloran.

Decades of aggressive genetic selection have pushed litter sizes in commercial swine to historic highs. Top-performing producers now average nearly 16 piglets per litter, with ovulation rates in some genetic lines reaching 40 oocytes — the number of eggs before maturation. But while geneticists have successfully increased the number of embryos a sow produces, uterine capacity has remained stubbornly unchanged.

"Ovulation rate is exceptionally heritable, but uterine capacity can't keep pace," Pasternak said. "We now have sows producing more piglets in a litter than they have nipples to nurse them."

The result for piglets is a condition known as intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR). Unlike traditional runts, which reflect poor genetic potential, IUGR piglets carry the full genetic capacity for efficient growth but are starved of nutrients in the womb. Disruption during this sensitive period has lifelong consequences.

IUGR piglets can represent up to 30% of a contemporary litter but account for the overwhelming majority of pre-weaning mortality. Survivors grow less efficiently and rarely reach market weight.

"From a pure reproductive standpoint, this is arguably the biggest issue facing the swine industry today," Pasternak said.

Researchers will track fetal development at sequential stages of gestation, measuring how and when individual organ systems begin to diverge between crowded and uncrowded environments. The goal is to identify the precise developmental windows during which crowding begins to derail growth. Pasternak's lab will also investigate why a subset of piglets appears naturally resistant to the effects of crowding.

Practical implications for producers

Pasternak emphasized that the goal is not to roll back decades of genetic progress but to inform it.

If the team can identify the genetic and physiological markers that make some piglets more resilient to crowding, producers may eventually be able to select for animals that maintain high litter sizes without the welfare and economic costs of IUGR.

"We're never going back on litter size," Pasternak said. "The goal is to perhaps inform the geneticists of what the limits of uterine capacity really are and find ways to maintain litter size while avoiding these low-quality piglets that won't perform as desired."

The research will be conducted using UK's swine unit and meat laboratory facilities, producing a tissue and sample archive that Pasternak hopes will benefit collaborators across campus.

"IUGR is also a human health issue, so the samples we're generating are likely to be valuable to other researchers at UK and beyond," he said. "We want people to know these resources will be available."

This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2026-67015-45761. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

UK researchers are now studying a condition known as intrauterine growth restriction, which can have serious consequences in the swine industry.

Photo provided by Jonathan Pasternak

"The greatest wealth"

2026 graduate celebrates community at the University of Kentucky

By Bailey Vandiver

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Zaynah Shahid is a people person. After four years at the University of Kentucky, she has built a community that she knows will continue beyond graduation. Shahid will graduate in May 2026 with a degree in Food Biosciences and Business Management. At UK, she has gained valuable relationships with her classmates in the close-knit Food Biosciences program, professors and mentors, fellow members of MANRRS and more.

"When I think of my connections and my network of people, I kind of equate it to being wealthy," Shahid said. "I think that's the greatest wealth: being able to share your experiences with people that you love most, having people to call on and lean on whenever you're transitioning from adolescent to adulthood or just transitioning from college to real life."

Shahid has always been a "foodie," she said, viewing cooking as a creative outlet. In school, she also loved science and the way there was always a correct answer.

Zaynah Shahid places a sample into a box for blind taste testing for a class project at the University of Kentucky on April 6, 2026.

Photo by Matt Barton

Learning about food science in high school "projected my future," she said.

"Oh, this is just for me. Somebody made this program just for me," Shahid said she remembers thinking.

Knowing she wanted to study food science, Shahid already thought UK was the right fit because of its Food Biosciences program in the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. But coming to Lexington for a tour confirmed her choice.

"I fell in love with the campus," Shahid said. "I think everyone says that, but it truly is a great campus."

Part of the Lewis Honors College, Shahid said her classroom experiences helped her become "a well-rounded learner."

Shahid and her Food Biosciences classmates became a close cohort, she said, taking classes together and educating their fellow students about what food science is through the Food Science Club.

Shahid has been involved with MANRRS, a national professional development organization with chapters at schools and universities, since her freshman year. Joining the MANRRS chapter at UK allowed her to join a legacy and community — "being a part of something that's bigger than myself," Shahid said. In her senior year, she has served as president.

"If you told me freshman year coming in that I was going to be president of a chapter, I wouldn't have believed you," Shahid said. "But I think the beauty is that it was unexpected, and I just rose to the occasion."

Shahid said Kendriana Price, assistant dean of Land-grant Engagement administration and adviser to the MANRRS chapter at UK, saw something in Shahid before she saw it herself, as Price has done for many other UK students.

"Zaynah is an exceptional student whose dedication and generosity consistently elevate those around her," Price said. "Her entrepreneurial spirit fuels creativity and connection, especially in cultivating spaces of belonging and unity."

In Fall 2025, Shahid was the Martin-Gatton CAFE recipient of the Lyman T. Johnson Torch Bearer Award, which celebrates Johnson's legacy and is given to one student per UK college for academic excellence and impact on others.

"I was honored," Shahid said. "That represented legacy, knowing that Lyman T. Johnson paved the way and was a trailblazer. That was everything, honestly."

Price nominated Shahid for the award.

"I am continually inspired by her willingness to step beyond her comfort zone in service to others, both directly and indirectly," Price said. "This quality beautifully reflects the enduring legacy of Lyman T. Johnson."

This summer, Shahid will intern with Farm Credit Mid-America, working with a cohort of fellow interns.

"That's the most exciting part because I am a people person," she said. "I think people work best when you are collaborative, when you have more than one mind thinking at a time."

Shahid said she is prepared for whatever comes next. As she stays connected to the network she has built in college, she hopes to give back to that community someday. Unsure exactly what her "dream job" is and open to possibilities, she wants to help educate and engage the next generation when it comes to agriculture.

"If I can be a beacon or steward in that way, I think I'll be satisfied," Shahid said. "I would be very satisfied."

Learn more about Food Biosciences at UK. UK will celebrate May 2026 graduates at commencement on May 8-9.

Zaynah Shahid and her classmates work on a group project in the Garrigus sensory lab at the University of Kentucky on April 6, 2026.

Photo by Matt Barton

> *"I think that's the greatest wealth: being able to share your experiences with people that you love most, having people to call on and lean on whenever you're transitioning from adolescent to adulthood or just transitioning from college to real life."*
>
> — Zaynan Shanid

University of Kentucky student who founded The Thrifty Cat will continue sustainability efforts after graduation

Olivia Smith will graduate this month from the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

By Bailey Vandiver

LEXINGTON, Ky.— From establishing The Thrifty Cat to researching textile applications to thrifting for vintage clothing brands in her free time, Olivia Smith has devoted her time at the University of Kentucky to promoting sustainability.

"I've always really had a passion for coming up with solutions to overconsumption and just making more people aware of the issue," said Smith, who will graduate in May 2026 with a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Science (NRES) from the UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

In Fall 2025, Smith helped establish The Thrifty Cat, a free store for students on UK's campus to access clothing, furniture, dorm items, textbooks and more. The idea began during Smith's time as a sustainability intern with UK Recycling the year prior. As part of her internship, Smith helped plan the Thrift Shop Pop-up, an annual one-day thrifting event for students that started in 2018.

"When I organized the event last year, I really saw growth in it," Smith said. "We saw a 22% increase in donations collected from the previous year, and I wanted to make it more accessible for more people long-term."

When Wildcat Wheels Bicycle Library, which offers bike rentals and repairs to the UK community, moved to Sports Center Garage in 2025, its previous space in the basement of Blazer Dining became available.

"We took it as the perfect opportunity to bring in another sustainability resource to that area," Smith said.

The Thrifty Cat is currently open Monday through Thursday and allows students to shop for free, with no limit on number of items. It operates entirely on gently used donations, which can be left in collection bins outside the store.

"I'm seeing The Thrifty Cat as a really beneficial thing economically, especially for incoming students moving in to use that as a place to get their initial needs in setting up their new home here," Smith said.

In addition to her work with UK Recycling and The Thrifty Cat, Smith also participated in undergraduate research with Tyler Barzee, assistant professor in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering (BAE).

"It really helped me get a foundation in the research aspect of environmental science," Smith said.

The Thrifty Cat is located in Blazer Dining at the University of Kentucky.

Photo by Sabrina Hounshell

Olivia Smith helps coordinate the Thrift Shop Pop-up on April 1, 2026, at the Gatton Student Center at the University of Kentucky.

Photo by Sabrina Hounshell

"Dr. Barzee has been very helpful in setting me up for success in all of my avenues and all the connections I've made on campus."

In the Barzee Bioprocessing Laboratory, Smith's project focused on creating pure mycelium materials, which are made from the roots of mushrooms, for textile applications. Working with the fungus that makes tempeh, an Indonesian fermented soybean dish, the team learned that these organisms can eat inexpensive and widespread agricultural byproducts, like stillage from distilleries and manure, and turn them into a leather-like material.

Using a scaled-up production process that the lab developed, Smith and Keya Rani Roy, a BAE doctoral student and graduate research assistant, created the first prototype products from this material: a wallet and UK patch.

"It was a really successful demonstration of the process and taught us a lot about what was working and what needs to improve," Barzee said.

Barzee said his whole lab was rooting for Smith when The Thrifty Cat opened.

"This certainly indicates her growth and abilities in project management, collaboration, communication, creativity and dedication," Barzee said. "It is a special thing to not only have the vision and ambition but also be able to follow it through to completion."

Smith said it's been gratifying for her to see how appreciative her fellow students are when they "are finding things that they love" at the pop-up and at The Thrifty Cat.

"I'm looking forward to graduation and continuing my career in sustainability and implementing more long-term resources such as this one," Smith said.

Barzee said he admires the passion, maturity, awareness and resourcefulness that led to Smith's success at UK.

"Her work has been an inspiration to me and I'm sure many others on campus who have taken notice of the ways she finds creative and concrete ways to improve things in the world," he said. "I believe that we can expect to continue to see great things from Olivia as she moves into her career."

Learn more about The Thrifty Cat and about the Natural Resources and Environmental Science program.

# # #

The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, education information and other services to individuals and institutions that provide equal opportunities for qualified persons in all aspects of institutional operations and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, creed, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, uniformed service, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information or social or economic status.

Olivia Smith poses with Wildcat at the Thrift Shop Pop-up on April 1, 2026, at the Gatton Student Center at the University of Kentucky.

Photo by Sabrina Hounshell

Weathering the storm together

As we are now in Mental Health Awareness Month (May), I've been thinking a lot about the weight so many farmers and ranchers are carrying right now. Farming is rewarding work, but it can also feel overwhelming. Markets shift overnight. Weather can wipe out months of hard work. Costs keep climbing. Too often, the stress builds quietly while we keep pushing forward, because that's just what farmers do.

That's why Farm Bureau continues to invest in resources that support the wellbeing of farm families and rural communities. And this Mental Health Awareness Month, we're unveiling a new resource dedicated to helping farmers consider how to respond to stress before it reaches a breaking point. It's called the Farm State of Mind Checklist: Weathering the Storm.

Unpredictability, financial pressure and isolation can take a toll on farmers and ranchers and their families.

The checklist was shaped by the experiences of farmers and ranchers, along with guidance from mental health professionals. It's built around simple, practical reminders that can help people take small steps toward managing stress, preventing burnout, and finding clarity during difficult seasons.

Weathering the Storm, One Step at a Time

One thing I've learned over the years is that mental health conversations do not have to start with big speeches or perfect answers. Sometimes they start with small actions. That's the idea behind this checklist.

The first reminder is to nourish yourself. Farmers are good at taking care of crops, livestock and equipment, but we are not always good at taking care of our own physical wellbeing. Getting enough rest, staying hydrated, and fueling your body matters.

The checklist also encourages people to move. Physical activity has always helped clear my mind, whether that means walking the farm, working outside, or throwing the ball with my dog, Ziggy.

Another reminder is to unplug. In agriculture, it can feel like there is no off switch. But stepping away from the stress of the farm for even a short time can make a difference.

International Year of the Woman Farmer ACE Summit

It also encourages people to pause. That might mean prayer, quiet reflection, or taking a moment to breathe before jumping into the next challenge.

And maybe most importantly, it reminds us to connect and share. For me, that lesson became especially clear after

losing my first wife, Bonnie, to cancer. The support of my family, friends, and community helped carry me through some of the hardest days of my life. None of us are meant to weather these storms alone.

Supporting Mental Health in Rural America

I'm so proud of Farm Bureau's work through the Farm State of Mind Alliance, which brings together some of the largest membership organizations serving the farm community nationwide to reduce the stigma around mental health in rural communities and connect farm families with support and resources. One resource available through Farm State of Mind is Togetherall, a 24/7 online peer-to-peer community where farmers and ranchers can talk anonymously with others who understand what they're going through. Farmers can also access counseling support, life coaching and professional consultations through Togetherall. These services are completely free to farm families across the country.

Sometimes the hardest part is taking that first step. That's why I encourage farmers and ranchers to check out Farm State of Mind and sign up for a Togetherall account before hitting a breaking point. Having those resources already at your fingertips can make all the difference on the hard days.

These resources matter because stress in agriculture is real. Unpredictability, financial pressure and isolation can take a toll on farmers and ranchers and their families. And with USDA projecting farm income this year to be $48 billion below the highs we saw in 2022, many farm families are carrying even more financial strain and uncertainty into an already difficult season.

But we know the strength of rural communities is real, too. When farmers check in on one another, share their stories and encourage each other to seek support, it reminds each of us that we are not alone. Sometimes a conversation can make all the difference.

This Mental Health Awareness Month, I encourage you to take a few moments to check in on yourself and the people around you. Share the Farm State of Mind Checklist with a friend or neighbor. Start a conversation. Reach out if someone is struggling. And if you need support yourself, know there are people ready to listen and help. No one should have to weather the storm alone.

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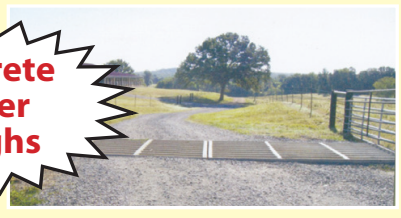
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River Valley AgCredit welcomes Logan Johnson as loan officer in Clinton

Clinton, KY – River Valley AgCredit is pleased to announce the addition of Logan Johnson as a loan officer in the Clinton Branch.

A native of Hickman, Kentucky, Logan has deep roots in agriculture and firsthand experience in the industry. He has four years under his belt in agricultural retail along with hands-on practice working in a farm operation, giving him valuable insight into the financial needs and day-to-day challenges faced by today's producers.

Johnson is a 2021 graduate of Fulton County High School and recently earned a degree in Agricultural Business from Murray State University, graduating in December 2024. His educational background, combined with real-world agricultural experience, positions him well to serve River Valley AgCredit customers with practical knowledge and a farmer-first mindset.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to help agricultural producers in this community using the experience and knowledge I've gained so far, as well as the knowledge I'll continue to build in this role," Johnson said. "I look forward to growing professionally and working alongside farmers to help them succeed."

Outside of work, Johnson enjoys spending time outdoors hunting, fishing, and going to the lake. All activities that further reflect his appreciation for rural life and the agricultural way of living.

River Valley AgCredit is proud to welcome Logan Johnson and looks forward to the positive impact he will have in serving the agricultural community and supporting the future of local farming operations.

If you want more information about this topic, please get in touch with Shea Weaks at (270) 554-2912 or email at sweaks@rvac.com.

Logan Johnson

Cayce's Pumpkin Patch in Princeton accepted to the 2026 Kentucky Farm Bureau Certified Farm Market Program

Louisville, KY — Cayce's Pumpkin Patch, located in Caldwell County, has been accepted into the 2026 Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Certified Farm Market Program.

As a member of this prestigious program, Cayce's Pumpkin Patch has committed to providing top-quality products and services to their customers. This certification ensures that each market meets the highest standards of quality, freshness, and marketing appeal.

"Kentucky Farm Bureau's Certified Farm Market program is a direct link between the farm families who grow our food and the neighbors who depend on them," said KFB President Eddie Melton. "The certification gives these markets the recognition they deserve, and it gives consumers a trusted signal that what they're buying was grown with care right here in Kentucky."

Located at 153 Farmersville Road in Princeton, Cayce's Pumpkin Patch is a family-friendly agritourism destination featuring a pumpkin patch, corn maze, hayride dinosaur tours, games, playground stations a pirate ship and a petting zoo. Spring and summer produce is available on the honor system May through July. The full fall experience is open daily from mid-September to November 1 from noon to 6 p.m. For more information, call 270-625-4091.

The KFB Certified Farm Market logo identifies markets certified through this program, and they are listed in the online directory. The program also provides collective advertising, promotional items, educational tour opportunities, and other marketing benefits, with the aim of increasing the net farm income of member markets.

Consumers can find the KFB Certified Farm Market Rack Card at Kentucky welcome centers, state resort parks, local chambers of commerce/tourism centers, and county Farm Bureau offices. For a complete list of markets, visit the KFB Certified Farm Market website at kyfb.com/certified or download the KFB App.

KFB is celebrating its 31st year of offering the Certified Farm Market program. For more information, visit the website, e-mail kfbcertified@kyfb.com, or "Like" the Facebook page at facebook.com/KYCertified FarmMarket.

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2017 JOHN DEERE R4038 $178,000

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2024 JOHN DEERE 6155M $170,000

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2024 JOHN DEERE 6R 145 $151,500

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2022 JOHN DEERE 6155R $130,000

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Comment Column | Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell

The Kentucky General Assembly[HB1] has just given the agricultural sector of the Commonwealth a special opportunity. And, if we act quickly, it could have a huge economic impact on our agricultural industry and our state.

Agricultural is already an economic engine for the Commonwealth. Our farming industry has nearly a $50 billion impact on Kentucky. We have a chance to rev up that agricultural economic engine if we entice the alternative aviation fuel industry to build a footprint in Kentucky, creating a once-in-a-generation economic development opportunity for our farmers, our communities, and our workforce.

Alternative aviation fuels are renewable, non-petroleum-based replacements for conventional jet fuel. They have lower carbon emissions and can be produced from several sources, including bio-derived feedstocks, such as corn oil, ethanol, soybean oil, forestry, and animal waste byproducts..[HB2]

Alternative aviation fuels are in high demand by commercial and passenger air carriers, and Kentucky's current agricultural landscape, infrastructure, and workforce put the state in a unique position to meet that demand. We also have three larger airports serving Kentucky including Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International (CVG), Louisville Muhammad Ali International (SDF), and Blue Grass Airport (LEX). These three serve as primary hubs, supplemented by regional airports in Owensboro and Paducah. These airports provide crucial connectivity to the region. In addition, we have the geographic advantage of being within a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population, meaning commodities that are transported by air into Kentucky can reach the nation by road, rail, or river with great speed.

But we're not the only state looking to garner investments from the alternative aviation fuels industry. Other states are moving aggressively with incentives, partnerships, and clear strategies.

That's why it was so important our state lawmakers acted fast. This year, the Kentucky Legislature passed House Bill 869 (HB 869), which constructs a targeted, nonrefundable income tax credit to encourage the production and blending of alternative aviation fuels in Kentucky. The bill leverages Kentucky's agricultural strength and positions the state as a leader in the emerging alternative aviation fuel industry.

This one bill creates the framework for building new markets for agricultural products, attracting investments, and strengthening the state's role in a growing energy sector. Its policy keeps value-added production in Kentucky, connects agriculture to advanced manufacturing, and helps the Commonwealth compete for large-scale aviation fuel investments. It is a Kentucky-first approach that builds on our state's existing strengths.

Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell

Kentucky has already proven it can build upon an opportunity like this. Targeted incentives helped establish Kentucky's biodiesel and ethanol industries. Those efforts created new buyers for farmers and brought processing facilities and jobs to communities across the Commonwealth. The tax incentive created by HB 869 simply applies that same winning model to a fast-growing aviation market.

For farmers, that means more buyers and more stability through a new domestic market for crops we are already growing. It also keeps more of the value from Kentucky crops here at home. Corn and soybeans can serve as feedstock, but the opportunity goes further. Materials that currently have limited value — crop residues, vegetable oils, and other agricultural byproducts — can generate additional revenue from every acre.

Kentucky has an amazing opportunity to be at the forefront of the alternate aviation fuel industry. HB 869 was the start. Now, together, let's get to the finish line.

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The link between agriculture and food security

The world faces many unique challenges in the decades to come, including a rapidly expanding global population. The United Nations estimates that the global population will reach 9.71 billion in 2050. That's an increase of more than 1.7 billion people between 2023 and 2050.

Food security is among the more significant challenges the world will face as the population increases. The United States Agency for International Development notes that food security means all individuals, regardless of their physical or economic circumstances, have access to sufficient food to meet the dietary needs for a productive, healthy life. Food security is a more significant issue than people may recognize, even in first world, fully developed countries. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service indicates that slightly more than 10 percent of U.S. households were food insecure at some point during 2021. In fact, estimates suggest more than 800 million people across the globe go to bed hungry every night, which underscores the seriousness of the issue.

Agriculture and food security

Food security and the agricultural industry are inextricably linked. The USAID indicates that most of the people who go to bed hungry at night are smallholder farmers who depend on agriculture to make a living and feed themselves and their families. Supporting efforts to strengthen the agricultural industry can help to combat food security, as the USAID reports that growth within that sector has been found to be at least twice as effective at reducing poverty as growth in other sectors. Much of that can be traced to the disproportionate percentage of poor people who live in rural rather than urban areas. For example, the USAID reports that 75 percent of poor people in developing nations live in rural areas.

But the poverty rate is higher in rural areas than urban areas in the United States as well. Data from the 2019 American Community Survey indicates the poverty rate in rural areas was 15.4 percent in 2019 compared to 11.9 percent in urban areas. Though recent data regarding rural poverty rates in Canada is unavailable, a 2013 discussion paper on the topic from the Government of Canada noted that the country's rural residents earned less and had lower levels of education than residents in urban areas, suggesting that poverty is likely more prevalent in the Canadian countryside than in the country's cities.

What can be done

Though food security poses a significant global challenge, lack of access to healthy foods is preventable. Individuals in rural and urban communities can voice their support for efforts to strengthen the agricultural sector. A thriving agricultural sector can ensure fewer people go to bed hungry each night and bolster the economies of rural communities that are disproportionately affected by poverty.

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Nominations open for 2027 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year Contest

Farmers are invited to submit nominations for the 2027 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year contest, which comes with cash prizes and bragging rights. This is the ninth year of the contest, supported by Nestlé Purina PetCare, which celebrates farm dogs and the many ways they support farmers and ranchers.

The grand prize winner – Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year – will win a year's worth of Purina Pro Plan dog food and $5,000 in prize money. The winner will be recognized at a Farm Dog of the Year award ceremony at the American Farm Bureau Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, in January 2027.

The 2027 Farm Dog of the Year will also be featured in a professionally produced video. The profile of 2026 Farm Dog of the Year Max can be viewed here. Since its inception, the contest has provided a link to the farm for pet-loving Americans who vote for their favorite farm dog online.

"Farm dogs are often important partners in our daily work as well as wonderful companions for farm families," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "As we saw with our 2026 winner, Max, these loyal companions go above and beyond to look after both the land and the farm families they work alongside."

Rounding up livestock, chasing off predators, opening gates, fetching or carrying tools/buckets and greeting visitors are among the many tasks performed by farm dogs.

Scientific research from a collaboration between Mayo Clinic

and Purina reveals that interacting with pets can provide health benefits. For example, spending just 20 minutes with a dog increased a hormone that helps moderate stress. This was also associated with a decrease in heart rate and an increase in a self-reported sense of well-being.

"We are honored to continue supporting the hard-working, devoted farm dogs featured in the American Farm Bureau's Farm Dog of the Year contest," said Jack Scott, vice president of sustainable sourcing at Purina. "Purina proudly uses nutritious ingredients sourced from American farms to make our pet food, and we remain committed to supporting American farmers who have fed generations of people and pets."

Desired attributes for the Farm Dog of the Year include helpfulness to the farmer and his/her family, playfulness and obedience.

Farm dog owners must be Farm Bureau members to enter their dogs in the competition. Not yet a Farm Bureau member but interested in nominating your farm dog? Visit fb.org/join to learn about becoming a member.

Eligibility guidelines and submission requirements are available here. Farm Dog of the Year nominations, which include written responses to questions, at least one still photo and a video clip (optional), must be received by July 11, 2026, for consideration. The Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year contest is sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The People's Choice Pup, a popular social media element of the Farm Dog of the Year competition, returns for 2027. Profiles of several dogs nominated for the contest will be shared beginning in September, with the public invited to vote. Bragging rights and a $2,500 cash prize from Purina will be awarded to the People's Choice Pup.

About Nestlé Purina PetCare Company

Nestlé Purina?PetCare? creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations. Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition. Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than $150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive. Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness.

About American Farm Bureau Federation

The American Farm Bureau Federation is the Voice of Agriculture. We are farm and ranch families working together to build a sustainable future of safe and abundant food, fiber and renewable fuel for our nation and the world. Learn more at http://facebook.com/FarmBureau or follow @FarmBureau on X or @farmbureau on Instagram.

The public helps University of Kentucky scientists uncover what two common backyard hawks really like to eat

UK study shows Cooper's hawks and sharp-shinned hawks are mostly bird hunters, with doves and songbirds high on the menu

By Jordan Strickler

Lexington, Ky.—

Anyone who keeps a bird feeder has likely had the same uneasy thought after seeing a sudden blur of wings in the yard: What was that hawk doing here?

A University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment study helps answer that question. The work, "Citizen science provides an unprecedented glimpse into the diets of Astur cooperii (Cooper's Hawk) and Accipiter striatus (Sharp-shinned Hawk)," was led by researchers in the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources (FNR) and published in Ornithology.

Citizen science is the public's voluntary participation in scientific projects, collaborating with experts to collect, analyze or report data.

Using thousands of photos shared through the citizen science platform iNaturalist, the authors took a closer look at the diets of two common hawks often seen around neighborhoods, feeders and wooded areas: The Cooper's hawk and the sharp-shinned hawk. The study found both species are mainly hunters of other birds, filling an important gap in what scientists know about two raptors many people see but few fully understand.

"We were very excited to explore the opportunities citizen science provides to the field of wildlife research, especially for two common backyard birds," said Will Gibson, a first-year Master's student in FNR who helped lead the study. "Citizen science platforms like iNaturalist offer an incredible glimpse into the lives and behaviors of wildlife that may otherwise be understudied."

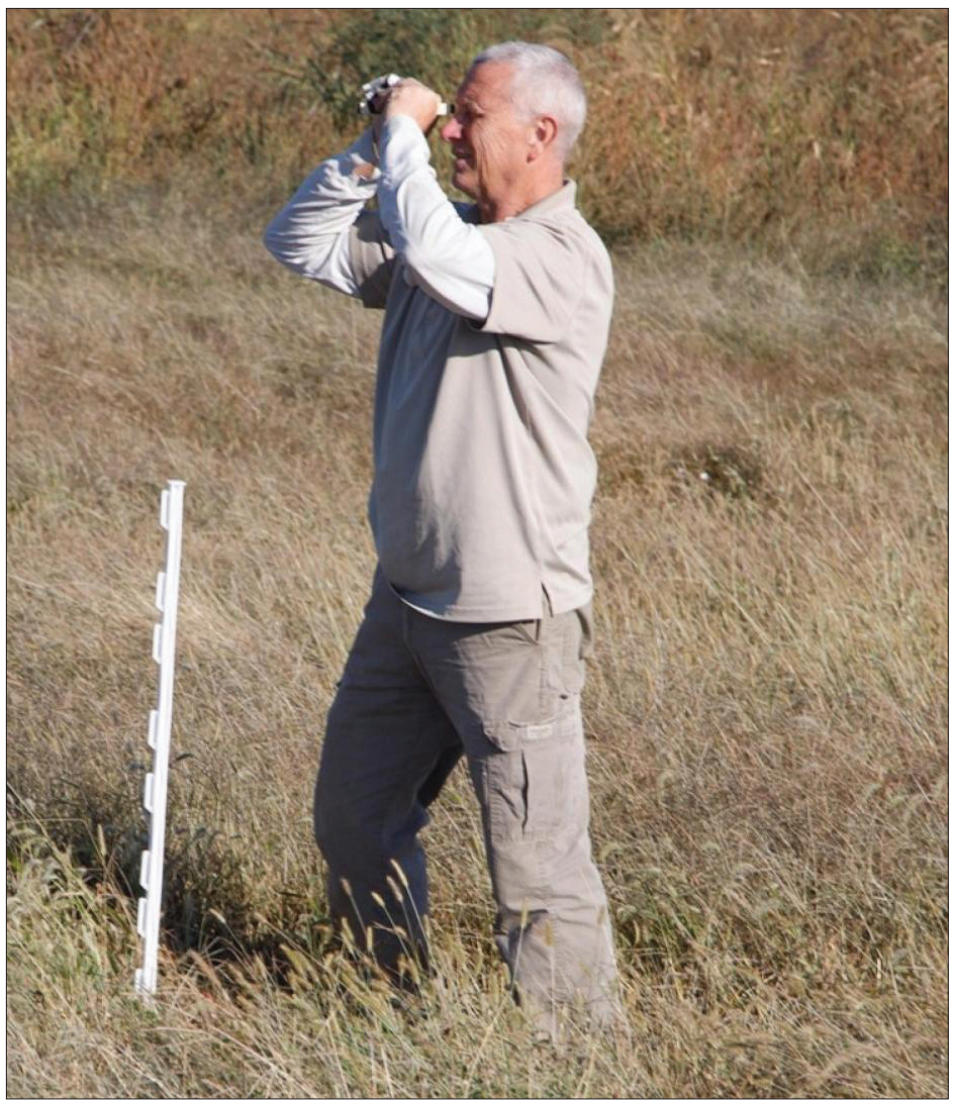
The team reviewed 74,974 photographs of the two hawk species and identified thousands of predation events, yielding an unusually large dataset across much of the birds' range.

"This is filling in an important gap in what we understand about these very common backyard birds," said Darin McNeil, assistant professor of wildlife management at Martin-Gatton CAFE. "There's a lot of information out there from citizen scientists that had not really been analyzed in this way, and we were able to use that to learn what these hawks are actually choosing to eat."

That matters to birdwatchers and homeowners, especially those who spend time watching activity around backyard feeders. Cooper's hawks and sharp-shinned hawks are not coming for seed; they are coming for the birds that gather there.

"If you see one of these hawks in your yard, you can be pretty confident it is scoping out the bird feeder and looking for a meal," McNeil said.

The two hawks look a lot alike, though the sharp-shinned hawk is smaller. That size difference turns out to matter.



Citizen scientists have proven to be a great asset to researchers and their work.
Photo by Steve Patton/Martin Gatton CAFE

Study results

The study found that Cooper's hawks, the larger of the two, strongly favor birds and especially larger prey such as doves and pigeons. The research showed they selected rock pigeons, mourning doves and other dove species more often than would be expected based on what was available. They also regularly ate mammals, but birds were still the clear preference.

Sharp-shinned hawks were even more focused on birds. In the study, nearly every identifiable prey item for that species was a bird. European starlings, mourning doves and house sparrows were among the most common prey, and the researchers found only one mammal record for the species in the dataset.

"We were actually surprised by how bird-focused the sharp-shinned hawk was," McNeil said. "There are reports in the literature of them eating mammals, but in our data we found almost no evidence for that."

The findings support a long-held idea that both hawks are avian specialists, meaning they mostly hunt birds. The study also showed that prey size differed between the two species. The prey eaten by Cooper's hawks averaged 166 grams, while prey eaten by sharp-shinned hawks averaged 59 grams.

The reasons may be practical. McNeil said doves are especially attractive prey for Cooper's hawks. They are large, provide a good meal and are often out in the open. They are also less able to fight back once caught than some other birds.

"If you're a dove, you are in a rough spot," McNeil said. "They're fat, they're often exposed, and they don't have many defenses once a hawk grabs them."

The study's chart of preferred prey showed rock pigeons standing out for Cooper's hawks, while European starlings ranked high for sharp-shinned hawks. Mourning doves also appeared high on the list for both species.

The importance of citizen science

The project also highlights the growing value of citizen science. Researchers downloaded iNaturalist records, then examined them one by one to see whether a hawk was holding prey and, if it was, what kind of animal it had caught.

The team used expert help to identify hard-to-recognize prey from feathers, fur and other visible clues. They also compared those hunting records with background observations of birds, mammals and reptiles to see not just what hawks ate, but what they seemed to prefer.

That approach gave researchers a broader view than older studies that focused only on nests or bird feeders. It also helped them see prey that might not often appear in feeder-based projects, such as pigeons.

"These are native birds of prey that belong here," McNeil said. "They are part of the natural system and part of keeping other animal populations in check."

The research also points to another change people may already be seeing. Cooper's hawks have become more common in suburbs and urban areas over recent decades. McNeil said that shift is one reason these citizen scientists are noticing them more often at feeders and in neighborhoods.

"By expanding the types of data that can be garnered from citizen science, we have shown how useful citizen science is as a tool," Gibson said. "This just shows how important everyday people are to the field of wildlife research."

Visit the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Martin-Gatton CAFE.

This material is based upon work that is supported by National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, McIntire-Stennis Capacity Grant under award number KY009043. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of Agriculture.

Boots on the ground, and hands in the dirt

Hardin County farmer Ray Allan Mackey inducted into the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Hall of Distinguished Alumni

Hardin County farmer Ray Allan Mackey looks over a soon-to-be-planted corn field on ground that was part of the very first farm he and his wife Jan bought in 1986. It's soil he is familiar with and knowledgeable about after 40 years of production.

Mackey attributes his agricultural insights to his family's deep farming heritage and the education he received at the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment (UKMGCAFE).

"UK was always a vision for me, and always a pathway that I felt I was going down, somehow," he said. "The overriding encouragement I had growing up with family influences on all sides, going to field days, going to seminars, going to the local extension office, and hearing folks from UK come in and present, there was never any other doubt or option. I wanted to go to UK and be a part of that, so I could come back to the farm and put that knowledge on the ground and be a farmer."

And he has put that knowledge to good use over the years, not only expanding his family farming operation but also serving the agriculture industry in a number of ways, at a number of levels, and always with an incredible desire to better an industry that everyone depends on.

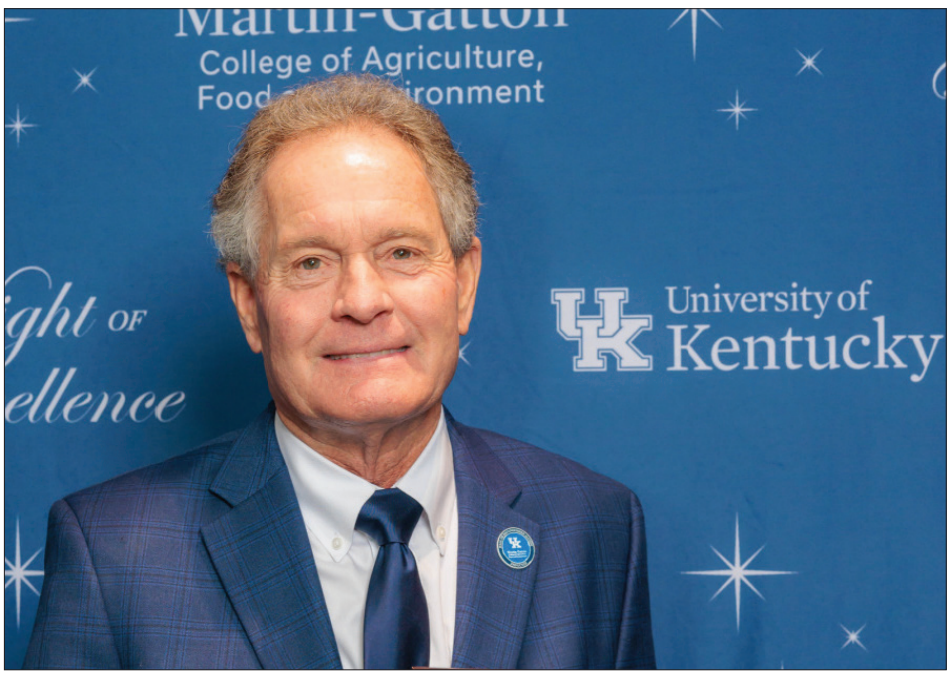
UKMGCAFE has taken notice of Mackey and his accomplishments by inducting him into their Hall of Distinguished Alumni. The ceremony took place in February and is an honor once bestowed upon his father, Ray Mackey, 45 years ago.

"I was surprised when they called—and mostly humbled," he said. "Just hearing and seeing the details of the other past winners, and the three other winners that night, and seeing their accomplishments and servitude, it was—and is—amazing."

In addition to his on-farm accomplishments and his dedication to UK, Mackey has served in a variety of other leadership roles, including sitting on the Kentucky Farm Bureau Board as a state director. His father once served as KFB President, and Farm Bureau has been a big part of his professional life. He currently represents the third district and serves as the vice-chair of the KFB Grain Crops Advisory Committee and chairs the Swine Advisory Committee.

Mackey is also on the board for the Kentucky Corn Growers Association and is the current chair of that organization's Promotion Council, which oversees check-off dollars. He has served on corn growers' national committees and is a member of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association and the Kentucky Pork Producers. He is also serving on the American Farm Bureau Federation's Farm Policy Committee.

Today, his farming operation includes 4,000 acres in Hardin and LaRue counties,



where he raises grain, tobacco, and beef cattle. The farm also contains the infrastructure for swine.

The season ahead with boots on the ground and hands in the dirt.

Mackey has never been one to rest on his laurels and is plowing ahead, both physically and figuratively, into the 2026 growing season. He said his plans include planting about 1,700 acres of soybeans, 2,400 acres of corn, to go along with the farm's 85 acres of burley tobacco.

"We planted beans earlier than I have ever planted, but that's what most of the country is doing these days, planting some soybeans first," Mackey said. "Soybeans have gotten a lot of attention, and the market is relatively strong. But we also started planting corn just a few days later. That's just the way it's worked out this year."

The 2025 planting season was slowed by historic rainfall and flooding, while this year, much of the state has been in some stage of drought during the early planting season, ranging from abnormally dry to extreme drought in some areas of Western Kentucky. With extensive rainfall expected during the week of April 27, however, the drought conditions should decrease.

The dryer than normal conditions did allow producers to get a jump on early spring planting. As of the April 27 crop progress report from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, nearly 70 percent of the state's corn crop had been planted, along with half of the soybean crop, far ahead of 2025 and five-year averages.

While the spring planting season seems to be going well, current market conditions are not so much, as input prices continue to increase.

"The markets look bleak for 2026 with the corn market really needing help," Mackey said. "Corn is the most expensive crop we put out, with the need for nitrogen, fertilizer, crop protectants, and the cost of seed corn. All those things make it a very expensive crop, and it's dragging along here in 30-year-old prices."

But Mackey recognizes that research and advanced technology have helped farmers increase production greatly over the past 30 years.

"The only way that we survive in corn is that we increase yields and we keep doing that," he said. "We're on that wheel that we have to feed the crop in order to make the bushels, so that we can afford the crop, but the more we feed the crop and the more we invest in it, the tighter the margins are. But we survive to grow another crop, and that's the goal."

Mackey has utilized diversity on the farm as a way to navigate the up and down cycles that come with today's agriculture industry. With a cow-calf operation and a burley crop that still can provide some profitability, he looks toward initiatives like those in renewable fuels to help foster new markets for grain crops, especially corn.

"We favor corn because we like corn on our farm, and we think we're comparatively advantaged to grow corn for yield and dollars," he said. "But we need new markets. Year-round nationwide E-15 and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) could be game changers. However, when you pass two billion bushels of corn stocks, you've got a cloud hanging over the corn market that keeps farmers in that pool of water just up to the chin. So expanded uses for corn with E-15 and SAF would be a big help."

As Mackey and other farm families navigate an ever-changing market environment, he continues on the path he set forth on that first farm so many years ago and is humbled at the honor he received from UK.

Mackey's hope is that he is seen as one who championed the process of education, research, and extension, and taking it all back to the farm.

"I hope they see a farmer that believed in that and proved it by putting it into action and with boots on the ground, and hands in the dirt," he said. "I hope they see someone not looking for a recognition or an award, but someone who took the tools that were available through the university and proved it."

Editor's note: UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Hall of Distinguished Alumni, awarded on a biennial basis, honors, and recognizes extraordinary alumni who have contributed substantially to their chosen fields, their communities and society. This award is the highest honor the college will bestow.

"The overriding encouragement I had growing up with family influences on all sides, ... there was never any other doubt or option. I wanted to go to UK and be a part of that, so I could come back to the farm and put that knowledge on the ground and be a farmer."

— Ray Allan Mackey

UK names Anna Kate Shoveller to lead Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program

Shoveller's appointment represents a significant investment in advancing the science of companion animal health and strengthening the University of Kentucky's leadership in this rapidly growing field.

By Derrick Meads

Lexington, Ky.— The University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment has named Anna Kate Shoveller as director of the Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program and professor in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. She is expected to join the university in 2027.

Shoveller is an internationally recognized leader in companion animal nutrition and metabolism, bringing extensive experience in research, teaching and industry collaboration. She currently serves as a professor in the Department of Animal Biosciences at the University of Guelph, where she is the Champion Petfoods Research Chair in Canine and Feline Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism and a University of Guelph Research Leadership Chair.

The Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program is a key component of the Martin-Gatton CAFE's commitment to student success, interdisciplinary collaboration and industry engagement.

"Dr. Shoveller is a globally recognized leader whose work will elevate our ability to advance companion animal health through research, teaching and industry partnership," said Laura Stephenson, vice president for land-grant engagement and dean of Martin-Gatton CAFE. "This position reflects our commitment to preparing students for careers in a growing and important field, while strengthening the connections between science and practice. We are also grateful to The Bill Gatton Foundation for its vision and investment in making the Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program—and this opportunity—possible."

The Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program is central to the vision of The Bill Gatton Foundation's historic $100 million gift to Martin-Gatton CAFE. The initiative is one of the gift's four primary pillars, reflecting Mr. Gatton's deep appreciation for the human-animal bond and its role in improving lives. Named in honor of Gatton's beloved pets — Higgins, his cat, and Neyland, his dog — the program reflects a personal connection that underscores the broader impact of companion animals on individuals, families and communities.

Prior to her academic career, Shoveller held research positions with Procter & Gamble and Mars Petcare. She has published more than 180 peer-reviewed papers, contributed to multiple book chapters and secured more than $10 million in research funding. Her work has played a critical role in advancing companion animal nutrition and training the next generation of scientists and industry leaders.

At UK Shoveller will lead efforts to expand the Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program, fostering collaboration across disciplines and strengthening partnerships with the industry and its stakeholders. She will also contribute to teaching and mentoring students, preparing them for careers in animal health, nutrition and related fields.

Students in the Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program will explore how animals and people interact, support one another and shape communities — moving beyond traditional animal sciences to examine the broader social, ethical and health dimensions of those relationships.

Anna Kate Shoveller.

Picture provided

The program reflects the college's broader land-grant mission to improve lives through teaching, research and Extension — creating opportunities to address emerging challenges and support the well-being of animals and the people who care for them.

Learn more about The Bill Gatton Foundation legacy and the Higgins-Neyland Companion Animal Program.

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University of Kentucky alum and former trustee Carol Martin "Bill" Gatton bestowed a transformational $100 million gift to the college through The Bill Gatton Foundation. It is the largest gift to the university in its history.

Four Pillars of The Bill Gatton Foundation's gift are (1) Scholarships and other initiatives for Student Success, (2) Companion Animal Program, (3) 21st Century Capital Projects and New Initiatives Fund and (4) Faculty Research and Innovation/Research Challenge Trust Fund Program.

The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, education information and other services to individuals and institutions that provide equal opportunities for qualified persons in all aspects of institutional operations and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, creed, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, uniformed service, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information or social or economic status.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture announces second annual Farm to School Stars Recognition program

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Kentucky school districts committed to purchasing food from Kentucky farmers are once again eligible for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Farm to School Stars Recognition Program.

The program, now in its second year, monetarily awards the top three school districts that demonstrate a commitment to increase their food purchases directly from farmers.

"Kentucky farmers grow some of the best food in the nation, and our schools play a vital role in getting that food onto the plates of our students," Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell said. "When schools buy local, our students, our farmers, and our communities all benefit."

By increasing purchases of locally grown produce and proteins, participating districts help strengthen farm income while improving the quality and freshness of school meals.

The Farm to School Stars program supports the goals of the recently passed Senate Bill 5 (SB5) by strengthening local food systems, expanding market opportunities for Kentucky producers, and ensuring more Kentucky grown products reach our classrooms. SB5 allows Kentucky school districts participating in USDA Child Nutrition programs greater flexibility in directly purchasing Kentucky-grown agricultural products without being subject to certain state competitive bidding laws – while still complying with all federal requirements. In some cases, the flexibility allows local farmers to compete with large conglomerates by allowing school food purchases to award contracts when the district considers the price reasonable based on prior experience, purchase history, or other relevant information.

The Farm to School Stars Recognition Program highlights districts that achieve the highest percentage of Kentucky grown or Kentucky raised products in their breakfast and lunch programs. To qualify, districts must participate in the USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Only breakfast and lunch meals will be evaluated for award consideration.

KDA will announce the winning districts during Farm to School Month in October. Incentive awards, which are paid through Ag Tag funds, include:

- First place: $10,000
- Second place: $8,000
- Third place: $6,000

Districts must use award funds to purchase local foods during the following school year. Districts that receive an award are not eligible to participate again the next year.

Applications are due to KDA by July 31, 2026. Rules and application materials are available at: kyagr.com/consumer/documents/FD_FS_KDA_Star_Recognition_Application.pdf.

Indiana Department of Agriculture announces specialty crop block grant funding

Illinois to prioritize projects that benefit beginning farmers, nutrition and health outcomes, sustainability and conservation

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) will distribute more than $796,000 over the next three years to expand access to fresh, locally grown produce and boost the competitiveness of the state's specialty crop industry. This funding is made possible through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

An application for grant funding will be available this week on the Illinois Department of Agriculture website and must be returned to the Department by noon on June 5, 2026. The program will run from September 30, 2026 through September 29, 2029.

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, local and government entities, trade and commodity associations, public and private colleges/universities. Illinois funding priorities include projects that benefit beginning farmers and first-time specialty crop producers (a beginning farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation), projects with educational programming to enhance knowledge and consumption of specialty crops, projects connecting specialty crops with nutrition and health outcomes, including food safety, projects that prioritize sustainability and conservation.

"These grant funds help ensure that Illinois producers—especially small, beginning, and historically underserved farmers—have the opportunity to grow and succeed," said Jerry Costello II, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. "Our goal is to strengthen local food systems, expand access to fresh, healthy products, and drive innovation in Illinois' specialty crop industry."

To encourage further expansion of this industry, and to take full advantage of the allocated federal funds, the Department invites the development of projects pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:

Enhancing food safety.

Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors.

Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes.

Supporting the growth of organic specialty crops.

Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops.

Improving pest and disease control.

Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.

Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems.

Projects that benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual are ineligible. Farmers' markets, roadside stands and community-sponsored agriculture programs should consider submitting proposals to the USDA's Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service defines specialty crops as "fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture)." There are more than 3,200 producers devoting more than 83,000 acres of Illinois farmland to specialty crops production, creating nearly $500 million in annual sales for Illinois farmers. Nationally, Illinois ranks first for its pumpkin and horseradish production and ranks in the top ten for the production of asparagus, cauliflower, fresh-cut herbs, peas, mustard greens and lima beans .Additional information about the program can be found online at the Department's website and/or by contacting AGR.ISCBG@illinois.gov

Tennessee Agricultural Crime Unit secures conviction in Monroe County barn arson case

NASHVILLE — The Agricultural Crime Unit (ACU) has secured a guilty verdict in the 2024 intentional burning of a barn in Monroe County.

ACU Special Agent Clint Brookshire charged Charles Anthony Ellis of Monroe County with arson. Ellis has been sentenced to 11 months and 29 days in the Monroe County Jail and ordered to enter an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program.

"Our agents are trained to investigate complex rural arson cases—from wildland fires to the targeted burning of agricultural structures like barns and hay storage sheds," said ACU Special Agent in Charge Greg Whitehead. "That expertise ensures we can quickly determine cause, hold offenders accountable, and protect Tennessee's farms, forests and rural communities."

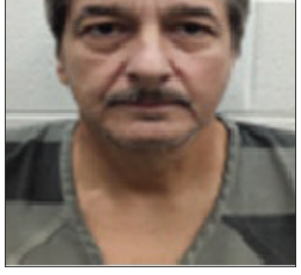
In September 2024, at the request of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Special Agent Clint Brookshire joined the investigation into a barn fire in Madisonville. Working collaboratively with local authorities and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the investigation determined the fire was deliberately set by a relative of the property owner following a family dispute, leading to Ellis' arrest and conviction.

ACU special agents receive advanced wildfire-arson training, including FBI-supported instruction and extensive field experience, equipping them as the state's primary experts in agricultural and wildland arson investigations.

To contact ACU call 844-AG-CRIME (844-242-7463) or email Agriculture.Crime@tn.gov.

ACU investigated 53 cases in April 2026.

ACU is a vital component of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's mission to serve, support and promote agriculture and forestry in the state. ACU law enforcement officers investigate and enforce state laws related to the agricultural community. To accomplish this work they collaborate with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.



Charles Anthony Ellis

Translation and interpretation services for this press release are available free of charge. Please contact Kim.Doddridge@tn.gov.

Applications are open for 2026 Kentucky Proud Farm to Fork dinners

Local food movement benefits charities

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Agriculture Commissioner Jonathan Shell invites Kentucky Proud members to apply to participate in the Kentucky Proud® Farm to Fork program for 2026.

"Kentucky Proud® is the perfect way to share a little bit of Kentucky on your table," Commissioner Shell said. "Kentucky Proud® is a national model for promoting local agricultural products, and the Farm to Fork Program helps publicize the many outstanding products produced by our farmers and agribusinesses."

The Kentucky Proud® Farm to Fork Program, administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, works to increase awareness

of the local food movement by teaming up with host groups to benefit a charity in their community. These groups can host an event that will highlight local farms, farmers, producers, and Kentucky Proud® products. Funding is made possible through a grant from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund.

The Farm to Fork cost-share grant can reimburse up to 50 percent (up to $750) of the event's eligible Kentucky-grown food products and associated promotional expenditures. Only those meal ingredients and items that directly impact Kentucky farms will be eligible for consideration and can be submitted for the full grant amount.

Applications for 2026 Farm to Fork events are due 30 days before the event. Events must take place before Nov. 13. For more information about the Farm to Fork program or to download an application and guidelines, go to kyagr.com/marketing/farm-to-fork.html.

For more information about Farm to Fork cost-share grants, contact Alisha Morris at (502) 782-4119 or Alisha.Morris@ky.gov.

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Breaking new ground in Ag Policy

Brandon Hunt becomes the first Kentuckian to be elected to the National Corn Growers Association.

Kentucky agricultural leaders have played a prominent role through the years in state and national ag policy, serving in many different roles on a variety of advocacy platforms, but Brandon Hunt of Christian County becomes the first from this state to be elected to the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Board of Directors.

He is a fourth-generation crop producer, raising a fifth, as he puts it. His operation consists of corn, wheat, soybeans, dark-fire tobacco, and CBD hemp.

And if his name sounds familiar, Hunt's family has a storied history of ag leadership, including his grandfather, Wayne Hunt, who has served on the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board since its inception more than 25 years ago.

Hunt is the first to admit that he has been blessed to be part of a long legacy of farm families, and there is nothing he would rather do. As part of that legacy, he remains intensely focused on paving the way for future generations on the farm.

"I'm thoughtful of the fact that because our industry is ever-changing, and to continue into the next generation, we've just got to try to keep things on the right course," he said. "My children are at the cornerstone of everything I do, from a thought process about how we set up this industry, from a policy perspective, and in going forward with production agriculture."

Hunt said he had a fantastic start and opportunity to participate in the ag industry, but one can't be satisfied with their visionary thoughts moving into the future because of how quickly things change.

"We're in some difficult times right now, but my generation really needs to do everything we can to set things up for future generations so our industry can continue moving forward," he said. "I don't get up any day dreading that I'm going to work; it's a blessing for me, and I feel sorry for people who don't have that blessing. But I care so much about it and about my kids having the opportunity to do it, if they want to."

Ag policy plays a big role not only in the present but also in the future, and Hunt said the policy side of the industry is something he really enjoys.

Brandon Hunt of Christian County is the first from Kentucky to be elected to the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Board of Directors.

"Getting to interact at the national level related to corn production, from policy to organizational matters, is something I really enjoy," he said. "I love ag policy, and I love working on ag policy, and ultimately, it's all about the people."

But, for Hunt, it's not just the people in the agricultural sector, but also those outside of the ag realm who need to understand more about an industry they all depend on.

"I never turn down an opportunity to talk to people who aren't in our industry," he said. "The perception of [many] is that [farmers are] hurting them, and that's a very scary place to have reached. And I can't imagine what's going to happen for my kids' generation, having to try to defend that position. So, we should take the opportunity to talk to people outside the industry about things that we take to be so normal as agriculturalists."

Hunt noted that because many generations are removed from any type of ag background, there is a lack of knowledge about the agriculture industry with much of the general public.

"You go back three generations when a high percentage of people had a tie to a family farm," he said. "As ag consolidation has happened and people have retired and different career choices have been made, you lose that closeness to the soil and to the crops and to the animals and everything that it takes to be productive in this country. The normalcy of that education is gone or is leaving at a very rapid rate."

Hunt emphasized that in a farming operation, it's all about time, but time has to be taken to tell the true story of agricultural practices.

"That's another reason I wanted to participate in NCGA, because it's a great platform to tell that story as we go along while also working on real-world problems," he said.

From an NCGA policy perspective, there are several issues the 15-member elected board is working on.

"Obviously, it's the farm economy, and that's a multifaceted conversation, from a policy perspective, and just the overall health of our industry right now, trying to get us through this downturn," Hunt said. "We also continue to work on biofuels, trying to get the E-15 initiative across the finish line, legislatively. But we've been working on this entirely too long."

Hunt added that the E-15 initiative, which would bring year-round use across the country, seemed to be headed in the right direction a year ago, but due to some opposition, the ag industry and in particular the NCGA, is still trying to get this accomplished.

"We got close again in January but really got sidetracked by some mid-level oil refiners at the ninth hour that came in and really caused a stir on Capitol Hill, which spooked a lot of people and ultimately we didn't get it done," he said. "It's a no-brainer right up until the point you get in somebody's back pocket. It's pretty frustrating at the legislative level, having not been successful on the topic that can make so much sense."

In keeping with the biofuels topic, Hunt said NCGA is very active in supporting the Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) initiative, something that could be a tremendous boost to the ag industry.

"We're at the infancy [stage] of it right now, but it's going to become more popular, and it's going to become more widely adopted, and I think sometime in my generation, it'll become the norm," he said.

During the just-concluded Kentucky General Assembly session, legislation was introduced to target incentives to encourage the production and blending of alternative aviation fuel in the state.

"Kentucky again is leading the charge at the state level on that, and we're so blessed to have our state legislators and Agriculture Commissioner Jonathan Shell with the foresight of agriculture going forward," Hunt said. "We rival states in the nation about the vision of what that looks like."

Another opportunity recognized by the NCGA is that of bioplastics, which would position corn-based products as sustainable, renewable alternatives to petroleum-based plastics.

"Ethanol is going to play a pivotal role in the emerging plastics market," Hunt said. "At the end of the day, farmers are the biggest conservationists, no matter what state you live in, and to have a product like ethanol used, making for a better environment, it's just so cool to participate in that market.

All of the work Hunt and his fellow corn producers across the country are involved in will, in the end, come back to preserving an agricultural industry for future generations.

"Ultimately, it all ties back to those next generations, and we have to take care of our assets," he said. "Farmers understand that more than anything or anyone, and we always want to do our part."

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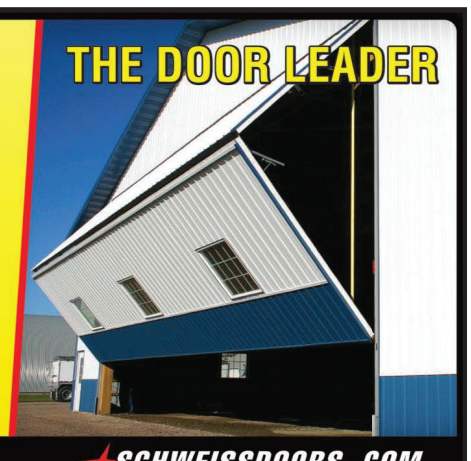

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The Tanker - Premium Fuel Trailer

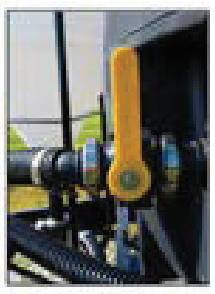
Fuel Pro - Compact Fuel Trailer

FUEL PRO is the compact, affordable in-field fuel solution you've been waiting for. Built to the same high-quality standards as The Tanker series of fuel trailers, you can rely on Fuel Pro to keep your equipment filled up and running.

- 600 GALLON FUEL CAPACITY (NO DEF TANK)
- 35' FUEL HOSE AND REEL W/AUTO SHUTOFF NOZZLE
- 2" CAST IRON PUMP
- HEAVY DUTY POWDER COATED FRAME
- GREY, RED AND GREEN COLOR OPTIONS

NURSE TRAILERS - 1010

1010 Nurse Trailer w/Inductor and Chem Rack



USA

1010 Standard Features

- 1010 UV stabilized full drain leg tank (black, white or light blue)
- Heavy duty powder coated channel frame
- Pump options: poly or cast iron in 2" or 3" • Six bolt hubs
- 11L x 15 (12 ply) implement tires • Slipper leaf-spring suspension
- Adjustable height clevis hitch • Two (2) safety chains with hooks
- Two (2) tank access steps • 2" Or 3" plumbing
- Recirculating plumbing w/quick fill tank, Clean load system

1010 Nurse Trailer w/Inductor

Additional Options:

Electric brakes, Lights, Fenders, Ball Coupler, Pintle Coupler, High speed axles, wheels and tires, Shuttle platform, 15 or 30 gal. mix and fill tank, Clean load system

NURSE TRAILERS - 1620-2010

1610/2010 Stretch Nurse Trailer w/Inductor

1610/2010 Gallon Standard Features

- 1610 UV stabilized full drain leg tank (black, white or light blue)
- Heavy duty powder coated 7" channel frame
- Pump options: poly or cast iron in 2" or 3" • 8 bolt hubs
- 22.5" x 11.25" Wheels/tires • Slipper leaf-spring suspension
- Adjustable height clevis hitch • Two (2) safety chains with hooks
- Two (2) tank access steps • 2" Or 3" plumbing
- Surge brakes (single axle) • Recirculating plumbing w/quick fill tank

Additional Options:

- Surge brakes (dual axle) • Lights • Fenders • Ball coupler
- Pintle coupler • High-speed axles, wheels and tires
- Shuttle platform • 15 or 30 gallon mix & fill tank
- Clean load system

Alabama - 2394 Hwy. 134, Headland, AL 334.785.0573
Kansas - 2021 Iowa Street, Hiawatha, KS 877.390.4480
Kentucky - 1100 New Industry Ln., Hopkinsville, KY . 270.887.8550
Mississippi - 104 Eastman Street, Greenwood, MS ... 334.785.0573
Mississippi - 800 Moore Street ,Invernes, MS 662.265.5841
North Carolina - 6345 US 301, Elm City, NC 252.977.1606

May celebrated as Kentucky Beef Month

By TOM LATEK
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Kentucky cattle producers and industry representatives joined Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell Monday as he signed a proclamation commemorating the month of May as Kentucky Beef Month.

"Through the hard work of our cattle farmers, Kentucky retains its distinction as the state with the largest beef inventory east of the Mississippi River with 862,000 head," he said. "I join Kentuckians in recognizing the effort, diligence, and perseverance of this important agricultural sector as we celebrate May as Kentucky Beef Month."

The U.S. is the world's second largest producer of beef, primarily high-quality, grain-fed beef. Kentucky ranks 14th nationally for total cattle inventory with 1.82 million head and 10th in the nation for beef cattle. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Kentucky is home to 31,060 beef cattle producers of the 69,400 total farms in the state.

January 2026 numbers for all cattle inventory are down slightly from 2025, matching the nationwide trend. The U.S. beef cattle reached a 64-year low in 2025. Several factors including low calf prices, high costs, and drought across the county played a role in the declining inventory.

Kentucky cattle producers and industry representatives joined Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell Monday as he signed a proclamation commemorating the month of May as Kentucky Beef Month. (Department of Agriculture photo)

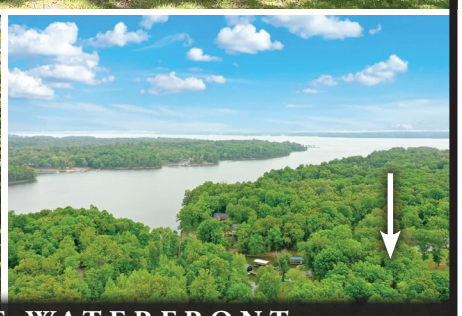
In contrast the lower number of beef cattle has created a higher market demand and driven up the sale prices for farmers. The tight national cattle supply and higher market prices will likely contribute to higher agricultural receipts for the state. The final agricultural cash receipts for 2024, the latest available, show the cattle and calves sector brought in $1.5 billion, ranking it first for Kentucky commodities.

Cattle prices are expected to remain strong and potentially peak, following a year of high demand in 2025. Tight supplies and strong demand drove the market for much of 2025 with Kentucky cattle prices up 20-30 percent from the previous year. It's predicted Kentucky's anticipated strong livestock sector could help maintain overall cash receipts above $8 billion for 2025 with estimates of a record $8.5 billion for 2026.

The top five Kentucky counties for number of beef cattle are Barren, Pulaski, Madison, Breckenridge and Warren.

ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION
663 Steamboat Road • Gilbertsville, KY 42044
SATURDAY, MAY 23RD, 2026 at 12:00 PM

PREVIEW: Sunday, May 17th | 12:00 - 1:00 PM



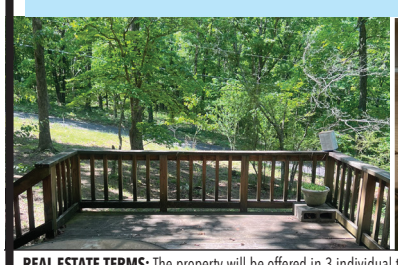
KENTUCKY LAKE WATERFRONT

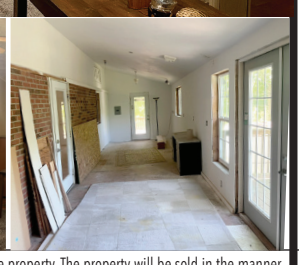
Don't miss this opportunity to own a 3 bedroom, 2 bath manufactured home on 1.77± acres in the heart of Kentucky Lake country. Ideal as a primary residence, weekend getaway, investment, or future building site.

The home offers an open living and dining area, a private primary suite, and a bright sunroom addition perfect for year-round enjoyment.

Step outside to an elevated deck overlooking a peaceful setting with views toward Kentucky Lake. With dockable potential and close proximity to the water, this property is ready to enjoy now or develop into your ideal lake retreat.

PROPERTY HIGHLIGHTS
- 3 Bedrooms, 2 Full Bathrooms
- 1.77± Acre Lot
- Dockable Property
- Excellent Future Building Site Potential
- Open Living Room & Dining Area
- Primary Suite with Private Bath
- Sunroom Addition for Extra Living Space
- Rear Deck Overlooking Kentucky Lake Area
- Conveniently Located Near Moors Marina
- Peaceful, Wooded Setting





REAL ESTATE TERMS: The property will be offered in 3 individual tracts, any combination of tracts, or as a whole property. The property will be sold in the manner resulting in the highest total sale price. A 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to the final bid and included in the deed transaction sale price. 15% as down payment on the day of the auction with balance in cash at closing on or before 30 days. The down payment may be in the form of cashier's check, personal check, or corporate check. YOUR BIDDING IS NOT CONDITIONAL UPON FINANCING, SO BE SURE YOU HAVE ARRANGED FINANCING, IF NEEDED, AND ARE CAPABLE OF PAYING CASH AT CLOSING. Buyer Will Be Required To Sign A Lead Based Paint Disclosure Waiving The Opportunity To A 10 Day Post Sale Inspection. Make Inspections Prior To Date Of Sale. Closing shall take place on or before 30 days from auction date. All 2026 ad valorem taxes will be prorated at closing. The property will be sold by the deed.

HARRIS Real Estate & Auction
HOMES - FARMLAND ESTATES - WATERFRONT

MICHAEL HARRIS
PRINCIPAL BROKER
PRINCIPAL AUCTIONEER
KL# 252972 | KY Broker# 198374
Phone: 270-247-3253 Toll Free: 800-380-4318 harrisauctions.com

ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION
Saturday, May 30TH, 2026 at 10:00 am
1455 McKENDREE CHURCH ROAD • KEVIL, KY 42053
LOG HOME - BUILDINGS - BARN
92± ACRES
IN 4 TRACTS & COMBINATIONS
McCracken County Farm
726
JUST 10 MINUTES TO McCRACKEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL!

AUCTION HELD ON TRACT 2
PUBLIC PREVIEW:
Monday, May 18th from 5:00-6:00 pm

REAL ESTATE TRACTS

Tract 1	20.79± Acres
Tract 2	25.16± Acres - 3 Bdrm 3 Bath Log Home - 2,113± sq ft, Detached 2 Car Garage, 30'x40' Metal Shop Building, 40'x40' Metal Building, 40'x40' Tobacco Barn
Tract 3	20.42± Acres
Tract 4	25.67± Acres

Ideally situated only 10 minutes from McCracken County High School Kentucky Oaks Mall, and Paducah's dining and retail amenities.

Outstanding opportunity to purchase 92± acres in McCracken County offered in 4 tracts & combinations! This diverse property features a beautiful log home, multiple shops and barns, and a strong mix of open farmland and wooded acreage–perfect for residential, recreational, or agricultural use. Enjoy the privacy of a rural setting while being just minutes from shopping, restaurants, and conveniences in the Paducah area. Whether you're looking for a country home, mini farm, hunting property, or investment, this offering provides flexibility to buy individual tracts, combinations, or the entire property.

TRACT 2 – HOME & IMPROVEMENTS (25.167± ACRES)

The centerpiece of this tract is a charming 2,300± sq ft log home that blends rustic character with everyday functionality. Offering 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, the home features a spacious living area with vaulted ceilings, a wood-burning fireplace, and a screened-in front porch perfect for relaxing and taking in the surroundings. Additional highlights include walk-in closets, a dedicated office or den, a mud room and laundry room, and an open attic area providing excellent storage. Above the garage, unfinished space offers outstanding potential for a rec room, bonus area, or private retreat.

The property is further enhanced by a strong lineup of improvements designed for both residential and agricultural use. These include a 28'x30' detached 2-car garage and a 30'x40' metal shop building complete with concrete floor, electric, and a 10' overhead door. Also included are a 40'x40' metal barn and a 40'x40' tobacco barn, providing ample storage and versatility. A concrete driveway with turn-around area ensures easy access, and the property is serviced by county water, making it a well-rounded and highly functional offering.

REAL ESTATE TERMS: The property will be offered in 4 individual tracts, any combination of tracts, or as a whole property. The property will be sold in the manner resulting in the highest total sale price. A 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to the final bid and included in the deed transaction sale price. 15% as down payment on the day of the auction with balance in cash at closing on or before 30 days. The down payment may be in the form of cashier's check, personal check, or corporate check. YOUR BIDDING IS NOT CONDITIONAL UPON FINANCING, SO BE SURE YOU HAVE ARRANGED FINANCING, IF NEEDED, AND ARE CAPABLE OF PAYING CASH AT CLOSING. Buyer Will Be Required To Sign A Lead Based Paint Disclosure Waiving The Opportunity To A 10 Day Post Sale Inspection. Make Inspections Prior To Date Of Sale. Closing shall take place on or before 30 days from auction date. All 2026 ad valorem taxes will be prorated at closing. The property will be sold by a new survey. Buyer is responsible for 50% of the cost.

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